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"TO BE OR NOT TO BE?": PASNAU ON AQUINAS'S IMMORTAL HUMAN SOUL

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THE HISTORICAL ORIGINALITY and doctrinal importance of Aquinas's account of the embodied but immortal human soul-form can hardly be overestimated. Anton Pegis, who over his lifetime studied, with an unmatched profundity, the sources and internal development of Aquinas's doctrine, described it as "a revolutionary contribution to Aristotelian psychology"[1]—revolutionary because the contribution involved "a much greater loyalty to Augustine than [Aquinas's] acceptance of Aristotle is ordinarily supposed to allow."[2] Especially in the notable treatise "on man" (*de homine*) found in the *Summa Theologiae* (*STh* I, qq. 75-89), Aquinas's abiding Augustinian commitments, and not just Aristotelian terminology and doctrines, play a constitutive role in how the problems are set forth and resolved. Thomistic man is a paradoxically composite being, soul and body, a composite animated by a spiritual soul but one needing and created for incarnation, a soul living in the world of matter so as to know and, thereby, enable the whole man to attain eternal truth and beatitude.[3] In being so incarnated, the human soul, least of all the

[1] Anton Pegis, "St. Thomas and the Unity of Man," in *Progress in Philosophy,* ed. James A. McWilliams, S.J. (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1955), 153.

[2] Anton C. Pegis, *At the Origins of the Thomistic Notion of Man,* The Saint Augustine Lecture 1962 (New York: The Macmillan Company; London: Collier-Macmillan Limited, 1963), 24.

[3] See ibid., 54-59.

intellectual substances, "raises [matter] to something higher"—the world of spirit.[4]

Recently, Robert Pasnau has devoted, in what his publishers rightly call "a major new study,"[5] twelve thick chapters of "commentary"—taking that term broadly so as to include running historical and philosophical asides, numerous boxed *obiter dicta,* and occasional opinions, some intimately cast, about morals, theology, and the current academic *zeitgeist*—to the treatise on man On these fourteen important questions, Pasnau has "tried to write a book that would help the novice, stimulate the non-specialist, and provoke the specialist" (xi). Of these three goals, Pasnau undoubtedly attains the last. This large, sometimes repetitious, argumentatively sprawling, intentionally provocative, and, to use the author's own accurate but unapologetic characterization, "tendentious" (ibid.) book solicits from the provoked specialist what cannot be easily given, a comprehensively alternative, and on some issues counter, interpretation to Pasnau that would far exceed the compass of a single essay. In this essay, I shall mostly consider (since it is the primary topic of *STh* I, qq. 75-89) how Pasnau construes Aquinas's account of the human soul as both the form of a perishable body and, postmortem, a separate albeit incomplete spiritual substance.

For his part, Pasnau repeats and embraces Norman Kretzmann's negative judgment about the philosophical success of the Thomistic revolution in Aristotelian psychology. Pasnau bluntly rejects the probity of Aquinas's arguments for the postmortem subsistence of the soul that was once the form of a living body: they are "among the least persuasive parts of his thought" (457 n. 4). But Pasnau's rejection obliges the reader of his book to ponder, more explicitly and critically than the author himself, the philosophical standards by which the Thomistic

[4] See *ScG* II, c. 68 (ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello, 2:203a, n. 1452). Cf. Anton C. Pegis, "Between Immortality and Death: Some Further Reflections on the *Summa Contra Gentiles,*" *The Monist* 58 (1974): 1-15.

[5] Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: A Philosophical Study of Summa theologiae Ia 75-89* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Parenthetical page references hereafter, unless otherwise noted, are to this book.

revolution is being judged. Finally, there remains one of the basic questions of twentieth-century Thomism: What is the status of the *philosophy* putatively found in Aquinas's theological works?

I. The Substantial Unity of Thomistic Man

Questions 75-89 of the *Prima Pars* constitute, so the prologue to question 75 states, a treatise on human nature (*de natura hominis*). Human nature, as Aquinas portrays it, is mysteriously dual but not, in the ancient Platonist or modern Cartesian sense, dualistic: the treatise is "de homine, qui ex spirituali et corporali substantia componitur"—literally translated, "about man, who is composed from a spiritual and a corporeal substance" (but meaning, surely, "about man who is a substance composed from the spiritual and the corporeal"). *Substantia*, in this troublesome phrase, is ambiguous: it can refer to form, matter, and the composite.[6] Taking that ambiguity into account, the literal phrase need not entail that man is actually composed from "two substances, one spiritual and one corporeal" (413 n. 24). To interpret this phrase, with Pasnau, as implicated in a substance dualism is tantamount to disregarding Aquinas's whole polemic—contra Averroës—on behalf of an intellectual soul that is at once immaterial and a form of matter, and, as the latter, is the vehicle of the existential *entelechy* sustaining the unity of man.[7] Pasnau's dualistic interpretation, in fact, assimilates Aquinas to Averroës: "We have to identify the spiritual substance as the rational soul, and the corporeal substance as the whole human being, body and soul" (ibid.). But, then, Pasnau admonishes us *not* to "take at face value Aquinas's pronouncements about the way substances are composites of form and matter" (ibid.).

[6] See Aristotle, *De anima*, 2.412a6-10; cf. Aquinas II *De anima*, lect. 1 (Pirotta, 59b, n. 215): "substantia dividitur in materiam et formam et compositum. . . . Substantia vero composita est, quae est hoc aliquid."

[7] Cf. Pegis, "St. Thomas and the Unity of Man," 164: "if there is any doctrine that characterizes the Thomistic view of man, it is the notion that there is only one substantial form in man."

Such extraordinary, not to say drastic, hermeneutical advice calls for an equal measure of hesitation. And at this juncture, there is a very simple reason to hesitate: the prologue to question 50 avoids connoting any "substance dualism" inasmuch as it never mentions *substantia;* it simply refers to the forthcoming question 75 as a consideration "de creatura composita ex corporali et spirituali."[8] A single human substance that is both spiritual and corporeal is *not* an immaterial mind substance that has or uses a living body substance; rather, it is an embodied intellectual soul, the unique substantial form of a single living substance.

The difference between a substantial mind that is conjoined but extrinsic to the body and an intrinsic or embodied intellectual soul-form becomes evident if we consider the role of sensation. Aquinas maintains that sensation is essential to human knowing not just because the mind is inexplicably geared or somehow internally responsive to the body but because the intellectual soul radically requires embodiment for the achievement of its own proper intellectuality. Since a living man is a single corporeal and spiritual substance, sensation is an act that must be attributed to the whole human being: "It is through a power existing in this person, and not in another, that he is enabled to see and to hear."[9] If so, the body must be considered to be a part of human nature. The human being, therefore, cannot be identified with either part of human nature, neither solely the body nor solely the soul.[10]

[8] This characterization of the human composite, I would agree with Pasnau (cf. 413 n. 25), cannot be neatly assimilated to the contemporary notion of a single substance marked by an irreducible and inseparable "property dualism." It is true that Aquinas says, as would Aristotle, that the living human being is a single substance that cannot exist without its dual—immaterial and material—properties. However, the human being is human only because of its soul-form. While functioning as the Aristotelian form of a living human, the soul remains a quasi-Augustinian spiritual substance. The postmortem Thomistic soul, though not the complete man, is a spiritual substance uniquely inclined to—but by itself not able to realize, though it would otherwise seem *like,* an essential property—embodiment. On essential properties, see Q. *D. de Anima,* q. 12, ad 7 (ed. Robb, 183).

[9] "nam videre et audire convenit alicui per virtutem aliquam in ipso existentem, non in alio" (*ScG* II, c. 89; ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello, 2:253a-b, n. 1736).

[10] See ibid. (ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello, 2:256a, n. 1752): "non enim homo est suum corpus, neque sua anima."

Nonetheless, Aristotelian substances are actually what they are because of their forms. In any compound or material substance, form is the principle of actuality and matter the principle of potentiality. In the case of man, the rational soul is the form that makes a living human body to be alive and intelligent. Since, speaking precisely, it is the human form that makes man to be man, to know "man"—that is, common human nature—is to know, first of all, the essence, powers, and operations of the embodied rational soul. The Christian theologian, however, has his own reasons for being primarily interested in the human soul: it is the rational soul that makes man a self-directing agent and, thereby, an image of God, who acts through infinite intelligence and will.[11] Given this perspective, the theologian can also take into account the human body but only secondarily, insofar as it relates to the soul.[12] There is no need for the theologian to be a physiologist.[13]

In defining the nature of the human soul, Aquinas begins generally and, in an Aristotelian context, noncontroversially. To define something is to give the species or form whereby (otherwise indeterminate) matter is what it determinately is. "Soul" can be generically defined as the first principle that makes a living body to be living. A body, however, is living not because it is a body—otherwise every body would be alive—but because it is *such* a body, that is, a body "in act" in a certain way. The principle that makes a body actually to be of a certain kind is called the *actus* or (in Pasnau's translation) "actuality" of the body. Contrary to the doctrine that Aquinas attributes to the ancient naturalists, the soul itself, as the first principle of life, cannot be a body. Again, form is *actus* or actuality. Aquinas allows that the ancient naturalists did recognize the actuality of accidental forms: bodies, by changing from state to state, show that they are subject to further (accidental) determinations. But,

[11] See *STh* I-II, prologus: "homo factus ad imaginem Dei dicitur, secundum quod per imaginem significatur intellectuale et arbitrio liberum et per se potestativum."

[12] See *STh* I, q. 75, prologus.

[13] Cf. Pasnau, 14: "Ironically, medieval theology might therefore be condemned for being . . . overly abstract and too little in touch with empirical data."

contradicting the ancients, he observes that all of the four, putatively unchanging, elements are generated one from the other; in fact, no one of them is unchanging.[14] He concludes that the ancients failed to grasp the concept of substantial change: hence, they did not posit, as the necessary substratum of determinate elementary bodies, prime matter, the pure potency existing under a form but always open to other substantial actualizations.

The distinction between an accidental and a substantial change is crucial for understanding the death of an animal. Death, the separation of the soul from the body, is not an accidental change: obvious signs, putrefaction especially, indicate that a dead body is not the same body that was once alive. Accordingly, the soul, the first principle of life, cannot be identified as an accidental form; it is the substantial form of the living body, but, postmortem, one that no longer actualizes the dead body. So much is basic Aristotelian and Thomistic doctrine.

By relying on a version of Aristotelian hylomorphism, Aquinas attempted to overcome the prevailing Platonic-Augustinian soul-body dualism. Pasnau labels the latter a (two-)substance dualism or a "nonreductive" theory of the soul's union with the body; by contrast, Aquinas's hylomorphic account reaches a single unified substance, and, therefore, is "reductive"—though not, as the term connotes contemporaneously, a reductive materialism. Pasnau, however, carries the reduction even further: he repeatedly rejects what he calls any matter-form dualism. His Aquinas embraces, to use Pasnau's eccentric label, "reductive hylomorphism" (44). Pasnau maintains that, *for Aquinas,* there is only a conceptual but not a "real" or, as he also calls it, "metaphysical" distinction between matter and form.[15] Presumably one of the interpretative

[14] See I *Metaph.*, lect. 12 (ed. Cathala-Spiazzi, 56b-57a, n. 191).

[15] Pasnau, 44: "A substance is just one thing, he [Aquinas] believes; the matter and the form are conceptually different, but there is no real difference, no way to split the material part off from the formal part. . . . Aquinas is not insisting on a metaphysical distinction between matter and actuality."

novelties that Pasnau initially promises,[16] this, indeed, is a surprising reading of Aquinas, one of great consequence for understanding how the soul-form is related to the body. Prima facie, Pasnau's interpretation is implausible. If "form and matter are not really distinct components of material beings" (80), how could Aquinas argue for the separability of the embodied human soul? It is because form and matter are, in the living human body, distinct *secundum rem* that Aquinas could coherently pursue the question whether, postmortem, the human soul-form has a separate and subsistent existence.

Everything depends, of course, on how we interpret a distinction *secundum rem*. For Pasnau, applying the term "real distinction" to matter and form connotes being able to "split the material part [of a substance] from the formal part" (44). That this is not Aquinas's understanding of a "real distinction" can be easily shown by reference to another instance that calls for an equivalent Thomistic distinction: it is not possible to split a singular material *suppositum* from its essence or an essence from its properties; yet, in both conjoints, the one member is said to be "other" (*aliud*) than its partner. By *aliud* Aquinas means that they are to be distinguished *secundum rem,* not *secundum rationem.* Moreover, the distinction *secundum rem* between the essence and the *hypostasis/suppositum* of a material thing is further explained by the latter being individuated by the matter of the *hypostasis/suppositum*, which distinction Aquinas explicitly contrasts with the distinction *secundum rationem* between the divine essence and each of the subsistent (but matterless) divine persons.[17]

[16] See Pasnau, 1: "I have some novel and perhaps surprising things to say about Thomas Aquinas. . . ."

[17] See I *Sent.,* d. 34, q. 1, a. 1, sol. (ed. Mandonnet, 1:788): "persona et essentia omnino re in divinis non distinguuntur. In illis enim in quibus *aliud* est essentia quam hypostasis vel suppositum, oportet quod sit aliquid materiale, per quod natura communis individuetur et determinetur ad hoc singulare. Unde illam determinationem materiae vel alicujus quod loco materiae se habet, addit in creaturis hypostasis supra essentiam et naturam; unde non omnino ista in creaturis idem sunt. . . . Nihilominus tamen essentia [divina] et persona distinguuntur secundum rationem."

Although Pasnau, who seems to favor something like Scotus's notion of a formal distinction, opines that it is "peculiar and misleading"(425 n. 5) for Thomists to label the nonidentity of the soul and its powers a "real distinction" between them, Aquinas does so in one early text.[18] Later texts, without using the term "real distinction," evidently reaffirm the same doctrine: a "real distinction" is a distinction that is grasped as mind-independent; it is grounded in the thing itself, not in the way that we consider the thing.[19] In all creatures, then, the distinction between essence and powers is as mind-independent as the distinctions between act and potency, substance and accident, and essence and existence. Only in God is there what can only be called a *real* identity of the members in each of the three couplets.[20]

In none of these "real distinctions" is either conjoint able to be "split" from the other. Let me, then, simply repeat the standard Thomist interpretation, which has been thoroughly discussed and confirmed in the best of contemporary historical scholarship (to which Pasnau sometimes refers but which overall he does not adequately engage).[21] Pasnau has not, I think, convincingly displaced the standard interpretation, as it can be found in the

[18] "Egredietur etiam ab essentia alius actus, qui est etiam actus habentis essentiam sicut agentis, et essentia, sicut principii agendi: et iste est actus secundus, et dicitur operatio: et inter essentiam et talem operationem cadit virtus media differens ab utroque, in creaturis etiam *realitier*, in Deo ratione tantum" (I *Sent.*, d. 7, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2; ed. Mandonnet, 1:177; emphasis added).

[19] See XII *Quodl.*, q. 3, a. un. (ed. Spiazzi, 226a): "aliter est de formis realibus, et aliter de praedicatis quae important aliquid pertinens ad actum rationis: quia in primis, scilicet realibus, si in eis debeat habere locum talis distinctio, oportet inesse separationem in re et in consideratione: in secundis non requiritur, sed oportet quod res illa cadat sub alia consideratione"; *De Verit.*, q, 2, a. 2, ad 3 (ed. Spiazzi, *Quaest. disput.*, 1:28b): "similitudo que est relatio realis, distinctionem rerum requirit; sed ei quae est rationis relatio tantum, sufficit in similibus distinctio rationis."

[20] See I *Sent.*, d. 7, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1 (ed. Mandonnet: 1:177): "Sed in Deo est omnino idem re essentia, potentia et operatio, sed differt tantum ratione."

[21] See John F. Wippel, "Prime Matter and Substantial Form," chap. 9 in *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000): "Matter is now regarded as identical with its potentiality and with its relationship [to substantial form]" (319), *but* "it is clear that Thomas defends the view that a principle of being such as matter is related in objective or extramental fashion, i.e., *really rather than merely logically*, by its very nature or essence to its correlative principle, i.e., its substantial form and vice versa" (320 n. 96; emphasis added).

first of the Twenty-Four Thomistic Theses: "Potency and act divide being, so that whatever is either is pure act or necessarily comes together from potency and act as [its] first intrinsic principles."[22] For Aquinas, matter and form are principles of things, not things themselves; they (and especially prime matter) are not understood to be real in the way that a *res* is real. Nonetheless, matter and form correspond to potency and act, which is the fundamental ontological—not merely, as Pasnau would have it, conceptual—distinction in "the genus of *substance.*"[23] Aquinas, while rarely using the precise label *distinctio realis* to refer to internal distinctions posited within finite beings,[24] consistently maintains an ontological distinction in the *res* between matter and form: he contrasts, for example, a mobile substance composed of matter and form, which *in the thing* are diverse, with the corresponding matter-form composition *in the intellect,* the predication of the *totum universale* "rational animal"—wherein the genus "animal" = matter, and the species "rational" = form—of its parts, "man" and "Socrates." The predication of the form-matter composition "rational animal" is a "sign of the [conceptual] identity of the components":[25] that is, "animal" can be predicated wholly of

[22] "Potentia et actus ita dividunt ens, ut quidquid est vel sit actus purus, vel ex potentia et actu tamquam primis atque intrinsecis principiis necessario coalescat." The "Twenty-Four Thomistic Theses," encapsulating what were thought by the numerous professors consulted to be the principal philosophical doctrines of Thomas Aquinas, were first prescribed by Pope Pius X in a *Motu proprio* of 29 June 1914, subsequently confirmed by Pope Benedict XV on 7 March 1916, and promulgated in the 1917 Code of Canon Law (article 1366, § 2): see P. B. Grenet, *Les 24 thèses thomistes: De l'évolution à l'existence,* 4th ed. (Paris: Librairie P. Téqui, 1962).

[23] See III *Quodl.*, q. 8, a. un. (ed. Spiazzi, 6a): "potentia et actus sunt prima principia in genere substantiae; materia autem et forma sunt prima principia in genere substantiae mobilis. Unde non oportet omnem compositionem in genere substantiae esse ex materia et forma; sed hoc solum necesse est in substantiis mobilibus." Cf. Pasnau, 61: "We can draw a conceptual difference between the two [i.e., between a nonsubsistent form and the matter that it informs], but there is no real distinction."

[24] *Distinctio realis:* the *Index Thomisticus* shows that Aquinas uses this term frequently, not in metaphysics or physics, but in his Trinitarian theology: the divine persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) are really distinct from one another but only conceptually distinct from the divine essence.

[25] *STh* I, q. 85, a. 5, ad 3.

"rational animal," "rational animal" wholly of "man," and "man" wholly of "Socrates."[26]

The real otherness or distinction *secundum rem* between principles composing things—however uncongenial it may be to contemporary philosophers, who often are more comfortable with strictly conceptual distinctions—is basic to Aristotle's and Aquinas's metaphysics.[27] It cannot, without destroying the foundation of their respective metaphysics in real things, be expunged: "The intellectual operation [of composing form with matter] ought to be reduced to the thing as to [its] cause."[28] Forty years ago, Wilfrid Sellars acknowledged the historical correctness of this point even as he himself sought to eliminate matter and form as "really distinct principles" in things.[29] But I shall return more than once to Pasnau's assertion that matter and form, *in Aquinas's own doctrine,* are merely conceptually distinct; this implausible interpretation is indicative of Pasnau's truncated and rather skeptical exposition of the metaphysical principles that sustain Thomistic psychology.

II. THE SUBSISTENT SOUL

In defining the soul as the first principle of actuality or the substantial form of a living body, Aquinas affirms the immateriality of the soul: by definition all forms are not material. However, he does not thereby demonstrate the *subsistence* or substantial *spirituality* of the human soul. The demonstration that the human soul can exist separately or apart from the living body

[26] Cf. *STh* I, q. 77, a. 1, ad 1: "Totum enim univerale adest cuilibet parti secundum totam suam essentiam et virtutem, ut *animal* homini et equo: et ideo proprie de singulis partibus praedicatur."

[27] Cf. Cornelio Fabro, C.S.S., "La determinazione dell'atto," in *Esegesi Tomistica* (Rome: Libreria Editrice della Pontificia Università Lateranense, 1969), 341: "La materia è potenza reale, non pura possibilità, e perciò concorre con la forma, che è il suo atto, alla costituzione della sostanza corporea. Essa è principio di essere, ma l'attualità le viene della forma."

[28] IX *Metaphys.*, lect. 11 (ed. Cathala-Spiazzi, 456a, n. 1898).

[29] See Wilfrid Sellars, "Comment" on Ernan McMullin, "Matter as a Principle," in *The Concept of Matter in Greek and Medieval Philosophy,* ed. Ernan McMullin (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), 213-17.

that it once informed—that is, that it can subsist postmortem as a substance in its own right—requires additional premisses. It requires showing that the human soul has a *per se* operation—namely, intellectual understanding—that cannot be attributed to any material organ of the body that it *now* informs. Here, in outline, is Aquinas's metaphysical argument, given in question 75, article 2 of the *Prima Pars,* for the subsistence of the human soul: (1) since only what subsists in itself apart from the body could operate apart from the body, and (2) since the rational soul in intellectual understanding does *per se* operate apart from any organ of the human body, then (3) the human soul must be incorporeal, separable, and subsistent.

Each of the Thomistic premisses calls for extensive commentary. In today's philosophical climate, the second premiss is the most controversial and the least likely to be accepted. Nonetheless, in its own setting, the Thomistic proof for the perpetual existence of the postmortem soul does not require showing *first*—as Pasnau demands (65)—that the human soul continues to have intellectual activity once it is separated from the body. Pasnau maintains that it is a conceptual truth that the existence of a living separate intelligence requires that it actually understand. But, then, he hitches this conceptual truth to an altogether different requirement: Aquinas must demonstrate that the separate soul continues to understand some object in lieu of a bodily phantasm—*before* establishing that it "survives death" (367). But why should Aquinas be saddled with this requirement?

Aquinas distinguishes *secundum rem* the essence of the soul, which is the first principle that makes a living being to be actually alive (the "first act" of the soul), from its powers (*potentiae*) and habits or dispositions (*habitus*) which are the mediating proximate principles of further actions (accordingly, the soul's "second acts").[30] Ensouled beings, by definition always living, are

[30] While observing that the Latin terms are used synonymously (145), Pasnau prefers to translate *potentia* by "capacity," reserving "power" to translate *virtus* and *vis*. But this does not quite fit Aquinas' s distinction between active and passive powers. Aquinas notes (I *Sent.*, d. 42, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1) that *potentia* first applies to the *potentia* for acting (here, surely "power") and, then, secondarily, by extension, to the *potentia* for being acted upon (here,

not always acting in the various ways that they can and sometimes do act.

Aquinas allows that *sentire vel intelligere* can stand for either the operations or the being of the things operating.[31] Any proof purporting to show that the subsistent disembodied soul can act must initially distinguish the disembodied soul's "first act," the *esse absolutum* of the soul's essence, from the disembodied soul's "second acts," its operations of understanding and willing, since the same distinction first applies to the embodied soul. Again at this juncture, Pasnau apparently rejects any "real distinction" between the soul's essence, its powers, and their acts;[32] yet a distinction *secundum rem* is exactly what Aquinas posits and needs to posit for his argument about the separate soul to work.[33]

In the Thomistic metaphysical context, "each thing's mode of operating follows upon its mode of existing" (*STh* I, q. 89, a. 1).[34] Consequently, if the human soul subsists—that is, continues to exist postmortem—it should be able to operate since it retains its immaterial powers of knowing and willing.[35] Still, however confident one might be in the truth that things were not created

"capacity" seems right). But he variously distinguishes an active from a passive *potentia:* active powers affect and transform their object; passive powers are moved by their objects (*De Verit.*, q. 16, a. 1, ad 13). More perspicuously described, the object of an active power is its terminus and end; a passive power has no product (whether internal or external) other than the operation caused in itself.

[31] See *STh* I, q. 18, a. 2, ad 1: "Vel dicendum est melius, quod sentire et intelligere, et huiusmodi, quandoque sumuntur pro quibusdam operationibus; quandoque autem pro ipso esse sic operantium . . . esse est sentire vel intelligere, idest habere naturam ad sentiendum vel intelligendum."

[32] Cf. Pasnau, 157-58; 425 n. 5; 427 n. 1.

[33] See *STh* I, q. 77, aa. 1, 8. Cf. *Q. D. de Anima,* q. 19 (ed. Robb, 179): "sicut se habet essentia ad esse, ita potentia ad agere. Ergo permutatim sicut se habent esse et agere ad invicem, ita se habent potentia et essentia. Sed in solo Deo idem est esse et agere; ergo in solo Deo idem est potentia et essentia. Anima ergo non est suae potentiae."

[34] "modum operandi uniuscuiusque rei sequitur modum essendi ipsius" (*STh* I, q. 89, a. 1).

[35] See *ScG* II, c. 81 (ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello, 2:235a, n. 1624): "Quod autem quinta ratio proponebat, nullam operationem posse remanere in anima si a corpore separetur, dicimus esse falsum: manent enim operationes illae quae per organa non exercentur. Huiusmodi autem sunt intelligere et velle."

to be frustrated—and doubtless Aquinas was so confident[36]—there remain difficult and perhaps philosophically unsolvable puzzles. The disembodied or postmortem soul is a spiritual substance that retains its (nonbodily) intellectual and volitional powers but has lost the sensible phantasms that were the objects necessary for the embodied exercise of those powers. Consequently, Aquinas's Aristotelian contemporaries denied that a totally inert soul—one not exercising those powers on sensible objects—could perpetually exist.[37] Aquinas's rejoinder (*ScG* II, c. 79) secures the being of the disembodied soul (apart from its *present* intellectual operations) by appealing to the distinction *secundum rem* between essence, powers, and operation, that is, between first and second acts.[38] On the basis of those distinctions, the immaterial powers are said to remain immanently within the separated soul.[39]

Yet it is not the possession of quiescent intellectual powers but actual understanding that seems the only life and arguably the only being possible for a subsistent soul. The Thomistic rejoinder, then, is but partial: it allows Aquinas to suppose that the postmortem, disembodied human soul must be able, though without relying on a phantasm, to engage in intellectual activity—somehow.[40] This supposition, however, is not a

[36] See *STh* I, q. 105, a. 5: "Quinimmo omnes res creatae viderentur quodammodo esse frustra, si propria operatione destituerentur: cum omnis res sit propter suam operationem. Semper enim imperfectus est propter perfectius: sicut igitur materia est propter formam, ita forma, quae est actus primus, est propter suam operationem, quae est actus secundus; et sic operatio est finis rei creatae."

[37] See *De anima* 3.7.413a15-17 (revised Oxford, ed. Barnes, 1:684): "To the thinking soul images serve as if they were contents of perception. . . . That is why the soul never thinks without an image."

[38] See I *Sent.*, d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1 (Mandonnet, 1:766): "dicitur esse ipse actus essentiae; sicut vivere, quod est viventibus, est animae actus; non actus secundus, qui est operatio, sed actus primus"; X *Quodl.*, q. 3, a. 2, ad 4 (ed. Spiazzi, 202b): "anima secundum suam essentiam est forma a corporis, nec destructo corpore destruitur anima quantum ad id secundum quod est forma, sed solum desinit esse forma in actu."

[39] See *De Verit.*, q. 19, a. 1, ad 9 (ed. Spiazzi, *Quaest. disput.*, 2:360a): "potentiae intellectivae remanent in anima separata, et ex parte illa qua radicantur in essentia animae, et ex parte illa qua comparantur ad actum."

[40] "Dicendum quod cum nulla substantia propria operatione distituatur, necesse est ponere, cum anima intellectiva post mortem remaneat, quod aliquo modo intelligat" (III *Quodl.*, q. 9, a. 1; ed. Spiazzi, 61b).

demonstration that or how the disembodied human soul enjoys intellectual life.[41] It is this latter ignorance, which Owens calls a philosophical "aporia," that Aquinas circumvents by appeal to the theological doctrines of "congruence and divine providence."[42] In a universe governed by an intelligent, loving, and infinite creator, where nature cannot be ultimately frustrated or "in vain," Aquinas can conclude—not demonstratively but "probably enough"[43]—that "no substance is deprived of its proper operation," especially the perpetually existing, subsistent, separated intellectual soul made in the image of God.[44]

III. Life after Death

Pasnau dismisses Aquinas's profoundly Aristotelian conviction that our natural desire for immortality cannot be "in vain" (otherwise nature itself would be unintelligible) as an argument (*STh* I, q. 75, a. 6) that depends on unacceptable teleological assumptions that Aquinas himself, so Pasnau alleges, recognized to be weak (362). The allegation is dubious. Aquinas calls the human desire for perpetual existence, which is natural to an intelligence that apprehends being "absolutely and according to all time" (*STh* I, q. 75, a. 6), a *sign* of the soul's temporal incorruptibility. But the term does not indicate that Aquinas regarded such teleological arguments as weak. To take but one example: Aquinas uses a long and very subtle argument from natural desire (*ScG* III, cc. 50ff.) to prove that the ultimate end of any created intelligence should be and can only be the direct

[41] See *De Verit.*, q. 19, a.1 (ed. Spiazzi, *Quaest.disput.*, 1:358a): "Sed modum intelligendi [post mortem] difficile est considerare, eo quod necesse est ponere eam [animam] habere alium modum intelligendi quam nunc habeat."

[42] Joseph Owens, "Soul as Agent in Aquinas," *The New Scholasticism* 48 (1974): 68, 71.

[43] See *ScG* IV, c. 51 (ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello, 2:343b, n. 3876): arguments framed from the perspective of divine providence, in this case the body's prelapsarian harmony with its governing soul, are said to be *satis probabiliter.*

[44] See *ScG* II, c. 81 (ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello, 2:235b, n. 1625b): "Esse vero separatae animae est ipsi soli absque corpore. Unde nec eius operatio, quae est intelligere explebitur per respectum ad aliqua obiecta in corporeis organis existentia, quae sunt phantasmata."

intellectual vision of the divine essence, although that vision is utterly supernatural and gratuitous.

The conclusion of the first argument (in *STh* I, q. 75, a. 6) is that a subsistent as distinguished from an accidental or material substantial form (*forma materialis*) is incorruptible because the former is inseparable from its own act of being (*esse*). This argument's underlying premiss, which is a restatement of the principle of identity, is that "it is impossible for a form to be separated from itself" (ibid.). But this premiss does not entail that every form is absolutely incorruptible or inseparable from its own being. By definition, an accidental form is one that is corrupted when the substance in which it adheres undergoes a change in the relevant category—cold to hot, small to large, and so forth. The rational soul is a substantial, not an accidental, form. But it is also not a material form whose actuality is equivalent to and exhausted in the actuality of the material compound of which it is the substantial form. The being of a substantial *forma materialis*—though it belongs to the form "in virtue of itself"—is "submersed" or inseparable from matter; hence, such a form has no being apart from matter. It is thus corrupted *per accidens* (i.e., loses being *per accidens*) when the material substance undergoes corruption (= *transmutatio de esse in non esse)* through the separation of the form from its matter.[45]

The rational soul, however, has an act of intellectual understanding that is transcendent or not dependent on the body which it informs, and only thus can it be known to have a subsistent *actus essendi.* In reality, the order is exactly reversed: in the words of the metaphysical formula, "agere sequitur ad esse in actu."[46] Hence, the rational soul as a subsistent substantial form with an *esse absolutum* can be separated from matter—but not, thereby, corrupted *per accidens* as is a material form—when its compound, the living human body, is corrupted. Aquinas concludes that just as no form can be *per se* separated from itself (or, equivalently, from its own actuality), neither can any

[45] See II *Sent.*, d. 19, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2 (ed. Mandonnet, 2:483).

[46] *ScG* III, c. 69 (ed Pera-Marc-Caramello, 3:97a, n. 2450). Cf. *Comp. theol.*, I, c. 21, §6: "Unumquodque enim potest agere inquantum est ens actu."

subsistent form be separated from its own actuality or subsistent *actus essendi.*

This would be Aquinas's answer to Pasnau's charge (366) that, somehow, a created agent might be able to corrupt *per se* a subsistent soul-form: since there is no intrinsic potentiality towards nonbeing in a subsistent form (*STh* I, q. 75, a. 6, ad 2), it is not possible (logically or ontologically) for a created agent to annihilate it. The only possibility is for the creator to withdraw the divine causality that originates and sustains the being of all creatures, including subsistent immaterial creatures. Pasnau, nonetheless, is swayed by the objection that since the embodied human soul needs the material phantasm in order to cognize anything, a separate soul cannot function on its own and, therefore, "might well be destroyed, indirectly, by the body's being destroyed" (366). Aquinas, however, holds to the distinction between the intellect's proper functioning (understanding the universal nature of any sensible body), which is not the act of any bodily organ, and the sensible object of that intellectual act (the phantasm from which the intelligible species is abstracted).[47] The act of understanding, inasmuch as it requires a sensible object, may be said to depend *secundum quid* on the latter bodily phantasm.[48] But can the disembodied soul, which lacks phantasms, be said to exist if it does not engage in intellectual acts? From his earliest works, Aquinas took note of the question and tried to ward off the negative conclusion that it implied.[49]

It could be that, postmortem, the human soul falls into a deep Pauline sleep (1 Cor 15:51) until the day of resurrection, eternally alive but in no way functioning intellectually—but this is an eventuality that would have seemed utterly implausible to anyone

[47] See II *Sent.*, d. 19, q. 1, a. 1, ad 6 (ed. Mandonnet, 2:484).

[48] Cf. *STh* I, q. 89, a. 5: "Sed sicut actus intellectus principaliter quidem et formaliter est in ipso intellectu, materialiter autem et dispositive in inferioribus viribus idem etiam dicendum est de habitu."

[49] See III *Sent.*, d. 31, q. 2, a. 4, resp. (ed. Moos, 4:997, n. 148): "Dicere enim quod secundum id quod modo anima habet in natura sua, non possit intelligere sine corpore aliquo modo, est valde familiare illis qui ponunt animam cum corpore deficere; quia . . . si nulla operationum quas habet potest esse sine corpore, nec ipsa sine corpore esse posset, cum operatio naturalis consequatur naturam."

living or thinking within a neo-Platonic philosophical cosmos that has been assimilated and conformed to the created world of Christian faith. It is not surprising that Pasnau, who it would seem does not live or think *within* either of those worlds, finds Aquinas's complete answer (*STh* I, q. 89, a. 1, ad 3) philosophically unsatisfactory: that, postmortem, God will infuse—naturally *not* supernaturally—intelligible species in the separated subsistent soul by which it can cognize.[50] Pasnau searches, wrongheadedly, for some demonstration that God will or, in fact, must infuse the separated soul with such species. Finding that Aquinas provides no such demonstration, Pasnau dismisses Aquinas's account as "nothing more than an extended just-so story" (368). But all that Aquinas can attempt is to show what it would be appropriate for God to do. How could Aquinas demonstrate what God *must* do? The Christian God, in regard to all created beings, acts—need we be reminded?—freely and not from any necessity.

Pasnau, unfairly, turns Aquinas into an ideologue. Aquinas "as a Christian," is *not* "committed to arriving at certain sorts of results"(361)—that is, the soul's immortality—rather, as a theologian, he is interested in understanding and, if possible, demonstrating the truth of certain Christian beliefs.[51] The point of Aquinas's argument—not "story" but *argumentum conveniens*—is that the human soul's postmortem mode of knowing can be analogized to that of the angelic separate intelligences, who at their creation are connaturally infused with intelligible species. Such infusion, by God via the superior separate intelligences, would also be in accordance with the disembodied human soul's mode of being. Unlike the material forms of bodies, the rational soul has an *esse absolutum;* postmortem, it may be called *secundum diversam considerationem* (here a *consideratio secundum rem*) not the form of the living human composite but a separate "subsistent substance."[52]

[50] See *STh* I, q. 89, a. 3: "anima separata intelligit per species quas recipit ex influentia divini luminis, sicut et angeli."

[51] See *De Verit.*, q. 19, a. 1.

[52] II *Sent.*, d. 19, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4 (ed. Mandonnet, 2:484).

The latter consideration, however, is not what predominates—indeed, in regard to their cognitive powers, the differences between the separate substances and disembodied souls are stressed—in the account of the separate soul found in the works written after 1265, notably question 89 of the *Prima Pars* (dating from 1265-68) and question 15 of the *Quaestiones Disputatae de Anima* (1269).[53] In these works, Aquinas continues to maintain that embodied and disembodied or separate human souls have different modes of being, but he now emphasizes that they have the same nature.[54] Accordingly, there remains only one natural way of knowing for the separated soul. No longer does Aquinas attempt to assimilate ("perfectly") the disembodied human soul's mode of knowing to that of the totally separate substances.[55] As "the lowest among all of the intellectual substances,"[56] the soul has an "inferior intellectual power."[57] The knowledge that it gains through infused universal species is not so much "abundant"[58] as imperfect; it can only be "general and confused" (a. 3).

In these later texts, the natural *modus intelligendi* of the human soul is the significant and controlling notion: Aquinas describes the understanding that results from the divinely originated but *naturalis influxus*[59] of these intelligible species as *praeter naturam* of the disembodied human soul (*STh* I, q. 89, a. 1).[60] It is the

[53] On the emergence and central role of "the Aristotelian notion of *nature*" in the later discussions of the disembodied soul, see Anton C. Pegis, "The Separated Soul and its Nature in St. Thomas," in *St. Thomas Aquinas 1274-1974: Commemorative Studies,* ed. Armand A. Maurer, C.S.B. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974), 1:131-58.

[54] See *STh* I, q. 89, a. 1: "Habet autem anima alium modum essendi cum unitur corpori et cum fuerit a corpore separata, manente tamen eadem animae natura."

[55] Cf. *ScG* II, c. 81 (ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello, 2:236a, n. 1625) where the *modus intelligendi* of the disembodied soul "perfecte assimilabitur substantiis separatis."

[56] "Manifestum est enim quod anima humana est infima inter omnes intellectuales substantias" (*Q. D. de Anima,* q. 18; ed. Robb, 239).

[57] Ibid.

[58] So described in *ScG* II, c. 81 (ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello, 2:236a, n. 1625).

[59] *Q. D. de Anima,* q. 15 (ed. Robb, 214).

[60] Cf. III *Sent.,* d. 31, q. 2, a. 4 (ed. Moos, 3:996) which contrasts the nature of the soul with its embodied mode of operating cognitively *in statu viae.* The proper object of the human intellect, according to its nature, is the intelligible species, not the embodied phantasm (ibid., ad 5).

nature of the soul that inclines it, even in its disembodied state, to reunion with the body.[61] The original union with the body was for the good of the soul; its postmortem disembodiment is not for its good, but rather is *contra naturam.*[62] Embodiment is the only condition that allows for a "perfect and proper knowledge of [the material] things" (ibid.) which remain, even for the disembodied soul, the things proportioned to the soul's *capacitas naturalis.*[63]

In its *contra naturam* disembodied state, the soul's infused knowledge is *praeter naturam* in a sense that comes very close to being *contra naturam.* Here we have the Thomistic basis for an *argumentum conveniens* for the future resurrection of the body: if nothing *contra naturam* can be everlasting in a providentially created and governed universe, it is exigently reasonable to think that the disembodied human soul, because it has an everlasting act of being, will be divinely reunited once again with its commensurate body, the principle of its own individuation as a spiritual substance.[64] What more, by way of philosophical "proof" for a revealed theological truth, the resurrection of the human body, could an "Aristotelian Christian" demand?

Still, any kind of argument for a postmortem subsistent human soul, even one that finds a requirement in the soul's nature for reunion with the body, might still seem to jeopardize the this-worldly, hylomorphic unity of the single human substance that is both corporeal and spiritual. A living human being is not, in any way, composed of two substances, a soul-substance and a body-substance.[65] The living human being is a single substance with a

[61] See *Q. D. de Anima,* q. 15 (ed. Robb, 214): "Ad perfectionem igitur intellectualis operationis necessarium fuit animam corpori uniri."

[62] See *ScG* IV, ch. 79 (ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello, 3:391b, n. 4135): "anima corpori naturaliter unitur: est enim secundum suam essentiam corporis forma. Est igitur contra naturam animae absque corpore esse."

[63] *Q. D. de Anima,* q. 18 (ed. Robb, 239).

[64] See *ScG* IV, c. 81; cf. Pegis, "Separated Soul," 157-58.

[65] Pasnau forcefully explains (73-79) that, for Aquinas, only a hylomorphic account adequately guarantees that it is the same embodied person who both thinks and senses: the rational soul is the substantial form of the matter of the living human body. No other explanation of the soul-body relationship—spatial continuity, functional order, or mover-moved—can adequately show that an embodied human person is an *unum simpliciter* (*ScG* II, c. 68).

nature that is both bodily and rational. Aquinas allows (*STh* I, q. 75, a. 2, ad 1) that the disembodied human soul can be called a particular thing (*hoc aliquid*), because, postmortem, it is a particular subsistent substance, but he carefully qualifies both of the latter terms. In the full or proper sense of "subsistence," a particular thing is subsistent if it neither inheres in something else, as does an accident or a strictly material form, nor is a part of a whole, as a hand or an eye is a part of the living body. A hand, since it does not exist "extrinsically grounded"[66] in another after the fashion of an accident (as, e.g., a color in a surface) or a material form (which exists only in matter), can be said—according to the first criterion, but *improperly*—"to subsist" and, thus, to be a *hoc aliquid.* However, in the proper sense of the term, a subsistent must be neither inherent nor a part (ibid., ad 2); both criteria must be met in order for the subsistent to be properly identified as a *hoc aliquid* with a *per se* operation. Strictly speaking, a living hand is a part of a *hoc aliquid,* and is not, by itself, an individual substance operating *per se.* The operation of a part is attributed to the whole operating through its parts: a man touches through his hands and sees through his eyes. Like the hand or eye, the embodied human soul is a part of the living human composite: a man understands through his rational soul.

A disembodied soul, which no longer inheres in the matter of the human composite, is certainly subsistent in the first sense of the term. It is, therefore, a *hoc aliquid,* but only in a qualified sense: it is not an *hypostasis* or substance that possesses a complete human nature. As the (disembodied) form of the human body, it remains a part of human nature. A disembodied human soul, therefore, is not like an amputated human hand; once amputated, the hand is dead and no longer really a part of the living human body. But one must also say that the disembodied human soul is not only a part. The disembodied human soul exists

[66] See *De Pot.,* q. 9, a. 1 (ed. Pession, 226a): "Substantia vero quae est subiectum, duo habet propria: Quorum primum est quod non indiget extrinseco fundamento in quo sustentetur, sed sustentatur in seipso; et ideo dicitur subsistere, quasi per se non in alio existens."

per se but now separated from the living body that it once informed. It is clear, then, that the embodied human soul is significantly unlike a living or attached hand, and, no less, a disembodied human soul is significantly unlike a detached or amputated hand. Unlike the attached hand, the embodied intellectual soul has an act not attributable to the body; unlike the detached hand, the disembodied soul continues to exist and can be unequivocally identified (unlike the detached hand) as the same (previously embodied) soul.

Yet Pasnau contends that the disembodied soul is subsistent or a substance "in precisely the sense in which a hand is" (66). This contention flattens Aquinas's comparison of the disembodied soul with a living, attached hand. The Thomistic comparison is an analogy—not a claim that the disembodied soul "part" and the living hand "part" are, in some univocal sense, "equally subsistent and so equally substances" (ibid.). Pasnau is led to his odd conclusion by fantasizing about a functioning but disembodied hand. Such fantasies, in this case conjuring up an alternative possible world where a hand could function apart from a living human body, are set pieces in current philosophical repertoire. They are alien to Aquinas's resolutely focused, albeit theologically sublated, this-worldly "Aristotelian naturalism."[67] No matter: Pasnau's imaginary, alternative-world hand could hardly be said—or said only equivocally—to be a "part" in the way that a living hand in our world is a part of the human body. The latter is a part and *only* a part precisely because it cannot act in any hand-like way once amputated from the whole human body.

Pasnau's fantasy muddies rather than clarifies Aquinas's doctrine of the postmortem soul-part. The embodied soul is a part of the living human being—not a quantitative or functionally subsidiary part such as an attached hand—in the way that form and matter are *parts* of the compound: as intrinsic, real co-principles. As embodied, then, the rational soul is not a separate

[67] For an instance of Thomistic naturalism, see *ScG* II, c. 86 (ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello, 2:248a, n. 1708) on the two possible ways *in our world* that the transmission of semen might be thought (erroneously) to originate the human soul.

substance but the form of a single subsistent substance, the human being. What seems paradoxical—more so if one ignores Aquinas's analogical use of the term "part"—is that this soul, while remaining a part (unlike the severed, no longer living or functional "hand"), can exist, postmortem, as a subsistent individual substance. The conclusion, nonetheless, follows because the embodied soul, unlike even the living hand, has an activity (intellection) that transcends the bodily whole of which it is a "part."

Aquinas did not need to imagine an alternative possible world in order to argue for the postmortem existence of an embodied but, nonetheless, immaterial, subsistent, substantial, and spiritually transcendent human soul. To quote another version of the formula: "Esse est prius quam agere natura."[68] Here and now the human soul acts spiritually because it has a spiritual act of existence which, postmortem, sustains it as a continuing spiritual substance:[69] even while embodied, Thomistic human souls certainly are "more of a substance than are other [bodily] parts" (68). Its act of being and, consequently, the activity of the intellectual soul "transcends the whole genus of bodies."[70]

Pasnau's remarks to the contrary, there is, indeed, something special—Aquinas explicitly says "marvelous"[71]—about the existence and activity of the human soul here and now.[72] To use Pasnau's language, although Aquinas would have found it altogether nonsensical, human souls neither possess nor lack "some kind of stuff that animal souls possess" (70); rather, they are spirits because they have a different act of being—and,

[68] III *Sent.*, d. 18, q. un., a. 3, ad 1 (ed. Moos, 3:563, n. 49).

[69] See *ScG* II, c. 69 (ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello 2:204b, n. 1465): "[anima humana] quasi non dependens a corpore in operando: quia nec etiam in essendo dependet a corpore"; *Spirit creat.*, q. un., a. 2, ad 4 (ed. Calcaterra-Centi, 377a): "Tamen in quantum attingitur a corpore, [anima] est forma; in quantum vero superexcedit corporis proportionem, dicitur spiritus vel spiritualis substantia."

[70] *ScG* II, c. 86; Anderson trans., 2:292, §7.

[71] See *ScG* II, c. 68 (ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello, 2:203, n. 1453).

[72] But Pasnau is not entirely consistent in the language he uses to describe Thomistic man: "human beings are exceptional, in that we combine the immateriality of an angel with the materiality of brute animals" (100).

consequently, different activities—from that of animal souls. And this spiritual act of being, in comparison with the being of animal souls, is not merely a matter of "degrees of actuality" (ibid.); the human soul is not "a form just like other forms" (72).[73] It is the "most noble of material forms" (*Comp. theol.* I, c. 9, §2) and occupies a unique rank in the hierarchy of beings.

> The being [*esse*]of the rational soul is acquired in a certain middle way between separate and material forms. For immaterial forms, namely angels, receive from God being [*esse*] that is neither dependent on some matter, nor in some matter. Truly material forms receive from God being [*esse*] that both is in matter and depends upon matter, since they are not able to be conserved without matter. [74]

The hierarchy of being into which the human soul fits is a *mirabilis rerum connexio*[75] of different genera of beings. Man, because of his rational soul, is the lowest member in the genus of intellectual substances. While the human intellectual soul possesses all the sensitive powers of the animal soul, the sensitive soul of a man is specifically different from that of a nonrational animal.[76]

IV. Irreducible Principles

To reinforce his admittedly "unorthodox" (132) notion of "reductive hylomorphism"—that is, his rejection of "dualistic forms of hylomorphism" (101)—Pasnau notes that material forms are not directly produced through substantial changes; rather, the substantial composites of which they are the forms are produced.

[73] See *ScG* II, c. 87 (ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello, 2:249b, n. 1716): "Anima autem humana hoc habet proprium inter alias formas, quod est in suo esse subsistens, et esse quod est sibi proprium, corpori communicat."

[74] "Esse autem animae rationali acquiritur quodam modo medio inter formas separatas et materiales. Formae enim immateriales, sicilicet angeli, recipiunt a Deo esse non dependens ab aliqua materia, nec in aliqua materia. Formae vero materiales esse a Deo accipiunt et in materia existens, et a materia dependens, quia sine materia conservari non possunt" (*De Verit.*, q. 19, a. 1; ed. Spiazzi, *Quaest. disput.*, 1:359a).

[75] *ScG* II, c. 68 (ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello, 2:203, n. 1453).

[76] See *ScG* II, c. 89 (ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello, 2:225b, n. 1747): "anima sensitiva hominis ab anima sensitiva bruti specie differt per hoc quod est etiam intellectiva."

This much of his exposition is in line with Aquinas: forms are educed from the potency of matter by an agent acting on the matter. But while Pasnau correctly states that Thomistic form and matter are not separate entities, he also asserts that they have no "separate causal powers" (103). Here the word "separate" is doing service for the word "split." Of course, form and matter, as coprinciples, cannot have separate causal powers if this means that they cannot (save in the case of the human compound) be ontologically "split" apart. But, more controversially, Pasnau equates *not separate causal powers* with *not really but only conceptually distinct casual powers.*[77] That equation, textually and systematically a blatant heterodoxy, erases the irreducible ontological distinction, which Aristotle so carefully develops in the first book of the *Physics,* between material and formal causes. Both are required to explain substantial change. One can only repeat Aristotle: "First principles must not be derived from one another nor from anything else, while everything has to be derived from them" (*Phys.* 1.5.188a27-29).[78]

At a yet deeper level, Pasnau's "reductive hylomorphim" cannot be squared with Aquinas's *esse*-metaphysics: although a material form comes into being through the transmutation of matter and, therefore, cannot itself exist in separation from the matter of its composite, it is the form that gives its own act of being (*esse*) to the matter and, consequently, "the composite exists *only* by the form."[79] However, unlike an Aristotelian form, the Thomistic form is other than (and this is otherness in the *ordo essendi* not just the *ordo rationis*) its own act of being (*esse*). The latter doctrine, however, Pasnau professes to find "notoriously

[77] Cf. Pasnau, 133.

[78] Though prime mater can be known only on the basis of an analogy, the Aristotelian argument for its existence and nature is apodeictic, not probable: see Joseph Owens, "The Aristotelian Argument for the Material Principle of Bodies," in *Aristotle: The Collected Papers of Joseph Owens,* ed. John R. Catan (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New Press, 1981), 122-35.

[79] *ScG* II, c. 68; Anderson trans, 2: 204,§3. As distinguished from a separate form, which has being through and in itself, the material form is solely the act of being of matter: as existing only united to matter, a material form "*in this way* will be dependent according to its *esse* on matter" (*ScG* II, c. 86; ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello 2:248b, n. 1708e; my translation).

difficult" (146), implicated in a distinction that, he implies, can never be made "genuinely evident" because it relies on an argument incorporating "deep metaphysical assumptions" (158).

Whatever be Pasnau's (unspecified) criteria for recognizing a metaphysical doctrine as "genuinely evident," it is true that complex arguments, variously reconstructed by different Thomists,[80] are required to conclude to this fundamental Thomistic tenet, the "real" otherness of *esse* and *essentia* in all created beings. So let us admit that the Thomistic doctrine is difficult but not notoriously so. When since Parmenides has there been an easy, much less "evident," argument about being and existence? What to one philosopher are unwarranted, argument-vitiating assumptions about *being* may, indeed, be another's principles but are more likely to be hard-won conclusions.[81] At this point, one may wonder how deeply or sympathetically Pasnau is able to enter into the Thomistic metaphysics wherein not form but *esse* is the "actuality of all actualities" composing all finite substances.[82] Unfortunately, Pasnau sidelines this fundamental Thomistic metaphysical tenet throughout his book.[83] Yet, it

[80] For an extensive review of the texts and interpretive issues, see John F. Wippel, "Essence and Existence in the *De Ente,*" in John F. Wippel, *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1984), 107-32; "Essence and Existence in Other Writings,"in ibid., 133-61.

[81] Cf. Étienne Gilson, "Rencontre de l'être," in *Constantes philosophiques de l'être* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1983), 143-68: "On dit qu'ils sont des *entia,* des étants. Cette expérience de l'être est universelle, mais la réflexion sur elle ne l'est pas. Elle est assez rare et il est remarquable que ceux qui s'attachent à la décrire ne la situent pas tous au même point. Ils ne la décrivent donc naturellement pas de la même manière."

[82] See *De Pot.,* q. 7, a. 2, ad 9 (ed. Pession, 192b): "esse est actualitas omnium actuum, et propter hoc est perfectio omnium perfectionum."

[83] Cf. Pasnau, 131: "Reality is actuality all the way down, and substances are bundles of actuality unified by organization around a substantial form." Adequately to criticize this one, truly misleading sentence, and others like it, would require a precis of Thomistic metaphysics. One text must suffice to indicate the vast metaphysical distance between Pasnau and Aquinas: "ipsum esse non est proprius actus materiae, sed substantiae totius. Eius enim actus est esse de quo possumus dicere quod *sit.* Esse autem non dicitur de materia, sed de toto . . . nec forma est ipsum esse, sed habent secundum ordinem. . . . Deinde quia ad ipsam etiam formam comparatur ipsum esse ut actus" (*ScG* II, c. 54; ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello, 2:174b, nn. 1289-91).

Thomistic reality (God excepted) is not "actuality all the way down": "In substantiis autem

underlies Aquinas's doctrine of the unity of man as well as the soul's subsistence.[84]

> Although there is one being [*esse*] of [conjoined] form and matter, it is not necessary that the matter always be exactly commensurate to the being [*esse*] of the form. In fact, just as much as the form is more noble, just so much does it exceed in its being [*esse*] the matter. . . . Hence a form whose operation exceeds the condition of matter, [also] itself exceeds matter according to the dignity of its being [*esse*]. (*ScG* II, c. 68; ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello, 2: 203a-b, n. 1454)[85]

In the reference to the human soul-form, the principles governing the multileveled existential and causal distinctions drawn between the form and matter of the human composite are evident, at least to Aquinas: once again, "in the way that a thing has being, so does it operate."[86] Since intellection is not a bodily act, so too the intellectual soul is not "wholly immersed in matter."[87] Rather, one must draw a positive conclusion: the human soul even when embodied is actually "elevated above matter in regard to its being and operation."[88] The being of the soul is to be in matter but not dependent on matter; as a

compositis ex materia et forma est duplex compositio actus et potentiae: prima quidem ipsius substantiam quae componitur ex materia et forma; secunda vero ex ipsa subsantia iam composita et esse quae etiam potest dici ex quod est et esse; vel ex quod est et quo est" (ibid., n.1295).

[84] See *ScG* II, c. 68 (ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello, 2:202b, n. 1450): "forma et materia conveniant in uno esse. . . . Et hoc esse est in quo subsistit substantia composita quae est una secundum esse ex materia et forma constans. Non autem impeditur substantia intellectualis, per hoc quod est subsistens . . . esse formale principium essendi materiae quasi esse suum communicans materiae."

[85] "Quamvis autem sit unum esse formae et materiae, non tamen oportet quod materia semper adaequet esse formae. Immo, quanto forma est nobilior, tanto in suo esse superexcedit materiam. . . . Unde forma cuius operatio superexcedit conditionem materiae, et ipsa secundum dignitatem sui esse superexcedit materiam" (ibid.; ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello, 2:203a-b, n. 1454).

[86] "sic enim res habet esse sicut et operatur" (*ScG* II, c. 86; ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello, 2:248a, n. 1707).

[87] "[non] sit totaliter immersa materiae" (*ScG* II, c. 69; ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello, 2:204b, n. 1465).

[88] See *ScG* II, c. 89 (ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello., 2:255b, n. 1747): "ipsa substantia animae [humanae] sit secundum esse et operationem supra corpus elevata."

consequence, the matter of the living human body is raised to the level of the spiritual existence of the soul.[89]

> The soul acquires from God being [*esse*] in matter; it exists in matter insofar as it is the form of the body. Through this, the [soul-form] is united, according to its being [*esse*], to the body. However, it does not depend on the body, since the being [*esse*] of the soul is able to be conserved without the body. [90]

V. When Human Life Begins

Given its transcendent or immaterial act of being (*esse*), the human soul cannot be educed from matter by any corporeal agent. Human beings, because they have spiritual souls, are the only animals that cannot, solely by themselves, reproduce themselves. Yet human procreation remains human. Human semen is not itself actually alive or ensouled but Aquinas accepts that it contains a "frothy breath" (*spiritus spumosum*) that has a "formative power" (*vis formativa*). This formative power, as a causal extension of the generative power of the father's soul, is able to educe from the matter of semen, through a series of internally guided substantial changes, the vegetative and animal souls. Aquinas holds to the biological doctrine standard among his contemporaries: the formative power can only dispose matter to receive an intellectual soul-form: an intellectual soul must be infused into a living body almost but not quite human. God Himself must directly create and infuse the intellectual soul into an embryo—not a vegetable but a uniquely prehuman animal—that has the incipient bodily organs requisite for intellectual activity. During gestation, the divine infusion of the rational soul perhaps occurs—Aquinas noncommittally repeats Aristotle—around the fortieth day for males and the ninetieth for females.[91]

[89] See *ScG* II, c. 68 (ed. Pera-Marc-Caramello, 2:203a, n. 1451): "Est enim materiae corporalis ut recipientis et subiecti ad aliquid altius elevati: substantiae autem intellectualis ut principii, et secundum propriae naturae congruentem."

[90] "Anima vero acquirit esse in materia a Deo, in materia quidem existens, in quantum est forma corporis, ac per hoc secundum esse corpori unita: non autem a corpore dependens, quia esse animae sine corpore conservari potest" (*De Verit.*, q. 19, a. 1; ed. Spiazzi, *Quaest. disput.*, 1:359a).

[91] See III *Sent.*, d. 3, q. 5, a. 2; cf. Aristotle, *Hist. de an.*, 7.4.583b2-30.

Since the biological details in Aquinas's account of procreation are so fatally antiquated, one might suppose that they cannot be usefully or at least not easily coordinated with the data of contemporary embryology. Not so: Pasnau makes much moral ado—with undisguised hostility and condescension towards what he tags the "noxious social agenda" (105) of the Roman Catholic Church—about the continuing relevance of the "delayed hominization" of the embryo. Pasnau explains how updating the *vis formativa* to the role of DNA "removes much of the impetus for holding that human life begins at conception" (109). A Thomistic God, depending on which reckoning the soul's creator favors, morally may—or rather metaphysically must—*wait* twenty-five to thirty-two (maybe even thirty to thirty-five weeks) or, more "conservatively" if God follows Pasnau, twenty weeks before infusing the rational soul into the prehuman animal which, by one or other of those dates, has a sufficiently developed brain cortex to receive and sustain such a soul.[92] While one might be troubled by the moral indeterminacy consequent upon these shifting deadlines for foetal humanity, Pasnau is more concerned about emphatically reiterating Aquinas's proposition that the intellectual soul as *form* needs to be infused into the right sort of matter.[93]

For his part, Pasnau argues—with a conviction that goes beyond the metaphysical value of any appeal to scientific method or consensus among scientists about the facts of brain development—that conception cannot be the ontologically apt moment when the rational soul is infused into the prehuman embryo: "To have a rational soul requires having the potential *in hand* for using the *mind,* rather than having some *remote* potential to develop the potential" (420 n. 18; emphasis added). Is the normative or moral difference asserted between these two "potentialities"—remote and proximate—"genuinely evident"? It is to Pasnau: on this assertion, he rests his whole argument for the permissibility of early abortions: in early cases, the animal killed

[92] Cf. Pasnau, 419-20 n. 14.

[93] But *not* as Pasnau so breezily puts it: "the human mind . . . must be attached to the right sort of body" (113).

is without a brain and, therefore, simply not yet human enough to count as having an inviolable moral dignity. But here advocacy throws off exegesis. Pasnau's own bumptious metaphor ("potential *in hand*") eliminates Aquinas's precisely drawn and important distinction between (a) the spiritual power of intellect itself (the subject of which is the soul not the body), and (b) the bodily organ(s) needed for the actual exercise of that power. If we translate his metaphor into plainer language, Pasnau's "functional capacity" criterion necessitates that the prehuman body have (literally) a halfway-developed brain before it can be informed by a human soul. Of course, this brain requirement is exactly in line with Pasnau's inability to sustain Aquinas's argument "that the intellect is immaterial" (119). This inability colors Pasnau's whole interpretation and ultimately generates his negative evaluation of Aquinas's "revolutionary Aristotelian psychology": the rational human soul does not transcend matter and certainly not the brain.[94]

I shall leave it to others to consider whether Aquinas's or, more likely, some contemporary arguments for the spiritual transcendence of intellect over brain are dispositive.[95] Aquinas certainly thought he had demonstrated that transcendence given what he took to be the intentional limitations of any bodily organ: unlike the *intentio mentis,* no determinate bodily organ is able to intend or be informed by the universal natures of all other material things (*STh* I, q. 75, a. 2).[96] But suppose, to go along with Pasnau, that the rational soul is a strictly material form that does perish with the body. Even so, what argument cinches Pasnau's contention that the mid-gestation brain is the necessary and

[94] See Pasnau, 48-57.

[95] See, for example, the articles in *Neuroscience and the Person,* ed. Robert John Russell, et al., vol 4 of *Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action* (Vatican City State: Vatican Observatory Publications; Berkeley: Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, 1999). Pasnau, 410-11 n. 11 refers to other arguments made on behalf of "the unlimited scope of intentionality" and against "finite naturalistic" accounts of knowing.

[96] On the natural (and supernaturally enabled) intentional scope of the human mind, see *STh* II-II, q. 175, a. 4: "Oportet autem, cum intellectus elevatur [above the entire material and created world known through phantasms] ad altissimam Dei essentiae visionem, ut tota mentis intentio illuc advocetur."

sufficiently developed organ for the emergence (presumably by solely natural causes) of what Aquinas would surely have regarded as an oxymoron, an intellectual but strictly material soul-form? Aquinas's embryology gives us no help; it is full of mistakes that Pasnau glosses over. Pasnau's quotations from contemporary embryologists about the chronology of cortical development cannot settle the metaphysical/moral issue of how delayed is "delayed hominization." For embryologists, the species identity of the human zygote is noncontroversial and its continuous *internally* motivated and directed development is "genuinely evident": it is a member of a natural kind—the species *homo sapiens*—and, unalterably after uterine implantation and gastrulation, remains a single biological entity. Contemporary philosophers, as Pasnau acknowledges, mostly take the biological data for granted; in arguing for the moral permissibility of abortion, they spin out the conceptual issues that permits questioning, and as often denying, that the developing embryo or foetus is a "person" with any overriding metaphysical status or moral dignity.

Again, suppose that we correlate, as Pasnau does, the emergence of intellectual but strictly material soul-forms with approximately mid-gestation brains: the counter question and its implied answer, readily posed by any contemporary Aristotelian who has assimilated the data of contemporary embryology, has already emerged in full—one might even say official—force.[97] What form other than the intellectual soul—whether or not it is a spiritual form capable of existing as a postmortem separate substance—could actualize and teleologically direct the continuous development of (what ordinarily stays) a single, genetically unique body that has, from conception as a single cell with forty-six chromosomes, the epigenetic primordia for all bodily organs, including, of course, the human brain? Pasnau gives not a hint that he regards such a question as intellectually respectable, or even required by the embryological data: for him,

[97] See Robert P. George and Alfonso Gomez-Lobo, "Appendix: Personal Statements," in *Human Cloning and Human Dignity: The Report of the President's Council on Bioethics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2000), 294-306.

"it is surely absurd to think that a few unformed cells count as a human being" (120).

To be sure, some of the data are puzzling. Monozygotic twinning, the fusion of zygotes, and the totipotency of detached embryonic cells raise questions about a zygote's continuing personal identity—enough questions that some Catholic philosophers rejected, too precipitately given the results of recent research, the "immediate hominization" of the preimplanted zygote.[98] But the developmental individuation of embryonic cells does not commence with implantation or, subsequently, with the appearance of the primitive streak. Considerable evidence supports the view that the cells within a *two-cell* mammalian zygote are not featureless but are already internally differentiated.[99]

In the vast majority of cases, the development of the human zygote, unlike what Aquinas thought (and Pasnau must commit himself to think), does *not* involve any apparent "constant, radical discontinuity" (123) that could signal the need for and the plausible advent of generically different souls.[100] That is, there is no evidence that the developing human embryo is informed by a kind of Aristotelian sequence of substantially different soul-forms—

[98] See William A. Wallace, "Aquinas's Legacy on Individuation, Cogitation, and Hominization," in D. Gallagher, ed., *Thomas Aquinas and His Legacy,* Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy 28 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 173-93: "If God had created the human soul and infused it into the zygote at the moment of fertilization, then a stable individual of human nature would already have been formed" (188). For the biological evidence in favor of the zygote's initial (preimplantation) developmental as well as genetic individuation, see George and Gomez-Lobo, "Appendix: Personal Statements," 301-3.

[99] On "the existence of patterning information in the early human embryo," see Helen Pearson, "Your Destiny, from Day One," *Nature*, News Features: 8 July 2002 (http://www.nature.com/nsu/020701/020701-12.html): "developmental biologists will no longer dismiss early mammalian embryos as featureless bundles of cells." Cf. Pasnau, 422 n. 25, who notes that "specialization already sets in," at the eight-cell stage.

[100] See Ronan O'Rahilly and Fabiola Muller, *Human Embryology and Teratology,* 3d ed. (New-York: Wiley-Liss, 2001), 8: "During the embryonic period proper, milestones include fertilization, activation of embryonic from extra-embryonic cells, implantation, and the appearance of the primitive streak, and bilateral symmetry. Despite the various embryological milestones, however, development is a continuous rather than a saltatory process and hence the selection of prenatal events would seem to be largely arbitrary."

vegetative, animal, and rational. On the contrary, if we agree to value intellectual activity as the proper or defining human activity, then it seems "genuinely evident" that intellectual "brain-usage" is the telos that defines a human zygote's internally directed, individuated, and unitary development from its temporal beginning: nothing intervenes from outside the zygote's own genetic code substantially to alter or to redirect its original development.

The delayed *exercise* of the human zygote's intellectual capacity or potency—and it is the exercise not the biological capacity that is not functional (not "in hand") at conception—may perhaps be described as temporally but not ontologically "remote." For Aquinas, the intellectual power is a necessary property of the human essence; what seems eminently reasonable to think is that this essential property, especially if it is regarded as a nonseparable property of the living human body, is a power contained in the body's determinate and determining form—the initial chromosomal program—that internally controls the development of the zygote. All of this information is readily available in the most elementary presentations of human embryology. Can one responsibly or plausibly contend, then, that Aquinas's reasons for denying that "human life begins at conception . . . remain compelling today" (106). Or that Aquinas *redivivus* would find them compelling?

Although the morality of abortion is—and, given the structure of the *Summa Theologiae,* should remain—an issue quite outside of the scope of a commentary on questions 75-89 of the *Prima Pars,* Pasnau is a man with a passionately felt mission, quick to disparage papal "rhetoric" in favor of his own, ready to shoulder what he considers to be the unavoidable burden of making "comparisons and trade-offs" when weighing "the value of human life" in respect to other values.[101] So, despite Aquinas's—and, prior to the fourteen century, apparently every other medieval theologian's and canonist's—condemnation of all abortions,

[101] Pasnau, 125.

including those of "unanimated foetuses," as seriously sinful,[102] Pasnau enlists Aquinas in the contemporary proabortion and proeuthanasia movement.[103] This move is more than surprising. Pasnau is plain wrong to assert that Roman Catholic philosophers and theologians have deliberately slighted Aquinas's notion of "delayed hominization."[104] Since John Haldane and Patrick Lee have already taken Pasnau to task for this section of his book, I need not repeat their courteous but meticulous deconstruction of Pasnau's misleading and misplaced polemic.[105] Let me single out only one specious claim that Pasnau recycles as part of a long argument against the actual humanity of the embryo. On any biologically precise and morally apt description, sperm and ova are not "potential humans";[106] their only relevant innate potential is to fuse with the other so that each can provide one half of the DNA for a new, genetically distinct, one-cell organism. Only the one-cell zygote is an organism with properly human potential because, arguably, it already is human. A spermatozoon and an oocyte, left to their own solitary devices, go biologically nowhere; they either unite or die.

VI. *DICENDUM QUOD* . . .

Pasnau , who despite his penchant for "drawing conclusions about his [Aquinas's] metaphysics that go beyond what the texts explicitly say" (85)—indeed, sometimes contrary to what the texts

[102] See John J. Connery, S.J., *Abortion: The Development of the Roman Catholic Perspective* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1977), 306. Citing the unpublished *Quodlibeta,* q. 10 of another Dominican, John of Naples, it was Antoninus (1389-1435), the archbishop of Florence, who first raised and affirmatively answered the question whether it was morally permissible, in order to save the life of the mother, to abort an "unanimated foetus," that is, one not yet animated by a rational soul.

[103] Cf. Pasnau, 105: "Aquinas provides the resources to show something of what is wrong with the Church's position"; 124: "So the best modern information on brain functioning combined with Aquinas's metaphysics yields an attractive symmetry between the beginning and the end of human life."

[104] Cf. ibid., 115.

[105] See John Haldane and Patrick Lee, "Aquinas on Human Ensoulment, Abortion and the Value of Life," *Philosophy* 78, no. 304 (2003): 255-78.

[106] See Pasnau, 121.

explicitly say—can be historically erudite and textually perspicacious. Still, he usually engages Aquinas agonistically, reading with a "hermenutics of suspicion" that betrays his own underlying but continually surfacing anxiety about the *au courant* philosophical worth and moral propriety of much of Aquinas's theology. Since Hume, for Pasnau, has set the course of the "philosophical mainstream" (335), he often approaches a topic in Aquinas by first raising objections that someone with a Humean mind-set might raise.[107] Granted, this approach might be defended on medieval as well as contemporary grounds: Pasnau replicates, after a fashion, the structure of a *quaestio* in the *Summa Theologiae,* which first lists the objections to the doctrinal position that Aquinas will advance. But Pasnau's *optique* distorts as much as it clarifies Aquinas.[108] If Aquinas is "diametrically opposed to Hume" (262), as Pasnau himself acknowledges, then immersing him, even partially, into mainstream "Humean" (or any other opposed) philosophy too easily allows one to conflate diverse problems, methods, and principles and thereby generate interpretative novelties that are systematically misguided and not merely anachronistic and eisegetic. I can only offer as salutary hermeneutical advice the wise dictum of that master of historical erudition, Richard McKeon: "The relations among philosophies are not simple differences concerning the same or comparable problems, nor can they be reduced to a translation formula which

[107] Cf. ibid., 26, 43, 262, 335-6

[108] For example, Pasnau intertwines (ch. 11.2) discussion of the Thomistic doctrine that the intellectual soul has an exclusively reflexive knowledge of its own nature and operation with an epistemological paradox that Pasnau generates (346) about the object of phenomenal consciousness. That the incarnate intellectual soul perceives and knows sensible things is, for Aquinas, the first principle or absolute beginning of sound philosophizing about knowing: cf. *STh* I, q. 89, a. 1: "Ad hoc ergo quod perfectam et propriam cognitionem de rebus habere possent, sic [animae humanae] naturaliter sunt institutae ut corporibus uniantur, et sic ab ipsis rebus sensibilibus propriam de eis cognitionem accipiant." Pasnau says, however, that Aquinas "takes consciousness for granted" (345). This observation betrays Pasnau's own bias. For Aquinas, this is true: we do *not* first perceive our perceiving or know or knowing. But only by voiding Aquinas's own first principle, which ground his "cognitive realism," can one charge that he ought but fails to provide what modern epistemological critique demands, "an evaluation of its [consciousness's] reliability" (347).

will transform a philosophic doctrine into the equivalent statement proper to another philosophy."[109]

Pasnau's provocative novelties are generated by a hermeneutical assumption deeper than his merely surface Humean predilections. The answer to one question largely controls how we view and read Aquinas. In what sense may it be said that Aquinas wrote *pure philosophy*?

Pasnau certainly knows that the *Summa Theologiae* is a "work of theology" but he makes an all-too-common mistake about the theological scope of the work: he holds that only "large parts" of the *Summa* "presuppose elements of Christian doctrine."[110] In fact, the whole of the *Summa Theologiae,* including those parts that Pasnau quickly labels "philosophy" (because they provide rational arguments *sans* any premisses held on Christian faith), falls, according to Aquinas, under the formal object of *sacra doctrina* or (to use the less common term) *theologia:* Aquinas subsumes under the *revelabilia* all the subjects discussed in the *Summa Theologiae,* including those rational arguments for the existence of a provident God[111] which Pasnau blithely labels "nonsectarian theological premises" (10).

It is perplexing, given decades of discussion of this issue, that Pasnau still thinks that he can, merely by subtracting the revelation-dependent "theological stuff" (11, 13), reach a remainder that is purely rational and, he thinks, evidently philosophical. There are, of course, innumerable rational demonstrations to be found in Aquinas's works. But so-called "Thomistic philosophy," in its own state, is not an autonomous enterprise; it is what Aquinas thought to be prompted by and rationally congruent with a Christian *fides quaerens intellectum:* "When a man has a will ready to believe, he loves the truth he believes, he thinks out and takes to heart whatever reasons he can find in support thereof" (*STh* II-II, q. 2, a. 10). Now if this

[109] Richard McKeon, "Philosophy and Method," in *Selected Writings of Richard McKeon,* vol. 1, *Philosophy, Science, and Culture,* ed. Zahava K McKeon and Willaim G. Swenson (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 199.

[110] Pasnau, 10.

[111] See *STh* I, q. 1, a 3 (esp. ad 3).

reasoning is to be counted as "philosophy," it stands apart from any philosophy allegedly generated by pure reason alone. The theological locus of Aquinas's "philosophy" is not controversial. What is controversial is whether Aquinas's philosophy can be extracted from its theological setting. Those who advocate the latter acknowledge, if they are careful, that the extracted Thomistic philosophy is, in fact, a contemporary historian's reconstruction.[112]

Pasnau, however, makes the astonishing claim that Aquinas, in "actual practice" (15), did not adhere to the distinction drawn in question 1 of the *Prima Pars* between a theology grounded in revelation and a philosophy grounded solely in reason; the distinction, he suggests, cannot be taken "at face value" (ibid.). Is the implication that philosophy in the *Summa Theologiae* swallows—or attempts to swallow—revealed theology?[113] Pasnau contends that because Aquinas offered rational demonstrations of some religious beliefs—those called the *praeambula fidei*—he was actually "concerned with limiting those presuppositions [dependent on faith] as much as possible" (ibid.).[114] This contention, perhaps Pasnau's most provocative, leads to a preposterously skewed view of what Aquinas attempts by reasoning within theology. If we accept what Aquinas says, Thomistic theology "really did take its premises from revealed truth" (ibid.).[115] Nothing in Aquinas's actual procedure suggests otherwise. In

[112] Cf. Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas,* xviii.

[113] Cf. Pasnau, 16: "Aquinas's theology, then, is thoroughly philosophical in its methods. Never is something accepted on faith that might be proved through reason."

[114] In support of this contention, Pasnau observes that the distinction between revealed and sacred theology (*STh* I, q. 1. a. 1, ad 2) is "immediately" (15) followed by the *quinque viae* of rationally proving God's existence (*STh* I, q. 2, a. 3). Besides being an overstatement, Pasnau neglects to mention that the *quinque viae* appear under the consideration of the divine essence (see q. 2, prologus), a procedure that, while it takes into account Platonist and Augustinian "theologies of essence," does not raise the question of God's existence from a Thomistic philosophical point of view, since Aquinas rejected any Anselmian or "ontological" proofs reasoning from the divine essence to the divine existence; see Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. L. K. Shook, C.S.B. (New York: Random House, 1956), 52.

[115] See *STh* I, q. 1, a. 8, resp.: "Ita haec doctrina non argumentatur ad sua principia probanda, quae sunt articul fidei"; ad 2: "Dicendum quod argumentari ex auctoritate est maxime proprium huius doctrinae."

regard to the proofs for the existence of God, Aquinas prefaces them with the words revealed "ex persona Dei" as they are recorded in Sacred Scripture (Exod 3:14): "Ego sum qui sum."[116]

Whatever Pasnau may think about the epistemic value of putatively revealed doctrines, Aquinas held that the truths of supernaturally infused faith are not subrational but superrational. In theology, rational argumentation laboriously lifts the discursive human mind to truths achieved at the lowest level of intuitive angelic vision (*STh* II-II, q. 2, a. 6).[117] Written not for sceptics but for Dominican theological students, the *Summa Theologiae* shows how certain theological beliefs can be systematically organized so that they follow as conclusions from their ultimate premises (the revealed articles of faith).[118] Showing this is not eliminating faith in favor of reason but showing how reason works within and at the service of the divine revelation that every believing Christian recognizes as grounding his or her faith.

Along the way, Pasnau acknowledges but does not adequately respond to the grave reservations that may be raised against his account of Aquinas's theology. His account, which does scant justice to the unitary end of Aquinas's theology, is constantly thrown off by his search for the acceptable contemporary philosophical remainder. And so he refers (13) to two senses of theology, the medieval and ours, without providing any specific details as to how we supposedly now conceive "theology." Contemporary philosophy as well as theology is more protean than Pasnau allows. Not every contemporary philosopher will happily align his postmodern enterprise with what appears to be Pasnau's thoroughgoing Enlightenment rationalism with its foundationalist undertones.[119] In any case, Pasnau argues as

[116] See W. J. Hankey, *God in Himself: Aquinas's Doctrine of God as Expounded in the "Summa theologiae"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 36 n. 4 on the significance of Aquinas citing "God Himself" in order "to avoid all ambiguity about the theological character of the *Summa*."

[117] See *STh* I, q. 56, a. 3; I, q. 58, aa. 3-4; *De Verit.*, q. 24, a. 3

[118] See *STh*, prologus; I, q. 32, a. 1, ad 2; II-II, q. 1, a. 5, ad 2.

[119] Cf. Pasnau's remarks (13) that if medieval theology primarily brings philosophy to bear—"as a kind of auxiliary tool"—"on the premises of revealed dogma" that "would be deeply unphilosophical in the modern sense."

though philosophy needs to be rescued from any (sectarian?) revelation which is not and can never be acceptable to a reason that demands that it should pull itself up, to whatever metaphysical heights, only by its own bootstraps. Here the gulf between Pasnau and Aquinas is unbridgeable.[120] Aquinas allows that philosophy can do precisely three things for theology: demonstrate the *praembula fidei,* refute counterpositions to the faith, and illumine but not prove the revealed mysteries. But to imagine that philosophy can or should circumscribe faith and theology is simply an error.[121] Aquinas sets forth all of the issues with great clarity in question 2 of the *Secunda Secundae.*

Pasnau, however, is eager to identify Aquinas as a preeminent medieval practitioner of contemporaneously pertinent philosophy because he apparently embraces the modern assumption that reason *should* belong in some proper or even exclusive way to "philosophy."[122] This assumption misdirects his reading of Aquinas's theology. "Philosophical theology," as that term might be given a historical designation recognized by Aquinas, is the metaphysical doctrine of pagan philosophers about the highest or first principles known to reason.[123] The rational argumentation contained within the *Summa Theologiae* should not be called "philosophical theology": it is an instrument used to articulate and explain the *revelata* and, therefore, is by Aquinas's standards strictly Christian "theology."[124] More metaphorically but more profoundly, when Aquinas uses Thomistic philosophy within

[120] Cf. Anton C. Pegis, "Some Reflections on *Summa Contra Gentiles* II, 56," in *An Etienne Gilson Tribute,* ed. Charles J. O'Neill (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1959), "St. Thomas likewise believed that philosophy was both saved and perfected by the light of that [Christian] revelations. The philosophy in the *SCG* [is] . . . a philosophy that considers its openness to the influence of revelation to be nothing less than turning to the source of its nature. That is why, far form suffering any diminution in autonomy or rationality from its Christian state, philosophy rather experiences an advancement."

[121] See *In Boet. de Trin.,* q. 2, a. 3.

[122] Cf. Pasnau, 16: "Revealed doctrine is the foundation of his [Aquinas's] theology, but in practice it provides at most the guidelines for his work. The real heart of what Aquinas's theological project corrsponds quite closely with what we consider the project of philosophy."

[123] See VI *Metaphys.,* lect. 1 (ed. Cathala-Spiazzi, 298a-b, nn. 1166-68).

[124] See *STh* I, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2: "Unde theologiae quae ad sacram doctrinam pertinet, differt secundum genus ab illa theologia quae pars philosophiae ponitur."

Thomistic theology, he does *not* "mix water with wine, but rather changes water into wine."[125]

[125] *In Boet. de Trin.*, q. 2, a. 3, ad 5.

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CATHOLIC MORAL TEACHING AND THE PROBLEM OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

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I. THE PAPAL TEACHING INTERPRETED

RESPONSES TO THE PRESENT papal teaching on the problem of capital punishment have been varying and even conflicting. Steven Long, whose ideas I consider in the second part of this essay, argues that the papal teaching cannot say what it appears to be saying because the Church has never said such a thing; it therefore must be interpreted as saying what the Church has always said. Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J., tends to agree, arguing that what is new is not the underlying principle regarding the legitimacy of capital punishment but the application of that principle to changing conditions.[1] Gerard Bradley, on the other hand, says the treatment is novel; capital punishment, once justified as a means of retribution, is now being assessed in terms of civil society's right to defend itself.[2] Mark Latkovic agrees but says the novelty does not go so far as to render capital punishment intrinsically evil.[3] Janet Smith suggests the pope might be leaning

[1] See Avery Dulles, "The Death Penalty: A Right to Life Issue?" Laurence J. McGinley Lecture, Fordham University (17 October 2000), reprinted as "Catholicism and Capital Punishment," in *First Things* 112 (April 2001): 30-35.

[2]Gerard V. Bradley, "The Teaching of the Gospel of Life," *Catholic Dossier* 4 (Sept.-Oct. 1998): 43-48.

[3]Mark S. Latkovic, "Capital Punishment, Church Teaching, and Morality: What is Pope John Paul II Saying to Catholics in *Evangelium vitae*?" *Logos* 5, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 82

precisely in that direction.[4] James Hitchcock thinks the pope is trying to elevate the social conversation "to a higher plane . . . by affirming the sacredness of human life in all situations."[5] Charles Rice agrees and thinks the papal teaching has made "obsolete" the traditional view that death is the only fitting punishment for certain very grave crimes.[6] Justice Antonin Scalia thinks that Charles Rice and the pope are flat wrong.[7] And so on.

I think the papal teaching is saying something new.[8] Catholic tradition has argued that legitimate public authority rightly inflicts the death penalty for very grave crimes, and that its infliction—insofar as it serves to redress the disorder introduced by a criminal's crime, protects the community from a dangerous influence, and deters others from committing similar crimes—is not only justified, but good. This is not something the present pontificate has taught, nor in my estimation would it be willing to teach.

The papal teaching as articulated in the 1997 edition of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) (which includes the morally relevant elements of the death penalty account of *Evangelium vitae*) is unprecedented for a magisterial document. A careful examination justifies the conclusion that a theoretical foundation is being laid for a substantive revision in the Church's teaching on the morality of capital punishment. That revision would teach that capital punishment as *punishment* is no longer legitimate; that the state rightly uses lethal force only for purposes of self-defense, which means that inflicting death could not be justified as a means of retribution; that in using lethal force against a dangerous criminal, the state is justified only in using

[4] Janet E. Smith, "Rethinking Capital Punishment," *Catholic Dossier* 4 (Sept.-Oct. 1998): 49-50.

[5] James Hitchcock, "Capital Punishment and Cultural Change in American Life," in *Capital Punishment: Three Catholic Views* (Washington, D.C.: Faith and Reason Institute, 2003), 13

[6] Charles Rice, "Avery Cardinal Dulles and His Critics: An Exchange on Capital Punishment," *First Things* 115 (August/September 2001): 9

[7] Antonin Scalia, "Justice Scalia's Letter to the Editor," *National Catholic Register* (24-31 March 2002).

[8] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2263-67; *Evangelium vitae* 55-56.

force proportionate to render him incapable of causing harm; and that if he dies as an consequence, his death would have to remain *praeter intentionem* (i.e., unintended). This is not the explicit teaching of the *Catechism,* but the conclusions follow neatly from a fair reading of the text. I say this for four reasons. First, capital punishment in the 1997 *Catechism* (and *Evangelium vitae*) is not conceived in traditional retributive terms but rather in terms of self-defense; second, the *Catechism* deliberately distances itself from traditional ways of categorizing the death penalty in the Church's tradition of justifiable homicide; third, it frames its discussion of the legitimate infliction of death in terms of double-effect reasoning; and fourth, the 1997 text deliberately suppresses the one statement from the 1992 text warranting the conclusion that death can be rightly inflicted as a punishment *per se*. I will consider each in turn.

The first indication that the papal teaching is proposing something new is found in the title of the subsection in which capital punishment is addressed. The section is entitled "Legitimate defense." What precedent is there in the tradition for treating capital punishment as a form of legitimate defense? Almost none. Aquinas never uses the term "legitimate defense" (*defensio legitima*), neither in his treatment of the death penalty, nor in any major work on theology or morality. But he does use the related term "blameless defense" (*inculpata tutela*). Asking whether it is morally legitimate to kill a man in self-defense, he answers, "it is legitimate to repel force with force provided one does so with the *moderation of a blameless defense*."[9] "Nor is it necessary for salvation that one omit an act of moderate defense in order to avoid killing another."[10] The phrase *moderamine inculpatae tutelae* is repeated continually over the centuries in treatments on lawful killing—but not in regard to the infliction of the death penalty by public authority. Rather, in virtually every instance it is used as Aquinas uses it, that is, to limit lawful killing

[9] "Vim vi repellere licet cum moderamine inculpatae tutelae" (*STh* II-II, q. 64, a. 7; emphasis added).

[10] "Nec est necessarium ad salutem ut homo actum moderatae tutelae praetermittat ad evitandum occisionem alterius" (*STh* II-II, q. 64, a. 7).

by private persons in self-defense.[11] When the 1917 and 1983 Codes of Canon Law use the term "legitimate defense" (*legitima tutela*) they too use it in reference to acts of legitimate killing by private persons in *self-defense.*[12] And the Second Vatican Council's use of the term, in *Gaudium et spes,* is more or less the same.[13] In each source the context for the term's usage is self-defense. The *Catechism*'s insertion of its treatment of the death penalty under this title is entirely novel.

The second indication that the magisterium intends to distance itself from its traditional justification for the death penalty occurs in the very first line of the subjection: "The legitimate defense of persons and societies *is not* an exception to the prohibition against the intentional killing of the innocent that constitutes murder" (*CCC* 2263, emphasis added). Why deny at the outset that killing in legitimate defense is an exception to the fifth precept of the Decalogue? Perhaps because the *Catechism*'s historical predecessor, the 1566 *Roman Catechism,* issued pursuant to a decree of the Council of Trent, locates its teaching on the death penalty in a section explicitly devoted to "exceptions" to the fifth Commandment.[14] The logic is straightforward. The *Roman Catechism*

[11] A few examples include: Alphonsus Marie de Liguori, *Theologia Moralis*, tom. 1, lib. 3, tract. 4, cap. 1, dub. 3, par. 380 (Rome: Ex Typographia Vaticana, 1905); M. Zalba, S.J., *Theologiae Moralis Compendium*, vol. 1 (Madrid: Biblioteca De Autores Cristianos, 1958), no. 1591, p. 871; I. Aertnys, C.Ss.R. and C. Damen C.Ss.R., *Theologia Moralis* (Rome: Marietti Editori Ltd., 1956), tom. I, lib. III, tract. V, cap. III, no. 571, p. 541.

[12] "Causa legitimae tutelae contra iniustum aggressorem, si debitum servetur moderamen, delictum omnino aufert; secus imputabilitatem tantummodo minuit, sicut etiam causa provocationis" (*Codex Iuris Canonici* [1917], can. 2205, § 4; "legitimae tutelae causa contra iniustum sui vel alterius aggressorem egit, debitum servans moderamen"; "ab eo, qui legitimae tutelae causa contra iniustum sui vel alterius aggressorem egit, nec tamen debitum servavit moderamen" (*Codex Iuris Canonici* [Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983], can. 1323, 5°; 1324, 6°).

[13] On warfare: "once all means of peaceful negotiations are exhausted," the council teaches, "governments cannot be denied the right of legitimate defense." It is the responsibility of civil authority to "protect the safety of people", to provide "a defense that is just," and should never use means which "far exceed the limits of legitimate defense [*legitimae defensionis*]" (*GS* 79, 80). The context is still self-defense, not, however, the private defense of an individual but rather the self-defense of the community.

[14] The *Roman Catechism* itemizes five exceptions: (1) the killing of animals, (2) execution of criminals, (3) killing in a just war, (4) killing by accident, and (5) killing in self-defense.

teaches that capital punishment is an exception; the new *Catechism* teaches that it is not.

Third, the theoretical framework for the *Catechism*'s treatment of capital punishment, indeed, its treatment of all forms of legitimate killing, is double-effect reasoning. Recall that Aquinas says that an act can have two or more effects: one intended, the other(s) not. Since *intention* is primary, though not always sufficient, for assessing the morality of an act,[15] it can be morally legitimate to perform an act that results in bad effects, like death, provided that the bad effects are unintended. The *Catechism*, having denied that killing in legitimate defense is an exception to the Decalogue, continues in its next sentence to quote Aquinas on double-effect reasoning, indicating that what the Commandment forbids is not all acts that bring about death but only those that intend death: "The act of self-defense can have a double effect: the preservation of one's own life; and the killing of the aggressor. . . . The one is intended, the other is not."[16] The next paragraph (2264) applies double-effect reasoning to a specific form of legitimate defense, namely, the killing of aggressors by private persons in self-defense:

> Love toward oneself remains a fundamental principle of morality. Therefore it is legitimate to insist on respect for one's own right to life. Someone who defends his life is not guilty of murder even if he is forced to deal his aggressor a lethal blow: "If a man in self-defense uses more than necessary violence, it will be unlawful: whereas if he repels force with moderation, his defense will be lawful. . . . Nor is it necessary for salvation that a man omit the act of moderate self-defense to avoid killing the other man, since one is bound to take more care of one's own life than of another's." [Aquinas *STh* II-II, q. 64, a. 7]

Paragraph 2265 expands the scope of the term "legitimate defense" to include the defense that public authority renders on behalf of the community in repelling aggressors, implying foreign aggressors:

[15] John Finnis, *Aquinas* (Ozford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 27.
[16] *STh* II-II, q. 64, a. 7.

Legitimate defense can be not only a right but a grave duty for one who is responsible for the lives of others. The defense of the common good requires that an unjust aggressor be rendered unable to cause harm. For this reason, those who legitimately hold authority also have the right to use arms to repel aggressors against the civil community entrusted to their responsibility.

The paragraph does not explicitly mention a form of killing and so there is no need to specify limits in terms of double-effect reasoning. But there are two good reasons for concluding that the same context of indirect killing is in view. First, the logical relation set by the preceding paragraphs and the absence of any indication of a change of context would seem to necessitate that the context of double-effect reasoning is still present. Second, the defense the paragraph speaks about requires "rendering aggressors unable to cause harm." This is classical language in Catholic moral tradition used to explain the limits of lawful killing by private persons in self-defense. If the aggression of another threatens my life, the tradition that springs from Aquinas very clearly has taught that the natural right to preserve myself in being justifies me in using force against that aggressor proportionate to rendering him unable to cause harm; and the tradition has unambiguously asserted that the killing that follows from such a defensive act must be unintended.[17]

Since the duty of civil authority to defend the community against external threats is addressed in paragraph 2265, we might anticipate that the next paragraph would address the civil authority's duty to defend the community against internal threats. And this is what we find in paragraph 2266 in its consideration of just punishment:

[17] See ibid.; although Aquinas only refers to aggressors, not *unjust* aggressors, it is not uncommon for authors to refer to the status of the aggressor's aggression as *unjust,* if not formally, at least materially. For example, Henry Davis writes: "Everyone has a natural right to defend himself against unjust aggression even to the death of the assailant. . . . But the assailant's death is a secondary result of my act, the primary result being my own defence. The doctrine is justified on the universally valid principle of the double effect. (nt. II-II, q. 64, a. 7c)" (H. Davis, S.J., *Moral and Pastoral Theology,* 5th ed. [London: Sheed and Ward, 1946], 152-3; see also *EV* 55.

The efforts of the state to curb the spread of behavior harmful to people's rights and to the basic rules of civil society correspond to the requirement of safeguarding the common good. Legitimate public authority has the right and the duty to inflict punishment proportionate to the gravity of the offense. Punishment has the primary aim of redressing the disorder introduced by the offense. When it is willingly accepted by the guilty party, it assumes the value of expiation. Punishment then, in addition to defending public order and protecting people's safety, has a medicinal purpose: as far as possible, it must contribute to the correction of the guilty party.

Is the context for paragraph 2266 still double-effect reasoning? It would seem not. In setting forth the primary aim of punishment in terms of retribution—"of redressing the disorder introduced by the offense"—the paragraph indicates that it is no longer talking about an act of forward-looking self-defense. The defining aim of punishment, it says, is to correct a disorder caused by some crime, to look back, as it were, at something that has already happened, not forward at something that still threatens to happen. This makes sense since only those who do wrong are rightly punished. Punishment, the paragraph says, *also* serves the purpose of "defending public order" and "protecting people's safety," but neither of these two purposes makes punishment punishment.

We would expect paragraph 2267, in which the death penalty is taken up, to frame its discussion of the lawful limits of capital punishment in terms of the theoretical framework used to define the nature and purposes of punishment outlined in paragraph 2266. But this is not what we find. When turning to the death penalty the subsection returns to the language of double-effect reasoning:

Assuming that the guilty party's identity and responsibility have been fully determined, the traditional teaching of the Church does not exclude recourse to the death penalty, if this is the only possible way of effectively *defending human lives against the unjust aggressor.*

If, however, non-lethal means are sufficient *to defend and protect people's safety from the aggressor,* authority will limit itself to such means, as these are more in keeping with the concrete conditions of the common good and more in conformity with the dignity of the human person.

Today, in fact, as a consequence of the possibilities which the state has for effectively preventing crime, *by rendering one who has committed an offense*

incapable of doing harm—without definitively taking away from him the possibility of redeeming himself—*the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity "are very rare, if not practically non-existent."* (Emphasis added)

The act of force referred to here is not an act of "punishment proportionate to the gravity of a criminal's offense." It does not look back at a disorder introduced by deliberate crime; it is not in fact an act of punishment according to the preceding paragraph's own definition. It is an act of self-defense as described in paragraphs 2263-65. The text states that it is a defensive act against an "aggressor" aimed at "rendering him incapable of doing harm." If he is safely incarcerated in prison, why refer to him as an aggressor? Why not call him "the condemned," "the prisoner," "the guilty," or some other term that appropriately describes one who lives under a sentence of death? The text deliberately eschews a traditional retributive framework and terminology in its treatment of capital punishment in favor of a framework and terminology equally traditional, but not in relation to the death penalty—rather, in relation to lawful killing by private persons in self-defense. This is the language and framework of double-effect reasoning. Limiting the death penalty's lawful infliction by conditions traditionally invoked for the guidance of acts of private self defense, paragraph 2267 concludes that "the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity [*absolute necessarium*] 'are very rare, if not practically non-existent.'"[18] The last statement is of course taken directly from *Evangelium vitae*.

The final—and perhaps the clearest—indication that the papal teaching explicitly intends to reconceive the death penalty along nontraditional lines is seen when we compare the 1992 version of the *Catechism* with the same section in the 1997 *editio typica*. The 1992 version taught:

[18] It should be noted that this claim is a matter of sociological and technological fact, not a matter of faith and morals. Since the teaching authority of the Church extends only to matters of faith and morals (cf. *LG* 25), it cannot be said to form part of the Church's authoritative teaching on capital punishment, but must be held to be incidental to it.

For this reason the traditional teaching of the Church has acknowledged as well-founded the right and duty of legitimate public authority to punish malefactors by means of penalties commensurate with the gravity of the crime, *not excluding, in cases of extreme gravity, the death penalty*. (Emphasis added)

A retributive justification is proposed here. Punishing someone "by means of penalties commensurate with the gravity of the crime" means punishing them for what they have done, not for the threat they still pose. Sometimes a person's crime—"in cases of extreme gravity"—merits death. In such a case the death penalty is legitimate. This is a noncontroversial rearticulation of a traditional principle of justifiable homicide. Remarkably, however, in the 1997 *Catechism* the clause I have highlighted is suppressed. The statement in the 1992 text was the only indication that a traditional retributive justification of capital punishment was being maintained. And that proposition was deleted from the final authoritative text. Moreover, in 1992 the *Catechism* included its treatment of capital punishment in its analysis of punishment generally. In the *editio typica* the death penalty is moved from the section dedicated to punishment to its own section (2267).

II. One Critic

There is ample reason for concluding that a new doctrinal teaching on the morality of capital punishment is being anticipated in the *Catechism*. Not all, however, would agree. Steven Long has published an influential article in *The Thomist* refuting this claim.[19] His essay is problematic in several respects. First, its method of interpretation is flawed, which results in a tendentious interpretation of the text and the explaining away of important assertions about the lawfulness of the death penalty in the modern world. Second, its use of Thomistic sources is misleading. Third, it falsely states that there is no precedent in

[19] Steven A. Long, "*Evangelium vitae*, St. Thomas Aquinas, and the Death Penalty," *The Thomist* 63 (1999): 511-52. Parenthetical page numbers included in the text hereafter refer, unless otherwise noted, to Long's article.

Catholic moral tradition for the plain interpretation of the papal teaching. And fourth, it caricatures terribly the same plain interpretation.

Long's attention is directed exclusively to the treatment of the death penalty found in *Evangelium vitae,* which, he says, is "the most important modern locus for understanding the Church's teaching on the topic."[20] Because the preparation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was a collaborative effort of the bishops of the world, and because the morally relevant elements of *Evangelium vitae*'s teaching were incorporated into the 1997 *editio typica,* I take the *Catechism*'s teaching on the death penalty to be equally if not more important for assessing the mind of the present pontificate. I will therefore appeal to both documents in my analysis.

Long's essay revolves around a judgment that the apparent meaning of the death-penalty teaching of *Evangelium vitae* (and by extension the *Catechism*), because it diverges from what the tradition has ordinarily taught, cannot be its actual meaning. In other words, the papal teaching should not be interpreted as saying what it appears to be saying, but rather as what the Church has always said. A methodological error at its outset leaves this conclusion unconvincing. Long asserts at the beginning of his lengthy essay that "as a magisterial document, its meaning is *constituted* in relation to tradition."[21] Although appealing to Catholic tradition to help clarify ambiguous or partial magisterial statements is a valid principle of interpretation, to say that a document's meaning is "constituted" by its relation to the tradition (by which I take him to mean constituted by the meaning of past authoritative statements on the subject) is false. The meaning of an ecclesiastical statement or document is constituted in the first place by the intentions of its author(s). This is why it is possible to ask to what degree a particular magisterial assertion corresponds to or departs from the tradition *to which it contributes.* A Catholic scholar's role in the interpretation of

[20] Ibid., 511.

[21] Ibid, 513; emphasis added.

ecclesiastical texts therefore is to ascertain in the first place, through careful analysis of a text, the precise intentions of its author. Most of the problems with Long's essay stem from his application of his exegetical principle to the papal teaching on capital punishment with the result that the most important elements of that teaching become relativized along lines that Long considers more compatible with Catholic ethical tradition.

Long asserts that "a more traditional reading" of the encyclical, what he also calls a "prudential" reading, will "not hesitate to give 'defense of society' a rich meaning inclusive of the manifestation of a transcendent order of justice within society" (513-14). The term "defense of society," or more specifically "legitimate defense," deserves unpacking. Both *Evangelium vitae* and the *Catechism,* as I have shown, frame their discussions of the lawfulness of capital punishment in terms of legitimate defense; and in both, legitimate defense is narrowly construed to mean the collective self-defense of society. The death penalty, they teach, may only be inflicted when it is in the interests of societal defense. But, as I have stated, Catholic moral tradition has held that death can be a fitting punishment for a crime whether or not the self-defense of society remains at stake. In other words, the death penalty in the tradition has been justified as a means of retribution, as a means of giving criminals what they deserve. This tension between the present papal teaching and the ordinary teaching of the tradition is the sticking point for Long. It leads him to argue that we ought "not hesitate" to include within the interpretation of "societal defense" a retributive meaning. But that meaning is not sustained by the text. On the contrary, the text sets forth an exclusively nonretributive justification, namely, necessary defense: "*the nature and extent of the punishment* must be carefully evaluated and decided upon, and ought not go to the extreme of executing the offender except in cases of absolute necessity: in other words, when it would not be possible otherwise to defend society" (*EV* 56).

Recall too that the *Catechism*'s analysis references Aquinas's discussion of lawful killing by private persons in self-defense.

Evangelium vitae does the same. Neither text references Aquinas's article defending the killing of malefactors by the state, an article that has exercised enormous influence on Catholic moral tradition, and with which any scholar familiar with traditional literature on capital punishment—including the drafters of *Evangelium vitae* and the *Catechism*—would be well acquainted. Why not? Why suppress such reference? Why reference instead an argument that says that killing is legitimate only when necessary to render an aggressor incapable of causing harm? Why refer to the beneficiaries of this kind of killing, as in the *Catechism,* as "aggressors," not "the condemned," "the guilty," etc.? One reason may be because the authors intend to conceptualize lawful killing in capital punishment along the lines of lawful killing in self-defense. Long discounts this possibility from the outset, calling it a "reductionist reading" of the papal teaching.[22] He says that if we conceive of capital punishment under a paradigm of self-defense, then the papal teaching "will appear to miscontextualize the teaching of Thomas," that is, will appear to apply a set of norms to capital punishment that Aquinas only intended to be applied to self-defense. But this is precisely the novelty of the papal teaching, that its analysis applies a nontraditional paradigm to limit the lawful killing of criminals. Long admits that the text tends toward a novel justification: "if we accept a reading of the document as a doctrinal argument *apart from tradition,* it does appear to propose that only those executions are justified which are absolutely necessary to the physical protection of society" (517). But the text does not merely "appear" to say this, it states it outright: ". . . ought not go to the extreme of executing the offender except in cases of absolute necessity" (*EV* 56).

Long uses fidelity to the tradition as a tool to reshape the meaning of the papal text. He says, "we might wish to ask whether the solemn execution of a divine norm of justice might

[22] Long says the same in another essay: "*Yet careful reading of the document itself shows that Evangelium Vitae cannot intend to declare that the formal doctrinal reason for capital punishment is some species of mere defense.*" See "*Evangelium vitae* and the Death Penalty," in *Capital Punishment: Three Catholic Views* (Washington, D.C.: Faith and Reason Institute, 2003), 29.

not be described as necessary to a richer conception of social order and the common good that may legitimize the application of the death penalty" (517). Defining capital punishment in these terms may very well lead to a "richer" conception justifying capital punishment, but whether or not it does so is irrelevant to the meaning of the papal teaching whose texts neither state nor imply such a meaning.

Evangelium vitae, having established "absolute necessity" as the condition for the lawful infliction of the death penalty, concludes with the now well-known prudential judgment, "Today however, as a result of steady improvements in the organization of the penal system, such cases are very rare, if not practically non-existent." Commenting on the papal judgment Long argues, "if one incorporates within 'protection of society' not only physical protection, but also the manifestation of transcendent justice in society as constituting a good in its own right . . . then there is no particular *doctrinal* reason why justified uses of the death penalty should be absolutely 'very rare, if not practically non-existent' (*EV* 56)" (539). Again, there is no textual warrant for concluding that the intentions of the authors would tolerate such a conclusion. In so doing, as Long's statement illustrates, one is forced to explain away the pope's prudential judgment that the condition of absolute necessity effectively eliminates the death penalty in the modern world as a viable alternative. Long's assumptions lead him to propose what he terms "a *more plausible reading,*" namely, that "the encyclical stresses that it is better for contemporary society to avoid the use of the penalty" (546). But the text does not state nor imply that it would merely be "better" to avoid inflicting death; it states that occasions warranting the penalty "are very rare, if not practically non-existent." According to Long, "an astute intratextual reading should see this prudential feature of the argument" (546-47). But such a feature should be seen if the author intended it to be seen. We are not warranted in reading such an intent into the papal teaching.

If it was the pope's intent to stay within the traditional framework, we may presume that he would have made his

intention clear; at the very least he would have referenced the account in Aquinas that scholars have referenced for centuries in defense of capital punishment. But he didn't. He did what is almost without warrant in the tradition: not only to state the condition of "absolute necessity" as the primary ground for the death penalty's lawful infliction, not only to refer to the beneficiaries as "aggressors," not only say that the death penalty is lawful for purposes of rendering such aggressors incapable on causing harm, but also to reference Aquinas's account of lawful killing by private persons in self-defense.

Long's phrase, "the manifestation of the transcendent order of justice in society," which he uses to describe what he takes to be the primary purpose of punishment in general, and capital punishment in particular, is repeated continually throughout his article. It deserves a closer look.

Long attributes the phrase to the Church's tradition, which he says stems from Aquinas.[23] But the phrase is neither Aquinas's nor the tradition's but Long's. Punishment, Aquinas says, not only tends to the emendation of the one punished[24] and the preventing (deterring) of others from choosing wrongly,[25] but it heals some *defectus* in the order of justice in civil society.[26] The order of justice to which Aquinas refers here is an order established by the just interactions of members of a community based upon naturally created equality and the morally relevant elements stemming from their relationships. It is a *moral* order maintained by the upright willing of the members of a community. The order can be called transcendent to the extent that the moral order is God's ordering of the human person to his proper end, just as divine providence

[23] In the same essay, Long asserts that "the *primary* medicinal purpose of penalty is *neither deterrence nor rehabilitation,* but rather is *the manifestation of a transcendent norm of justice within society.*" This he states "is especially clear in the work of St. Thomas Aquinas" (ibid., 33).

[24] II *Ethic.*, lect. 3; *STh* II-II, q. 108, a. 4; *ScG* III, c. 158; *STh* I-II, q. 87, a. 6, ad 3;III *Sent.*, d. 19, q. 1, a. 3, sol. 2.

[25] See *ScG* III, c. 140; IV *Sent.*, d. 46, q. I, a. 2, sol. 3, ad. 2, *STh* I-II, q. 87, a. 8, ad. 2, II-II, q. 33, a. 6.

[26] II *Sent.*, d. 42, q. 1, a. 2, sol.; see also III *Sent.*, d. 19, q. 1, a. 3, sol. 2. See also *ScG* III, ch. 144.

orders all things in the universe toward their proper ends.[27] Deliberate crime disturbs this order to the extent that a criminal deliberately "exceeds the due degree of his measure when he prefers his own will to the divine will by satisfying it contrary to God's ordering."[28] A criminal "has been too indulgent to his will,"[29] has been "inordinate [in his] affection,"[30] "has exceeded in following his own will,"[31] which makes him "deserving of punishment."[32]

Because crime entails the immoderate satisfaction of the will, punishment entails the suppression of the wayward will in due proportion: "the nature of punishment consists in being contrary to the will, painful, and inflicted for some fault."[33] "By means of punishment the equality of justice is restored in so far as he who by sinning has exceeded in following his own will suffers something that is contrary to his will."[34] The result is the "restoration of the equality of justice."[35] Long's phrase, "the manifestation of the transcendent order of justice in society"—what he calls elsewhere, the "'truth manifestative' function of punishment"[36]—never arises. Though it is intelligible, given Aquinas's conception of the just order of civil society as reflective of a community's conformity to the moral order established by divine providence, its imprecision is misleading. Rather than using the Hegelian notion of punishment as the *manifestation* of justice,[37] Aquinas and the tradition refer simply

[27] *ScG* III, c. 140.

[28] Ibid.

[29] *STh* III, q. 86, a. 4; I-II, q. 87, a. 6.

[30] *STh* I-II, q. 87, a. 1, ad 3.

[31] *STh* II-II, q. 108, a. 4.

[32] *STh* I-II, q. 87, a. 1, ad 2.

[33] *STh* I-II, q. 46, a. 6, ad 2; "the nature of punishment is that it is contrary to the will" (*On Evil,* q. 1, a. 4, trans. Jean Oesterle [Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995); see also *ScG* III, c. 140; III, c. 141; II *Sent.,* d. 42, q. 1, a. 2, sol.; *STh* I, q. 48, a. 5; I-II, q. 87, a. 6.

[34] *STh* II-II, q. 108, a. 4.

[35] *STh* I-II, q. 87, a. 6.

[36] See Long, *"Evangelium vitae* and the Death Penalty," 33.

[37] *Hegel's Philosophy of Right,* trans. with notes by T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 69-73.

to punishment as the *correction*—in *Evangelium vitae* and the *Catechism*'s words, *redress*—of a disorder introduced into the good order of the community by a deliberate offense.

Even granting the similarity between Aquinas's retributive explanation of punishment and Long's conception of capital punishment as "the manifestation of the transcendent order of justice in society," it should be noted that Aquinas never (to my knowledge) justifies the infliction of capital punishment explicitly in terms of punishment's retributive function. When Aquinas turns from punishment in general to discuss capital punishment in particular his justification invariably turns to his Aristotelian conception of the relationship of a part to its corresponding whole. The most prominent example is found in *Summa Theologiae* II-II, question 64, article 2. There he writes:

> Now every part is ordered to the whole as imperfect to perfect. And therefore every part is naturally for the sake of the whole. On account of this we see that if it is useful [*expediat*] to the health of the whole body of a man to cut off one of his members, as when it is putrid or corrupting of the other members, it will be praiseworthy and salubrious for it to be cut away. Now every individual person is compared to the whole community just as a part to the whole. Therefore if any one is dangerous and corrupting to the community on account of some sin, it is praiseworthy and salubrious that he be killed, in order to preserve the common good. (My translation)[38]

He argues that dangerous and harmful men—with danger and harm being precisely specified in terms of "some sin"—may rightly be removed from the community as a diseased limb may be removed from the body whose integrity it threatens. Aquinas does not say here or elsewhere that the death penalty is only lawfully inflicted for purposes of societal defence. His larger account of punishment makes it improbable that he would have employed

[38] "Omnis autem pars ordinatur ad totum ut imperfectum ad perfectum. Et ideo omnis pars naturaliter est propter totum. Et propter hoc videmus quod si saluti totius corporis humani expediat praecisio alicuius membri, puta cum est putridum et corruptivum aliorum, laudabiliter et salubriter abscinditur. Quaelibet autem persona singularis comparatur ad totam communitatem sicut pars ad totum. Et ideo si aliquis homo sit periculosus communitati et corruptivus ipsius propter aliquod peccatum, laudabiliter et salubriter occiditur, ut bonum commune conservetur"; cf. *ScG* III, c. 146; see Aristotle, *Politics* 1.2.1253a19-29.

such a limiting factor. But he does say that death as a punishment is justified when man's moral state becomes a threat to the community, that is, when the community needs to be protected from a person's harmful influence. He certainly never says that killing a criminal "manifests a transcendent norm of justice." In fact, an explicitly retributive justification for capital punishment does not figure prominently in Catholic moral tradition until the sixteenth century.[39]

Long asserts that the "reductionist" premise—that the state only rightly inflicts the death penalty when necessary for the physical protection of society—is not found "anywhere in Catholic sources prior to *Evangelium vitae*" (539). In fact, Catholic theologians back in the nineteenth century were beginning to argue along these lines. Francis Xavier Linsenmann, for example, an influential professor of theology at Tübingen, argued:

> the death penalty can only be considered just—and therefore permissible—if it is necessary from the standpoint of self-defense; and it remains legitimate only so long and to such an extent that the need for self-defense remains. Just as war is self-defense writ large against an external threat to the community, so the infliction of *the death penalty is self-defense writ large* against an internal threat to the community, i.e., against a dangerous element in one of the many layers of the community itself. It follows, that if a condition of civil order and safety arises in which it is possible to control individual dangerous elements with lighter coercive means than death, then the death penalty would be rendered superfluous. Indeed, legally limiting the use of the death penalty is a goal well worth striving for. Its abolition by law is simply a political or cultural question; no principle of right stands against it.[40]

[39] See chapter 6 of my book, *Capital Punishment and Catholic Moral Tradition* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003).

[40] "In der That muss man vom Wesen und Zweck der Strafe als solcher absehen und darauf recurriren, dass die Todesstrafe nur als gerecht erkannt wird, wenn sie aus einem andern Grunde für nothwendig erklärt werden muss; mit andern Worten: Die Todesstrafe ist nur zulässig, wenn dieselbe unter den Gesichtspunkt der Nothwehr gebracht werden kann; und sie ist es nur so lange und in solcher Ausdehnung, als die Nothwehr vorliegt. Gleichwie der Krieg eine Notwehr im Grossen ist gegen Bedrohung der Gesellschaft von Aussen her, so ist Ausrechthaltung der Todesstrafe eine Nothwehr im Grossen gegen die Bedrohung der Gesellschaft durch innere Feinde, durch gemeingefährliche Elemente in den verschiedenen Schichten der Gesellschaft selbst. Hieraus folgt, dass es ganz wohl einen Zustand bürgerlicher Ordnung und Sicherheit geben könnte, in welchem einzelne gemeingefährliche Elemente mit

A twentieth-century example is that of Jacques Leclercq, professor of moral theology at Louvain, who argued in the 1940s that

> the death penalty, like all punishment, is *legitimate* only *if it corresponds to the legitimate defense of the community.* It is not justified by a right of the State to dispose of the life of its citizens, but only by social necessity. The life of a man is in itself inviolable, for the State as for individuals. (Emphasis added)[41]

Legitimate defense, he makes clear, refers to self-defense: "unless the person in question poses a serious threat to the lives of others."[42] He continues: "Supposing there is no other effective means of defending the social order, it seems in practice that the death penalty must be limited to the case where civil authority has no other sure means of incarcerating dangerous offenders."[43] But other means of safely incarcerating criminals have been around for "more than a century [*plus d'un siècle*]." Therefore, he concludes, "today, in the Western world, the death penalty has ceased to be legitimate as States have other effective means [*suffisants moyens*] to defend the social order."[44] This conclusion is repeated by Catholic authors in the years that follow.[45]

leichteren Zwangsmitteln, als die Hinrichtung ist, niedergehalten werden könnten, die Todestrafe also entbehrlich wäre; ja, dass es ein zu erstrebendes Ziel sei, die Anwendung der Todestrafe gesetzlich einzuschränken. Die gesetzliche Abschaffung der Todestrafe ist einfach eine politische oder Culturfrage, ein Rechtsgrund steht ihr nicht entgegen" (F. X. Linsenmann, *Lehrbuch der Moraltheologie* [Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1878], 473).

[41] "La peine de mort, comme toute peine, n'est *légitime* que *si elle correspond à la légitime défense de la collectivité.* Elle ne se justifie pas par un droit de l'État à disposer de la vie des citoyens, mais seulement par la nécessité sociale. La vie de l'homme prise en elle-même est inviolable pour l'État comme pour les particuliers" (Jacques Leclerq, *Leçons de droit naturel* vol. 4, *Les droits et devoirs individuels* (Louvain: Société D'Études Morales, 1946), 89.

[42] ". . . un danger grave pour celle des autres" (ibid.).

[43] "La peine de mort supposant qu'il n'y ait pas d'autre moyen efficace de défendre l'ordre social, il semble qu'en pratique, il faille la limiter aux cas où les pouvoirs publics ne disposent pas de moyens sûrs d'incarcérer les malfaiteurs" (ibid.).

[44] "dans le monde occidental, la peine de mort a cessé d'être légitime, les États disposant sans elle de moyens suffisants pour défendre l'ordre social" (ibid., 90).

[45] E.g., "the theologians' acceptance of the State's right to inflict capital punishment does not rule out a divergence of opinion on the appropriateness of exercising that power in given conditions. It seems that a growing number of moralists would like to see the power of the sword in abeyance, a power to be exercised should the need arise but otherwise resolutely kept in the background" (M. B. Crowe, "Theology and Capital Punishment," *The Irish Theological*

By the end of his essay, Long's criticisms of the plain interpretation of the papal teaching become sweeping and farcical. Not only has the "reductionist interpretation," he argues, erroneously subsumed its analysis of the death penalty under a model of self-defense, but its entire rationale for punishment generally, he says, is derived from punishment's utility in defending public order:

> the reductionist interpretation of *Evangelium vitae* appears to place the entire *ratio* of penalty in question, suggesting that inasmuch as penalty is not required for defense of minimum public order it is superfluous. In arguing that mere physical protection is the primary aim of criminal law and penalty—such that a penalty not absolutely required for physical protection of society is to be avoided—the encyclical would then be construed to suggest that there is no question of justice pertinent to the common good beyond physical protection. (541)

Evangelium vitae neither states nor implies that the primary aim of punishment is the physical protection of society. When addressing the question of the justification of punishment in general, it asserts plainly that "the primary purpose of the punishment which society inflicts is 'to redress the disorder caused by the offence'" (*EV* 56). (The second half of this quotation is taken directly from *CCC* 2266.) The primary rationale for punishment, according to the encyclical, is not "physical protection," but retribution; punishment is punishment, in other words, to the extent that it looks back at a crime already

Quarterly 31 [1964]: 102); "There will always be criminals, but modern society has other means of protecting itself from them than this" (Jean Imbert, *La peine de mort: Histoire-actualité* [Paris: Armand Colin: 1967]; English quotation in James J. Megivern, *The Death Penalty: An Historical and Theological Survey* [New York: Paulist Press, 1997], 297); "the death penalty for murder in this country [i.e., England] at present is unnecessary and therefore unjust" (M. Tidmarsh, O.P., et al., *Capital Punishment: A Case for Abolition* [London: Sheed and Ward, 1963], foreword); see also "Statement of Rhode Island's Religious Leaders," *Origins* 5 (25 March 1976): 629, 631; *Declaration of the Administrative Board of the Canadian Catholic Conference*, 1976, in Thomas G. Daily, "The Church's Position on the Death Penalty in Canada and the United States," *Concilium* 120 (10 October 1978): 122; before the twentieth century, see Cesare Beccaria, "On Crimes and Punishments," ch. 28, par. 3, in Richard Bellamy, ed., *On Crimes and Punishments and Other Writings*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

committed and aims to correct the disorder that the crime introduced. This traditional account of punishment, immediately preceding the text's analysis of capital punishment, is what makes the papal teaching so interesting, and Long's interpretation so unsatisfactory. The text sets forth a thoroughly traditional account of the nature and purposes of punishment, and then, when turning to the particular type of punishment the death penalty entails, lays out *another* justification, apparently incompatible with the former. On the one hand, it says that the primary purpose of punishment is retribution, and, on the other, that a criminal's crime alone is not a sufficient justification for killing the criminal—that although retribution defines punishment generally, it does not define capital punishment. The papal teaching says in effect that the death penalty may not be inflicted for purposes of retribution, but rather only in cases where it is absolutely necessary to defend civil society. It is not the encyclical's account of punishment, as Long suggests, that departs from the tradition, but the encyclical's failure to subsume its account of capital punishment under *its own* analysis of the nature and purposes of punishment.

Asserting without argument that the plain interpretation follows from an inadequate conception of the common good, which, Long says, has been proposed "in the effort to come to terms with republican political institutions and the old liberalism," Long levels the elliptical criticism: "the regnant minimalist interpretation of the teaching of *Evangelium vitae* constitutes another minimalist epicycle in the to and fro between rich and eviscerated senses of political common life" (543). But paragraph 56 of *Evangelium vitae* is traditional in its account of punishment, and it is traditional in its conception of the duties of civil authority. It maintains that punishment is primarily retributive and that public authority has the responsibility to inflict retributive punishment: "public authority must redress the violation of personal and social rights by imposing on the offender an adequate punishment for the crime" (*EV* 56). It just does not include capital punishment among the available expressions of this

authority. There is no indication that it maintains an "eviscerated" conception of political common life.

Long continues, saying that "the reductionist major premise (viz, that the State rightly inflicts the death penalty only when absolutely necessary for the physical protection of society) seems to embrace an instrumentalist view of the common good that is, finally, incompatible with the infliction of any punishment save on grounds that appear remarkably utilitarian" (549). It is not clear what Long means by the phrase "instrumentalist view of the common good," or what is particularly problematic in conceiving the common good as instrumental. *Gaudium et spes,* for example, defines the "common good" as instrumental to the goods of persons and nothing about this suggests incompatibility with retributive punishment.[46] It does seem fair to say however that the encyclical's justification for capital punishment is grounded in empirical considerations and devoid of formal (retributive) ones. If this is what Long means by "utilitarian" then in this respect his point is granted. But to say that the plain interpretation of *Evangelium vitae* entails a view of the common good that is "incompatible with the infliction of *any* punishment" save on utilitarian grounds is gratuitous. Not only are some punishments, according to the papal teaching, primarily justified on non-utilitarian, retributive grounds, but *all* punishments are—save capital punishment.

Long concludes by saying that "the reductionist interpretation of *Evangelium vitae* to this effect is vulnerable to decisive criticism from tradition" (551). While I reject the view that the plain interpretation of *Evangelium vitae* (and the *Catechism*) is "reductionist," it is fair to say that it departs from tradition and in that sense is subject to criticism. I suggest however that rather than relativizing the papal teaching along traditional lines, we should be making every effort to formulate that teaching fairly,

[46] "interdependence (between nations) . . . is leading to an increasingly universal common good, the sum total of the conditions of social life enabling groups and individuals to realize their perfection more fully and readily" (*GS* 26); "And the common good comprises the sum of the conditions of social life which enable individuals, families and associations to reach their own perfection more completely and more readily" (*GS* 74).

asking to what degree it is compatible with the Church's traditional teaching on the lawfulness of capital punishment, examining where the present teaching is pointing, and judging whether or not, in light of Catholic tradition, the Church can go there.

III. With What Authority?

I would like to conclude this essay by asking the question: Is the Church bound by an irreformable tradition not to take the next step in declaring the death penalty wrong *per se*? This question comes down to whether or not the traditional justification of the right of civil authority to inflict death has been infallibly taught by the magisterium of the Catholic Church. Vatican II teaches that the Church's infallibility is exercised when: (1) the pope as successor of Peter intends solemnly to define an article of faith or morals (i.e., makes an *ex cathedra* statement), (2) the bishops in union with the pope gathered together in council intend to solemnly define a dogma, or (3) the bishops scattered throughout the world though preserving a bond of communion amongst themselves and with the successor of Peter agree on a judgment on a matter of faith or morals and teach it as to be definitively held. (The latter is called the infallibility of the ordinary and universal magisterium.)[47]

Has the proposition "capital punishment is in principle a legitimate exercise of civil authority" ever been solemnly defined by a pope or ecumenical council? The topic of capital punishment has rarely been raised by ecumenical councils. Among those at which it has, no judgment on its morality has ever been taught. Lateran III (1179) speaks of the assistance the Church receives from harsh penal laws, but does not propose any moral judgment on the death penalty *per se*.[48] And Lateran IV (1215) states that

[47] *Lumen gentium* 25.

[48] It is actually a quotation from St. Leo the Great; "As St. Leo says, though the discipline of the church should be satisfied with the judgment of the priest and should not cause the shedding of blood, yet it is helped by the laws of catholic princes so that people often seek a salutary remedy when they fear that a corporal punishment will overtake them" ("Sicut [ait

clergy are forbidden from participating in bloody punishment, but also makes no positive assertions about the death penalty's morality.

As for papal statements, only two are of such a nature as to merit attention. The first is the famous statement in the Waldensian oath by Pope Innocent III in the early thirteenth century. In the context of a profession of faith intended to reconcile members of the heretical sect, he states:

> We declare that the secular power can without mortal sin impose a judgment of blood provided the punishment is carried out not in hatred, but with good judgment, not inconsiderately, but after mature deliberation.[49]

With what authority was this statement—or rather, the profession of faith in which the statement appears—proposed? The profession is directed to a particular group and not to the universal Church; moreover, it was published in the form of a personal letter to the breakaway sect members and not in the form of a bull or otherwise universally authoritative document. Not all of its assertions therefore should be taken to be Catholic dogmas, binding on the universal Church, even though some of its assertions already possess this status. If therefore one of its propositions is not already a definitive doctrine of Catholic faith, its presence in the oath to the Waldensians does not alone suffice to constitute it as such. It is my judgment therefore that Innocent's statement does not constitute an infallible definition.

beatus Leo,] licet ecclesiastica disciplina, sacerdotali contenta iudicio, cruentas non efficiat ultiones, catholicorum tamen principum constitutionibus adiuvatur, ut saepe quaerant homines salutare remedium, dum corporale super se metuunt evenire supplicium"; Third Lateran Council [1179], ch. 27 [*Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils,* vol. 1, ed. Norman Tanner and Giuseppe Alberigo (London: Sheed and Ward, 1990), 224]). This statement appears again in Decretal. Gregor. IX, lib. V, tit. VII- *De Haereticis,* cap. VIII (*Corpus iuris canonici,* vol. 2, *Decretalium* Collectiones [Lipsiae: Ex officina Bernhardi, 1881], cols. 779-80).

[49] "De potestate saeculari asserimus quod sine peccato mortali potest judicium sanguinis exercere, dummodo ad inferendam vindictam, non odio, sed judicio, non incaute sed consulte procedat" (*Patrologia Latina* 215:1512a; my translation); the entire revised 1210 profession is translated in Denziger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma,* trans. Roy J. Deferrari (London: B. Herder Book Co., 1954), nn. 420-27, esp. n. 425.

The second relevant papal statement is a solemn condemnation of an article ascribed to Martin Luther by Pope Leo X in his bull *Exsurge Domine* (1520). Luther's proposition reads: "That heretics be burned is against the will of the Spirit."[50] With what authority was this condemnation promulgated? *Exsurge Domine* is a papal bull, a document of high papal authority addressed to the whole Church. Its solemn condemnations single out judgments of faith and morals considered to be dangerous to Christian faith and life.[51] For argument's sake let us say that the censures it contains have been promulgated with the highest degree of papal authority. Should we also conclude that the *falsity* of Luther's proposition has been proposed infallibly, entailing the conclusion that the burning of heretics is *not* contrary, or not always contrary, to the will of the Holy Spirit? To resolve this question we need first to examine the precise language of the papal condemnation. The general censure which follows the list of Luther's forty-one condemned propositions reads: "All and each of the above mentioned articles or errors, so to speak, as set before you, we condemn, disapprove, and entirely reject as respectively heretical, or scandalous, or false, or offensive to pious ears, or seductive of simple minds, and in opposition to Catholic truth."[52] The precise formulation warrants us in concluding no more than that the article in question is among a set of articles whose members are either heretical *or* scandalous *or* false *or* offensive to pious ears *or* seductive of simple minds, and are obstructive to Catholic truth. It is reasonable to conclude therefore that the falsity of Luther's proposition has not been infallibly proposed in *Exsurge Domine.*

[50] *Denz.* 773.

[51] It is not uncommon for the authoritative condemnations of papal bulls to be judged to have been promulgated with infallible authority. Francis A. Sullivan S.J., for example, claims that theologians Louis Billot, in his work *Tractatus de Ecclesia Christi* (1898), and Edmond Dublanchy, in his article on infallibility in the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* (1927), judged that *Exsurge Domine* (1520) contain "dogmatic definitions." Sullivan does not specify to which propositions he refers. His own judgment is that *Exsurge Domine* "does not meet the requirements for a dogmatic definition" (see Francis A. Sullivan, *Creative Fidelity: Weighing and Interpreting Documents of the Magisterium* [Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, Ltd, 1996], 84-85).

[52] *Denz.* 781.

The question remains, however, whether the liceity of the death penalty has been infallibly taught by the ordinary and universal magisterium. Vatican II's formulation of this mode of infallibility reads:

> the individual bishops . . . proclaim Christ's doctrine infallibly whenever, even though dispersed through the world, but still maintaining the bond of communion among themselves and with the successor of Peter, and authentically teaching matters of faith and morals, they are in agreement on one position as to be definitively held. (*LG* 25)

It states four conditions that must be met before this mode of infallibility has been exercised: (1) the bishops must remain united amongst themselves and with the successor of Peter, (2) they must teach authentically on a matter of faith or morals, (3) they must agree on one judgment, and (4) they must proclaim it "as to be definitively held" (*definitive tenendam*). To resolve the question as to whether these four conditions have been met relative to the Church's traditional defense of capital punishment would involve an in-depth analysis that is beyond the scope of this paper. I have undertaken it elsewhere and have concluded as follows:

> the evidence supports the conclusion that the first three criteria have been met. The writings of Catholic bishops and councils of bishops going back to early Christianity contain an explicit or implicit affirmation of one or more of the propositions summarizing the Church's traditional teaching. These affirmations have remained constant and the bishops have remained united in them among themselves and with the successor of Peter. If chronological scope and the magnitude and firmness of consensus were all that were necessary for the bishops in their ordinary teaching to proclaim doctrine infallibly, there could be little doubt about the status of the Church's traditional affirmation on the lawfulness of the death penalty. But *Lumen Gentium* states that the bishops' judgement on an issue, even their united and firm judgement, is not enough to assure the protection of the Holy Spirit from error. As teachers of the Christian faith, the bishops must teach that judgement to the faithful not simply as a doctrine of Christianity, nor as a probable or very probable conclusion of Christian faith, but as a matter of faith, certainly true, to be definitively held by all. Their act of teaching and the faithful's act of receiving are complementary, and it is in this movement of teaching and receiving that the Holy Spirit secures and advances the right belief of the Church. . . .
>
> [I judge that] the evidence does not warrant the conclusion that this final criterion of the ordinary and universal magisterium has been met. Scattered

episcopal statements assert all or part of the traditional teaching as to be definitively held, but the majority of episcopal statements are not proposed in this manner. More often than not, the lawfulness of capital punishment is directly or indirectly affirmed only in the context of discussions, condemnations, and affirmations of other points of human morality.[53]

This of course is a scholarly judgment. If the Church should teach otherwise I would assent to the Church's judgment and encourage others to do the same. But if my conclusion is true then it implies that the Church's traditional teaching can change. To speak about the changing of a teaching as eminent and long-standing as the Church's defense of the death penalty understandably makes some people uneasy. The concern is that an analysis like the one I propose opens the way to a rejection of other controversial but authoritative moral teachings by those characterized by a disposition of dissent or those who are weak in conscience. This is not my intention. My intention is to provide a fair and honest reading of the present papal teaching and then ask what its implications are. If the *doubt* regarding the traditional teaching was raised in the first place by me, or by a small group of theologians, or by theologians noted for their dissent from the Church's authoritative moral teaching, then there would be good reason not to entertain serious doubt about the verity of the traditional judgment. Such is the case for example with the widespread unjustifiable dissent from the central moral judgment of Paul VI's *Humanae vitae*.

But the present situation is different. Clear signs of revision are found in contemporary doctrinal documents promulgated by the bishops of the world in union with the successor of Peter. Whereas Christian writers from the early Church up through the middle of the twentieth century maintained a relatively consistent attitude towards the death penalty, that attitude began to change in the 1950s and 1960s, and more so in the 1970s and 1980s, so that by the middle of the 1990s a significant turn in the Church's

[53] Brugger, *Capital Punishment and Catholic Moral Tradition*, 151.

attitude toward capital punishment had taken place.[54] The attitudinal change alone might be considered sufficient justification for asking questions regarding a *change* in the traditional teaching. But more followed. The attitudinal turn was fused in 1995 and 1997 with formal and universally authoritative doctrinal promulgations of the magisterium (viz., *Evangelium vitae* and the *Catechism*), promulgations that clearly introduce new terminology and a new ethical paradigm for examining an age-old problem. In light of this, it is not only justified but of paramount importance for theologians to ask questions of the tradition that otherwise they might not be warranted to ask.

[54] A few examples of national conferences going on record in the past twenty-five years in opposition to the death penalty include: Canadian Catholic Conference (press release, 4 March 1976); Irish Bishops (see Irish Commission for Justice and Peace, "Capital Punishment," *The Furrow* 27 [1976]: 697-98; *La documentation catholique* 78 (1981): 581-84); French Bishops (see Social Commission of the French Episcopate, "Éléments de Réflexion sur la Peine de Mort," *La documentation catholique* 75 [1978]: 108-15); Philippine Bishops (see "Restoring the Death Penalty: 'A Backward Step'," *Catholic International* 3 [1992], 886-88); Bishops of England and Wales (see "Bishops Say "No" to the Re-introduction of Capital Punishment," *Briefing* of the Catholic Information Service, 15 July 1983); the U.S. Catholic bishops individually or in state or national conferences have issued over 130 statements in opposition to the death penalty since 1980 alone (see Catholics Against Capital Punishment, *Bibliography of Statements by U.S. Catholic Bishops on the Death Penalty: 1972-1998* [CACP: Arlington, Va., 1998]).

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MEDICALLY ASSISTED NUTRITION AND HYDRATION IN MEDICINE AND MORAL THEOLOGY: A CONTEXTUALIZATION OF ITS PAST AND A DIRECTION FOR ITS FUTURE[1]

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FOR A SIGNIFICANT PORTION of the 1980s, ethical issues regarding the use of various forms of support to prolong life grabbed newspaper headlines in the United States. High-profile legal cases over the "right to die," such as those of Karen Ann Quinlan and Nancy Cruzan, became legal landmarks. Other highly publicized cases, such as those of Brophy, Conroy, Herbert, and Jobes, contributed to making the issue a commonplace part of the news. In the midst of the headlines generated by these and other related cases, many Catholic ethicists attempted to provide analysis and guidance. These cases also elicited frequent formal statements from the Catholic episcopacy, both from individual bishops and from episcopal conferences.[2]

[1] Thanks to Michael Baxter, Bill Mattison, Joyce McClure, Gilbert Meilaender, John Grabowski, and William Barbieri for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper. Thanks also to Jennifer Moore, M.D., and Heidi White, M.D., for insight on current medical practice with regard to MANH, and to Thomas Bender, M.D., for originally bringing to my attention the Kelly-Donovan debate. Finally, I wish to acknowledge with gratitude the support of the Duke Institute on Care at the End of Life, where I was Visiting Scholar in 2001-02, and where much of the research for this paper was conducted.

[2] For example, "Guidelines for Legislation on Life-Sustaining Treatment," U.S. bishops' Committee for Pro-life Activities, *Origins* 14:32 (24 January 1985): 526ff.; "Providing Food and Fluids to Severely Brain-Damaged Patients," friend of the court brief by the New Jersey Catholic Conference in the Nancy Ellen Jobes Case, *Origins* 16:32 (22 January 1987):582ff.; "Georgia Man Asks to Turn Off Life-Supporting Ventilator," friend of the court brief by the archdiocese of Atlanta in the case of Larry James McAfee, *Origins* 19:17 (28 September

Of the various ethical dilemmas surrounding decisions regarding the use of life support, none provoked more disagreement among both Catholic ethicists and the Catholic episcopacy than that of the use of medically assisted nutrition and hydration (henceforth MANH). Among the episcopacy, this disagreement gained high profile in statements from the Texas and Pennsylvania bishops, as well as those of other groups of bishops. There were regular if not constant exchanges between Catholic ethicists on this question through the 1980s and early 1990s.[3]

The literature detailing various arguments for or against the use of MANH in caring for the dying and debilitated is extensive. Yet the thesis of this article is that a large part, if not the main thrust, of the debates over MANH have been inadequate and misguided on a number of different levels. I hope to reorient and redirect the debate by attending to the medical history of MANH (part 1) and recent medical developments with regard to MANH (part 5), examining and contextualizing the earliest debate (i.e., in the 1950s) over MANH among moral theologians (part 2) as well as a more recent debate over MANH involving numerous American Catholic bishops (part 3), and critically evaluating the types of moral arguments that preoccupy many of those who currently write on the ethics of MANH (part 4).

The first section—a brief history of nineteenth and twentieth-century medical practice with regard to MANH—aims to show that inadequate understanding of the medical history,

1989): 273ff.; "The Nancy Cruzan Case," Bishop John Leibrecht, *Origins* 19:32 (11 January 1990): 525ff.; "Treatment of Dying Patients," bishops of Florida, *Origins* 19:3 (1 June 1989): 47ff.

[3] For examples of such exchanges, see John Connery, "The Clarence Herbert Case: Was Withdrawal of Treatment Justified," *Hospital Progress* (February 1984): 32-35, 70; and John Paris, "Withholding or Withdrawing Nutrition and Food: What are the Real Issues," *Hospital Progress* (December 1985): 22ff. See also Richard McCormick, S.J., "'Moral Considerations' Ill Considered," *America* 166 (14 March 1992): 210-14; and Kevin McMahon, "What the Pennsylvania Bishops Really Said," *Linacre Quarterly* 59 (August 1992): 6-10. For an exchange between William E. May and Kevin O'Rourke, see William E. May, "Tube Feeding and the 'Vegetative' State," *Ethics and Medics* 23:12 (December 1998): 1-2; Kevin O'Rourke, O.P., "On the Care of 'Vegetative' Patients: A Response to William E. May's 'Tube Feeding and the "Vegetative" State,'" *Ethics and Medics* 24:4 (April 1999): 3-4.

development, and varying roles of medically assisted nutrition and hydration has led moralists to overly rigid understandings of its place in medicine. One upshot of what I argue in this section is that, for example, attempts to define MANH as either inherently "basic care" or "a medical treatment" is an exercise in futility. Such descriptions are only legitimate in specific medical contexts and are "patient dependent."

With this history providing a sense of the medical context of MANH in the 1950s, the second section analyzes what I believe is the first discussion of MANH by American moral theologians, placing it in the context of their broader concern with "the duty to preserve life." The astute reader will surmise that the very different medical context for MANH at that time reveals both the achievement of and the limitations and provisional character of the debate over MANH by the Catholic moralists (e.g., Gerald Kelly, S.J.) of that era. In view of the evolving medical context of MANH between the 1950s and the 1980s, one goal of this section is to show the problematic nature of appeals by some later Catholic moralists to the authority of earlier authors on the question of MANH.

The third section examines a more recent Catholic "debate"—one between two groups of groups of American Catholic bishops in the early 1990s—over the appropriate uses of MANH. Even this relatively recent debate cannot be separated from its specific social and medical context. Their debate shows both continuity with and development beyond the earlier textbook debates, showing a greater sensitivity to the various contexts in which the question can arise. In this debate, the emphasis seems to be moving away from the preoccupation with how vigorously to preserve life, and towards asking which lives should be vigorously (or even not so vigorously) preserved. The concern over questions related to "quality of life" is seen in the inordinate attention this debate devotes to questions related to the preservation of the lives of patients in comas or in a PVS (persistent vegetative state). My point in this section is that the traditional question concerning the duty to preserve life has been to some extent preempted by new questions regarding what

constitutes a dying person and the quality of life to be preserved. These new questions—especially those concerning quality of life—are full of conceptual ambiguity and at the same time deeply troubling.

In order to clarify the current status of the debate concerning MANH, the fourth section unpacks some of the arguments that had significant currency in the last two decades when arguing that MANH should be discontinued from PVS and other coma patients. Focusing on four recent arguments regarding MANH for comatose patients, this section argues that while adequate decisions regarding the use of MANH must always be relative to the benefit received by the patient, those who wish to withdraw MANH from patients who are not terminally ill and whose lives will be extended by MANH bear the burden of proof, morally speaking.

In the light of the argument made in the fourth section, the fifth section is a reversal of sorts. This section evaluates recent studies on the efficacy of MANH, studies that raise serious questions about the medical benefit of MANH for many classes of patients. Having argued in the fourth section that the presumption should be to give MANH to all who can derive proportionate medical benefit from it, I postulate in the fifth section that many classes of patients who have been presumed to gain such medical benefit from MANH may not in fact have been benefiting from MANH, and some (as a class of patients) may even have been harmed by MANH. If these current studies hold up, the forty-year honeymoon between MANH and much of the medical community will be over. As questions continue to be raised about the medical benefits and burdens of MANH, we can expect that the future will bring greater attention to various means of and general benefits of oral feeding, and less reliance on MANH.

In the light of the medical developments presented in section 5, the article concludes with some reflections on the eating practices of contemporary American culture, and their possible influence on assumptions about the moral appropriateness of MANH and feeding the dying and severely debilitated more generally. The debates over MANH in the 1980s and early 1990s

focused almost exclusively on one aspect of eating practices, namely, their nutritive significance. In other words, concern was focused almost entirely on how morally to evaluate a death that resulted from a lack of nutrition.[4] While some contributors to the debate expressed intuitions about the symbolism of food as an expression of concern for one's parent or relative or friend, little was said about the significance of eating practices theologically—for example, for Eucharistic practices, for maintaining Christian community, for practicing hospitality, etc. For many of those involved in the debate, there was no significant moral difference between eating and receiving nutrition. I conclude this section and the article with observations as to how a Eucharistic vision and Eucharistic practices might guide Christian care of the dying and severely debilitated, including feeding practices. The purpose of this paper will be realized, *not* if the reader's primary conclusion is that MANH is not as helpful as we have thought and must use it less, *but only if* the reader's primary conclusion is that MANH often represents a failure truly to feed the patient, and if it leads to redoubled efforts to find a more holistic means of feeding all persons whenever it is beneficial to them.

I. Medically Assisted Nutrition and Hydration: A Short History and Summary of Recent Practice[5]

From ancient times, people have received nutrition in ways other than through oral feeding. Greek physicians made extensive use of nutrient enemas, delivering various broths as well as wine, milk, and whey through this means. Hippocrates was one of many

[4] Some saw failing to feed as allowing the patient to be "starved" to death. Others saw feeding (specifically comatose) patients as a failure of faith with regard to Christian belief in the resurrection of the body.

[5] Good general histories of alternatives to oral feeding include Henry T. Randall, "The History of Enteral Nutrition," in J. L. Rombeau and Michael D. Caldwell, eds., *Clinical Nutrition,* vol 1: *Enteral and Tube Feeding* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Co., 1984), 1-9; and Laura Harkness, "The History of Enteral Nutrition Therapy: From Raw Eggs and Nasal Tubes to Purified Amino Acids and Early Postoperative Jejunal Delivery," *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 102 (2002): 399-404.

who advocated rectal tube feeding. Devices were developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that delivered nutrients by such means as far along as the colon. Articles in British and American medical journals in the latter part of the nineteenth century discussed a wide variety of nutrients introduced in this way.[6] Perhaps the most high-profile recipient of rectal feeding in the nineteenth century was President Garfield, who was fed in this way every four hours for most of the seventy-nine days he survived after being wounded by an assassin.[7]

While the earliest recorded use of a tube for feeding directly into the esophagus, stomach, or jejunem is in the fourteenth century, it first came into widespread use in the nineteenth century.[8] At the time such methods were known as gavage or force-feeding. Their first common use was apparently for feeding patients of insane asylums in the first half of the nineteenth century. Such feedings were through tubes inserted either through the mouth (orogastric feeding) or the nose (nasogastric feeding). In the latter half of the nineteenth century, both nasogastric and rectal feedings were widely used.[9] By the end of the nineteenth century pediatricians were advocating such feedings for premature infants, and for infants and children with diphtheria and other

[6] See C. E. Brown-Séquard, "Feeding per rectum in Nervous Affections," *Lancet* (1878): 1:144. Also Y. M. Humphreys, "An Easy Method of Feeding per rectum," *Lancet* (1891) 1:366-67.

[7] W. D. Bliss. "Feeding per rectum: As Illustrated in the Case of the Late President Garfield and Others," *Medical Record* 22 (1882): 64-69.

[8] Such tubes were also used for removing poisons or other unwanted contents of the stomach. The first reported use of a tube for aspirating the contents of the stomach was in 1813 by a professor of surgery at the University of Pennsylvania (P. S. Physick, "Account of a New Mode of Extracting Poisonous Substances from the Stomach," *Eclectic Repertory and Analytical Review* 3:1 [October 1812]: 111-13; also see Morton D. Pareira, *Therapeutic Nutrition with Tube Feeding* [Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1959], 11). Combining lavage and gavage was being done by 1939, when Stengel and Ravdin reported on inserting twin tubes at the time of gastric surgeries, one into the jejunum for feeding and the other into the stomach for removing gastric contents. See A. Stengel, Jr., and I. S. Ravdin, "The Maintenance of Nutrition in Surgical Patients with a Description of the Orojejunal Method of Feeding," *Surgery* 6 (1939):511-19.

[9] Randall, "The History of Enteral Nutrition," 2.

acute ailments.[10] One physician noted that while such MANH was best carried out by a physician, any intelligent nurse or parent could be taught how to administer it.[11]

While numerous developments in both the techniques of tube feeding and the nutritional content of tube feeding occurred in the first half of the twentieth century, the first monograph devoted to the practice of tube feeding—in particular to scientifically demonstrating its positive effects—was published by Morton Pareira in 1959. Pareira noted that while knowledge of tube feeding had been commonplace, use of tube feeding had up to that time been "sporadic and limited."[12] Scientific studies of the beneficial effects of tube feeding were only begun in the early 1950s. Three large studies (at least 100 patients in each study) including one by Pareira and associates showed the beneficial effects of tube feeding on a wide range of patients who were suffering from malnutrition.[13] Pareira classified the 240 patients in his 1954 study into nine categories. Since practically all of his patients showed improvement from tube feeding, he considered all categories as indications for tube feeding. For example, he considered patients suffering malnutrition because of localized mechanical impediments (e.g., maxillofacial surgery or paralysis of swallowing muscles) and because of the nature of their postoperative convalescence (e.g., whose malnutrition persisted because of anorexia) to be indications for tube feeding.

[10] Gavage feeding of premature infants was popularized by the first modern authority on the feeding of premature infants, the French physician Stephane Tarnier (1828-97), and furthered in America by the work of Julius Hess (1876-1955), who in 1913 opened the first continuously operating center for premature infants in the United States. See Frank Greer, "Feeding the Premature Infant in the 20th Century," *The Journal of Nutrition* 131 (2001): 426S-430S.

[11] W. A. Morrison, "The Value of the Stomach-tube in Feeding after Intubation, Based upon Twenty-eight Cases; Also its Use in Post-diphtheritic Paralysis," *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 132 (1894):127-30.

[12] Pareira, *Therapeutic Nutrition with Tube Feeding*, 13.

[13] T. Boles, Jr., and R. M. Zollinger, "Critical Evaluation of Jejunostomy," *Archives of Surgery* 65 (1952):358-66; L. S. Fallis and J. Barron, "Gastric and Jejunal Alimentation with Fine Polyethylene Tubes," *Archives of Surgery* 65 (1952): 373-81; M. D. Pareira, E. J. Conrad, W. Hicks, and R. Elman, "Therapeutic Nutrition with Tube Feeding," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 156 (1954): 810-16.

Pareira included patients unable to eat because of systemic mechanical impediments related to sensorial depression (i.e., patients in a prolonged coma) and patients suffering from terminal cancer as two other indications for tube feeding.[14] Although he only referred to the beneficial effects of tube feeding for coma patients in passing, he devoted a chapter of his short monograph to the benefits of tube feeding for patients with terminal cancer. Pareira studied 64 terminal cancer patients.[15] Most were bedridden, and all were malnourished and anorexic. After pursuing various means and incentives to get these patients to eat, such attempts were abandoned and the patients were tube-fed. With the exception of the few patients who were imminently dying, anorexia disappeared in all of the tube-fed patients. The return of appetite occurred in these patients between one and three weeks after tube feeding was initiated. Evidence of the return of appetite was demonstrated by the number of patients who desired to "eat around the tube" and their action in doing so if permitted. Pareira found that while most of these patients were considered imminently dying when admitted, many who were thought to be terminal were rehabilitated for a period of many months prior to their eventual death. While initially almost all were bed-ridden, the majority of the tube-fed patients became at least partially ambulatory, more comfortable, and less dependent on nursing care. Pareira concluded that these patients were undernourished not because of any specific effects of the cancer, but because of anorexia. By restoring appetite through tube feeding, the condition of patients who were becoming progressively malnourished was reversed, with improved nutrition leading to the return of appetite. While Pareira was unable or unwilling to make claims about increased longevity, he considered the beneficial clinical effects of tube feeding, including a return of strength and increased sense of well-being as well as a return of appetite, to be clear. The resulting situation was also happier for patients and their families.

[14] See Pareira, *Therapeutic Nutrition with Tube Feeding*, 8, 16-17.

[15] Pareira notes that none of the patients had tumors that involved the gastrointestinal tract (ibid., 34).

Extensive developments in MANH would go on in the 1960s and 1970s, leading to a widespread use of MANH. However, it suffices for our purposes to note that Pareira's conclusions about the therapeutic efficacy of MANH for a broad range of acutely and chronically ill patients and its palliative benefit for dying patients have been widely accepted up to the recent past. Later I will discuss recent medical studies that question these assumptions about the efficacy of MANH, but it is important that we be aware of this prevailing medical context for discussions and debates regarding the use of MANH from the 1950s through the 1990s. This context is important for three reasons.

First, we saw above that while alternatives to oral feeding were certainly employed in a large number of contexts in the first part of the twentieth century, the clinical benefits of MANH were not scientifically demonstrated until the mid-1950s and their use did not become routine until the 1960s. However, the first discussion of MANH by Catholic moral theologians took place in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Therefore, it is important carefully to contextualize the conclusions drawn by those moral theologians in relation to the medical status of MANH at that time.

Second, in considering how best to characterize tube feeding morally, the diverse purposes for which it is employed must be adequately considered. For example, tube feeding is sometimes employed not because oral feeding is no longer physically possible but as a supplement to or an improvement over oral feeding, and sometimes as a substitute for convenience rather than out of necessity.

Thus it is important to note that MANH, even for coma patients, is not necessarily employed because coma patients are "unable to chew and swallow." For example, long before tube feeding was widely available, at least some coma patients were sustained for many years. Though I have not been able to obtain data on the nutritional arrangements for coma patients from the nineteenth and early twentieth century with long-term survival, I presume that some of these patients were fed orally and others were fed via nutritional enemas. While some coma patients are unable to chew and swallow, this is not a universal feature of

coma patients. Certainly, to feed coma patients—or patients with a wide variety of other debilities—orally often takes a great deal of time and effort and such patients may aspirate (i.e., choke on) their food. These kinds of difficulties often make oral feeding an extremely unpalatable choice for nurses or other health-care providers. While tube feeding may often be rightly instituted for efficiency and safety, we should not conclude that all such patients are unable to chew and swallow *simpliciter.*[16]

Third, this brings us to a further issue related to the cost and convenience of tube feeding. Whereas reference is sometimes made to the high cost of maintaining tube-fed patients in hospital, it is neither true that patients must be tube-fed in hospital nor that tube feeding is necessarily a costly option. Tube-fed patients are more often than not in nursing homes and often at home.[17] Patients in nursing homes sometimes (unfortunately) come to be tube-fed because they experience significant weight loss, and rather than hiring additional staff to supervise the patients' eating practices or to take the time to assist them in eating, tube feeding is prescribed. While a lack of assistance or supervision by no means accounts for all or even most cases of nursing-home patients losing weight, the fact that it is often less costly to have a patient on a feeding tube than to hire additional staff to customize meal preparation or to supervise eating probably provides a disincentive to improve oral feeding efforts. Furthermore, Medicaid and other forms of insurance typically

[16] A neurologist well known for advocating the withdrawal of MANH from PVS patients acknowledges that "[b]ecause PVS patients often have an intact involuntary swallowing reflex in addition to intact gag and cough reflexes, it is theoretically, and in rare cases practically possible, to feed these patients by hand. However, this usually requires an enormous amount of time and effort by health-care professionals and families. If the patient is positioned properly, and food is carefully placed in the back of the throat, the patient's involuntary swallowing reflex will be activated" (Ronald Cranford, "The Persistent Vegetative State: The Medical Reality," *Hastings Center Report* 18 [February/March 1988]: 31).

[17] See Catherine H. Bastian and Richard H. Driscoll, "Enteral Tube Feeding at Home," in Rombeau and Caldwell, eds., *Clinical Nutrition,* 1:494-511.

provide additional reimbursement for tube feeding but not for special meal preparation or assisted oral feeding.[18]

II. The Christian's Duty to Preserve Life

With this brief history and overview of tube-feeding practices in place, we are now in a position to turn to the first significant analysis of the ethics of tube feeding in moral theology. Of the various textbooks in medical ethics produced by Catholic moral theologians between the 1940s and 1960s, two of the most popular and significant were Gerald Kelly's *Medico-Moral Problems* and Charles McFadden's *Medical Ethics*.[19] While the majority of these texts focused on beginning of life issues, each dedicated a chapter to the topic of the duty to preserve one's life. This discussion was generated at least in part by the desire to help the dying distinguish suicide from acceptable forgoing of some medical treatments, and to help medical professionals distinguish euthanasia from appropriate withdrawals of treatment.

For Kelly and McFadden, the Catholic tradition's key principle for discerning the extent of the duty to preserve life was the distinction between ordinary and extraordinary means of

[18] Note that "in most states, there is a higher reimbursement rate for tube-fed patients, and hand-feeding a disabled resident takes considerably more staff time than operating a feeding tube pump," (Susan Mitchell, D. K. Kiely, and L. A. Lipsitz, "Does Artificial Enteral Nutrition Prolong Survival of Institutionalized Elders With Chewing and Swallowing Problems?" *Journal of Gerontology* 53A, no. 3 [1998]: M212). The authors are citing B. Leff, N. Cheuvront, and W. Russell, "Discontinuing Feeding Tubes in a Community Nursing Home," *Gerontologist* 34 (1994):130-33.

[19] Gerald Kelly, S.J., *Medico-Moral Problems* (St Louis: Catholic Health Association of the United States and Canada, 1958), 128-41; Charles McFadden, *Medical Ethics* (5th ed.; Philadelphia: Davis and Company,1961), 227-32. For further elaboration of Kelly's viewpoint, see Gerald Kelly, S. J., "The Duty of Using Artificial Means of Preserving Life," *Theological Studies* 11 (June 1950): 203-20. For a history of these texts in medical ethics by Catholic moral theologians and claims about the centrality of the work of Kelly and McFadden, see David F. Kelly, *The Emergence of Roman Catholic Medical Ethics in North America* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1979). For a more extensive examination of the principle of ordinary and extraordinary means of treatment from the same period as Kelly and McFadden, see Daniel Cronin, *The Moral Law in Regard to the Ordinary and Extraordinary Means of Conserving Life* (Dissertatio ad lauream; Rome: Gregorian University, 1958).

preserving life.[20] Their texts include definitions of the principle, a history of the principle, and examples for its application.

In itself, the principle is straightforward. A patient is obligated gratefully to receive ordinary means of preserving life, but may decline extraordinary means. In defining what constitutes ordinary means, Kelly and McFadden note that physicians and moralists typically mean different things by the term. For a physician, "ordinary means" typically refers to those medicines or procedures that are, for example, commonplace, standard, and accepted. For a moralist, ordinary means of treatment includes "all medicines, treatments, and operations, which offer a reasonable hope of benefit for the patient and which can be obtained and used without excessive expense, pain, or other inconvenience."[21] Whereas for a physician "ordinary means" refers to a medicine or treatment in itself, for a moralist what constitutes ordinary means is always dependent upon the benefit gained from the particular treatment by the patient relative to his

[20] This traditional distinction between ordinary and extraordinary means of treatment continues to function normatively and institutionally in Catholic healthcare in the United States, with its inclusion in the fourth edition of the *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services* (2001). Directives 56 and 57 read as follows:

> 56. A person has a moral obligation to use ordinary or proportionate means of preserving his or her life. Proportionate means are those that in the judgment of the patient offer a reasonable hope of benefit and do not entail an excessive burden or impose excessive expense on the family or the community.
> 57. A person may forgo extraordinary or disproportionate means of preserving life. Disproportionate means are those that in the patient's judgment do not offer a reasonable hope of benefit or entail an excessive burden, or impose excessive expense on the family or the community.

We find four key elements in these two directives. First, discernment of whether a treatment is ordinary or extraordinary requires the judgment of the patient. Second, the patient needs to judge what constitutes a treatment's offering a reasonable hope of benefit. Third, the patient needs to judge whether a proposed treatment entails a severe or excessive burden. Fourth, the patient needs to judge whether a proposed treatment imposes an excessive expense on the family or the community.

[21] Kelly, *Medico-Moral Problems,* 129. Compare this statement of ordinary treatment with that of *Ethical and Religious Directives* 56, above.

particular condition at a particular time. Thus, for a moralist, the same treatment may at one point in a patient's illness be considered ordinary, whereas at another stage it may be considered extraordinary or even useless, depending on its possible efficacy.

Kelly roots this principle in the difference between absolute and relative duties for the Christian. Whereas the prohibition on taking one's own life is absolute (the duty to avoid doing evil), the obligation to preserve one's own life is limited (the duty to do positive good). Since one's obligation to preserve one's life is limited, a number of different considerations can render a treatment extraordinary. Kelly cites three examples from the history of moral theology where a hardship or burden was regarded as rendering a means of treatment extraordinary: going into a debt that would place hardship on one's family, undergoing a tremendously painful surgery or amputation (e.g., prior to the development of anaesthesia), or moving to a far country to preserve or restore one's health (i.e., in a cultural context in which people's identities were firmly rooted in the land and their families and at a time when such travel was difficult, dangerous, and likely permanent).[22] Of course, some of what constituted serious burdens in centuries past (e.g., travelling to another country for a cure or undergoing an operation) are no longer a serious burden for most persons today. Such categories are in themselves always open to revision in relation to medical, technological, and cultural changes over time.

Kelly and McFadden consider the 1950s equivalent of MANH when they discuss the appropriateness of withdrawing intravenous feeding from a patient in the last stages of a painful death from cancer. The patient, though racked with pain, continues to linger on, sustained by the intravenous feeding.[23] In the case they

[22] Kelly, *Medico-Moral Problems*, 132.

[23] With intravenous feeding, nutrients are introduced into veins rather than into the stomach or jejunum. Such forms of feeding (now referred to as total parenteral nutrition) are used with some patients (e.g., patients who have had their small intestine removed and cannot adequately absorb nutrients received enterally). However, intravenous feeding is typically not the nutritional therapy of choice because of its negative effects on the veins through which they are delivered. While I do not have definitive data on the efficacy of intravenous feeding

discuss, the physician removes intravenous feeding, and the patient dies within twenty-four hours.[24] Presumably the patient dies from a complication related to a lack of hydration. Was such a decision appropriate? McFadden presents different answers from three moral theologians before presenting his own view.

Joseph Sullivan argues that means of preserving life must be seen in relation to the patient's condition. Since the patient has no hope of recovery and is suffering extreme pain, the intravenous feeding is to be classified as extraordinary.[25] J. P. Donovan argues that since the feeding nourishes the patient, it must be considered ordinary care and the removal of such sustenance is the equivalent of mercy killing.[26] G. Kelly says that, although he understands the prolongation of life in such circumstances as "relatively useless," he would continue with the intravenous feeding unless the patient objected to it. On the other hand, he also acknowledges that if the patient were incompetent and the physician and family thought that he was racked with pain to such an extent that he was not spiritually profiting from his state, they might reasonably presume that he does not want the feeding. Kelly is reluctant to propose this solution, out of fear that people might regard it as "Catholic euthanasia." Instead, he says that efforts should be directed towards better pain management. He does not insist on this as the only recourse, but advises the employment of extreme caution with possible instances of forgoing the preservation of life.

In response to these three alternatives, McFadden states his own view that while in theory such intravenous feeding would be considered extraordinary, in practice its withdrawal should be rejected. His objections include Kelly's arguments regarding

as it would have been done in the 1940s, I believe that such feedings would have been very limited in terms of delivery of calories and nutritional balance, and would have likely led to numerous other medical complications. However, delivery of simple hydration intravenously would have been provided with greater ease and fewer complications.

[24] See McFadden, *Medical Ethics,* 229-30.

[25] J. V. Sullivan, *Catholic Teaching on the Morality of Euthanasia,* Catholic University of America Studies in Sacred Theology, 2d ser., 22 (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1949), 72.

[26] J. P. Donovan, "Letting Patients Die; Plight of a Vasectomized Man," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 49 (August 1949): 904.

scandal and the slippery slope to euthanasia, and the claim that a medically useless treatment may have other spiritual benefits.

In addition to the case of the imminently dying cancer patient, Kelly and McFadden comment on a case where a patient has lapsed into what appears to be a terminal coma.[27] If the patient is not spiritually prepared for death, then it is obligatory to maintain him with the hope that he will recover from the coma. If the patient is spiritually prepared for death, then both Kelly and McFadden consider it to be appropriate to cease intravenous treatments once it is medically established that the coma is in all likelihood irreversible. According to Kelly, intravenous feeding to terminal coma patients "creates expense and nervous strain without conferring any real benefit."[28]

While these analyses of the question of the use of MANH to dying and/or debilitated patients were the first attempts to address this question, and seemingly produced at best a provisional solution to this problem, they have been extremely influential. Kelly is well known to have been the primary author of the earliest editions of the *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services,* which influenced thinking about this question and continues to function authoritatively for Catholic health-care services, albeit in an edition further revised by others. McFadden's and particularly Kelly's writings on MANH are widely cited by moral theologians who argue very different viewpoints about MANH, not least because some of the ambiguities in Kelly's response make it easy to see it as supporting one's own viewpoint. However, their writings on the subject of MANH reflected the medical practices of their day (i.e., regarding the immediate impact of withdrawing MANH from a cancer patient, or the nature of the coma state), practices significantly different from those of the present. In particular, their medical assumptions about coma states was different from those current four decades later, when the question of MANH for patients in

[27] It is not exactly clear what Kelly means by "terminal coma." Some moral theologians have interpreted this as being a patient in a persistent vegetative state, but this is by no means clear.

[28] Kelly, "The Duty of Using Artificial Means of Preserving Life," 230, cited in McFadden, *Medical Ethics,* 232.

coma and/or PVS states would become the focus of a major debate within the American Catholic episcopacy.

III. Recent Episcopal Interpretations of the Duty to Preserve Life

As we saw in the previous section, the key principle regarding the withdrawal of MANH from a dying person has traditionally been that of ordinary versus extraordinary means of medical treatment. While certainly a live issue in the 1950s and 1960s, the question of withholding or withdrawing life-supporting treatments such as MANH came to much greater prominence in the 1970s. In this dawning of an era of increasingly technological medicine combined with an zealous imperative to prevent death at all costs, the careful casuistry of the Catholic tradition on ordinary versus extraordinary means of treatment was seemingly overwhelmed by two competing viewpoints. On the one hand, there was the approach of a well-meaning but at times overzealous medical profession eager to use all the tools at its disposal to save lives. On the other hand, there was the approach of an increasingly large group of persons who began to see the medical establishment as infringing on their right to self-determination at the end of their lives. In response, the "right to die" movement was born.

In different ways, these two competing approaches departed from the classic "patient-dependent" understanding of ordinary treatment of the dying. While the medical establishment could be accused of sometimes forgetting the integral good of the individual patient in the quest to use all possible life-prolonging treatments, the "right-to-die" contingent substituted "patient autonomy" for a measured understanding of the good of the patient. Determinations of the good of the patient were increasingly subsumed in the question of who had the authority to make decisions regarding the patient's treatment. In the 1980s, these two different, competing viewpoints were played out in a number of very high profile legal decisions, in particular the Karen Ann Quinlan and Nancy Cruzan cases.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, a number of bishops and dioceses submitted briefs for these cases and/or made public comment on the legal decisions. Among these various statements, two are particularly noteworthy. In May 1990, sixteen of the eighteen Texas Catholic bishops issued an "Interim Pastoral Statement on Artificial Nutrition and Hydration." In January 1992, the Pennsylvania Catholic bishops issued "Nutrition and Hydration: Moral Considerations." These two episcopal documents follow closely the approach of Kelly and McFadden. Both see the issue as that of the appropriate care for and preservation of human life. Both appeal to the principle of ordinary and extraordinary means of treatment as the key principle for discerning appropriate efforts toward preserving life, and both examine the examples of providing nutrition and hydration for the dying cancer patient and the comatose patient.

With regard to the example of MANH for the dying cancer patient, the Texas and Pennsylvania bishops follow Kelly and McFadden in theory but not in practice, in that both argue that forgoing MANH can be acceptable in practice as well as in theory. The Texas bishops argue this implicitly when they follow the 1986 statement of the NCCB's Committee for Pro-Life Activities that "medical treatments may have to take account of exceptional circumstances, where even means for providing nourishment may become too ineffective or burdensome to be obligatory."[29] The Pennsylvania bishops argue the point explicitly, seeing this example as a "relatively easy" case of where it is appropriate to withhold or withdraw MANH:

> In the case of a terminally ill cancer patient whose death is imminent, for instance, the decision to begin intravenous feeding or feeding by nasogastric tube or gastrostomy may also mean that the patient is going to endure greater suffering for a somewhat longer period of time—without hope of recovery or even appreciable lengthening of life. Weighing the balance of benefits and burdens makes it relatively easy to decide that this could fall into the category of

[29] Texas Catholic Bishops, "Interim Statement on Withdrawing Artificial Nutrition and Hydration," *Origins* 20:4 (7 June 1990): 54, quoting from NCCB Committee for Pro-Life Activities, "The Rights of the Terminally Ill," *Origins* 16:12 (4 September 1986): 222ff.

extraordinary means and that such feeding procedures need not be initiated or may be discontinued.[30]

Here we see an apparent change in practice (though not in principle) of Catholic teaching on the use of MANH for those imminently dying in significant pain.

When it comes to the example of the use of MANH for comatose (especially PVS) patients, the Texas and Pennsylvania bishops part company. Since the question of providing MANH for PVS patients has provoked perhaps the most medical and ethical disagreement among bishops' conferences and among Catholic moral theologians, the rest of this section and the next section will focus on this particular class of patient, before returning to a more general discussion in the final section.

According to the Texas bishops, patients in a PVS or in an irreversible coma are stricken with a fatal pathology. Thus, decisions about when it is appropriate to withhold or withdraw MANH are to be judged individually, ascertaining the relative burdens or benefits of using MANH and deciding accordingly. According to the Texas bishops, in this situation the evaluation of benefits and burdens is to be made by the proxy based on the expressed wish of the patient. They do not say what should be done in the situation in which the express wishes of the patient are not known, but since they say that a person in PVS or an irreversible coma "has come to the end of his or her pilgrimage and should not be impeded from taking the final step," it would seem that they would have no principled objection to a proxy withdrawing MANH.[31]

The Pennsylvania bishops diverge from the Texas bishops on this question at a number of points. Whereas the Texas bishops limit their discussion to irreversible comas and the PVS and define neither, the Pennsylvania bishops seek to avoid possible confusion by distinguishing a range of unconscious or seemingly unconscious states, not all of which are properly referred to as either a coma

[30] Pennsylvania Catholic Bishops, "Nutrition and Hydration: Moral Considerations," *Origins* 21:34 (30 January 1992): 547.

[31] Texas bishops, "Interim Statement on Withdrawing Artificial Nutrition and Hydration," 54.

or a PVS. For example, they describe two forms of apparent unconsciousness, the psychiatric pseudocoma and the locked-in state, where a person is not actually unconscious, but is for different reasons entirely or almost entirely unable to show the typical signs of consciousness. In addition, the Pennsylvania bishops consider the term "irreversible coma" an oxymoron, since a true coma is "never permanent." Eventually, a person will either emerge into consciousness or sink into a deeper form of unconsciousness known as a PVS. Furthermore, the Pennsylvania bishops argue that regardless of which state of unconsciousness a patient is in, in none of these states is the patient dead or imminently dying, but is rather debilitated to varying degrees. They acknowledge that while the dominant medical opinion is that patients in a PVS are unlikely to recover, they note that some patients have been known to recover consciousness, and also note that there is debate in the medical literature regarding the likelihood of the recovery of PVS patients.[32]

Having provided a description of varying degrees of unconsciousness, the Pennsylvania bishops go on to argue that since, unlike the cancer patient, the PVS patient is not "imminently terminal," MANH can serve a life-sustaining purpose and thus prima facie constitutes ordinary care. Although it usually will not contribute to restoring a patient to health, it does serve to preserve the patient's life in its current debilitated state. Involved here are two key claims: first, that PVS is not a fatal pathology because the "natural history" of the condition (independently of not receiving nutrition and hydration) is not imminently or even routinely terminal; second, that preserving the life of a person, no matter how debilitated his state, is a benefit. There is no such thing as a life that is of itself of greater burden than benefit—that is, a life not worth living.

[32] For examples of patients who have revived from a PVS, see Pennsylvania bishops, "Nutrition and Hydration," 551 n. 14. For the viewpoint that recovery from a PVS after six months "does occur, but is rare," see The Multi-Society Task Force on PVS, "Medical Aspects of the Persistent Vegetative State: Part II," *New England Journal of Medicine* 330:22 (2 June 1994): 1575; for evidence that recovery from a PVS is more likely, see Keith Andrews, "Recovery of Patients afer Four Months or More in the Persistent Vegetative State," *British Medical Journal* 306 (12 June 1993): 1597-1600.

Having accepted that feeding a PVS patient is a benefit to him, the Pennsylvania bishops then engage in an extended examination of potential burdens that might outweigh the benefits of MANH. Interestingly, while the they consider primarily the possible burdens imposed by the procedure of MANH itself, they also consider, secondarily, the burdens of continued existence in a PVS state. Possible burdens are considered first in relation to the patient himself and second in relation to the family, loved ones, and society. In general, the Pennsylvania bishops conclude that neither the feeding of a PVS person, nor continued existence in that state, is a serious burden to the patient. Furthermore, while acknowledging the potential strain on the patient's family, they do not think that in most cases this justifies a decision to remove MANH from a PVS patient. However, they acknowledge that in some instances a family "may have reached the moral limits of its abilities or its resources. In such a situation they have done all that they can do, and they are not morally obliged to do more."[33] While willing to acknowledge such possible "exceptions," they do not wish such exceptions to be the basis for a general acceptance of the practice.

Initially, the main difference between the positions of the Texas and Pennsylvania bishops seems to be descriptive: what constitutes an appropriate description of the PVS patient? Do such patients have a fatal pathology (i.e., the inability to chew and swallow, as one ethicist puts it)? Or are they simply particularly debilitated patients that require significant care?

Upon a closer reading of the two documents, deeper disagreements emerge. For example, in citing examples of reasonable benefits for a patient, the Texas bishops include "maintenance of life with reasonable hope of recovery." Maintenance or preservation of life itself is not included on their list, and this is reinforced by their next statement, that "Even without any hope of recovery it is an expression of love and respect for the person to keep the patient clean, warm and comfortable." Feeding incurable patients is not included as necessarily an expression of love. Further on in the document, when discussing patients with a lethal pathology, the question of

[33] Pennsylvania bishops, "Nutrition and Hydration: Moral Considerations," 549.

MANH is presented in such a way that arguments must be provided as to why it should be given, rather than why it may not. This is a viewpoint that seems to follow logically from the viewpoint in which human life—independently of the degree of function or debilitation—is not considered something worthwhile to be preserved in itself.

The disagreements implicit in these episcopal statements are given a much clearer articulation in arguments presented by numerous theologians in the years leading up to them. In order better to understand the underlying disagreements that existed both in these episcopal statements and the more general debate among theologians, I will characterize what I take to be the four types of arguments that were typically presented as moral justifications for withholding or withdrawing MANH from patients in a PVS or other coma-like states.

IV. Four Kinds of Arguments for Withdrawing or Withholding MANH from Comatose Patients

However much the episcopal statements we looked at above may differ, even more starkly different viewpoints on these questions can be found (as might be expected) in the writings of moral theologians. Identifying the key arguments which encapsulate rival viewpoints requires some effort, since there is no consensus on the meaning and use of key terms such as "benefit," "burden," "fatal pathology," "quality of life," and so on. In this section, I will parse out and summarize the four most influential justificatory arguments for withholding or withdrawing MANH for PVS or other seriously ill patients who are unable to be or have difficulty being fed by mouth.

First, there is the "fatal pathology" argument. On this view, the severely debilitated patient who is unable to chew and swallow is considered to have a fatal pathology. Morally speaking, an "existing fatal pathology may be allowed to take its natural course."[34] By "fatal pathology," one may mean one of two things. If one means "fatal if no treatment is given," then this argument

[34] Kevin O'Rourke, "The A.M.A. Statement on Tube Feeding: An Ethical Analysis," *America* 155 (1986): 321-23, 331, at 322.

on its own establishes very little, if anything. For without someone having at least a potentially fatal pathology, the conversation concerning the duty to preserve one's life never arises. Furthermore, while it is clearly acceptable in some circumstances for a person with a fatal pathology to refuse particular medical treatments, the simple recognition of a person's having a fatal pathology does not provide criteria for morally evaluating treatment decisions.

On the other hand, if one means "fatal regardless of the treatment given," then this would seem to mean that the patient is imminently dying, or at least terminally ill. The terms "imminently dying" and "terminally ill" more unambiguously constitute a prognosis of a particular patient's condition than does "fatal pathology," and thus function better as criteria for evaluating the choice to withhold or withdraw MANH. Unsurprisingly, these terms have been much more widely accepted in the theological and particularly the medical community as appropriate criteria.

This distinction sheds light on differences between the debate about MANH by Kelly and others in the 1950s and the debate as it played out in the 1980s. When Kelly and McFadden addressed the issue of "terminal coma," a coma condition as they understood it in light of the medical practices and possibilities of their day was indeed akin to what could be considered "imminently dying." However, by the 1980s, whether for good or ill, PVS patients could not for the most part be accurately defined as being imminently dying or even terminally ill.

A second justification for withholding or withdrawing MANH from PVS patients is the "inability to pursue the spiritual purpose of life" argument.[35] According to this argument, the obligation to prolong human life comes from the need and desire to strive for the purpose of life. Pursuing the spiritual purpose of life requires one to be able to perform human acts (*actus humanus*). However, since PVS patients cannot and probably will not be able to

[35] An alternative name for this argument is the "no hope of benefit" argument. On this view "hope of benefit" is understood as a recovery of cognitive or relational functioning that allows a person to perform human acts (*actus humanus*).

perform human acts, they can no longer pursue the spiritual purpose of life. Since "the ability to strive for the purpose of life [is] the touchstone for using or forgoing life support for persons with serious . . . pathologies. . . . when people are in a PVS, there is no moral mandate to utilize MANH on their behalf."[36] This argument—when made in a specifically Catholic context—appeals to a particular interpretation of Aquinas regarding the *telos* of a human life, and also finds support in a widely quoted address by Pius XII.[37] In terms of the traditional appeal to the benefits and burdens of a medical treatment, the argument is essentially that MANH does not benefit PVS patients, and thus is a useless treatment which may not or even should not be administered.

The "spiritual purpose of life" argument has considerable appeal, not least because we tend to identify ourselves with the activities that distinguish us as human beings. Advocates of this view tend to distinguish sharply between biological and personal life, arguing that "biological" life only has significance to the extent it enables personal life.[38] However, critics of this argument claim that it assumes a dualistic anthropology, requiring persons to disassociate "themselves" and their spiritual purpose from their character as bodily creatures. Critics further note that humans are not "in" their bodies, but that their bodies are in some sense constitutive of who they are.[39] The "spiritual purpose of life"

[36] O'Rourke, "On the Care of 'Vegetative' Patients," 3-4.

[37] Pius XII, "The Prolongation of Life: An address of Pope Pius XII to an International Congress of Anaesthesiologists (November 24, 1957)," appendix IV in *Conserving Human Life,* ed. R. E. Smith (Braintree, Mass.: The Pope John Center, 1989), 312-18.

[38] With regard to the biological life/personal life distinction, "[I]t is necessary to distinguish clearly and consistently between physical or biological life and personal life (personhood). When this important distinction is not made, quality of life judgments can equivocate between the value of biological life and the value of personhood" (Thomas Shannon and James J. Walter, "The PVS Patient and the Forgoing/Withdrawing of Medical Nutrition and Hydration" *Theological Studies* 49 [1988]: 635). With regard to the significance of this distinction for the care of PVS patients, Callahan argues that MANH can be withdrawn from PVS patients because "neither provides any genuine benefit: there is not meaningful life of any kind—it is a mere body only, not an embodied person" (Daniel Callahan, "Feeding the Dying Elderly," *Generations* 10 (Winter 1985): 17.

[39] Thus Gilbert Meilaender argues "Yet for many people the uselessness of feeding the permanently unconscious seems self-evident. Why? Probably because they suppose that the nourishment we provide is, in the words of the President's Commission, doing no more than

argument typically assumes functional criteria for "personhood" and thus leads to the exclusion of certain classes of human beings from care typically extended to all persons. The argument seems logically to legitimate withdrawal or withholding of MANH not only from PVS or other coma patients, but also from various classes of patients who through genetic disease or other debility are unable to perform human acts. Since these classes of patients cannot benefit from MANH or other medical treatments, there is no purpose to treating them should they develop any kind of life-threatening (but manageable) illness.

Thus, in the 1980s, some theological ethicists accepted the discontinuance of MANH to those in a PVS state for reasons similar to that articulated by James Gustafson, that for such patients "the qualities that distinguish human beings and are the basis of human valuing of, and respect for, persons no longer exist."[40] However, other theological ethicists argued that "withholding or withdrawing food and fluids *on this rationale* is morally wrong because it is euthanasia by omission. The withholding or withdrawing of food or fluids carries out the proposal, adopted by choice, to end someone's life because that life itself is judged by others to be valueless or excessively burdensome."[41]

The above reference to "excessive burden" in fact constitutes a third distinct argument. This argument also has two discernible varieties. The first focuses on the burden to the patient, the second focuses on the burden to the caregiver, to the family, and

'sustaining the body.' But we should pause before separating personhood and body so decisively. When considering other topics (care of the environment, for example) we are eager to criticize a dualism that divorces human reason and consciousness from the larger world of nature. Why not here? We can know people—of all ranges of cognitive capacity—only as they are embodied; there is no other 'person' for whom we might care. Such care is not useless if it 'only' preserves bodily life but does not restore cognitive capacities. Even if it is less than we wish could be accomplished, it remains care for the embodied person" (Gilbert Meilaender, "On Removing Food and Water: Against the Stream," *The Hastings Center Report* 14 (December 1984): 12.

[40] James Gustafson, in a 22 May 1985 letter to John Paris, cited by Richard McCormick in "Nutrition-Hydration: The New Euthanasia," in *The Critical Calling* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1989), 377.

[41] William E. May, et al., "Feeding and Hydrating the Permanently Unconscious and Other Vulnerable Persons," *Issues in Law and Medicine* 3 (Winter 1987): 206.

to society. Of the four kinds of arguments distinguished in this section of the paper, arguments from "excessive burden" are those most closely rooted in the traditional principle of ordinary versus extraordinary means of treatment. Thus, this argument is the basis for Kelly's and McFadden's acceptance—at least in theory—of withdrawing intravenous feeding from a comatose patient. It is also the basis for the Pennsylvania bishops' acknowledgment that in some instances MANH for a PVS patient could be considered extraordinary treatment and thus morally optional.

The first type of "excessive burden" argument emphasizes the burden of MANH for the PVS patient himself. This burden is sometimes expressed in terms of the patient's autonomous choice: that the patient would not have wanted to be kept alive in such a state. It is also expressed in terms of the aesthetic disvalue of such a state of existence, described as "offensive" or "repugnant." However, when the burden is described in this way, it is unclear whether what is being objected to is the burdensomeness of MANH as a form of treatment or care, or rather the form of life of the PVS patient which MANH helps sustain.

Traditional "excessive burden" arguments for withholding or withdrawing MANH depend on the discernment that the burden being considered excessive is the burden of the treatment, not the burden of life itself. Discerning the motives of patients or their proxies is difficult at best. However, since some PVS patients can be fed orally, one means of engaging in such discernment is to enquire whether the proxy would think it a good thing to feed the PVS patient orally if that were possible. If that is the case, then it is more likely that what is being rejected is the treatment. However, if the receiving of nutrition by any means is rejected, and there is no reason to believe that the nutrition itself would harm or poison the patient, then there is significant reason to believe that what is being rejected is not a treatment but life in that state. However, as such, this is not a form of the traditional "excessive burden" argument against MANH as it is understood in terms of the principle of ordinary versus extraordinary treatment, and is more properly seen as what is typically referred to as a "quality of life" argument, which is discussed below.

The second type of "excessive burden" argument is one in which MANH for the PVS patient is considered burdensome to the family, the caregivers, or society. This is not only the most common justification for withdrawal of MANH from PVS patients, but also the kind of argument which defenders of the classic distinction between ordinary and extraordinary treatment are likely to accept as legitimate in the tradition. More strident advocates of withdrawing MANH from PVS patients tend to make this appeal by referring to the financial costs to society of maintaining PVS patients, and thus make a generalized argument that the burdens of caring for such patients typically or always outweigh the benefits. Those who more reluctantly acknowledge the legitimacy of the argument that in some situations the burdens of maintaining a PVS patient make MANH an extraordinary treatment—such as the Pennsylvania bishops—focus on the limits of a family's ability to care for a PVS patient in a limited number of difficult or unfortunate situations.

The fourth and final argument is the "quality of life" argument. We can again distinguish two varieties of argument, which are distinguishable by their different understandings of "quality of life." On the one hand, "quality of life" may refer to choices about the quality of living. For example, when one has a particular form of heart disease, having an angioplasty now might result in a stroke and a very debilitated future existence, whereas not having the operation may mean that one will likely die from a heart attack before too long. In making a choice whether or not to undergo angioplasty, a person is making a choice about what kind of life he wants. While these kinds of choices are not strictly commensurable, it is still possible to evaluate them, arguing that some are better and others worse, some morally acceptable and others morally unacceptable.

For instance, when a person is making a choice whether or not to receive a medical treatment, or between two different possible medical treatments, there are at least three different ways in which we can evaluate the nature of his decision. We may understand him to be (a) choosing between two reasonable alternatives, as in the example of the previous paragraph; (b)

making a seemingly imprudent but perhaps defensible choice; and (c) choosing to die by omission. To take another example, with an elderly but somewhat demented man whose last remaining pleasure is eating, but who is beginning to have problems chewing and swallowing, one could defend a choice to keep feeding him orally, despite the risk of death by aspiration.[42]

The second kind of "quality of life" argument is a choice that there is insufficient "quality" in life itself. Like the first variety of "excessive burden" argument discussed above, this argument is typically not a rejection of a treatment because it does not improve or maintain the quality of life that one presently has, but is rather a rejection of a treatment because it sustains a life that is not considered to have sufficient quality to be maintained. As such, to withdraw MANH because of this kind of "quality of life" concern is not in fact a choice about appropriate medical care, which is always ordered to benefitting the life a patient has, but a nonmedically determined choice about living itself.

In this section, I have examined what I take to be the four most significant arguments put forward by moral theologians as a rationale for limiting or forgoing the administration of MANH to PVS and other comatose or severely debilitated patients. While not using or withdrawing MANH from PVS or other severely debilitated patients can be justified in some circumstances, the burden of proof lies with establishing that the burden of the treatment outweighs the benefit to the patient of maintaining and prolonging his life.

Of course, perhaps the strongest rationale for the widespread administration of MANH to patients over the last forty years has been the accepted belief that MANH does extend the life of a broad range of patients. This underlying assumption about the efficacy of MANH has recently begun to be questioned by the medical profession, and it is to this that I turn in the next section.

[42] For an interesting discussion of why the Catholic tradition does not advocate the protection of one's life and health at all costs, see Bernadette Tobin, "Can a Patient's Refusal of Life-prolonging Treatment Be Morally Upright When It Is Motivated Neither by the Belief That the Treatment Would Be Clearly Futile Nor by the Belief That the Consequences of Treatment Would Be Unduly Burdensome?" *Issues for a Catholic Bioethic,* ed. Luke Gormally (London: The Linacre Centre, 1999): 334-40.

V. Changing Medical Practices with Regard to MANH

In the previous section the focus was on arguments for and against withdrawing MANH from PVS patients. In this final section we return to a more general discussion of changing medical practice with regard to MANH for dying and debilitated patients. In the first section I discussed medical practice over the last thirty years with regard to MANH, how often it is instituted for a variety of reasons that combine perceived safety, cost, and convenience for caregivers. In this section, we look at recent changes in the use of MANH amongst medical practitioners.

Two of the key assumptions that have governed the use of MANH among the elderly and debilitated are that it increases longevity (e.g., for comatose patients) and that it improves quality of life (e.g., Pareira's cancer patients). This assumption has led to the use of MANH for large numbers of elderly patients in nursing homes, VA hospitals, and other facilities across America, which continues to the present.

One of the shared assumptions about MANH by almost all the moral theologians who discuss the ethics of MANH is that it increases longevity for almost all classes of patients. This assumption has been held for the last forty years with little empirical verification. Until recently it was assumed that tube feeding was almost always a relatively safe, effective, and valuable therapy. This assumption has been particularly strong in the United States, where the use of tube feeding is four to eleven times more common than in other industrialized nations.[43] However, the assumption that MANH increases longevity has been challenged by recent studies on a number of different classes of patients.

In one study published in 1998, 5266 elderly nursing-home residents with chewing and swallowing problems were followed,

[43] See L. Howard, M. Ament, C. R Fleming, and others, "Current Use and Clinical Outcome of Home Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition Therapies in the United States," *Gastroenterology* 109 (1995): 355-65. Cited in M. L. Borum, J. Lynn, Z. Zhong, and others, "The Effect of Nutritional Supplementation on Survival in Seriously Ill Hospitalized Adults: An Evaluation of the SUPPORT Data," *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* 48 (2000): S35.

to compare the rates of mortality of those with a feeding tube versus those without.[44] Overall, the study found a significantly higher mortality rate for patients with a feeding tube. On the other hand, a significant portion of those patients who employed a feeding tube were later able to be weaned from the tube, though the study does not indicate why this was the case, or whether the patient's chewing and swallowing problems were resolved. The study is aware of the possibility that the increased mortality may be because the tube-fed population was sicker, but also offers a number of other potential explanations for the increased mortality. First, while feeding tubes are often inserted to prevent aspiration, the efficacy of this intervention has never been proven.[45] Second, tube-fed patients have a tendency to be more agitated, which leads to the use of other medications or restraints. Third, tube-fed patients may have a number of other local complications, such as increased diarrhea leading to fluid and electrolyte imbalances, and increased infections from the feeding tube itself, or from it being dislodged.

In another study published in 2000 of 2149 patients receiving nutritional support who were seriously ill (e.g., almost all were also on a ventilator), enteral or tube feeding was associated with increased longevity for patients in a coma. However, it was also associated with decreased longevity for patients with acute respiratory failure, with multiorgan system failure with sepsis, with cirrhosis, and with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.[46] The authors of the study acknowledge that the significance of their results might be limited because of an inability to adjust for the relative severity of their patients' illnesses (i.e., those receiving nutritional support might have been relatively sicker and thus likely to die sooner). While they do not wish to draw definitive conclusions about the cause for increased mortality among certain classes of patients, the authors of this study do conclude that

[44] Mitchell, Kiely, and Lipsitz, "Does Artificial Enteral Nutrition Prolong Survival of Institutionalized Elders With Chewing and Swallowing Problems?," M207-M213.

[45] See Thomas Finocane and Julie Bynum, "Use of Tube Feeding to Prevent Aspiration Pneumonia," *Lancet* 348 (23 November 1996): 1421-24.

[46] Borum, Lynn, Zhong, and others, "The Effect of Nutritional Supplementation on Survival in Seriously Ill Hospitalized Adults: An Evaluation of the SUPPORT Data," S33.

certain classes of patients who receive tube feeding may be at increased risk of mortality.

At the same time as these studies have been going on, an increasing number of geriatricians have been finding that there are alternatives to overcoming many kinds of chewing and swallowing problems in the elderly. There is presently much work on matching appropriate diets for individual patients, making meals that are appetizing to particular patients, and also finding the kind of consistency of food that patients with chewing and swallowing problems can assimilate without aspiration. For example, while some patients will choke on solids but not on liquids, other patients will choke on liquids, but not on thickened liquids. Whereas in the past a patient's tendency to aspirate a typical menu might have been an indication for tube-feeding, now in some places efforts are going towards tailoring menus to the specific swallowing abilities of a particular patient.

This brings us to the question of the future of MANH in medicine. If the studies discussed above are reinforced by other studies, there will undoubtedly begin to be a considerable change in the use of MANH. Because the previous two sections of this paper focused on MANH for PVS and other coma patients, and the argument put forth there is that since (a) this class of patients is not in any ordinary sense "terminally ill" or "imminently dying" and (b) MANH has been shown to prolong the life of this class of patients, the burden of proof is on those who wish to argue that such patients should not receive MANH, the reader may assume that this paper is strongly advocating the use of MANH for all classes of patients. It is not. While undoubtedly preserving the lives of many persons, MANH also has many deleterious qualities, which have not been addressed widely in either the medical or the ethical literature. Some of these deleterious qualities are medical burdens in the narrow sense: MANH in some classes of patients may result in reduced longevity, add other medical complications, and increase patient discomfort. On these grounds alone, we are seeing the reduction in the use of MANH for dying and debilitated patients in various medical settings in the United States. In the final section, I will argue that moral theologians

have a broader and more holistic perspective to offer to the question of the use of MANH for dying and debilitated patients, a perspective that is rarely presented in the moral and theological literature.

VI. Feed Me Till I Want No More?

The perspective to be presented in this last section is encapsulated in a verse by the Welsh poet and hymn writer William Williams. His most famous hymn begins as follows:

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but Thou art mighty;
Hold me with Thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
Feed me till I want no more;
Feed me till I want no more.

In Williams's verse, we can see three implicit claims. First, eating is placed in the context of Christian pilgrimage and discipleship. The hungers of a Christian can and should always draw him to the Provider of his daily bread, which by God's grace will fulfill those hungers. Second, Williams's reference to "being fed" signals the importance of the communal element in Christian eating: Christians not only pursue their daily bread, but also accept being fed, and in doing so accept gifts given to them. Thus Christians accept the gift of the Eucharist as sustenance for their lives. Third, in the ambiguity of the term "want" in Williams's verse, we are drawn to the realization that "being fed" is adequately grasped neither as merely a satiation of human desires nor as the fulfillment of bodily needs. Rather, Christians' desires and needs for food are to be integrated with—and if and when necessary, subordinated to—the ultimate end of the Christian. For the Christian, "feed me till I want no more" is ultimately neither a cry of gluttonous self-assertion, nor a medical request for the most efficient delivery of nutrition as long as medical benefits are to be

had, but an exclamation of a commitment to recognize that one's daily bread comes from God and God's people.

It is remarkable how little has been written about the theological significance of eating practices. The human practices of dining and/or feeding others has not been a significant topic for most moral theologians. A notable exception to this is a recent article by Patrick McCormick, which focuses on the theological—and especially Eucharistic—significance of eating practices in relation to some of the culinary pathologies endemic in American culture.[47] McCormick seeks to recover a holistic theological perspective on Christian eating practices in light of "Diet America's" current preoccupation with dieting. However, McCormick's insights are also applicable, as I will seek to show, to Christian reflection on feeding those who are dying and severely debilitated.

McCormick seeks to move us toward a more adequate theological understanding of our eating practices. He emphasizes a theological understanding of the significance of the bodily, and challenges contemporary eating practices—specifically those of "Diet America"—in the light of a Eucharistic theology. Thus he asks:

> if our ability to participate in the mystery of this sacrament depends at least in part on our grasp of the symbols employed in the breaking, sharing, and eating of this bread and wine, then just how does our being immersed in the rituals and customs of "Diet America" affect our experience of the Eucharist? And second, what, if anything, does the Eucharist have to say to our contemporary food culture and larger practices of table fellowship? In what ways does this sacrament of God's creative, redemptive and reconciling love inform and/or challenge the attitudes, practices, and structures of "Diet America"?[48]

[47] See Patrick T. McCormick, "How Could We Break The Lord's Bread in a Foreign Land? The Eucharist in 'Diet America,'" *Horizons* 25 (1998): 43-57. For other suggestive articles on ways in which Christians might understand their eating practices Eucharistically, see Mark Allman, "Eucharist, Ritual, and Narrative: Formation of Individual and Communal Moral Character," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 14:1 (2000): 60-67; and especially William T. Cavanaugh, "The World in a Wafer: A Geography of the Eucharist as Resistance of Globalization," *Modern Theology* 15:2 (April 1999): 181-96.

[48] Ibid., 47.

McCormick's theological account of the significance of our eating practices begins with an appeal to Wendell Berry's claim that with food becoming ever more an efficiently produced, processed, and packaged commodity, we find it increasingly harder to eat with an understanding of our food as a gift of God that involves the labors of others. When we are involved with the growing and/or the preparing and cooking of our food, "we experience and celebrate our dependence and our gratitude, for we are living from mystery, from creatures we did not make and powers we cannot comprehend."[49] This insight is particularly relevant for the situation of the person receiving MANH. Although tube feeding has always in some sense circumvented eating, at one time it was simply hospital food inserted into a tube and transported into the body. At present it is highly processed, and perhaps the exemplification of the alienation of "food" from its sources, and the mystery and gratitude that food should call forth from us. As we noted earlier, patients are often tube fed not strictly out of medical necessity, but for a variety of conveniences and benefits, which sometimes do not take into account the pleasures and joys of eating of the person who is to be tube fed.

McCormick also seeks to show how "Diet America's" approach to food alienates us from the pleasures of eating, and on a deeper level, from an adequate recognition of our embodiment. The culture of dieting rejects the pleasures of the palate, and, in typically promoting an idealized conception of the body, produces a rejection and/or hatred of real human bodies. McCormick cannot see how this can be reconciled with a Eucharistic vision that tells us to "taste and see the goodness of the Lord." He also notes that "Diet America" is particularly ill at ease with bodies that "grow old, get sick, and die," and with women's bodies, which it constantly seeks to "reduce," often "to a number on their bathroom scales, a number which is always too large."[50] In contrast, McCormick notes that by our participation in the Eucharist, we are transformed into the body of Christ, and we are

[49] Ibid., 48, quoting from Wendell Berry, "The Pleasures of Eating," in Daniel Halpern, ed., *Not for Bread Alone* (Hopewell, N.J.: Ecco, 1993), 17.

[50] McCormick, "The Eucharist in 'Diet America'," 52.

to "celebrate our bodies and the bodies of our neighbors. . . . our bodies are glorious creation . . . [which] have been fashioned by God to savor and enjoy that world—indeed they have become God's dwelling place."[51] McCormick's insights with regard to the diet culture's perception of imperfect bodies is clearly present in many discussions of the bodies of the dying and severely debilitated. Such discussions never rejoice in such imperfect and debilitated bodies, but typically speak of the "repugnance" or "burdensomeness" of life itself when it is lived in such bodies. Our culture, which prizes efficiency and bodily perfection, is often unable to find anything redeeming in the process of dying of a severely debilitated person.

McCormick also powerfully recognizes the communal and social elements of our eating practices. Humans do not merely eat; they dine. Dining is a place of companionship, and cooking is an opportunity to display artistry and hospitality. McCormick states this eloquently:

> For these tables are not only the places where we share our food and drink, they are also where we bring our stories, raise a toast to our dreams, thank God for our blessings, welcome new family members, and remember old friends. And they are the places we bring the good that has been grown, harvested, and delivered by others, as well as the places where we bow our heads to recall those without tables. They are places for sharing and breaking bread, for making sure that everyone has enough and that no one hoards all the good stuff; for it is a tough thing to enjoy a meal next to someone who is hungry. They are places for reconciliation, for forgiving and making peace with a simple toast or a piece of bread since it is much too hard and stilted a thing to sit around these tables and eat with enemies. And they are places to bring new acquaintances and fashion them into friends or family, because dining is not something we can do well with strangers. If there are things more important than how we behave at our tables—both personal and public—there are not many of them.[52]

Herbert McCabe echoes McCormick's argument that our eating practices create our communities, claiming that eating alone (and living alone) are somehow unnatural for humans.[53] In

[51] Ibid., 53.

[52] Ibid., 54.

[53] Herbert McCabe, *The New Creation* (London: Fontana, 1964).

breaking bread and sharing the cup with others, we become reconciled and brought into community with others.

The importance of the communal dimension of eating is also usually ignored in ethical discussions of MANH for dying and debilitated patients. For example, as was noted earlier in the paper, nursing-home patients are sometimes started on tube feeding because they are not eating sufficiently by mouth, for whatever reason. While the choice to tube feed may mean improved nutrition given the existing situation, the choice to administer tube feeding may signal the end of efforts to feed the patient by mouth. In such cases, it is also the end of one of the main forms of human contact and attention that such a patient may expect to receive. From then on, the nurse or attendant is typically "feeding" a machine, and contact with the patient is likely to be more remote. In addition, a nursing-home patient who is tube fed typically no longer goes to the dining room to eat with others. As such, she is deprived of another main source of human contact and socialization. Finally, the patient is now deprived of a ritual that typically regulates her days and hours, and further alienates him from the typical human activities that are part of defining who we are.

McCormick alludes to one other deficiency with the culture of "Diet America" in its preoccupation with "reducing" human bodies—its rejection of hospitality. In the quest to control and reduce the body, diet America is preoccupied with control over all that goes in the body, and so is suspicious of others' offers of hospitality. McCormick notes that "the Christian story is littered with saints like Vincent de Paul, William Booth, and Dorothy Day who spent their lives honoring and caring for the suffering bodies of neighbors and strangers alike."[54] For Christians, the centrality of the command to perform the corporal works of mercy is a stark reminder not only of the Christian responsibility to show hospitality in caring for the sick and suffering and debilitated bodies of the sick and dying, but also to be willing to receive hospitality when we are debilitated and dying. In the culture of "Diet America," a culture that emphasizes autonomy and self-

[54] McCormick, "The Eucharist in 'Diet America'," 51.

mastery, we should not be surprised to see the spiritual pathology of the refusal to receive hospitality.

The Christian witness of hospitality also speaks to the situation of many patients who receive or have received MANH. In most of the contemporary debates about MANH, it is assumed that if MANH is removed, the person will not be fed because she should not or cannot receive any substantive nutrition. While there are certainly many situations when a patient is dying where it is indeed necessary and even best for her not to be fed, it should not be a general assumption that patients who are taken off of MANH are no longer to be fed by mouth. Feeding others and being fed by others is among the most significant acts that Christians do, and not only for nutritive reasons. As persons shaped by a Eucharistic vision of our eating practices, Christians know this well. If and when it is realized that MANH is not as effective in prolonging life as it was once thought to be, there will be an opportunity in nursing homes and other medical contexts to rethink the significance of feeding. It can be hoped that a Eucharistic vision of the significance of feeding the dying and debilitated will be embodied in these settings, recalling what it might mean to hear the cry of even the dying and severely debilitated to "Feed Me Till I Want No More."

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RECONCILING SCIENCE WITH NATURAL PHILOSOPHY

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENCE has shaped or influenced virtually every aspect of modern culture. One of its consequences has been the apparent demise of natural philosophy, which was perceived to be an erroneous first attempt to do what science now does correctly. To this day one sees on occasion a physics textbook that begins by censuring Aristotle, the natural philosopher *par excellence,* for his blunders about falling bodies, or the stars, or the elements. Some historians concede that we could hardly have expected more from the Philosopher, helpless as he was without telescopes and other scientific paraphernalia. Others point out that he himself offered apology for daring to speak on things unobservable to him:

> We regard the zeal of one whose thirst after philosophy leads him to accept even slight indications where it is very difficult to see one's way, as a proof rather of modesty than of over-confidence.[1]

By the kinds of experience available to him, Aristotle could never have attained to much more than scanty conceptions about the stars. He could not correctly identify even the elements of familiar and humble Earth. It seemed only appropriate that philosophers

[1] *De Caelo* 2.12.291b25, J. L. Stocks translation, from *The Complete Works of Aristotle,* ed. Jonathan Barnes (repr.; Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995). All quotations of Aristotle will be drawn from this edition. In his *Meteorology,* Aristotle remarks that "We consider a satisfactory explanation of phenomena inaccessible to observation to have been given when our account of them is free from impossibilities" (1.7.344a5, E. W. Webster translation).

should have relinquished the whole study of nature to those better equipped for the job.[2]

Philosophers, however, cannot afford this luxury. Once every attempt to philosophize about nature is abandoned, what becomes of philosophy? What is left? Shall we philosophize about God? Or the immortality of the soul? If the principles and methods of philosophy prove unreliable regarding things we can lay our hands on, can we trust them in studying things outside our experience? Incredible. Worse yet, if philosophers give up talking about the natural world altogether, then ethics, too, despite its preoccupation with our very own actions, could not go forward without permission from the scientists, but would be obliged to wait upon their final verdict concerning, for example, the question of human freedom. When scientists, using only the methods to which they are accustomed, see no need for such things as free will, the soul, purpose in nature, and a host of other things, they are apt to regard them as obsolete hypotheses invented in a time when a sober study of nature was neither possible nor yet conceived, when people had an animistic and anthropomorphic view of the world. In other words, natural philosophers are not extinct; they have disappeared from philosophy departments only to reappear in science departments.

There has been for some time now an unfortunate divorce between "science" and "natural philosophy," a divorce which I am to some extent forced to acknowledge because of common parlance. Although there is a real difference between the methods used in the more general study of nature and those used in the

[2] Stephen Hawking notes this concession of the philosophers: "Up to now, most scientists have been too occupied with the development of new theories that describe *what* the universe is to ask the question *why*. On the other hand, the people whose business it is to ask *why*, the philosophers, have not been able to keep up with the advance of scientific theories. In the eighteenth century, philosophers considered the whole of human knowledge, including science, to be their field and discussed questions such as: Did the universe have a beginning? However, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, science became too technical and mathematical for the philosophers, or anyone else except a few specialists. Philosophers reduced the scope of their inquiries so much that Wittgenstein, possibly the most famous philosopher of this century, said, *The sole remaining task for philosophy is the analysis of language*. What a comedown from the great tradition of philosophy from Aristotle to Kant!" (Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* [New York: Bantam Books, 1990], 174-75).

more detailed studies of it, such differences do not warrant a distinction of disciplines. One and the same discipline can require many different methods in order to approach its one subject matter. Physicists sometimes use thought experiments, other times they perform physical experiments. Astronomers sometimes use optical telescopes, other times they need radio telescopes. Biologists sometimes observe the whole animal in action, other times they dissect it. Nevertheless, most philosophers who have not given up on nature entirely have restricted "the philosophy of nature" to the most general study of nature, where, as we shall see, certainty is attainable and hypotheses and experiments are unnecessary. Meanwhile, scientists have confined "science" to a study of nature by means of hypotheses and experiments. It was not always so. In Aristotle's day, indeed in the time of Thomas Aquinas, there was no distinction between the philosopher of nature and the scientist. Natural science is one philosophic discipline, although it requires many different methods. Even by Newton's time it was still customary to call physics "philosophy."[3]

The distinction between natural philosophy and science is certainly artificial for any lover of wisdom who wishes to understand all things as much as possible. A study that begins in wonder[4] could hardly stop just as the most wonderful questions emerge, for the mere reason that we cannot have certainty about the answers. For scientists, too, the distinction is unnatural. If they study nature out of curiosity about it, will they ignore any source of genuine knowledge about it? Will they not rather rejoice at the possibility of knowing with certainty at least some things about nature, however humble and general? It makes no sense to distinguish two disciplines that seek to understand the same subject matter in the same light, namely, the light of sense

[3] The very word "scientist," it seems, was not coined in English until 1834. See the Oxford English Dictionary, 2d edition, ed. J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

[4] "For it is owing to their wonder that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize; they wondered originally at the obvious difficulties, then advanced little by little and stated difficulties about the greater matters, e.g. about the phenomena of the moon and those of the sun and of the stars, and about the genesis of the universe" (Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* 1.2.982b10-15; W. D. Ross translation).

experience. To number disciplines based on the number of methods used is backwards: subject matter is much more fundamental.[5] If we define a discipline by a single method, then its subject matter becomes "whatever can be understood by that method." Accordingly, "the philosophy of nature" has for its subject matter "whatever can be understood about nature with certainty from general experience," and the subject matter of "science" becomes "whatever can be learned about nature by experiments."[6]

It is no doubt true that the generic study of nature is more "philosophical" than the detailed study of it in the sense that the way of thinking appropriate to this study resembles metaphysics more than modern physics does. It is a mistake, however, to conclude that thinking in very general terms is somehow more "philosophical" than getting down to particulars. A philosopher is not someone who prefers thinking about "animal" rather than "slug." Ideally, Aristotle says,

> We proceed to treat of animals, without omitting, to the best of our ability, any member of the kingdom, however ignoble. For if some have no graces to charm the sense, yet even these, by disclosing to intellectual perception the artistic spirit that designed them, give immense pleasure to all who can trace links of causation, and are inclined to philosophy.[7]

[5] Thus Thomas Aquinas points out that those who use a mathematical method to study nature are nonetheless more natural scientists than mathematicians, because they use mathematics for the sake of understanding something about nature, not something about mathematical things. See II *Phys.*, lect. 3, n. 336 (*In octo libros de Physico auditu sive Physicorum Aristotelis Commentaria,* ed. P. Fr. Angeli and M. Pirotta, O.P. [Naples: M. d'Auria Editore Pontificio, 1953], p. 82). The naturalist who applies mathematics to nature considers every term, such as "straight," "triangle," "circle," *in concreto,* thinking of each as existing in some kind of sensible matter. This difference in the mode of defining is the crucial difference between mathematics and natural science. One defines with, the other without, sensible matter. This is not a difference of method, but a difference in what they are studying, an essential difference in the intelligibility of their subject matters. See Aquinas, *In Boet. de Trin.,* q. 5 ("De divisione speculativae scientiae"), a. 1.

[6] None of this constitutes an objection against distinguishing parts of one science as a convenience for the division of labor.

[7] Aristotle, *Parts of Animals,* 1.5.645a5-10 (William Ogle translation).

As for which is more "scientific," the general or the particular knowledge of nature, this depends entirely on what is meant by the word. In its ancient sense, *scientia* or *epistēmē* meant a very perfect knowledge, a certainty of something obtained by seeing the reasons why it is so. Accordingly, mathematics would be the most scientific of the sciences, as one can judge by the standards laid out for "science" in Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*. In this sense of "science," the more general study of nature is more "scientific," because it is much more certain than the detailed study of nature which rests upon hypotheses.

Today, however, the word "science" has a meaning that does not apply to mathematics at all.[8] It means a knowledge obtained by experimentation, and the testing of hypotheses. Notice that this new meaning is not given in terms of the subject matter we hope to understand, but in terms of a particular method of understanding it.[9] It follows, of course, that a generic understanding of natural things, which does not need experiments at all, is not "science." Some would even call it "unscientific," implying, unjustly, that whatever does not use the experimental method cannot be real knowledge, but is more like conjecture or groundless opinion. Regardless of the motives for restricting the word "science" in this way, taken in this sense it is clear that the more detailed parts of the study of nature are more "scientific."

To sum up, if "philosophy" is taken in its ancient sense to mean any universal knowledge (or search for it) beginning in wonder, it applies to the whole study of nature, both general and specific, and if more to either, more to the specific, since a knowledge of things in all their concreteness is more wonderful than a general understanding of them that abstracts from their

[8] "Mathematics is not a science from our point of view, in the sense that it is not a *natural* science. The test of its validity is not experiment" (Richard P. Feynman, *Six Easy Pieces,* ed. Robert B. Leighton and Matthew Sands [repr.; Reading, Mass.: Helix Books, Addison-Wesley, 1995], 47).

[9] "Scientist" is more concrete than "science," and so it is natural for people to define "science" by what is common to all the people called "scientists." If those who call themselves scientists, however, arbitrarily restrict themselves to using certain methods to study nature when other legitimate ones exist, the "science of nature" will end up with an artificially restrictive definition.

differences. Thus what we call "science" today would be more "philosophical" than Aristotle's *Physics*. If "science" is taken in its ancient sense to mean a very sure and causal knowledge of conclusions, then it applies more to the more general study of nature, and thus Aristotle's *Physics* would be more "scientific" than what we call "science" today.

The more general study of nature I will call "natural philosophy," and the more detailed study of it, "science." Using this distinction, we may say that it is generally thought today that science does not continue the philosophy of nature, but replaces it. The detailed study of nature, based on experiments, is the only serious knowledge of nature, we are told, and it replaces the more general study of it conducted by philosophers who do not use experiments.[10] To see clearly whether the more "scientific" study of nature can replace the more "philosophic," to see how these methods are related, it is necessary first to see their distinction. Scientists might resent being told that theirs is only a part of the study of nature, that there are ways to study nature other than the ones they commonly adopt, ways that yield a knowledge worthy of the name. Science tends to define itself with perfect generality: any and all genuine knowledge of the natural world is "science." This is as it should be, and it is the way Aristotle understood the science of nature. There are nonetheless principles and methods, and even kinds of experience, that scientists almost entirely ignore, but that if pursued yield genuine knowledge of the natural world.

All distinction is based on some kind of opposition. Distinguishing the more "philosophical" study of nature from the "scientific" accordingly reduces to understanding six[11] oppositions, which I now take up one at a time.

[10] This is one of the reasons that it is difficult to defend the idea of a university, today, where science and philosophy departments are supposed to coexist peacefully, and even cooperate. "The presumption is that nature is every bit of what science can reveal, but a great deal more besides, and that some of this, too, can be known" (Charles de Koninck, "The Moral Responsibilities of the Scientist," *Laval Théologique et Philosophique* 6 [1950]: 356).

[11] I make no claim to exhaustiveness, but only to bringing out the most fundamental oppositions which bear on the distinction between "science" and "the philosophy of nature" in the modern and restricted senses of these terms.

I. General vs. Particular

The first difference between a more philosophic study of nature and what we today would call the scientific approach is based on the difference between generality and particularity. Science indisputably yields a much more distinct and detailed picture of the universe than philosophy can ever provide. A natural philosopher can show that locomotion is the most basic kind of change, and all other change depends upon it in some way.[12] A scientist can show how this is so in particular cases, for example showing how a change in temperature follows upon a change in the motions of tiny particles. A natural philosopher defines "element," and can show that elements must exist and that there must be a finite number of these in the world.[13] The scientist can tell what the chemical elements are, and he learns more every day about the ultimate particles composing all bodies. The natural philosopher argues that the universe is finite.[14] The scientist can tell roughly how much mass the universe contains, and whether the finitude of the universe is due to its having a boundary. The natural philosopher can say what time is.[15] The scientist can tell whether or not there is some universal standard of time in the universe. Thus scientists speak in a more particular and detailed way than natural philosophers do.[16]

In terms of detail science improves upon what natural philosophy has to say. A more particular knowledge is better than a more general, vague knowledge. It does not follow, however, that scientific knowledge of the natural world can replace a

[12] See Aristotle, *Physics,* 7.7. I cite Aristotle here not as an authority, but as an example of the way of studying natural things that is so commonly distinguished against "science."

[13] See ibid., 1.4.187b7.

[14] See Aristotle, *De Caelo,* 1.5-7.

[15] See Aristotle, *Physics,* 4.11.219b2 ff.

[16] The natural philosopher can talk about some very particular things, but not in concrete detail, as it were. The human soul, for example, is about as specific a thing as one could hope to find: it is the form of a most specific species of things, namely, man. What enables the philosopher to speak about so specific a thing, however, is his use of his interior experience of being a man, which does not enable him to speak in detail about the body of which this soul is the form. Details about the human body take us immediately into the realm of science.

philosophic knowledge of it. Particular knowledge cannot replace general knowledge. One reason for this is that more general knowledge, precisely because it is more general and therefore less perfect, is also easier and more certain to us than an exacting knowledge of particulars.[17] And more certain knowledge cannot be replaced by less certain knowledge.

To illustrate, even when blindfolded I can distinguish between wine and beer. That is easy enough, being a quite general knowledge of rather major differences between different kinds of alcoholic beverages. I boast that I can also infallibly tell a white wine from a red one by blind tasting. Once I am asked about different reds, though, I get nervous. When we descend into different particular Zinfandels, or different years of the same Zinfandel, I am lost. Now even if I were a true connoisseur my knowledge of the differences between this and that wine could never replace my knowledge of the difference between wine and beer. It can complete it in some way, but never replace it.

The same is true of intellectual knowledge. My knowledge of the differences between the species of triangles cannot replace my more general knowledge of the differences between triangles and quadrilaterals. My knowledge of properties belonging to all triangles in general cannot be replaced by my knowledge of the properties belonging to the "three-four-five" right triangle in particular. In the opening chapter of his *Physics,* Aristotle points out that it is natural for us to begin the study of nature in a very general way, and that we are much more certain in our vague general knowledge than in our understanding of specific details. We are much more certain that there is a difference of kind between plants and animals than that there is such a difference between a skunk and a horse, and we are more certain that there is a difference of kind between a skunk and a horse than that there is such a difference between a horse and a zebra.

[17] "The laws of physics can acquire this minuteness of detail only by sacrificing something of the fixed and absolute certainty of common-sense laws. There is a sort of balance between precision and certainty: one cannot be increased except to the detriment of the other" (Pierre Duhem, *The Aim and Structure of Physical Theory* [repr.; New York: Atheneum, 1974], 178-79).

It is better, then, to say that science completes natural philosophy in some way, rather than to say that it replaces it. A particular knowledge of the natural world is more perfect than a general knowledge of it, being more distinct and detailed, but it is also less general and less certain, and therefore cannot replace it.

II. Universal Experience vs. Confined Experiences

The second difference between natural philosophy and science is based on the kinds of experience from which they begin. I call "universal experience" the experience that all healthy adults have and cannot avoid having, and "confined experiences" any of the sort that only some people have.[18] Everyone experiences motion or change in the world; that is a matter of universal experience. But only some people experience earthquakes; that kind of experience is confined to certain individuals, even if a great number of them. Every healthy adult has an experience of seeing; that is again a matter of universal experience. The more particular experience of seeing the northern lights, however, is restricted to some people only. Experiencing hallucinations, or experiencing heightened senses of hearing and smell due to loss of vision, are also matters of confined experience.

The answers to some fundamental questions about nature can be reached by beginning from nothing more than universal experience. Accordingly the first part of the study of nature begins from universal experience alone, but can take us only so far into a study of natural things. Not everything we wish to know about nature is contained implicitly in the kinds of experiences that all of us share. Science accordingly seeks to supplement ordinary experience by contriving, with instruments and experiments, further experiences that are necessarily confined to a few

[18] Scientists make this distinction, too. Werner Heisenberg, for example, says, "Since the time of Galileo the fundamental method made it possible to pass from general experience to specific experience, to single out characteristic events in nature from which its 'laws' could be studied more directly than from general experience" (Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy* [New York: Harper & Row, 1962], 149).

observers. Yet science takes pains to ensure that the kinds of observations from which it begins will always be reproducible in principle—they must be things which every person could in principle experience, even if it is not the case that every person must experience them.[19] Those who love knowledge are not satisfied with the scanty conceptions of so many particular things which universal experience by itself would supply—we must pursue a more and more detailed experience of nature. Thus it is a part of the aim of science to extend the range of our experience.[20]

The scientist is therefore more free to investigate whatever questions he chooses than his more philosophical counterpart. But his freedom is bought at a price: to begin from experiences that are not shared by all people, to which in fact only a very few are privy, inevitably introduces an element of human faith into science which is foreign to philosophy. Not only does a layman have to take a scientist's word for it that observations and experiments bear out his theory, but even the scientist himself must take his fellow scientists' word for such things. No scientist can personally verify in his own experience all the scientific theories and results upon which his own efforts depend. The philosopher, on the other hand, who does not descend to the more particular experiences of the scientist, is restricted to the investigation of those mysteries to which nature itself has seen fit to give us clues; he begins only from things that are naturally experienced by everyone. His advantage is that he need not put his faith in anyone to know his conclusions, since they rely upon no one's experience but his own. Once more, then, we have a reason that scientific knowledge of nature cannot replace a philosophical knowledge of it: a knowledge that relies on trusting someone else cannot replace a knowledge that does not.

It is important to underscore that science, too, presupposes and depends on universal experience; it is not possible to begin from

[19] Niels Bohr says that the aim of every physical experiment is "to gain knowledge under reproducible and communicable conditions" (Niels Bohr, *Atomic Physics and Human Knowledge* [New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1958], 37).

[20] "The goal of science is to augment and order our experience" (ibid., 88).

confined experiences alone. What distinguishes the general part of the study of nature from science is not that it begins from universal experience, but that it restricts itself to this. The scientist, when describing or conducting an experiment or observation, relies upon the same common conceptions of the world that everyone does, even if he is not restricted to these.[21] The principle that "The whole is greater than its part" applies in nature as well as in mathematics, and it is known to everyone since wholes and parts are a matter of universal experience. Where would science be if this principle were in doubt? And yet it is not the result of experimentation or contrived observation of any kind.

It is therefore useless to try debunking the philosophy of nature on the ground that science often overturns common experience. "Common experience," if taken to mean universal experience as defined above, is not only the basis of the more general philosophy of nature, but it is also one of the irreplaceable pillars of science. There is another sense of "common experience" or "common sense," however, which can be overturned by science.[22] Sometimes what everyone naturally thinks at first, before being taught otherwise, is called "common sense." Taken in this way, it is common sense, for example, that a sailboat cannot sail faster than the wind that is pushing it. Scientists and sailors assure us that this piece of "common sense" is actually false. It is noteworthy that even those who have never sailed before (perhaps I should say *especially* those who have never sailed before) will resist the notion that a sailboat can sail faster than the wind. Clearly their resistance is due not to any experience of sailboats but to their experience of some more

[21] As Einstein put it, "The whole of science is nothing more than a refinement of everyday thinking. . . . Scientific thought is a development of pre-scientific thought" (Albert Einstein, *Out of My Later Years* [repr.; Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1970], 59).

[22] It is this meaning of "common sense" that Carl F. von Weizsäcker had in mind when he said "Aristotle wanted to preserve nature, to save the phenomena; his fault was that he made too much use of common sense. Galileo dissects nature, teaches us to produce new phenomena; and to strike against common sense with the help of mathematics" (Carl F. von Weizsäcker, *The Relevance of Science,* Gifford Lectures, 1959-60 [London: Collins, 1964], 104).

general thing. They know that "No effect can exceed its cause." They are quite right about this; they are only mistaken in thinking that the sailboat sailing faster than the wind violates that principle. It is up to the physicists to explain how a sailboat can sail faster than the wind that is pushing it, without doing violence to that very general principle, upon which scientists also depend. Nor is science alone in this occasional overturning of "common sense." Philosophy too has its share of surprises.[23]

III. Reflective Experience vs. Unreflective Experience

There is another difference among the kinds of experience from which natural philosophy and science begin. Philosophy begins from both reflective and unreflective experience, whereas what we call "science" today more or less restricts itself to beginning from specific kinds of unreflective experience.

By "reflective experience" I mean what we experience whenever we reflect on any of our own acts of knowing or feeling or desiring. All other experience is unreflective. To see an apple is an unreflective experience, but to be aware *that I am seeing an apple* is a reflective one. To fear something is an unreflective experience, but to take note *that I am fearing something* is reflective. It is on the basis of reflective experience that I discern in myself the differences between remembering and imagining, for example.

It can easily be thought that what we experience within ourselves by reflection must be subjective and private, and therefore cannot serve as a reliable foundation for serious inquiry. But a little reflection reveals that this need not always be the case. A scientist would not be censured for claiming that water boils under certain conditions just because we could not be there to witness *his* water boiling; it is enough that we can witness this for

[23] That there should be real and living things which do not exist in place and time and which have no shape or size runs more contrary to "common sense" than anything in the whole of science, and yet this is a conclusion of perennial philosophy. Whether one accepts the arguments or not, no one can deny that Aristotle was philosophizing when he arrived at the conclusion that there are indeed separated substances.

ourselves with our own water if we take the trouble. Why should a matter of reflection be any different? It is true that someone else cannot share my reflection upon the goings-on of my own interior life, but surely he can verify within himself the kinds of experiences that I claim are the same for everyone. A trivial example: smells are evocative of memories more than colors or textures are. If one cannot reliably reflect on one's own knowledge, one could never know this.

Reflective experience is "subjective" in the sense that its object is something going on within the knowing subject, and it is inaccessible to those outside the subject. But it is not "subjective" in the sense that irrelevant features of the knowing subject are hopelessly confused with the object perceived. "How hot it feels to me" is a mixed result of the temperature of my hand and the temperature of what I am touching. My sensation alone cannot separate these. Therefore "how hot it feels to me" is "subjective" in the usual and somewhat pejorative sense of the word. But reflections such as "I am thinking right now," and "hearing is different from seeing," involve no such confusion.

Science generally limits itself to what can be known through unreflective, external experience. The physicist reads all his data off of instruments of measurement and observation. Even the biologist does not usually have recourse to the data of reflective experience. There is certainly some reasonable fear, in his case, of anthropomorphism, if he is studying anything other than human biology.[24] Yet it is equally possible to apply falsely the facts of unreflective external experience, so this can hardly be a reason for abstaining from the use of reflective experience altogether. Psychology, it is true, makes use of some data known only by reflective experience, but it is partly for this reason that the discipline is not considered one of the "hard" sciences, and some

[24] J. Henri Fabre dispelled many an anthropomorphic interpretation of insect behavior. In chapter 10 of *The Hunting Wasps,* entitled "The Ignorance of Instinct," for example, he lays out several experiments in which different kinds of Sphex, seeming to know what they are doing, are proved to have no idea what they are doing. See J. Henri Fabre, *The Insect World of J. Henri Fabre,* ed. Edwin Way Teale, trans. Alexander Teixeira de Mattos (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), 55ff.

psychologists struggle to make their discipline more "scientific" by sticking to the data of external and measurable experience as much as possible.[25] If any part of psychology made full use of the data of reflective experience, it would look more and more like Aristotle's *De Anima*.

The scientist has no reason or need to deny the possibility of studying natural things, especially living things, with the help of reflective experience. Sir Arthur Eddington even remarks that a knowledge of the inner natures of things does not seem possible without it.[26]

IV. NATURAL VS. ARTIFICIAL

The opposition between the natural and the artificial partly explains the distinction between the "philosophic" and the "scientific" approaches to nature. For one thing, there is a

[25] This is the idea behind distinguishing between "philosophical" psychology and "experimental" psychology. If these are conceived as two parts of one science which must avail itself of many methods, I cannot object to the distinction. I object only when they are conceived as entirely different and independent studies.

[26] "Scientific investigation does not lead to knowledge of the intrinsic nature of things" (A. S. Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World*, The Gifford Lectures 1927 [New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930], 303). "The Victorian physicist felt that he knew just what he was talking about when he used such terms as *matter* and *atoms*. Atoms were "tiny billiard balls," a crisp statement that was supposed to tell you all about their nature in a way which could never be achieved for transcendental things like consciousness, beauty or humour. But now we realise that science has nothing to say as to the intrinsic nature of the atom. The physical atom is, like everything else in physics, a schedule of pointer readings. The schedule is, we agree, attached to some unknown background. . . . We have dismissed all preconception as to the background of our pointer readings, and for the most part we can discover nothing as to its nature. But in one case—namely, for the pointer readings of my own brain—I have an insight which is not limited to the evidence of the pointer readings. That insight shows that they are attached to a background of consciousness" (ibid., 259). C. F. von Weizsäcker also points out that the things we know by reflective experience are not approachable by the methods to which scientists restrict themselves: "Light of 6000 Å wavelength reaches my eye. From the retina, a chemico-electrical stimulus passes through the optical nerve into the brain where it sets off another stimulus of certain motor nerves, and out of my mouth come the words: *The apple is red.* Nowhere in this description of the process, complete though it is, has any mention been made that I have had the color perception *red*. Of sense perception, nothing was said" (C. F. von Weizsäcker, *The History of Nature* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949], 142-43).

difference between natural experience, in which we play an almost exclusively passive role, and artificial experience, which we contrive for ourselves in some way. Insofar as science uses artificial instruments to extend the range of our experience, it can be said to proceed from "artificial" experiences. Even an experiment which does not use such artificial aids is to some extent an artificial experience, since it is not something that plays out naturally, as it would if left to itself, but it is something that an observer "sets up." J. Henri Fabre put it this way: "It is something to observe; but it is not enough: we must experiment, that is to say, we must ourselves intervene and create artificial conditions which oblige the animal to reveal to us what it would not tell if left to the normal course of events."[27]

The scientist consequently enjoys more freedom in his lines of questioning than does the philosopher of nature. This difference between them can be illustrated by the following proportions:[28]

Natural Philosopher : Nature :: Student : Teacher
Scientist : Nature :: Lawyer : Witness

There is an obvious similarity between these two proportions. The student hopes to learn something from the teacher, and likewise the lawyer hopes to learn something from the witness. The natural philosopher and physicist both hope to learn something from nature.

[27] *The Insect World of J. Henri Fabre,* 327. Einstein makes a similar observation; in contrast to the detective, he says, "The scientist must, at least in part, commit his own crime, as well as carry out the investigation" (Albert Einstein and Leopold Infeld, *Evolution of Physics: The Growth of Ideas from Early Concepts to Relativity and Quanta* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1938], 78).

[28] Kant mentions these two proportions in his *Critique of Pure Reason* ("Preface to the Second Edition," trans. Norman Kemp Smith [New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965], 20). He endorses the comparison of the scientist to a judge, but rejects the attitude of being a student toward nature. In other words, like almost everyone after him, Kant rejects the philosophical study of nature, recognizing only the scientific study of it. The half truth in his view is that we should not rest satisfied beginning with whatever nature reveals about itself in things naturally known to us; we should force nature to answer as many other of our questions as we can. It is a mistake, however, to think that this is the only way to study nature.

But there are differences. The teacher is an initiator. He decides which topics to address, and which questions to answer. The student is not in a position to compel the teacher to address this issue or that, or to take things up in this or that order. The teacher will say many things, even if the student has not asked about them, and he might refuse to answer certain questions put to him by the student, deeming them inappropriate. When the natural philosopher studies nature, nature is like his teacher; he must listen[29] to what nature has to reveal about itself in natural experience, and content himself with whatever can be known by beginning from there. If he is not satisfied, but will compel nature to answer further questions, he is no longer like a student, but like a lawyer, with nature on the witness stand. The lawyer is the initiator and the witness does not speak except in answer to direct questions put to him by the lawyer. Nature must answer the questions put to it by the experimenter, but says no more to him than he has demanded with his experiment.

The natural philosopher distinguishes between the natural and the artificial, and then talks chiefly about the natural as such.[30] The physicist, on the other hand, can afford to ignore (though not

[29] The idea of "listening" to nature might be implied in the title of Aristotle's so-called *Physics*. As F. M. Cornford notes in his general introduction to his translation of Aristotle's *Physics*, "The title 'Physics' is misleading, and the reader must expect to find little or nothing that it suggests in the treatise" ("General Introduction," Loeb Classical Library 228 [repr.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993], xv). The title is ΦΥΣΙΚΗΣ ΑΚΡΟΑΣΕΩΣ, which, rendered literally into English, is *Of Natural Hearing*. The full title is *The Eight Books of Natural Hearing*, which seems to mean "Hearing about Nature," perhaps because it consists in lecture notes, although it might also mean "Listening to Nature." Some authors of Latin commentaries on the *Physics* suggest the title means "natural philosophy acquired through hearing," in the sense that one cannot understand the text simply by reading it but has to have it explained, hearing it from a teacher. Whatever the title means, it is certainly true that Aristotle's *Physics* is more like listening to nature than what a physicist does. The physicist is far less passive, supplementing whatever experience nature happens to provide with carefully planned artificial experiences, outfitting the observation equipment provided by nature with artificial aids, and supplementing the things naturally known to us with carefully chosen hypotheses.

[30] The natural philosopher talks about the artificial in order to understand the natural by contrast or by likeness.

deny) the distinction, because his metrical vocabulary ignores it.[31] Thus many, if not all, of the laws of physics apply equally well to both natural and artificial bodies without distinction. The path of a body launched over a cliff will approximate a semi-parabola whether the body be a horse or a piano. Physics textbooks abound with problems like this: "Consider a string stretched tightly . . ." or "Suppose a pulley is set up . . ". It makes not a whit of difference whether the string or pulley is a natural thing or an artificial one, so long as it meets the metric requirements of the problem.

Biology, too, can overlook the distinction between the natural and the artificial, studying in living things only what is common to them and machines. Nothing prevents this kind of study, and it is nothing short of amazing how much living things do have in common with machines, and so the biologists, while ignoring anything distinctive of living things, never run out of things to talk about.[32] But if biology were to deny the difference between the natural and the artificial it would find itself unable to designate its own proper subject matter.

It goes beyond the evidence to say that living things are nothing but machines, that they do not differ in principle from them. This was Descartes's vision of the world: what we call cats and dogs are no more than *res extensa,* cogs and wheels grinding away without purpose or interior life, mere mechanisms, not

[31] The natural philosopher occasionally ignores the distinction between natural and artificial, too. The sixth book of Aristotle's *Physics* is about the properties of motion connected with its continuousness, and most of the statements Aristotle makes about motion in that book are true whether the thing in motion is a fish or a ship. As with science, one of the reasons this treatment of physical things can overlook the distinction between the natural and the artificial is that it is focusing on the quantitative aspects of things.

[32] Physicist Hermann Weyl says that "the scope of the understanding from within appears practically fixed by human nature once for all, and may at most be widened a little by the refinement of language . . . . Understanding, for the very reason that it is concrete and full, lacks the freedom of the 'hollow symbol.' A biology from within as advocated by Woltereck will, I am afraid, be without that never-ending impetus of problems that drives constructive biology on and on" (Hermann Weyl, *Philosophy of Mathematics and Natural Science,* trans. Olaf Helmer [repr.; New York: Atheneum, 1963], 283-84).

organisms.[33] Those overly enamored of the method of study based on unreflective external experience often succumb to the temptation of thinking theirs is the only legitimate study, that anything known only by reflecting within ourselves is material fit only for poets, for those who wish to emote, not those who would know anything about the world. How would such a person understand something as biological as sensation? He would have to reduce it to the things attendant upon it which he can observe with his "objective" methods—a hopeless endeavor. Erwin Schrödinger illustrates this point:

> The sensation of colour cannot be accounted for by the physicist's objective picture of light-waves. Could the physiologist account for it, if he had a fuller knowledge than he has of the processes in the retina? I do not think so. We could at best attain to an objective knowledge of what nerve fibres are excited and in what proportion, perhaps even to know exactly the processes they produce in certain brain cells—whenever our mind registers the sensation of yellow. . . . But even such intimate knowledge would not tell us anything about the sensation of colour, more particularly of yellow. . . . the same physiological processes might conceivably result in a sensation of sweet taste, or anything else. I mean to say simply this, that we may be sure there is no nervous process whose objective description includes the characteristic *yellow colour* or *sweet taste*, just as little as the objective description of an electromagnetic wave includes either of these characteristics. The same holds for other sensations . . . neither the physicist's description, nor that of the physiologist, contains any trait of the sensation of sound. Any description of this kind is bound to end with a sentence like: those nerve impulses are conducted to a certain portion of the brain, where they are registered as a sequence of sounds. . . . We may follow this conduction to the cerebral cortex and we may even obtain some objective knowledge of some of the things that happen there. But nowhere shall we hit on this *registering as sound*, which simply is not contained in our scientific picture, but is only in the mind of the person whose ear and brain we are speaking of.[34]

[33] "Organ," coming from the Greek word for tool, implies purposefulness. "Appendage" would be a better word for something of which it is denied that nature makes it for the sake of something.

[34] Erwin Schrödinger, *Mind and Matter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 90-95. Hermann Weyl also acknowledges that there is another way to understand life: "Scientists would be wrong to ignore the fact that theoretical construction is not the only approach to the phenomena of life; another way, that of understanding from within (interpretation) is open to us. . . . Of myself, of my own acts of perception, thought, volition, feeling and doing, I have a direct knowledge entirely different from the theoretical knowledge that represents the 'parallel' cerebral processes in symbols. This inner awareness of myself is

These words apply not only to the operations of the five senses, but to the operations of imagination, memory, to the emotions, to the will, and to the intellect. One would think that only a blind man could say that what we call seeing is nothing but these things he can record and observe from the outside of the one who is seeing. Has he never seen before? And if he has, how could he fail to realize that what he calls "seeing" in himself is precisely what he cannot see anywhere in the person he is observing? No matter how advanced his "objective" knowledge is, he will never observe sight in this way; he can witness only external signs, even if some of these are in some inscrutable way necessary for sight itself. None of them, and not even all of them together, *is* sight. There is no way to prove to a man that he has the ability to see colors if he discounts his own immediate experience of it.

If despite all this we insist on discarding all the data of reflective experience, it is sheer folly to demand that anyone show us evidence that living things differ from nonliving, or that animals differ from machines, or that natural things differ from artificial ones.[35] We have in advance not admitted into evidence the only kind of experience relevant to the question. We might as well demand that our neighbor prove there are two-inch fishes in the lake by means of a net with three-inch holes in it. If natural things and living things are precisely those which behave as they do because of some principle *within* themselves, a principle whose existence and nature would remain wholly unknown to us if we were incapable of reflecting on the operations of similar principles within ourselves, then to reject reflective experience as an

the basis for the understanding of my fellow-men whom I meet and acknowledge as beings of my own kind, with whom I communicate, sometimes so intimately as to share joy and sorrow with them. Even if I do not know of their consciousness in the same manner as of my own, nevertheless my 'interpretative' understanding of it is apprehension of indisputable adequacy. Its illuminating light is directed not only on my fellow men; it also reaches, though with ever increasing dimness and incertitude, deeply into the animal kingdom. Albert Schweitzer is right when he ridicules Kant's narrow opinion that man is capable of compassion, but not of sharing joy with the living creature, by the question, 'Did he never see an ox coming home from the fields drink?' It is idle to disparage this hold on nature 'from within' as anthropomorphic and elevate the objectivity of theoretical construction" (Weyl, *Philosophy of Mathematics and Natural Science,* 283-84).

[35] Or that men differ from animals or computers.

unsound basis for knowledge is to reject such distinctions as unfounded. Imagine an impossible scenario: a man being born utterly unable to reflect upon or notice any of his own living operations in an inward way, but always having his attention fixed outward. He could see colors, but never notice that he was seeing; he could understand shapes, but never notice that he was understanding. Could he ever form the slightest notion of what was going on in the mind of a deer in the park when he saw it perk up its ears? The event, to him, would be a sudden change of position in a chunk of matter, perhaps following upon many other little changes of place in adjacent chunks of matter, no more. He could form no notion of "hearing." Nor, when the deer bolted away, could he form any notion of "afraid," although he might suspect, from prior "objective" investigations into similar moving things, that there were many particular electrical and chemical changes that preceded this brownish mass dashing away upon its four appendages. He could also form no notion of himself, as distinct from any other thing in his direct, outward-fixed experience.[36] To ignore what we know solely by reflection is to

[36] This self-imposed seclusion in "objective" experience goes a long way toward explaining many otherwise baffling denials of biologists and psychologists. K. S. Ashley, for example, says "There is not direct knowledge of an experiencing self. . . . The knower as an entity is an unnecessary postulate" (*Brain Mechanisms and Conciousness: A Symposium,* ed. Edgar D. Adrian, Frederic Brenner, and Herbert H. Jasper [Oxford: Blackwell, 1956], 423-24). Psychologist Gordon Allport remarks that "For two generations, psychologists have tried every conceivable way of accounting for the integration, organization and striving of the human person without having recourse to the postulate of a self" (Gordon W. Allport, *Becoming* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955], 37). Compare this, now, to the following remarks of Thomas Aquinas about the indispensable role of reflective experience: "For it is manifest that this individual man understands: for we would never inquire about the understanding if we did not understand; nor when we inquire about the understanding do we inquire about any other principle than that by which we understand" ("Manifestum est enim quod hic homo singularis intelligit: nunquam enim de intellectu quaeremus, nisi intelligeremus; nec cum quaerimus de intellectu, de alio principio quaerimus, quam de eo quo nos intelligimus" [*De Unitate Intellectus*, c. 3). "Those things which are in the soul by its essence are known by an experiential knowledge, inasmuch as man experiences intrinsic principles through their acts, as we perceive the will in willing, and life in the operations of life" ("Illa quae sunt per essentiam sui in anima, cognoscuntur experimentali cognitione, inquantum homo experitur per actus principia intrinseca: sicut voluntatem percipimus volendo, et vitam in operibus vitae" [*STh* I-II, q. 112, a. 5, ad 1]). Commenting on Aristotle's discussion of the two ways in which one knowledge is better than another, Thomas says "This

ignore our only source of insight into what is distinctive about being alive or natural. What proceeds from deepest within is a living operation, or at least a natural one; but whence it proceeds simply is not visible from without. "Nature loves to hide."[37]

To suppose that another human being enjoys sight within himself similar to the sight I experience directly only within myself is not anthropomorphic.[38] Based on the more generic outward similarities between myself and a dog or a horse, I can go a step further and surmise that such creatures also experience within themselves something like what I call sight in myself, although possibly less like it than what goes on in my fellow humans. This is what it means to believe in animals, as opposed to *res extensa*. To insist that these things are nothing more than what I say they are in terms drawn exclusively from my outward observation of them is not only arbitrary, but anthropomorphic in the worst way. It would require that things are nothing more than what I know them to be by means of my arbitrarily preferred method of studying them.

The scientist can, and often should, ignore the differences between living and nonliving, between natural and artificial. This does not warrant any denial of such distinctions. But ignoring them has a wonderful side-effect: scientific results bear fruit in the world of technology. How could they not? If all the rules should apply to artificial things as well as to natural things, insofar as science abstracts from the difference (especially when speaking in a mathematical way), we should be able to manufacture things according to the laws of physics and chemistry. And the benefit is mutual, since science advances along with the instruments of observation and measurement provided by engineering. More

science, that of the soul, has both: because it is certain, for each person experiences this in himself, namely that he has a soul, and that he lives by a soul. And because it is nobler: for the soul is nobler among inferior creatures" ("Haec autem scientia, scilicet de anima, utrumque habet: quia et certa est, hoc enim quilibet experitur in seipso, quod scilicet habeat animam, et quod anima vivificet. Et quia est nobilior: anima enim est nobilior inter inferiores creaturas" [I *De Anima,* lect. 1]). See also *De Verit.*, q. 10, a. 8.

[37] Heraclitus, DK 123; my translation.

[38] "It is idle to disparage this hold on nature 'from within' as anthropomorphic" (Weyl, *Philosophy of Mathematics and Natural Science,* 284).

than that, technical advances are like the proof in the proverbial pudding for the particular theories that engendered them. The atom bomb was a sign that atomic physics was on to something.[39]

Natural philosophy, however, must be comparatively barren in this respect. How could it be of much practical value? It is chiefly about natural things precisely as natural, and so we cannot expect that what it says will be of any special help in producing artificial things. Moreover, it begins only from universal experience, forcing it to study things very much in general, whereas making and doing things requires a detailed knowledge. Finally, it makes no use of measurement, which is fundamental in the making of almost everything. On the other hand, natural philosophy is not dependent upon technological advances, needing no instruments of observation beyond those dispensed to everyone by nature. Natural philosophy is useful, however, for grounding ethics and metaphysics, for which end experimental science does not serve.

V. QUANTITATIVE VS. QUALITATIVE

Most sciences, if not all, use measurement, and the more scientific sciences use it more.[40] Science, then, is not only qualitative, but quantitative also, whereas the philosophy of nature is not quantitative, at least not in the sense of using measurement. A scientific measurement is only a particular kind of confined experience, but it characterizes science to such an extent as to be worthy of separate mention.

Science gains definite advantages over philosophy by its use of measurement and other forms of technical observation. Only by these means is a wealth of data made available to us which otherwise would remain forever beyond our reach, because it is

[39] "On to something" should not be equated with "true." "In fact, so far as mathematical physics is concerned, practical success is the only guarantee that we are on the right track; but this should not be mistaken for speculative certitude. We do in fact construct highly efficient machines on the basis of shaky theory" (Charles de Koninck, *Natural Science as Philosophy* [repr.; Québec: Laval University, 1959], 9).

[40] "What exact science looks out for is not entities of some particular category, but entities with a metrical aspect" (Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World*, 105); "the whole of our physical knowledge is based on measures" (ibid., 152).

either outside the range of our senses, or too dangerous for us to sense directly, or both. And even when we can sense something directly, the scientist is right to feel unsatisfied with the imprecision of unaided sensation. To one person this feels hotter than that, to another that feels hotter than this. As long as our bodies are our thermometers, we are not using measuring instruments constructed in precisely the same way, and what my sense of touch registers is vague even to myself. What portion of "how hot it feels to me" is due to the temperature of the water and what portion is due to the temperature of my body? My sensation does not tell me. Nor does my sensation assign a precise number to "how hot it feels to me," a number that I can compare to "how hot that other thing feels to me" in an unambiguous and precise way. Raw sensation was never meant for scientific precision. And yet mathematical precision is crucial for unraveling many of nature's riddles. Accordingly physics not only restricts itself to unreflective experience, but to objects of unreflective experience that are external and precisely measurable.

Galileo is traditionally hailed as the father of modern physics. He wrote his *Two New Sciences* in dialogue form, in the tradition of Plato, who, in his *Timaeus,* hinted that nature can be understood in a mathematical way. Modern physics, then, is the ultimate development of an ancient Pythagorean suspicion, a suspicion that many deep secrets of nature can be deciphered only by the use of mathematics. This suspicion was reasonable in two ways: first, because reason very naturally inclines to understanding things mathematically, since mathematics is so accessible to the human mind and yields great certainty and precision; second, because even a superficial look at the natural world reveals a host of things displaying quantitative properties, such as the hexagonal form of water crystals and the spiral form of sunflowers and seashells.

For these reasons, "to understand" in physics, and in science generally, quite often means "to have an equation," which is a kind of understanding insofar as it reduces a chaotic multiplicity of things to an identity of some kind, finding something one or

the same in the many and seemingly disconnected.[41] The scientist uses the language of mathematics as often as possible, and the more scientific the science, the more its results will be expressed in mathematical symbols and formulae rather than in words and sentences.

The scientist's preference for symbols and formulae has led some people to doubt whether any knowledge of natural things is possible in mere words. If our work-a-day words were a precise enough medium by which to express the truth about nature, then why would scientists not be content with them? It is certainly true that words are not suited to expressing the very technical and precise results of physics,[42] but this is not because words are hopelessly ambiguous and signify nothing solid and certain. If that were so, physics itself would be impossible, too, not just the philosophy of nature. Even the most obscure symbolism of the physicist ultimately depends upon ordinary language for its meaning.[43] What is the meaning of T in our equation? It is neither

[41] Werner Heisenberg says "For our senses the world consists of an infinite variety of things and events, colors and sounds. But in order to understand it we have to introduce some kind of order, and order means to recognize what is equal" (Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy,* 62-63). Richard Feynman expresses himself similarly: "The things with which we concern ourselves in science appear in myriad forms, and with a multitude of attributes. . . . Curiosity demands that we ask questions, that we try to put things together and try to understand this multitude of aspects as perhaps resulting from the action of a relatively small number of elemental things. . . . For example: Is the sand other than the rocks? That is, is the sand perhaps nothing but a great number of very tiny stones? Is the moon a great rock? . . . In this way we try gradually to analyze all things, to put together things which at first sight look different, with the hope that we may be able to *reduce* the number of *different* things and thereby understand them better" (Feynman, *Six Easy Pieces,* 23-24).

[42] "Since we must cease to employ familiar concepts, symbols have become the only possible alternative" (Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World,* 249). A physicist is better off not using words like "work" or "energy," since these have an ordinary sense which is rather irrelevant to physics. So he uses symbols, labels which have no meaning other than the one he assigns them. A symbol has the added advantage of "standing for" something in such a way that it can be the subject of calculations, unlike a word that designates what a thing is. A farmer might let each pebble stand for one sheep while figuring out how many to keep, how many to sell. In that case, a pebble does not mean "what it is to be a sheep," but stands for "one sheep."

[43] Niels Bohr says that "All account of physical experience is, of course, ultimately based on common language" (Niels Bohr, *Essays, 1958-1962, on Atomic Physics and Human Knowledge* [New York: Interscience, 1963], 1). Heisenberg says, "One of the most important

here nor there that we can replace it with a cumbersome word, such as "temperature," but it is of the essence that we can explain, in words, where the number came from for which *T* stands. The process of measurement or observation which is the source and meaning of every physical quantitative symbol in our equations cannot also be expressed in symbols; it is expressed in words only. If we do not understand the measurement or observation expressed in words, then the symbols and formulae are nothing but hieroglyphics or, at best, an exercise in pure mathematics.[44] The terms of physics are meaningless apart from the appliances we detect and measure things with,[45] and these appliances are ultimately understood in words.

Certainly mathematics sheds light on nature. But is nature nothing but quantities? Or is nature's quantitative aspect the only inroad to understanding it? If "understanding" is defined as "having an equation," then the answer is settled in advance. If, on

features of the development and the analysis of modern physics is the experience that the concepts of natural language, vaguely defined as they are, seem to be more stable in the expansion of knowledge than the precise terms of scientific language, derived as an idealization from only limited groups of phenomena. This is in fact not surprising since the concepts of natural language are formed by the immediate connection with reality; they represent reality" (Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy,* 200).

[44] This is not to disagree with Richard Feynman, who says that there is a limit to how much the symbolic statements of physics can be translated into the words of ordinary language minus mathematics (see Richard Feynman, *The Character of Physical Law* [Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1965], 40). The mathematics is essential to explaining the connections between the statements made by the physicist, and therefore much of what he is saying must remain unintelligible to the layman who would not take the time to learn the mathematics. Likewise Eddington says (*The Nature of the Physical World,* xv) "Science aims at constructing a world which shall be symbolic of the world of commonplace experience. It is not at all necessary that every individual symbol that is used should represent something in common experience or even something explicable in terms of common experience." The symbol, in other words, might represent something very unfamiliar to most people, such as a number obtained by using a sophisticated measuring device and manipulated by a certain mathematical function. Neither the device nor the mathematical function has to be a matter of common experience. But they must be understood ultimately through words, even if words which do not name things in everyone's experience.

[45] "Our knowledge of the external world cannot be divorced from the nature of the appliances with which we have obtained the knowledge. The truth of the law of gravitation cannot be regarded as subsisting apart from the experimental procedure by which we have ascertained its truth" (Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World,* 154).

the other hand, "understanding" is taken more broadly to mean any kind of insight into the what and why of things, we can legitimately ask: Can this be attained solely through measurement? How could one know that natural things were of such a nature as to be accessible only through measurement? Surely not through measurement. The only way to know this would be through a philosophical argument of some kind, in which case one would have discovered something about nature without measurement, and hence the position self-destructs. Besides, vague as it may be, I am sure that "Red is not the same as green," quite independently of any measurement or mathematics.[46] A scientist has neither any reason nor any need to deny that there might be ways of understanding nature besides the way of measurement.

VI. Self-evident Things vs. Hypotheses

The final opposition which is the basis for distinguishing between the philosophical and the scientific study of nature is the opposition between the self-evident and the hypothetical. "The whole is greater than its part," which is self-evident to everyone, is as true in the natural world as it is in mathematics. This is not a matter of mere induction, as if we were sold on the matter because we have seen so many wholes none of which failed to be greater than each of its respective parts. Should a science journal announce one day that rock samples have been found on Mars, some of which were only half their own size, we would suspect a misprint, a practical joke, or lunacy. This is not a matter of "seen it so many times I would be surprised to find a counter-example," as in the case of having seen so many white swans, we are surprised to hear that there are black ones in Australia. It is a matter of the self-evident. It is from truths of this kind that the philosophy of nature begins. Such self-evident principles are relatively few, and rather general, although some are more specific than "The whole is greater than its part." We see once

[46] Whatever one thinks of colors, or of the experience of colors, they are some kind of reality of the physical world, even if only of one's own brain. Chemists still use the colors of things to decide what they are or what produced them.

more that the philosophy of nature has a limited scope of inquiry, if it is defined as proceeding from such principles alone.

Science, on the other hand, begins from assumptions, from hypotheses, which though they are based on much experience and reasoning, nonetheless remain hypotheses. The scientist often reasons as follows:

If hypothesis Z is correct, then I should observe Q.
But I do observe Q.
Therefore hypothesis Z is somewhat confirmed.

He cannot conclude "hypothesis Z is correct," since that would amount to committing the fallacy of affirming the consequent. But the more often he reasons this way, and the more consequences of hypothesis Z that are confirmed, the more likely his hypothesis becomes. This is especially true if the consequences of the hypothesis are things never before observed or suspected, that is, if the hypothesis leads scientists to augment their experience. For all that, though, the hypothesis could still be false, merely resembling the true cause and producing similar consequences as far as we have seen. Einstein states it vividly:

Physical concepts are free creations of the human mind, and are not, however it may seem, uniquely determined by the external world. In our endeavor to understand reality we are somewhat like a man trying to understand the mechanism of a closed watch. He sees the face and the moving hands, even hears its ticking, but he has no way of opening the case. If he is ingenious he may form some picture of a mechanism which could be responsible for all the things he observes, but he may never be quite sure his picture is the only one which could explain his observations.[47]

The use of the phrase "free creations" is worth remarking upon. Physical concepts and physical theories are in large part a product of the imagination, and "Nothing is more free than the imagination of man."[48] The imagination plays a much larger role

[47] Einstein, *The Evolution of Physics,* 33.

[48] David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding,* section 5, part 2, n. 39 (in Great Books of the Western World, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge [Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1952], 466).

in modern physics[49] than it does in natural philosophy. In natural philosophy, the first concepts, such as "motion," "body," "time," and the first self-evident statements such as "All change requires a subject" are not free creations of the human mind. Aristotle speaks more as if the truth of these things coerces the minds of men.[50] The natural philosopher needs some imagination and some use of dialectical hypothesis in order to discover the truth, but only on the way to acquiring the kind of knowledge he seeks. In a similar way, a mathematician might suppose something he is not sure about and see where it leads, but his work is not done until he finds a proof for his supposition that takes it back to self-evident principles which he knows to be true beyond doubt.

Science also lays down many things as facts which, in some measure at least, are really hypotheses, being the results of imperfect inductions. Scientists assume that water always boils under given conditions, not because they have seen every case, but because they have seen many cases, and they assume a kind of uniformity in nature.[51] Should they find something about water that is the reason why it boils under those given conditions, this something about water will in turn be something they have found to be so in all cases they have seen, and which they assume to belong to water in all cases. What is the difference between "Water boils at such-and-such a temperature and pressure" and "The whole is greater than its part"? Why have we no assurance of the first of these except our oft-repeated experience, but our

[49] "Galileo formulated the problem of determining the velocity of light, but did not solve it. The formulation of a problem is often more essential than its solution, which may be merely a matter of mathematical or experimental skill. To raise new questions, new possibilities, to regard old problems from a new angle, requires creative imagination and marks real advance in science" (Einstein, *The Evolution of Physics,* 95). In this book, Einstein compares the physicist to a detective throughout. There is obviously danger, too, in using the imagination in physics. If the universe is indeed finite but unbounded, for example, any image we form of the universe, other than analogous images of other things, is false.

[50] Aristotle, *Physics* 1.5.188b29-30.

[51] Such quasi-universal statements or generalizations entirely dependent upon sense experience are like the primary "hypotheses" of science. Despite their uncertainty, they are perhaps more aptly called givens, data, than hypotheses, since they are not laid down as an explanation for some other phenomenon. Theories consist in further hypotheses, more worthy of the name, which are laid down as explanations of the generalizations based on observation.

assurance of the second seems to become independent of experience? The difference is that after some little experience we know what a "whole" is and what a "part" is well enough to see that denying the principle would entail a contradiction. What "water" is, however, our experience does not reveal to us quite so perfectly.

David Hume speaks of a knowledge that "arises entirely from experience, when we find that any particular objects are constantly conjoined with each other."[52] He says that "All the laws of nature, and all the operations of bodies without exception, are known only by experience."[53] This is not in fact as universally true as Hume would have us think, but it is true about the vast majority of modern scientific results. Poincaré, too, said that every generalization is a hypothesis. That is not true without qualification (the statement itself is a generalization!), but it is true of most of the generalizations made in science.[54] That every change is between opposites is not a hypothesis, but something self-evidently and necessarily true without exception; that the color red is always associated with such and such a frequency is a generalization we make based on repeated experience, and nothing more.

Yet again we see a complementarity between natural science and natural philosophy. Philosophy has a greater kind of certainty in its principles and conclusions, but at the cost of being quite restricted as to what it can investigate by such means. Science has a much greater freedom of inquiry, but at the price of giving up perfect certainty,[55] of assuming a provisional quality, ever revising and adjusting its statements in the light of new evidence.

[52] Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, section 4, part 1, n. 23 (Selby-Bigge, ed., 459).

[53] Ibid.

[54] We can be certain in general that there are regularities in nature. But if we have no reason beyond repeated experience to believe that this thing before us is one of those regularities, we cannot be absolutely sure that it does not admit of exceptions.

[55] "There are no eternal theories in science. It always happens that some of the facts predicted by a theory are disproved by experiment. . . . Nearly every great advance in science arises from a crisis in the old theory, through an endeavor to find a way out of the difficulties created" (Einstein, *The Evolution of Physics*, 77).

CONCLUSION

Once all these distinctions among the major approaches to studying nature are made, it is possible to ask about the relationships between them. Throughout this article I have contrasted "natural philosophy" with "science," in keeping with the common way of speaking today. This way of speaking, however, has the disadvantage of implying that we are speaking of two disciplines quite independent of each other.

The truth is that what we call "science" today is only a continuation of what we call "natural philosophy," and it certainly cannot replace it. A particular knowledge cannot replace a more general knowledge, both because it is a different knowledge[56] and because it is less certain. A knowledge based on confined experiences cannot replace one based solely on universal experience, because any advanced knowledge based on confined experiences depends on human faith, and is in that measure less certain. A knowledge based on unreflective experience alone cannot replace a knowledge based on reflective experience, because many of the things known by reflective experience cannot be known in any other way. A knowledge based on artificial experiences, such as experiments, cannot replace a knowledge based on natural experience, because even in experiments we rely upon the use of our senses in the ordinary way to read our instruments. A quantitative knowledge cannot replace a qualitative one because nature is more than its quantitative aspects, and there are many things in the natural world that can be known but not by measurement, such as substance, nature, and purpose. Knowledge based on hypotheses cannot replace knowledge based on self-evident principles, because it is less certain.

People at each end of the study of nature have tried to emancipate themselves from those at the other end. Philosophers,

[56] My knowledge that a circle is a "figure" can in some ways be replaced by my knowledge that a circle is a "plane figure contained by a single line equidistant at all points along itself from one point inside called the center," since this is simply a more refined version of the same knowledge. But this relatively particular knowledge of what a circle is cannot replace my more general knowledge of a what a "figure" is, since that is not the same knowledge.

seeking certainty, the ease of the armchair, and perhaps fearing mathematics, have restricted themselves to investigating questions about nature accessible from common experience, inward reflection, and self-evident generalities—or they have entirely given up talking about nature. As I noted at the beginning of this article, this is not a particularly philosophical disposition; it leaves us with vague certainties, which cannot be enough for any philosophic spirit.

Scientists, on the other hand, often have a distaste for anything vague, however certain it may be. They demand the clarity of mathematical conceptions and procedural definitions in all things.[57] They will not approach nature through self-evident principles, since these tend to be vague generalities, nor through reflective experience, since although it is very certain it is correspondingly imprecise and obscure.[58] Often, too, scientists suffer from a confusion of certainty with distinctness in our knowledge, unwittingly following Descartes. Those who mistakenly identify these will tend to reject the more philosophical study of nature as uncertain because it is vague, when in fact that is exactly why it is certain, and they will embrace the more scientific study of it as certain because it is particular and detailed, when in fact that is exactly why it is uncertain. Many a scientist, too, loves his freedom too much to study nature in the more philosophic way. Those methods restrict him too much; if he takes the initiative and forces nature to answer his questions experimentally, he is allowed to ask about anything as long as he can devise a way to test his predictions.

We should not condemn anyone who chooses to focus on one or another method for the study of nature. Choice is inevitable.

[57] Aristotle noted in his own time that "some people do not listen to a speaker unless he speaks mathematically," but insists that "The minute accuracy of mathematics is not to be demanded in all cases" (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 2.3.995a5 and 995a15; W. D. Ross translation).

[58] Cf. the testimony of Bertrand Russell, who says "It seems to me that philosophical investigation, as far as I have experience of it, starts from that curious and unsatisfactory state of mind in which one feels complete certainty without being able to say what one is certain of" (Bertrand Russell, *My Philosophical Development* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959], 133).

It is impossible for one person to become proficient in both the "scientific" and the "philosophic" ways of approaching nature without at least one of these suffering to some extent.[59] We may become expert in one, amateur in the other, but an expert in both is more an ideal than a reality. To become expert in one field of science is typically a lifetime achievement. This is no less true of becoming expert in the philosophy of nature. More than ever before, we are becoming conscious of how subject we are to time: *vita brevis, scientia longa.* Temperament and personal preferences and educational experience, too, might suit one person more than another for the philosophic or the scientific study of nature. I take issue only with those who say that only one of these approaches yields legitimate and worthwhile knowledge, or that they are independent of each other and can safely ignore each other, or that they constitute separate disciplines. To distinguish the methods by which nature can be known is a good thing. But to segregate those using different methods is to insist on unscientific philosophy and unphilosophical science. This would be the dismemberment of the knowledge of nature.

The philosophical study of nature depends on science for completion, to bring our more general knowledge into concrete focus, and to open lines of questioning that are bound to come up for the philosopher, but that he cannot answer from his armchair. "What is time?" asks the philosopher. Even presuming that his answer is correct when he says it is a kind of number of motion, the next question must be "Is there one motion whose number is *the* time?" His own line of questioning draws him naturally into science. "What is the soul?" he asks on another occasion. Even presuming that his answer is correct when he says it is the substantial form of a natural body equipped with organs, he must wonder of what kind of organic body is the human soul the substantial form. Once more, he is drawn into science. In defining

[59] Many scientists, such as Werner Heisenberg and Sir Arthur Eddington, have shown considerable gifts in thinking philosophically, and yet they are not the greatest of the natural philosophers. The greatest of the natural philosophers, such as Aquinas and Aristotle, might have made great physicists, but only at the expense of making progress in the more general study of nature.

"motion," he makes mention of "place," and in defining "place" he must talk about a frame of reference and once more he is entering the realm of science, in which we ask about the size and shape of the universe we inhabit.

The sciences in turn depend on the philosophical study of nature. The natural philosopher does not achieve a distinct knowledge of things in the sense that he descends to very particular kinds of things, but he does achieve a distinct knowledge of the very general things he studies. He defines them. What is a living thing? This question is answerable in a definitive (if vague) way only by the philosophical study of nature. A biologist might have a great career without ever attending seriously to this question, without ever availing himself of the methods of the philosopher, but then he is indifferent to what it is his own work is supposed to be illuminating. Science also cannot understand its own methods, or explain why they are appropriate or necessary, without turning to the philosophy of nature. A scientist who tries to define science is not practicing "science" in the modern sense of the word, but he is certainly philosophizing. Even a scientist who contends that only the methods called "scientific" today are appropriate for studying nature is in fact making a statement about nature without using those methods. It is impossible to know what one means by "science," in any sense of the term, without going back to a reflective experience of knowing things scientifically. And this is what many call a "philosophical" approach. Science also depends on the philosophy of nature for stability and guidance. To illustrate: if the philosopher of nature can demonstrate that understanding and willing are not acts of bodily organs, then this should be taken into account in neuroscientific research.

Which method affords a superior knowledge of nature? A knowledge of natural things, once it has progressed by natural stages to the level of particularity in science, is superior. It is more detailed, distinct, unfettered in its scope of inquiry. But this is assuming a scientist who accepts and applies the givens of reflective experience, and general principles such as "nature acts

for an end." A science isolated in a world of external phenomena, despite its astonishing detail, remains largely on the outside of things, making it a somewhat superficial knowledge. If we compare the beginning of the study of nature, the more "philosophic" part, to the more detailed "scientific" parts that should be its continuation but are instead pursued in isolation from it,[60] the beginning is a better knowledge. For in that beginning, in the more philosophic approach, we obtain a knowledge of some things nobler and more important to us than any studied in science, such as the human soul, and the difference between living and nonliving things and natural and artificial things. Though vague, natural philosophy is certain, and it is a living science, as opposed to the necessarily lifeless world of "objective" biology,[61] to say nothing of physics and chemistry.

In terms of practical fruit, the particular sciences can make technological products possible independently of natural philosophy. Natural philosophy either has no such fruit at all, or very little. But science is a blind guide to the much more important practical questions about how we should live, and in particular about how we should use science and technology. Science, in the restricted modern sense, prescinds from the good,[62] just as mathematics does, and by ignoring our inward

[60] "The fatal consequences of abandoning all thought of the subject as a whole, to become absorbed and lost in independent investigation of single aspects of it, is illustrated everywhere. The absence of coordination between the sciences, the failure of each to reflect constantly upon the scope and significance of the others have brought all to a state of hollowness" (Charles de Koninck, *The Hollow Universe* [Québec: Les Presses de L'Université Laval, 1964], 112-13). There is certainly some cooperation amongst the recognized "sciences," such as physics and chemistry and biology, but no one can believe there is any serious cooperation between these sciences and the more general philosophy of nature.

[61] "Modern biology, if some of its distinguished representatives are to be believed, dare not call itself true science unless it avoids and ignores all that naturally comes to the minds of ordinary people when they think of familiar animals and plants" (ibid., 79).

[62] The "anthropic principle," whether a sound principle or not, is a fine example of integral science, an approach to nature that does not limit itself to one method or another, but uses whichever approach seems best suited to help us understand the matter at hand. This principle invokes the idea that nature acts for an end, but also attends to the metrical aspects of things so crucial to the physicist. In our modern way of speaking however, we would say that in such cases the physicist is essentially borrowing from the natural philosopher, or in part becoming one himself, and he is stepping outside the methods strictly appropriate to the

experience of things, such as our own desire, without which a knowledge of the good is impossible. Accordingly, natural philosophy can ground ethics, studying the nature of man's soul and showing that nature acts for an end, whereas our modern "science," divorced from the philosophy of nature, is worthless in that regard.

Natural philosophy is also a better preparation for the study of truths about God. In pursuing these truths philosophically, we understand more what God is not than what he is. The *via negativa,* however, is much more fruitful the more general are the things we deny of God. "God is not a carbon atom" is not very instructive, whereas "God is not a body" is very illuminating. We cannot succeed in making these negations, though, unless we know quite distinctly what it is we are negating. We must know, to the point of being able to define them, what "body," "motion," and "matter" are. This is the work of the philosophy of nature.

Aristotle recognized the need for a more and more detailed experience of nature:

> Lack of experience diminishes our power of taking a comprehensive view of the admitted facts. Hence those who dwell in intimate association with nature and its phenomena grow more and more able to formulate, as the foundations of their theories, principles such as to admit of a wide and coherent development: while those whom devotion to abstract discussions has rendered unobservant of the facts are too ready to dogmatize on the basis of a few observations. The rival treatments of the subject now before us will serve to illustrate how great is the difference between a "scientific" and a "dialectical" method of inquiry.[63]

Aristotle recognized, too, the scientist's need for hypotheses testable by experiment and observation. Speaking of the followers of Empedocles and Democritus, he says:

physicist. How arbitrary this is can be seen by reflecting on the fact that a physicist necessarily borrows from mathematics, which is a discipline that does not even share his subject matter (or go back to sense experience to test its theorems), although it might be applicable to it. If he can thus borrow from the mathematician in his capacity as a physicist, why can he not use the general principles of the philosophy of nature, which is really the general beginning of his own discipline?

[63] Aristotle, *On Generation and Corruption* 1.2.316a5-13.

their explanation of the phenomena is not consistent with the phenomena. And the reason is that their ultimate principles are wrongly assumed: they had certain predetermined views, and were resolved to bring everything into line with them. . . . But they, owing to their love for their principles, fall into the attitude of men who undertake the defence of a position in argument. In the confidence that the principles are true they are ready to accept any consequence of their application. As though some principles did not require to be judged from their results, and particularly from their final issue! And that issue, which in the case of productive knowledge is the product, in the knowledge of nature is the phenomena always and properly given by perception.[64]

Aristotle was also quite aware of the need for applying mathematics and measurement to the study of natural things.[65] So why isn't he credited as the father of "science," even as we understand it today? Why does its founding wait until Galileo? Certainly Galileo was among the first to show the world just how powerful these methods are, and how quickly they become necessary when we investigate nature. Also, we happen to agree with Galileo's Copernican hypothesis, and not with the geocentric hypothesis of Aristotle. Moreover, many "scholastic" teachers in the time of Galileo contented themselves with being disciples of Aristotle, measuring their knowledge by conformity to his words rather than to reality. These false representatives gave Aristotle his undeserved reputation as an armchair philosopher who, like themselves, presumably would have refused to look through Galileo's telescope. As with any philosophic spirit, this is impossible to believe about a man who reflected that

The scanty conceptions to which we can attain of celestial things give us, from their excellence, more pleasure than all our knowledge of the world in which we live; just as a half glimpse of persons that we love is more delightful than an accurate view of other things.[66]

[64] Aristotle, *De Caelo* 3.7.306a5-17. Cf. *De Caelo* 2.13.293a20-25, about the Pythagoreans: "They further construct another earth in opposition to ours to which they give the name counter-earth. In all this they are not seeking for theories and causes to account for the phenomena, but rather forcing the phenomena and trying to accommodate them to certain theories and opinions of their own." Both quotations are from the J. L. Stocks translation.

[65] See, for example, Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* 1.13.

[66] Aristotle, *Parts of Animals* 1.5.644b32-35; William Ogle translation.

We are right to laugh at the legendary philosophers with a predilection for the abstract who, out of their loyalty to obsolete theories, refused to look at the world through a telescope. One hopes the day might arrive when we will find equally amusing the scientific type who refuses to remember what the world looks like without one.

BOOK REVIEWS

Culture and the Thomist Tradition: After Vatican II. By TRACEY ROWLAND. Radical Orthodoxy Series. London: Routledge, 2003. Pp. 226. $95.00 (cloth), $28.95 (paper). ISBN 0-415-30526-8 (cloth), 0-415-30527-6 (paper).

It is not surprising that Thomas Aquinas did not worry about the role of culture in moral formation since he lived in a thoroughly Catholic milieu. Contemporary Thomists, however, have no such excuse. According to Rowland, the culture of modernity—with its mix of theistic, quasi-theistic, and atheistic elements—is deeply inimical to the gospel in ways that have not been generally appreciated in the Church in general and among Thomists in particular. A notable exception to this is Alasdair MacIntyre, the Thomist hero of this book, whose writings articulate what Rowland classifies in her "Introduction" as "Postmodern Augustinian Thomism" (5). While on first glance it appears that these three terms do not belong together, Rowland argues that they can be synthetically reconciled in a kind of *concordantia discordantium* if defined in a certain way. She asserts that "post-modern" implies the following notes: a recognition that the primary intellectual problem is the need to transcend the culture of modernity, a nonmetaphysical starting point of the soul caught in the contradictory culture of modernity, and a critique of the Liberal tradition that incorporates elements from the Marxist and Genealogical traditions within a perspective that highlights the role of narrative and tradition in moral formation. The term "Augustinian" supplements "post-modern" with a theory of grace along the lines of *La nouvelle théologie,* a sense of the dialectical tension between the secular and sacral orders, and an appreciation of the role of memory in the formation of the soul. Strangely and tellingly, however, Rowland never defines what she means by the third term: "Thomism." Perhaps she thinks it is *per se nota.* Yet it is not at all clear how one could reconcile a basic adherence to the thought of Thomas Aquinas with a simultaneous adherence to what is required by Rowland's definitions of "post-modern" and "Augustinian." The worries mount as the text unfolds.

"Culture as a Theological Problem" is the topic of the first part. Chapter 1 argues that the Second Vatican Council in *Gaudium et spes* was too optimistic and naive about the degree to which modernity, understood as a specific cultural formation whose beliefs are embodied in social practices, is compatible with the

gospel. According to Rowland, the council's efforts at *aggiornamento* have too often led to dangerous accommodations to modernity. For example, Whig Thomists (a term of art comprising such diverse figures as Jacques Maritain, George Weigel, John Finnis, and Germain Grisez) have uncritically assumed that the natural-law teaching of Thomas Aquinas can be reconciled with liberalism in such a way as to allow the Church's teaching on morality to enter into the political dialogue of the naked public square. Motivated perhaps by a desire to distance itself from integralism—the view that it is possible for the Church to provide answers to secular questions directly from faith—the council unwittingly recognized the autonomy of secular modern culture in such a way as to encourage an extrinsicism of nature and grace that is reflected in most Thomists (even Karl Rahner!). After criticizing the authors of *Gaudium et spes* for failing to provide a good definition and analysis of culture, Rowland proceeds to endorse the German *Kulturgeschichte* understanding of culture as comprising *Geist, Bildung*, and *Kultur;* the first term refers to the dominant moral values of a culture or civilization, the second to the laws guiding self-formation, and the third to the guiding principles that give a culture its specific form. According to Rowland, these three concepts are somehow related to the Greek terms *ethos, nomos,* and *logos*. She never explains how these modern (and therefore presumably tainted) Germanic notions cohere with the premodern Greek concepts in a coherent concept of culture that is presumably centered on the Trinity. It is a central weakness of this book that it never explains the meaning of the first word of its title.

Chapter 2 explores the theme of culture in postconciliar magisterial thought. If the interpretation of *Gadium et spes* is the "explosive problematic" in contemporary Catholic theology, then the key to a proper hermeneutic of the text (at least according to the *Communio* school to which Rowland is more aligned than Radical Orthodoxy) is to make paragraph 22 the guiding principle: "The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light." What this means is that while the human sciences have a kind of juridical or even methodological autonomy vis-à-vis theology, nevertheless they ought not to be pursued as if they could disclose the truth autonomously. It is only through the Incarnation that the human condition, including culture, takes on its true meaning. According to Rowland's reading, the thought of John Paul II is marked by an appreciation for the need to interpret and critique the culture of modernity from an unabashedly Christological perspective. Yet she thinks that John Paul II's attempt to use the discourse of rights language as a way of establishing some kind of moral common ground with Liberalism is misguided; the pontiff shows a keener appreciation of modern culture when he characterizes it as a "culture of death." Liberalism is a deformation of the Protestant ethos that divorces the secular from the sacred. Thomism must therefore understand that its tradition is related in an inherently dialectical way with the culture of modernity; it cannot attempt to co-opt elements of that culture without accommodationism. By contrast, elements of Greco-Latin culture can and should be maintained in the Church (especially in

the liturgy) because it was pre-Christian and so open to incorporation, rather than anti-Christian and so inherently hostile as is modernity.

The second part of the book attempts to make the case that modernity is inherently hostile to the Thomist tradition through three chapters pegged to the three components of culture. In terms of *Geist* or *ethos,* Rowland relies on MacIntyre to show how modern bureaucratic culture impoverishes the ability of agents to develop Christian virtues. Modern bureaucratic culture typically relies on "experts" to make strategic decisions about ends and relegates to individuals technical questions regarding means. With the triumph of instrumental reasoning, where agents no longer deliberate about the good, it is not possible to develop genuine prudence. Caught between a workplace in which bureaucratic thinking dominates and a culture in which there is a cacophonous chorus of competing moral traditions, "plain persons" are not able to develop moral virtue. The triumph of capitalism has also impoverished moral agency insofar as it privileges the pursuit of money and allows market forces rather the good to govern economic practices. MacIntyre (in his Marxist mode) and John Paul II share a common concern for the way in which capitalism has deformed moral agency by subordinating the development of the worker to the good of the market. What is needed as an alternative to modernity is a theology of work along the lines of *Laborem excercens* wherein labor is seen "as an opportunity to participate in the transcendentals and offer the fruit of this participation to others as a gift" (67). Rowland warns that too many Catholic institutions operating within modern culture have capitulated to its ethos. Instead of incorporating secular bureaucratic practices, Catholic institutions are called to develop practices that are sacramental expressions of a deeper Christological identity.

Chapter 4 considers the conflict between modern mass culture and genuine Christian *Bildung* or self-formation. Modern Liberal models of self-formation were originally "aristocratic" in the sense that they held out a normative model for individual self-development that was predicated on some non-Christian ideal of human flourishing and that was available only for a cultivated few. That eventually gave way, however, to the more "bourgeois" model of self-development where there is no standard and an individual is free to fashion himself according to any model of flourishing so long as it does not impact negatively on any other individual's quest to do the same. Nietzschean nihilism is the ultimate consequence of this modern trajectory, where one is urged to fashion a self as a kind of original artistic creation in an exercise of power unfettered by anything except the ability to effect one's will. The result of all this is our debased "mass culture." In contrast to modernity, the Church offers a model of self-formation that is Christological and Trinitarian. Instead of self-creation, it stresses vocation: it is in response to God's call, rather than in absolute autonomy, that we come to realize our true selves. Rather than forgetting the past for the sake of unfettered new creation, genuine *Bildung* is based upon *memoria* in the form of "sapiential experience" where we incorporate into our moral selves the experience of the tradition. Much

influenced throughout by Hans Urs von Balthasar, Rowland emphasizes the need to participate in the transcendentals in order to develop as persons. In evaluating the debate between MacIntyre and Charles Taylor about modernity as a resource for Catholic self-formation, Rowland sides completely with the former.

Chapter 5 considers "The Logos of the *Kultur* of Modernity." The extrinsicism of the relationship between nature and grace common to the Thomist tradition prior to Henri de Lubac's recovery of Aquinas's authentic teaching in *Surnaturel* has as its legacy a tendency to divide the secular and the sacred in such a way as to relegate religion to the private domain, irrelevant to politics. Rowland argues that the traditional Thomistic reliance on a broadly Aristotelian notion of nature in its theological anthropology has fostered extrinsicism because it trades on a tight identification of *physis* and *telos;* as an Aristotelian nature, the human person must have some kind of natural *telos.* She proposes to remedy this conceptual problem through recourse to David Schindler's ontology of human persons as "identities in relation"; only by seeing the human person as constituted by its relationship to God can extrinsicism be avoided. Schindler's influence on Rowland is pervasive, and she echoes his critique of modern secular logic as mechanical and atomistic; in its Cartesian preoccupation with individuals, it ignores the role of culture and the fundamental primacy of relations. She endorses Schindler's claims that the logic of secular American culture is particularly noxious to the gospel. In a culture driven by capitalism and devoid of the transcendent, the priority of doxology to work has been lost. In this chapter it becomes clear that Rowland thinks that Schindler's theology provides the ultimate remedy to MacIntyre's diagnosis of the ills of modernity.

The third and final part of the book deals with proposals for a postmodern development of the Thomistic tradition. Rowland argues that a fundamental weakness of modern Neo-Thomism is an unconscious adoption of an Enlightenment model of rationality insofar as it purports to justify morality without any appeal to revelation. Specifically, by seeking to justify morality in a purely "philosophical" or theologically "neutral" manner through an appeal to an alleged "nature" abstracted from grace, Neo-Thomist natural-law theoreticians have distorted the teaching of Aquinas, for whom natural law is a fundamentally theological doctrine. In their strict separation of nature from grace and philosophy from theology, traditional Thomists have evacuated morality of its specifically Christian content. The boundary between theology and philosophy needs to be "smudged" through a greater recourse to narrative, presumably biblical, as a necessary feature of Christian morality. No moral theory independent of revelation can suffice, since it would then not be telling the truth of the end of human nature and the true condition of our impaired moral agency. MacIntyre's account of tradition-constituted rationality ought to be employed by Thomists as an alternative to an appeal to Cartesian-style rational precepts available with certainty to atomic individuals.

The final chapter of the expounds at length on a theme that has surfaced already: New Natural Law Theory (read John Finnis and Germain Grisez) is

vitiated by its covert supposition of Enlightenment rationality. This is manifested in its uncritical acceptance of the "no ought from is" dogma; Rowland contrasts this capitulation with MacIntyre's argument that if natures are conceived teleologically, rational judgments about what ought to be pursued for the sake of human flourishing are unproblematic. In contrast to the New Natural Law theorists, who make the precepts of natural law a matter of individual reflection, MacIntyre would argue that it is only within a moral tradition specified by narrative that it is possible to come to know and judge the human good. Rowland's fundamental complaint about the New Natural Law project is that in its attempts to find common ground with liberal natural-rights theory, it gives up what is distinctively Christian. This can be seen explicitly in its relegation of religion to one among many fundamental goods, rather than the overarching and necessarily dominant good that it is. Rowland argues that the liberal conception of natural rights is utterly incompatible with Thomism because it presupposes an autonomous a-teleological individual as its starting point. Without any common conception of the genuine human good, the apparently common rhetoric of "rights" turns out to be ideological shadow-boxing masking a deep and unbridgeable chasm between Catholic Christianity and modern Liberalism. Within the Thomist tradition, law as a tutor to a naturally common good must have priority over any talk of rights. As in all other domains discussed in this book, the presuppositions of modern culture, especially in its American form, are inherently hostile to Christianity insofar as they represent the severed fragments of the premodern framework operating in a dysfunctional manner.

This is a bracing and provocative book. Rowland has put her finger on a weakness in the Thomist tradition in its failure to engage in more systematic theological analysis of the culture of modernity. She has therefore done the Thomist tradition a service in raising the problems she identifies, even if not many are likely to be persuaded that she has offered a position consistent with that tradition. While there is much that deserves comment in this book, in these pages it seems advisable to focus on the following question: is what Rowland proposes really a version of Thomism? An argument could be made that her view is really postmodern Augustinianism in the vein of some of the more well-known authors in the Radical Orthodoxy series (e.g., John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock). A counter-argument could be made, however, that this really is a work squarely in the *Communio* tradition based on its heavy reliance on Schindler, de Lubac, and Balthasar. The only author that Rowland relies on who is broadly Thomistic is MacIntyre, and her interpretation of him is somewhat eclectic in that she emphasizes the antimodern and Augustinian strains in his thought. The invocation of all these names gives a sense of the broad learning that informs this book, but it also points to its central weakness, a weakness that it shares with some other works emanating under the rubric of Radical Orthodoxy: ultimately the swirl of references and authorities leaves the reader wondering how it all hangs together. It gives the appearance of being a mere *bricolage:* "an assemblage of haphazard or incongruous elements" (6).

Ultimately, I cannot see how what goes under Rowland's rubric of "postmodern" and "Augustinian" coheres with what goes under the rubric of "Thomism." It is therefore no accident that she never tries to explain what she means by the term: it cannot be given a credible definition in the light of the "postmodern" and "Augustinian" assumptions driving this book. While it would take more space than I have here to explain why this is so, I would say that it has something to do with another famous Greek term that Rowland neglects to consider: *physis*. One can grant to de Lubac (as Gilson did) that the Thomist tradition went wrong in its parsing of the nature-grace distinction while at the same time maintaining the importance of that distinction and the intelligibility of nature as the terminus of God's first gift in creation. One can also grant that culture has a profound influence on nature without collapsing the latter into the former. If nature is intelligible apart from grace and culture, then it can indeed serve as a starting point for an account of the human good that does not make explicit appeal to revelation and so can serve as a way to talk about that good to those who are not inside the circle. The simple fact that separates Thomas from us—he lived in a culture permeated by Catholic Christianity and we do not—means that we need some moral language that allows us a voice in the secular domain. Such language is not a substitute for evangelization and critique, both of which need to go on, but it is in the meantime a way of talking to strangers that can promote the common human good (including human rights) this side of the coming of the kingdom.

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Being & Some 20th Century Thomists. By JOHN F. X. KNASAS. Bronx, N.Y.: Fordham University Press, 2003. Pp. 335. $65.00 (cloth). ISBN 0-8232-2248-9.

Being and Thomism are two very elusive ideas. Knasas's book tries to pin them both down in no uncertain terms and, one might add, in function of one another. Thomism is taken primarily as a unique philosophy of being in a realistic sense and this realistic sense is taken to mean one thing only in the approach to the question of being: namely, that which is derived only from sense experience. *Being & Some 20th Century Thomists* comes as a response to other accounts of Thomism and its evolution in the twentieth century, such as that of Gerald McCool's *From Unity to Plurality* (also published by Fordham University Press, in 1992). In fact, it could be viewed as a response of the Toronto school, or more precisely the Joseph Owens school, to the transcendental Thomism

propounded by Joseph Donceel of Fordham. The argument of the book, to put it perhaps too succinctly, is to show that versions of Thomism other than that of Joseph Owens, especially those labeled as idealist but also some thought to be realist, fail the test of realism in their approach to the question of being and therefore fail the test of Thomism as found in the writings of St. Thomas. "Generally speaking," we are told in the introduction, "Existential Thomism is *a posteriori*. It is built from extra-mental reality as presented in the data of sensible experience. It is specified by the perception of a basic intelligibility, or commonality, in those real things of sensation" (xvii). The problem for the author is that this Existential Thomism, as he conceives it, is only a species of Neo-Thomism, which must be distinguished from and defended against other species because it is the only one that really works as an elaboration of the *ratio entis*.

In chapter 1 Knasas gives his own version of the Neo-Thomist revival *contra* that of the man he calls "the dean of the twentieth-century Thomist narrative, Gerald McCool, S.J."(29) Knasas names most of those one would think of as part of this revival and then divides them into what he calls three different brands, identified as Aristotelian Thomism, Existential Thomism, and Transcendental Thomism, all within a framework of *a posteriori* Thomism, which is for him the benchmark for coming into contact with reality. "The normal locus of this contact is sensation, that is, what you are doing as you look and listen" (3) For Knasas this contact is with an object that presents itself as real, or "as an existent ontologically independent of the sensor," where "doubt that the object is real is not even on the radar screen" (ibid.). This is the position of "immediate realism" he espouses throughout the book, no matter how complicated the discussion gets with analogical conceptualizations, transcendentals, and possessors of existential act or *esse*. It is the perspective from which he will try to show that "the metamorphosis of the twentieth-century Thomistic revival from Neo-Thomism into Transcendental Thomism is a disaster for Thomism itself" (31).

In chapter 2 Knasas tries to bolster this position of immediate realism with a carefully articulated theory of "abstraction without precision" and then launches into a prolonged attack on Joseph Maréchal (the Belgian Jesuit seen by most as the father of Transcendental Thomism) and what is spoken of as the *a priori* dynamism of intelligence as a fundamental orientation to God. In contrast to this *a priorism* Knasas describes Maritain's intellectual intuitionism of being, which he also takes issue with, and then goes on to show how Gilson and Owens come at the kind of metaphysics he wants. He quotes mostly from Owens and little from Gilson, with whom he will later also take exception. The most significant thing Knasas finds in Owens is that he "has worked out a metaphysics by initiating the science with a subject understood as material being taken in the concrete, that is, the composition of the sensible thing and its *esse*" (67). Beginning from the sensible, Knasas thinks "metaphysics itself can generate the further data of immaterial beings from which concepts able to be apart from matter can be cogently abstractive" (ibid.). One is left to wonder what "further

data of immaterial beings" might be if not more sense data or how such other data can be generated if not by a sort of idealist projection that is "cogently abstractive" of another set of data besides the set one already has from the senses. Knasas's way of talking about abstraction in relation to "data," his preferred term for referring to reality throughout the book, is not without its own difficulties when he comes to explain the difference between his "immediate realism" and the idealism he wants to repudiate.

Knasas takes an entire chapter to defend his immediate and direct sense realism against Descartes, whom, rather than Kant, he takes to be the "paradigm of critical philosophers" (72). In fact Kant could be viewed as an ally here, since he restored the validity of sense experience along with abstraction, as Maréchal pointed out, against the pure innatism of Descartes. But Kant is not brought in. He is hardly alluded to in the book, except in connection with the Transcendental Thomists, whose assertion of the validity of sense experience is also ignored. Critical philosophy for Knasas means only someone who denies the validity of sense consciousness operating in the sense manifold. In opposition to Descartes's methodical doubt concerning sense perception, Knasas offers his own version of a transcendental reflection: "Reflection here makes me aware of my awareness of something real. . . . The level of awareness of which I am speaking is my present one, in which I am at least looking this way and listening" (83).

Knasas is aware that the problem of metaphysics as science of being is hardly resolved by this simple dogmatic answer to Descartes's methodical doubt. There is more to the problem than just the objectivity of sense consciousness, which hardly gets us beyond Hume's skepticism with regard to everything that is not a matter of vivid impression or, shall we say, sense data. Another problem is that of the objectivity of the notion of being; Transcendental Thomists have long been aware of this, but other less critical Thomists have tended to ignore it or simply to set it aside as if it were not a problem for Thomistic metaphysics. Knasas confronts the problem in chapter 4 by maintaining that the validation of the concept of being is no different from the validation of any other concept such as *man* and *triangle*. We validate the objectivity of meanings "by seeing the meanings in light of real sensible data. . . . The same should be true of the concept of being, the *ratio entis*. Being should also be an abstraction without precision from real sense data" (93). However, Knasas is not yet ready to show how we validate the objectivity of the notion of being, whether by a theory of abstraction he is willing to admit or in some other way. He only states that Aquinas had "a novel definition of the *ratio entis* as *habens esse* [which] is not yet on the radar screen of [his] exposition" (94). What is still on his radar screen is all those attempts to substitute "a more autonomous and enclosed activity to validate our fundamental concepts" (95) other than what he calls abstraction, which supposedly "sees that [these concepts] have been drawn from the real directly given in sensation" (ibid.). Foremost among those who supposedly have made such attempts to "substitute" some proper activity of intelligence for "abstraction" are once again the Transcendental Thomists. This time Rahner's "horizon of infinite being" and Lonergan's "pure desire to know" will be

chastised along with Maréchal's "intellectual dualism," but along with these Maritain's "critical realism" will also come in for some criticism when it is seen as "an intellectual perception as such" (142). Knasas finds fault with any attempt to bring in anything like an intellectual activity as part of the validation for any objectivity for our concepts, as if the immediate realism of sense were not enough even for the concept of being. The argument culminates in a retorsion of retorsion, which Knasas characterizes as "the archetypal method of Transcendental Thomism" (109), but which most fundamentally is a method for forcing one to reflect on one's intellectual activity even if it be that of abstracting intellectual "data" from sense data or from the imagination.

Chapter 5 marks a major shift in the argument of the book. After giving a relatively severe account of his own approach to the question of being which is dismissive of any attempt to introduce some intellectual knowing into the picture as a deviation from the straight and narrow path Knasas takes to be proper to Thomism, he turns to a more positive account of what one can come up with using the method he has tried to restrict to what he calls the immediate realism of sense knowing: "the *ratio entis* is a first order, or first intention, sameness-in-difference" (128). With this he leaps immediately into an account of being as analogous in all its richness where the dimension of *esse* will be trumpeted in the *ratio entis* in chapter 5, but not before announcing that in chapter 6 he will speak of God or the First Cause as *Esse Subsistens* and that in chapter 7 he will derive a *ratio boni* from this rich *ratio entis* as food for the will and as the foundation for a natural-law ethic.

In connection with analogy Knasas speaks of the richness of being, but this richness is still tied to the beings of immediate sense perception. Analogy is not an abstractive dumbing down or an emptying of the commonality of being. What he actually tells us about analogy is that he follows Maritain, admitting that "Aquinas never speaks that way" (131). Knasas takes the rather classical line of showing how an analogous concept is not univocal, bringing it back to his own notion of abstraction without precision, that is, leaving out none of the richness of the *ratio entis,* even in its universal sameness. Knasas gives examples of analogy from ordinary experience, but he looks for confirmation of the analogy of being in Thomism. He cites different accounts of analogy in an attempt both to validate analogy and to show that the unique kind of analogy he has in mind is the one Aquinas had in mind even though it is found nowhere in his writings. After presenting the different types of analogy, he turns to McInerny, who has challenged this classical account as contrary to the mind of Aquinas. According to McInerny, analogy is only a matter of names or concepts and not of being, something Knasas cannot accept with his immediate realism of the senses. Knasas does battle with McInerny, admitting at several crucial points that he cannot make sense of what McInerny is saying, and goes on to argue that analogy is supraconceptual, where the analogical concept comes to bear upon the analogon or the sameness-in-difference one finds in a plurality of individuals. What he wants to maintain in the end is a "fundamental richness and density that intelligibly stands behind our experience of things" (163), without letting go of

"this one true metaphysics [that] would validate its fundamental analysis of individual beings" (169), presumably still abstracted directly from sense data. It is difficult to understand how all this is possible without some intellectual activity of the kind Transcendental Thomists speak about over and above mere sense activity. Knasas shows how active his intelligence is in all this when he slips from talking about being as given in immediate realism to being as possible, as late medieval commentators on Aquinas did, as Wolff did in his modern rationalist ontology, and as many Thomists like Garrigou-Lagrange and Maritain have done since, satisfied with possibility on the intellectual level while insisting on being or realism on the sense level.

As a centerpiece for any Thomistic metaphysics worthy of the name, the chapter on *actus essendi* or *esse* is a model for metaphysical thinking that is no longer stuck in the immediate realism of the senses. We are led into a definition of being as being that distinguishes *esse* from what is said to have it, *habens esse,* with a long discourse on how *esse* relates to the thing that has it. Through this we come to a metaphysical concept of being, but still relating only to sense data, as any "realistic" concept must. Knasas argues against any attempt to loosen this direct relation to sense data by way of the doctrine of the *duplex operatio intellectus,* postulating always that we know universals directly in sense data, no matter how singular the latter are. Whether this is the direct realism of Aquinas is highly questionable, but it is that of Owens, whom Knasas quotes at every key turn in his argument. Knasas knows of other authors who have interpreted the doctrine of the *duplex operatio intellectus* differently, but he cannot take them seriously as metaphysicians or as spokesmen for authentic Thomism. He ends up speaking of the *ratio entis* as releasing various *esses* that actuate things as its analogates, so that "the myriad of things intelligibly streams from the *ratio entis*" (211), an astounding statement for one who has spent so much time and energy denouncing the dynamism of intellect.

In the chapter on *actus essendi,* Knasas spends a long time discussing causality as it relates to *esse* and proofs for the existence of God, especially to the one he finds in the *De Ente et Essentia* of Aquinas, which relates more directly to the *actus essendi* as such. He takes issue with Gilson and Maurer regarding the interpretation of this "proof," which leaves him in a rather unique position in the broader school of Thomism, for no one else is willing to say that the argument in *De Ente et Essentia* is a proof like those in either one of the *Summae.* But Knasas is not daunted by this. He will go to whatever extreme the logic of his position on the metaphysical concept of being will take him. That is one of the strengths of his book: a consistency that brooks no exception.

In the end, after a consideration of the *ratio boni* that he derives from the *ratio veri* and how a such a *ratio boni* can ground a natural-law ethic, Knasas returns to his philosophical estimate of the twentieth-century Thomist revival as a summation of the book. He includes also a discussion of the much-debated relation between the finite and the infinite, between the natural and the supernatural, taking issue once again not only with the transcendental Thomists but also with others on his side of the "idealism/realism" divide. He shows that

he is well read in all these debates and he is anything but afraid to take his own position in all of them. The problem throughout the book is that the elusive ideas of being and Thomism do not stick together as closely as Knasas wants them to. He knows this, which makes him all the more forceful in the defense of his unmediated realist position, and he hangs tough at every turn, ready to gun down, to use his own metaphor, anything he perceives as opposition or as open to some mediation in our way of conceiving being.

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Erich Przywara, S.J.: His Theology and His World. By THOMAS F. O'MEARA, O.P. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002. Pp. 254. $35.00 (cloth). ISBN 0-268-02763-3.

Thomas O'Meara's portrait of Erich Przywara's (1889-1972) contribution to Catholic thought in Germany between the two world wars fills a significant lacuna in the English-speaking world. Most readers, if aware of Przywara's contribution at all, will know it only through footnotes to his work on analogy. Few of his eight hundred publications (including about fifty books) have been translated into English. Although his thought has been the subject of numerous scholarly monographs and articles in German and some in Spanish, Italian, and French, there are only a few such examples of secondary literature in English. Przywara's often convoluted literary dialectic and the difficulty of his written German style partly explains the lack of attention. But O'Meara finds a further explanation in Przywara's intense engagement with the particular concerns of German and Austrian culture after the 1920s. Przywara devoted himself to a wide-ranging conversation between Catholic tradition and the philosophy and culture of the hour. The significance of his contribution is to a large extent defined by that context. O'Meara deftly introduces that world, the issues of the day, some of Przywara's dialogue partners and the Jesuit's contribution to the discussions. O'Meara supplements his own analysis with numerous references to the literature on Przywara and so provides an invaluable introduction to that scholarship also.

The first chapter provides an overview of Przywara, his age, and his world. O'Meara describes a man and a Church struggling to come to terms with modernity in the context of German culture. The next two chapters offer an overview of Przywara's projects and central themes. Chapter 2 presents his early efforts to address the challenge of being a Catholic in the modern world and the role of his retrieval of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas in furthering that end.

Chapter 3 examines his efforts to articulate a philosophy of religion and an explanation of Catholic sensibility, particularly in dialogue with Newman, Husserl, and Scheler. His conceptions of analogy and grace are central to those projects. Chapter 4 fills out some of the details of Przywara's perspective through accounts of the theologian's dialogues with leading intellectuals of the time. He was a "lover of the arts," a literary artist and something of a poet himself, who explored culture, music, art, and fiction as well as religious themes. O'Meara focuses attention here on the Jesuit's conversations with prominent theologians and philosophers. The sampling (Karl Barth, Paul Tillich, Leo Baeck, Edith Stein, Martin Heidegger, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Karl Rahner) indicates the breadth and ecumenical thrust of his conversations with Protestant, Jewish, and secular thinkers, as well as fellow Catholics. The final chapter looks at his thoughts on Church, spirituality, and liturgy. Przywara saw himself as a pastoral theologian even though his conceptions remained rather abstract and theoretical. Still, his metaphysical theology was shaped and inspired by Ignatian spirituality. He wrote two lengthy and influential studies of the *Spiritual Exercises*.

By the end, O'Meara gives a well-drawn, complex, and fascinating sketch of an "analyst of the moment." But the sketch is also incomplete—suggestive of a richness and contour too multifaceted to capture in a 187-page narrative, and raising a question about what relevance Przywara's thought might have for us today. The complexity of the portrait arises in part from Przywara's calling, his characteristic way of thinking, and his times. He was born in Upper Silesia, then in Germany but now within the borders of Poland. It was a pluralistic environment that exposed the young Catholic to the secular and Jewish worlds. O'Meara suggests that this nurtured his openness later in life to engage the Catholic faith with other currents of thought. His early studies as a Jesuit were in Holland because the order was still outlawed in Germany. He began his professional career when the Society had only recently reentered the country and there was little prospect for a professorship. Hence he was sent to the editorial staff of the Jesuit journal *Stimmen der Zeit*, in Munich. The periodical sought to articulate Catholic faith and spirituality amid German philosophy, art, and religion. At the time, the Church in Rome was hostile to modernity, while Munich had emerged as an artistic and cultural hub of Germany. Although Przywara's assignment did not give him the prestige and influence of a university position, it put him at the center of Catholic Germany's confrontation with modernity and provided a broad forum for addressing the issues of the day through his countless reviews, overviews of books, articles, and lectures (often to university audiences). His rejection of isolation and his pioneering engagement with modern philosophy, Protestants, and Jews had a profound influence on the generation that followed him and was a remote preparation for the developments of the Second Vatican Council. His mental temperament was in some ways especially suited to his calling and times. He characteristically articulated his own positions in dialogue, often sketching typologies that arranged thinkers into types and directions, dialectically playing off both the positive and negative, always looking for connections and analogies that would

hold the polarities in balance. He sought in the diversity of positions a complementarity to ground a Catholic philosophy of religion, theology, and spirituality that would address the contemporary world. His efforts to combine a transcendental philosophy of subjectivity and a metaphysics of being aimed to demonstrate that the deepest convictions of Catholicism are anticipated in modern history and subjectivity. He was a fervent apologist but not in a narrow, defensive, or sectarian way. O'Meara thinks Barth described him fittingly as a sympathetic and engaging conversation partner who at the same time was confident and clear about his own positions.

Despite Przywara's dialectic analysis of such a variety of topics and sources, O'Meara finds that central themes occupied him throughout his career. All of these were functions of his consistent effort to articulate the nature of a Catholic approach to life. This led to his investigation of the resources in idealism and phenomenology for understanding the religious dimension; his effort to work out the contemporary significance of sources such as Origen, Augustine, Aquinas, and Newman; his concern to clarify the contrast between a Protestant emphasis on subjectivity and God's transcendence and the analogical interplay in Catholicism of God and creation, and of grace and sacraments; and his conception of the liturgy and Church in terms of the Body of Christ and sacramentality. His development of many of these themes was pioneering. O'Meara observes that Przywara was among the earliest scholars to recognize the many differences between Aquinas's theology and Neoscholasticism, and that in fact he understood Aquinas better than did many Neoscholastics. Although he had reservations about Maréchal's appropriation of Kant and subsequent efforts by Rahner, Muck, and Coreth, he supported such attempts to see how Thomism and modern philosophy could illuminate each other. He recognized the value of phenomenology for Catholic reflection and devoted considerable attention especially to Husserl's and Scheler's work. He was critical of Heidegger, but engaged his thought seriously. He worked to counter the tendency of Catholic theology at the time to make too sharp a distinction between nature and grace. He was among the first to recognize the significance of Newman's insights for contemporary questions and was instrumental in introducing him to German Catholics. In 1929, when Przywara gave a lecture at Münster at Karl Barth's invitation and took part in his seminar, the Holy Office was forbidding participation in ecumenical conferences. His conception of ecumenism as including encounter with Judaism was remarkable for the time and involved substantive interchanges with Martin Buber, Hermann Cohen, and Leo Baeck. He decried anti-Semitism as vulgar and destructive. His sermons delivered in 1943 and 1944 stressed the lasting importance of the Jewish Scriptures and though they where a "modest counter to the Nazi policies," they were disturbing enough in Berlin to earn a visit from Himmler who found them too abstract to be a threat. He was not a feminist but he wrote of the new importance of women in the Church. O'Meara's account of Przywara's friendship with Edith Stein and his encouragement of her academic aspirations shows that he was more progressive on the issue than many of his peers.

O'Meara recounts that in later years editors found Przywara's metaphysical theology too abstract, rhetorical, and poetic. He was affected by the trauma of the war and also began to suffer from somewhat debilitating mental illness. Although he became more productive again after the war and he found a new platform on the radio in the 1950s and 1960s, his work did not have the originality or impact it did earlier. His metaphysical and abstract approach was less effective as European Catholicism's concerns became more pastoral and concrete. Przywara's direct influence on Vatican II was negligible. O'Meara contends that his influence even on the next generation of theologians was rather indirect. He did not have the sort of personality or project that would attract disciples or establish a school. O'Meara considers at some length Balthasar's characterization of Przywara later in life countering the mainstream Catholic theology leading up to Vatican II; O'Meara rejects the interpretation as a bit too self-serving. His review of Przywara's work during those years shows one who was still a Thomist and "Ignatian activist" more sympathetic to modern philosophy and more involved in Church renewal than Balthasar acknowledges. O'Meara detects some deep similarities with Rahner and indirect signs of influence, but follows Klaus Fischer's judgment that there is no direct dependency in his case either.

On the question of contemporary relevance, O'Meara concludes with other recent commentators that Przywara does not offer a "system or conclusions but a way of thinking that is *Durchgang*, transition, passageway." Przywara's abstract metaphysical theology does not speak effectively to the issues of today's Church. His typologies and method are not very helpful in charting contemporary Catholicism's conversation with postmodern philosophies and cultures. At the same time, O'Meara's narrative establishes the influence of Przywara's efforts to engage Catholic sensibility with the intellectual currents of his time on the next generation's encounter with their culture. It was not so much his conceptions of analogy, incarnation, and sacramentality, but his performance, his thinking through of the analogous interplay of created and uncreated in the conceptuality of his day, that inspired the efforts of Rahner and Balthasar. The question this raises is what further can be learned for the current tasks of the philosophy of religion and theology from his performance and theirs—that is, from their employment of an analogical sensibility rather than from their theories about Catholic sensibility or the analogical imagination.

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The Thomist Tradition. By BRIAN J. SHANLEY, O.P. Handbook of Contemporary Philosophy of Religion 2. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002. Pp.236. $90.00 (cloth). ISBN 1-4020-0078-2.

Interest in medieval philosophy has been markedly on the rise over the last twenty-five years. This can be seen not only in Catholic institutions of higher learning, but in journals, publishing houses, and university departments of a more secular character as well. The emergence of the philosophy of religion as a recognized field within non-Catholic philosophy has clearly contributed to this development. After falling into ill repute during the heyday of positivism, philosophical reflection on the existence of God, the nature of religious language, and the problem of evil now enjoys acceptance within the corridors of the Anglo-American academy. While the proximate roots of this return to respectability lie chiefly in the impact of contemporary thinkers such as Wittgenstein and Heidegger, it was inevitable that the thought of the Scholastics would also benefit, given their very ample and technical treatment of issues relating to God, man, and the world.

Despite the obvious affinities between the set of topics now covered under the rubric of "philosophy of religion" and the religious questioning of the medieval Scholastics, the interface of these two approaches is not without its difficulties. For one thing, the new discipline side-steps the methodological distinction, so important within Scholasticism, between philosophy and theology. Likewise, some themes essential to the contemporary treatment—for example, religious pluralism—seem prima facie to be alien to the unitary faith-perspective of the Christian Schoolmen. Nevertheless, the benefits to be culled from a dialogue between the two discourses, contemporary and medieval, make it imperative to face the attendant challenges head on.

Written as the second volume in a new "handbook" series on the philosophy of religion, *The Thomist Tradition* represents a serious attempt at promoting this sort of dialogue. The book is not intended to be an historical reconstruction of Aquinas's own teaching on "natural" religion (with a focus on *religio* and associated virtues in *Summa theologiae* II-II, qq. 81-122). Nor does it aim at comparing influential contemporary projects in the philosophy of religion (as elaborated, e.g., by R. Swinburne or J. Hick) to work within Thomism. Rather, following an order of exposition that mirrors the standard topics in contemporary philosophy of religion, the author aims to show how the twentieth-century exponents of a key medieval thinker—Thomas Aquinas—have grappled fruitfully with all of the major issues in the new field. The idea, in sum, is to indicate how the Thomist tradition can serve as a valuable dialogue partner for contemporary research in the philosophy of religion. At this the book succeeds quite well. The level of discussion is sufficiently detailed that it conveys new insight to those who already philosophize from within Thomism, yet by shunning unnecessary jargon and pausing to explain key terms the book remains accessible to outsiders.

The story begins with Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879), which set the stage for a vigorous revival of Thomism in the next century. This influential text exhibited a basic ambivalence toward modernity. While heartily praising the genuine progress in human knowledge that had been achieved during this period (especially by the natural sciences), the pope nevertheless was quite critical of modern philosophy, which he deemed to be tainted by subjectivism and agnosticism. The encyclical accordingly gave rise to two different appropriations—conservative and progressive—of Aquinas's thought in the century that followed. The conservative strand viewed Thomism as an urgently needed corrective to the Cartesian and Kantian errors of modern thought. Its proponents thereby sought to maintain Thomism in its state of original purity, all the while promoting it as a sapiential framework from which to integrate the advances of modern science. The progressive strand, by contrast, was convinced that modern philosophy contained valuable insights that, once freed from their admixture of error and by dint of being creatively joined to Thomistic principles, would result in a revitalized Catholic philosophy.

These two very different reactions to modernity demonstrate how twentieth-century Thomism was anything but a monolithic doctrine. An initial glimpse of its diversity is offered in the book's opening chapter. The first section concentrates on the years before the Second Vatican Council. Reactions to Blondel and Bergson in early French Dominican Thomism, Maritain's reformulation of classical Thomism, the recovery of the historical Thomas by the likes of Gilson, Chenu, and Fabro, and the development of a "transcendental Thomism" at the hands of Maréchal (and others), were the chief tendencies during this formative period. A second (briefer) section brings the story up to the present: decline of classical Thomism in the grand commentatorial style, intensification of research into the historical Thomas, the transcendental projects of Lonergan, Rahner, and Schillebeeckx, and the emergence of an analytic Thomism.

This overview of the key players and trends within twentieth-century Thomism provides a concise backdrop to the chapters that follow, each of which is devoted to a specific research area within the philosophy of religion. The author's strategy is to outline the range of Thomistic debate within each of these areas. In so doing, he discusses not only the leading figures in the tradition, but also a broad range of other contributors. In this respect the book offers an advantage over previously published surveys of Thomism in the twentieth century (for instance, Gerald McCool's *The Thomists*). Many of the book's references are to recent publications; hence the reader comes away well informed of the current *status quaestionis* for the issues under consideration.

The second and third chapters of the book delve into issues relating to religious knowledge and language. Of central concern here is the distinction between faith and reason. An analysis of Aquinas's term *praeambula fidei*, in light of the contemporary categories of fideism and evidentialism, provides a useful segue into the Thomistic literature on the faith/reason distinction. Aquinas eschews evidentialism insofar as his *praeambula* do not provide antecedent

philosophical justification for the act of faith; yet he should not be classed as fideist because, on his account, reason has an important role to play in supporting and sustaining religious belief. Against this background Shanley provides a masterful treatment of theological faith: as a virtue of the intellect, faith is very much in continuity with reason's striving toward truth. Yet, because of its transcendence, the object of faith (God's uncreated mystery) can never be reached by intellectual investigation alone. Drawing on the groundbreaking work of A. Gardeil, Shanley elucidates particularly well Aquinas's claim that the act of faith is based upon an inward movement of the will: this represents much more than a kind of pragmatic or utilitarian choice, oriented by the hope of anticipated future rewards. Rather, it emerges from a special sort of love: "the person's dynamic moral striving toward the ultimate good under the influence of divine grace" (32). The *praeambula* should thus not be understood as premises of a ratiocination whose conclusion is faith in God. Their function resides elsewhere: "the point of the arguments for the existence of God . . . is to locate the Christian God on the map of the Aristotelian universe." They thereby establish "the referent of theology's discourse within the reflection on experience opened up by reason" (39).

This analysis is subsequently extended into the much-debated topic of Christian philosophy, first advanced by Gilson and Maritain, and its more recent mutation under the heading of "philosophical theology." The latter is an attempt to reframe traditional theological doctrines such as Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement in ways that render them amenable to investigation from within contemporary philosophy of religion. Shanley points out nicely that this approach is not without its dangers. Side-stepping the formal distinction between philosophy and theology, in order to allow the former dialectical access to the truths of faith, puts at risk an insight central to Aquinas's conception of theology qua *sacra doctrina:* what God has revealed about himself may rightly be investigated only with God's help. Theologizing thereby requires more than intellectual acumen; it presupposes "the virtues, membership in a worshipping community, a prayer life, and the guidance of an authoritative tradition" (43). Interestingly, yet perhaps more contentiously, this holistic construal of human knowledge of God is likewise applied to the related problematic of naming God. After outlining the standard Thomistic understanding of analogy as a teaching about the signification of a special class of *terms*, Shanley seems to nod in favor of a contemporary approach that sees analogy as especially bound up with the mental act of *judgment*. On this reading, "analogy ultimately is not a kind of scientific theory describing how a philosophical research program aiming at detached theoretical knowledge of God can proceed, but rather an attempt to explain the lived usage of language within a believing religious community" (55). Does this emphasis on religious experience spell an end to the central role previously accorded to analogy within the *scientia* of metaphysics?

Chapter 4 is devoted to the relation between science and religion. It serves as a bridge between the God-centered speculative concerns of the book's opening chapters, and the matters of existential import—evil and suffering, human nature

and destiny, conception of the absolute, religious pluralism—that are taken up in the remaining chapters (5-9). Borrowing from the work of I. Barbour, Shanley explains how Thomistic treatments of science have alternated between integration and dialogue. The integrative approach seeks to subsume scientific truth claims into the higher light of metaphysics and theology. This was the path followed by Aquinas when he formulated a proof for God's existence based on Aristotelian cosmology. Emphasizing the momentous changes in scientific outlook that have taken place since the time of Galileo and Newton, most contemporary Thomists have instead advocated a looser relationship of dialogue, wherein theology ceases to assert a privileged position vis-à-vis the empirical sciences. No longer are the latter expected to conform themselves to the doctrinal requirements of theology. To the contrary, the burden of revision falls on theology whenever its claims seem to contradict those of science. Correlation between the two disciplines is thus "achieved mainly by interpreting theological claims in metaphysical terms so as to obviate any conflict with an empirically-based science" (91). Shanley judiciously comments that this approach, despite its advantages, nevertheless risks separating metaphysics and theology from the realm of the physical: "at that point . . . theology no longer really dialogues with science because it has given up its foothold in the world of nature" (ibid.).

Space unfortunately does not allow for even a cursory examination of *The Thomist Tradition*'s remaining chapters. Suffice it to say that each maintains the same high caliber of structured exposition and reasoned judgment. Of these, the final chapter (9), on religious pluralism, is particularly original. It brings the whole nexus of issues covered earlier in the book to bear on a topic of urgent contemporary concern. There is no better way of showing how Thomism in our own time has been forced to shed the form of medieval Christendom, thereby to confront a central challenge of modernity. Importantly, this chapter also manifests how the Thomistic response to issues in contemporary philosophy of religion must draw from both philosophy and theology. The author is clearly at home on both levels of discourse, and is able to marshal (and evaluate) a broad range of literature from each, without succumbing to the temptation of bending the one to the exigencies of the other.

Overall the book is very well documented. It draws widely from sources in English, French, and German, and for this reason will provide a rich foundation for future study and research. Some lacunae may nevertheless be found. For example, chapter 6, on religion and morality, would have benefitted from at least passing reference to the work of M.-M Labourdette, O.P. Similarly, the chapter on religious pluralism might fruitfully have integrated Maritain's conception of the natural mystical experience (*l'expérience du soi*) or Journet's important treatment of degrees of membership in the Church. More generally, given its scope, this account of the history of Thomism could have been usefully nuanced by reference to the essays in *Saint Thomas au XXe siècle* (1994, edited by S.-T. Bonino, O.P.). Finally, the Catholic dialogue with trends in contemporary philosophy of religion would have been enhanced by some consideration of the arguments in *The Philosophy of Religion: A Guide to the*

Subject (1998, edited by Brian Davies, O.P.), which covers much the same ground as the present volume.

These are just minor quibbles. *The Thomist Tradition* is by far the most authoritative, engaging, and up-to-date book in its genre. It merits a broad readership within the Catholic academic community and beyond.

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"Person" in Christian Tradition and the Conception of Saint Albert the Great: A Systematic Study of Its Concept as Illuminated by the Mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation. By STEPHEN A. HIPP. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters n.f. 57. Münster: Aschendorff, 2001. Pp. 565. ISBN 3-402-04008-5 (paper).

At the end of one of his *opuscula sacra* discussing the nature of the Trinity, Boethius asks his friend to whom the work is dedicated, the deacon John, whether his arguments are consistent with Church teaching. A simple enough question and yet a revealing way in which to close one of the seminal documents on the topic in the Latin tradition. Indeed, Boethius is so concerned with the difficulties of providing a rational articulation of the doctrine that he asks John to suggest an alternative account should he have any hesitations. As Boethius's treatise is an investigation of the concept of *persona*, his caution concerning his attempt at philosophical understanding in light of the conciliar formulations is all the more understandable. The definition of person has been, and remains, controversial. Yet it cannot be avoided, for the problem of personhood is, for obvious reasons, among the defining issues of Christian philosophy.

Thus there can be no doubt about the importance of articulating the distinction between *natura* and *persona*, which is the task taken up by Stephen Hipp's historical study on Trinitarian doctrine. While the historical scope of this work is rather broad, its delineation is fairly exact: it is focused on the Christian philosophy of person from the beginnings to the thirteenth century and treats Albert the Great as a seminal figure in the tradition. The book begins with a sweeping overview of the concept of person developed in connection with the Christological councils and in patristic literature. The second section is devoted to Albert's response to this tradition as well as his own attempts to articulate the differentia defining personhood. The final section provides an overview of the study and its implications as well as brief accounts of the views of Aquinas, Scotus, Suarez, and others.

While the historical background for Albert's work includes both Greek and

Latin contributions, a significant portion of Hipp's treatment is dedicated to Boethius's attempts to define and distinguish *natura* and *persona*. Analyzing the concepts of nature and person as developed in the *Contra Eutychen*, Hipp shows how Boethius provides the metaphysical infrastructure for his famous definition of person as "naturae rationabilis individua substantia." Hipp also looks at the relation of subsistence to substance in the Cappadocian Fathers and their association of *prosopon* with particular subsistence. This allows a cogent comparison with Boethius's parallel treatment in the *De Trinitate* and *De hebdomadibus* as a foundation for the theological principle "substantia continet unitatem, relatio multiplicat trinitatem." Boethius's primary contribution to Christian philosophy of personhood is thus located in his formulation of the substantial yet relational character of personality. Moreover, Hipp shows this to be both a development of Greek thought and a source for the Latin tradition that influenced later treatments.

Among the later treatments are those of theologians associated with the twelfth-century School of St. Victor. Especially significant is the critique of Richard of St. Victor who insisted that the Boethian focus on rational nature is insufficient to mark the distinctive reality of persons as persons. Returning to the Cappadocian emphasis on incommunicability, Richard attempted to draw attention away from the quality of rationality as common to all persons and redirect it to the absolute uniqueness of each person as a singularity. This uniqueness, which can only be designated by a proper name, provides a mode of definition that goes beyond the limits of essentialism. Person remains a kind of substance, but cannot be fully articulated without reference to incommunicable subsistence. Given this shift of focus from substance to subsistence among the Victorines, Hipp is able to show that the Boethian definition comes down to Albert along with a set of distinctive critical developments in the logic of personhood.

The central section of the book is not so much a general account of Albert's Trinitarian theology as it is a treatment of certain logical problems concerning the concept of person arising out of Boethius's definition. This treatment has two distinct aspects. The first is Albert's use of twelfth-century developments in the logical theory of signification and supposition to sort out and clarify patristic and Boethian contributions to the problem of person. This is one of the significant merits of Hipp's study: being well-versed in medieval logic, he is able to appreciate Albert's discussion of the meaning of such crucial terms as "ousia," "hypostasis," and "prosopon" in their respective *modi significandi et supponendi*. By this means, Hipp provides a good account of how Albert explicates the tradition's treatment of the analogical attribution of personhood to the divine nature, the distinction between plurality in God and creatures, the nature of person as person, and other issues.

The second aspect concerns Albert's original contributions to the philosophy of personhood. Being unsatisfied with rationality and *per se* subsistence as in themselves defining characteristics of person, Albert adds a strong notion of individuality to the specific difference dividing being into persons and

nonpersons. The classical notions of person as rational substance and *per se* existent provide the basis for a general definition, but they do not provide the constitutive differences that particularize persons. For this, Albert holds, a special *proprietas personalis* is required that bestows the singularity and incommunicability distinguishing the distinct person in his personhood. Here, Hipp argues, Albert is refining the classical Boethian definition by using and extending the notion of singularity introduced by Richard of St. Victor. Albert it thus able to preserve the "rational substance" definition of Boethius while at the same time taking account of the emphasis on incommunicability as an essential element in personhood.

Hipp suggests that Albert's understanding of personhood has implications for Trinitarian theology by making possible a new understanding of the hypostatic union. The focus on singularity as a differentiating feature of persons implies that Christ's human nature is not individual because it is not *per se* a person. This allows that the *proprietas personalis* of the second person of the Trinity is primarily a characteristic in the union of the two natures. Hipp does not develop this suggestion; nonetheless, it is provocative in its theological potential.

While this is clearly an important study, the historical and theological merits of this book are compromised in its execution. It is quite long and ponderous and reads like an unedited draft of a dissertation. It is magisterial in its scope, yet it lacks the unity and accessibility necessary for its recommendation to any but the specialist. It is certainly true that the argument is quite sophisticated and provocative in places, but little effort is made to communicate with the reader. Indeed, the style of presentation is so poor that the reader is frequently at a loss to understand precisely what the author intends. A particular problem is diction which in many places is very bad. One wonders why the author and publisher decided to publish it in its present form. Both the subject and the author's insights deserve a better presentation.

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Transcendent Experiences: Phenomenology and Critique. By LOUIS ROY, O.P. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001. Pp. 215. $60.00 (cloth). ISBN 0-8020-3534-5.

Le sentiment de transcendance, expérience de Dieu? By LOUIS ROY, O.P. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2000. Pp. 136. 95 F (paper). ISBN 2-204-06390-8.

In both of these books, Louis Roy studies experiences many people have, namely, transcendent experiences: "an apprehension of the infinite through

feeling, in a particular circumstance" (*Transcendent Experiences*, 4). He agrees with those who have positive judgments of these experiences, and interprets them "in accord with thinkers who envision the human self as essentially open to the infinite" (xi). Such experiences can be nonillusionary, and indeed the most valuable component of human existence. Roy's books are not theological, but a "contribution to the philosophy of religion" (xiv).

Transcendent Experiences has three parts. The first part is phenomenological. Here Roy analyses the major elements of such an experience: the preparation for it, what occasions it, the "feeling" within it (not simply to be identified with emotion), the discovery or objective correlate that the person finds by its help, the interpretation of it, and its fruits (e.g., conversion). There are different principal types of such transcendent experience that we can distinguish: aesthetic, ontological, ethical, and interpersonal. Roy exemplifies these types by compelling narratives drawn from writers describing their own experiences, from the communal use of an African-American religious hymn, and from a novel, and he distinguishes the major elements in each of them. Through these experiences an infinite is somehow manifested.

How do philosophers who have positive judgments of such experiences account for them? This is the theme of the second part, which takes up two-thirds of the book . Roy draws something positive from Kant's analysis of the experience of the sublime, Schleiermacher's study of the sense of absolute dependence, Hegel's dialectical phenomenology of religion, William James's exposition of religious experiences within the context of his pragmatism, and Otto's explanation of the human sense of the Holy. But he also shows something lacking in each theory of the human intellectual, affective, and volitional activity and endowment by which these philosophers explain the transcendent experience that they affirm. Roy then turns to transcendental Thomism in Marechal, Rahner, and especially Lonergan to show how they defend the human being as open to the infinite and thus as capable of basically valid transcendent experiences. Roy differentiates his position from Lonergan's in part by finding conversion to be the fruit of religious experience and not identical with it, and by interpreting the relation between feeling (or state of loving) and knowing differently. He writes:

> The position that I take underlines the interplay between feeling and knowing. Feeling is neither cognitive nor totally separated from knowing. Since the feeling or state of love does not directly give rise to knowing, there is no such thing as an intuitive knowledge born of unrestricted love. . . . Although feeling is not a source of knowledge, it exercises the paramount function of drawing attention to the actual presence of values. (137)

In the third part of his book, Roy develops his own synthesis in support of the validity of transcendent experiences and their revelatory capacity. He

analyses the varied meanings of "experience." Specifically, a "transcendent" experience is one of "that which absolutely surpasses the universe of finite beings . . . in terms of meaningfulness, truth and worth—in a word, in terms of being" (156). The intellectual psychology underlying Roy's affirmation is that there is an intentionality operative in us in virtue of which we find so many experiences we have to be limited; for example, "on the affective level we are left with something unachieved in all interpersonal relationships" (157). And, as Stephen Toulmin notes, "the 'limiting questions' that we pose about the fundamental assumptions which undergird our cultural activities are performative proofs that as questioners we intend the infinite" (159). We ask ultimate "whys." Thus in both our intellectual and our affective or volitional operations there is a dynamic orientation toward the infinite; nothing less satisfies us.

How do feeling and discovery interact in such transcendent experiences? "Do they [feelings] provide an implicit form of knowledge or do they make up the affective conditions thanks to which the discovery occurs?" (162). Transcendent experience as such does not give us an object-like knowledge, but an experience of our own openness to the infinite (which the Greeks called *theion* [neuter] rather than *theos* [masculine]), and a sense of "being gripped by the infinite" (164)—"an assurance that something very profound has been intimated" (ibid.). The sense of a totality as context of our lives and a consequent wonder can accompany this. But "to what extent is transcendent experience fashioned by interpretation?" (166). Some interpreters think that there is a basic experience for all human beings, but it is colored by their culture; this leads at times to "a depreciation of religious doctrines as divisive" (167). Others hold that interpretation is present before, in, and after such experiences, and they can push this so far as to say that "since two mystical encounters are *caused* by unlike experiences, they do not have the same reality as object" (168). This latter view seems to suppose that if there were some "pure, unmediated experience . . . there would exist the possibility of objective knowing" (a quotation from James Price [172]). Against both views, Roy affirms that there are "transcendent experiences that are similar and different at the same time. Their commonality has to do with the openness to the infinite, whereas their particularity depends on the concern and the occasion that trigger them in each case" (175). These experiences are then both mediated and direct.

This is a very rich treatment of transcendent experience, and it is obviously based on many courses and much reading dedicated to this important theme. Roy's partial difference from Lonergan merits comment. I agree with Roy that conversion is a fruit of religious experience; to identify the two collapses what experience shows to be distinct. Roy's denial that feeling can be a source of knowledge may reflect the difference between Thomas's 'intellectualism' and the Ignatian experience of consolation without reason as a basis for discernment. Can Thomas's teaching on "connatural judgment" or "experiential knowledge" mediate these differences? For Thomas, a person facing a practical moral question could have a judgment based on the principles involved and the application of these principles to the individual case, or a judgment based on the

virtue he has (e.g., chastity) and his "sense" that one rather than another mode of acting is in accord with it. Similarly, Thomas says of the *instinctus fidei,* "The light of faith makes us see the things believed in. As by other virtues one sees what is appropriate to him by that virtue, so through the virtue of faith the human mind is inclined to assent to those things that agree with right faith and not to others" (*STh* II-II, q. 1, a. 4, ad 3). And he speaks of the believer being moved by "the interior appeal of God inviting him [*interiori instinctue Dei invitantis*]" (*STh* II-II, q. 2, a. 9, ad 3).

There are a number of theologians who do not see the immediate effect of this "interior appeal" in the human heart as intrinsic to revelation, because for them what is revealed is a religious *message.* But if we hold, as I think we must, that what is revealed involves a personal presence and relation offered to us, then this appeal is interior to revelation. The answer to the question whether the feeling or state of love gives rise to knowledge depends, it seems to me, on what "knowledge" here is. Though Thomas is speaking in the texts cited above directly of Christian revelation, this would seem to hold analogously in non-Christian revelations which are offered by some of the experiences Roy analyses. Perhaps Roy would accept the above, because he acknowledges that by this "feeling" one can have "assurance" that he or she is being engaged by the Absolute. This does not detract from the validity of his assertion that the interpretation of this Absolute is in part conditioned by the individual's culture and language and the preparation and occasion of his or her religious experience.

In *Le sentiment de transcendance, expérience de Dieu?*, a slightly earlier publication, Roy treats the same theme, but in a way more immediately understandable to the philosophically uninitiated. Though much of the same ground is covered, the two books are not repetitious. In *Le sentiment de transcendance,* Roy gives different examples of transcendent experiences, analyzes different critics (Feuerbach, Freud, Barth), and shows how psychologists of the second part of the twentieth century distanced themselves from Freud by distinguishing religion that enhances human beings and their adulthood from that which impoverishes the human spirit. He chooses examples that are not specifically Christian; he distinguishes them from mystical experiences, from paranormal and from everyday experiences; and he examines them phenomenologially rather than theologically. His extended analyses of such experiences here are quite illuminating, partially based on their analogy to aesthetic experiences. For example, he follows in some detail recent psychologists' approaches to discerning how individuals can interpret their religious experiences with quite different results, or how the human psyche can be satisfied with substitutes (e.g., an interior harmony without facing the conflicts of the life of the spirit) and/or inhibit the beneficial effects of genuine religious experiences.

Roy's point is to give us a greater understanding of such experiences that many people claim to have and that can be a turning point in their lives—if they can understand them aright, perhaps with the help of spiritual guides, and integrate them properly into their lives. Reading these accounts and analyses

should lead many readers to reflect fruitfully on certain experiences they have had and the part they have played in their lives. No doubt, since we live in a world where people interpret the implications of their religious experiences in radically different ways, Roy would agree that his studies need to be complemented by theological studies of how specifically Christian revelation is mediated to us. But what he gives us can help to open students and others to very significant dimensions of their experience, in the process making them more open to Christian revelation, and therefore could contribute much to college courses on cognate themes and be of interest to individual readers.

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Universal Salvation: Eschatology in the Thought of Gregory of Nyssa and Karl Rahner. By MORWENNA LUDLOW. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. Pp. 304. $80.00 (cloth). ISBN 0-19-827022-4.

Morwenna Ludlow's study of Gregory of Nyssa and Karl Rahner is remarkably ambitious. The subtitle itself speaks volumes. Ludlow's study is as much about the complex inter-workings of Gregory's and Rahner's theologies as it is about their particular eschatological claims. This is necessary, Ludlow explains, because neither author treats eschatology in a vacuum, apart from his wider theology (10). The study of their respective eschatologies becomes for Ludlow a window into each author's mind. Given the theological, philosophical, and rhetorical sophistication of both Gregory's and Rahner's thought, one might assume that treating one or the other would be sufficiently challenging for a single-volume study. Yet Ludlow presents the eschatological teachings of both thinkers in the context of two extremely nuanced and more than adequately detailed studies of each one's systematic thought. She clearly knows the primary texts of both authors quite well, and she is adept at moving back and forth between micro- and macro-readings of them; commentaries on the finer points of specific texts are smoothly woven together with big-picture discussions of each author's philosophical influences, historical context, overall scriptural hermeneutic, general theological agenda, and rhetorical methods.

Ludlow begins her study with an analysis of Gregory's eschatology. Her overall picture is of a theologian deeply rooted in a particular intellectual-cultural context yet also extremely original and innovative. At root Gregory is committed to interpreting the scriptural canon and theological doctrines in ways that are relevant to the spiritual development of his contemporaries. For example, Ludlow argues, while it is undeniable that Gregory was influenced by

Platonism and Neoplatonism, and to a lesser extent by Stoicism and a host of other pagan discourses, it is equally undeniable that all of these influences work in the service of his reading of the biblical canon (26). This reading is largely, but not slavishly, indebted to Origen. Like Origen, Gregory assumed that the biblical canon contains a single, coherent spiritual meaning, and all its parts work together as an ordered whole to express this meaning (28-30). Also like Origen, Gregory generally interprets the core meaning of the biblical canon in terms of the ascent of human creatures toward God through the practice of virtue. Moreover, with Origen and against the "dualistic" advocates of an eternally parallel heaven and hell (such as Irenaeus and Gregory's own brother Basil), he believes that all of creation will ultimately complete the ascent to God and hence be saved. In this sense he agrees with Origen's famous (or infamous) interpretation of Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 15:28 that in the end God will be "all in all." Gregory generally shares Origen's conviction that Scripture fundamentally teaches a doctrine of universal *apokatastasis* in the sense of a restoration and universal fulfillment of God's original goal for the creation, namely, the perfection of all creatures through humanity's full union with the Creator (38-44). However, Gregory's version of *apokatastasis* is not garden-variety Origenism. As Ludlow's analyses in chapters 2 and 3 ably demonstrate, Gregory rejects Origen's doctrines that God's nature is ultimately comprehensible, human souls preexisted their fall into bodies, and the resurrection is more about the freeing of souls from bodies than about the reunion of souls with their perfected earthly bodies.

Ludlow concludes her analysis of Gregory's version of *apokatastasis* with a discussion of freedom. She shows that Gregory makes things difficult for himself by simultaneously asserting that (1) all creatures—even the devil—will *certainly* be saved, and (2) the exercise of freedom is an essential characteristic of human nature and God will not override human nature in the process of saving all humanity and all creation (97). Ludlow believes that because Gregory was not fully conscious of this dilemma he does not argue himself out of it with maximal systematic coherence. However, his assumptions about and arguments for salvation as participation in God after a pedagogical moral-spiritual purification, both in this life and after, display the beginnings of a coherent solution, namely, a redefinition of true freedom not as choice but as progressive union with God (97-111). Still, Ludlow argues, there are problems with this solution, which she examines in her conclusion.

Ludlow then turns to an analysis of Rahner, and the overall picture she paints is the same: Rahner certainly belongs within a particular intellectual-cultural context, but like Gregory he works within his environment in original and innovative ways. Like Gregory, he makes use all his influences in order to explicate the meaning of the biblical canon and church doctrine for the spiritual growth of his contemporary readers. Also like Gregory, Rahner assumes that there is a fundamental coherence in the biblical canon and Catholic doctrine. Although he conceives of the form of this coherence in a way different from Gregory, the content is generally the same. The two basic elements in the core

message of the biblical canon and Catholic doctrine are (1) the absolutely gratuitous nature of God's universal self-communication—grace—and (2) salvation understood as the full human acceptance of this gratuitous offer in freedom and love (129). It is fair to say that Gregory presupposed the first element (evidenced by his rejection of Neoplatonic and Gnostic emanationist doctrines of God in favor of the biblical doctrine of free creation and redemption), but this receives explicit attention from Rahner due to his particular historical context (post-Reformation) and geographical location (Germany). Regarding the second element, Rahner shares Gregory's revised Origenist proclivity for a doctrine of universal salvation understood cosmically as *apokatastasis,* or in Rahner's case, *Vollendung* (consummation). For Rahner God's universal offer of grace will *likely* be met with universal acceptance, and hence God's original plan for creation will be restored and fulfilled. There are several important distinctions between Rahner and Gregory in their methods and conclusions (their understandings whether and how people can spiritually mature in an interim state between death and the general resurrection differ in interesting ways; see 254-57), but for Ludlow the most important thing to notice is that Rahner shares Gregory's theological *sensibility* on this question of universal salvation. The only real difference is that whereas Gregory is *certain* that all humans and all creatures will be saved, Rahner prefers to espouse a strong doctrine of *hope* that all will be saved; Rahner refuses to abandon his carefully qualified belief that it is at least possible for humans to reject God in a way that would negatively determine their eternal destiny (164, 173-79, 183-88).

The conclusion of Ludlow's study undertakes a comparison and an assessment of Gregory's and Rahner's eschatological teachings. She sees in Gregory "a fundamental belief in the impermanence of evil in the face of God's love and a conviction that God's plan for humanity is intended to be fulfilled in every single human being" (239). She finds Gregory over-confident in his view that the biblical canon can be read as teaching this message in a detailed and coherent way (241). Instead she thinks that his fundamental belief can best be supported by his arguments about the reformatory nature of God's punishment, but even these arguments are not incontrovertible (242).

Ludlow finds Rahner's anthropological arguments on behalf of hope for universal salvation more persuasive, provided they are always understood as the products of prior theological assumptions. Because Rahner's theology is, she believes, in the service of his reading of Scripture, its credibility is based on the validity of his hermeneutics. Generally she finds his overall approach to the biblical canon superior to Gregory's hermeneutic, which sometimes imposes uniformity on disparate texts in the name of a higher coherence. Rahner's approach, on the contrary, acknowledges dissonance and relative incoherence within the canon without anxiety about forfeiting the real but imprecise coherence of the overall message (246). Indeed, Ludlow faults Rahner for not recognizing the wisdom of his own hermeneutical practice, and consequently sometimes thinking that his own theology must reproduce the incoherence of the

canon in the form of a "paradoxical" assertion that God's love will certainly prevail universally but nevertheless hell remains a possibility (248). A doctrine of universal hope, she contends, need not make contradictory claims (under the guise of "paradox") to avoid making certain predictions.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Ludlow's concluding discussion is that it raises the question of a common, "genuinely Christian" core connecting Gregory and Rahner. In fact, Ludlow's handling of this issue indicates that she holds a vision of the Christian theological tradition as a unified discourse teaching a consensus understanding of the God-human relationship across time and place. Contrary to historicist assumptions, there seems to be for Ludlow a common though imprecise core meaning underlying the Christian theological tradition. This core, it seems, would be analogous to a common though imprecise core meaning underlying the disparate canonical texts. At one point she itemizes six points of similarity between Gregory's and Rahner's eschatologies and places them in the context of the traditional theological framework of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation (262-63). She then asserts, "The interpretation of this framework by Gregory and Rahner suggests that Christians are right to expect, or hope for, a universal, consummation, given what has been revealed to them about God's love in creation and redemption" (263). This seems to mean that Gregory and Rahner are functioning here as the prototypes of "genuine" Christianity, or at least of genuine Christian theology.

Ludlow says as much when she writes that "although Rahner and Gregory express a belief with which not all Christians would agree, there are good grounds for thinking theirs is a Christian belief—particularly if it is expressed as a hope rather than as a certain prediction" (265). While granting that each thinker's eschatology has a "subtly different content," Ludlow shows concern on two fronts: we must not allow differences to invalidate overall commonality as if there were no sense "in speaking of a Christian tradition (or traditions) in eschatology," yet we also must avoid saying that the commonality erases all difference so that one generation of Christians merely hands on to the next a "package of ideas totally unaltered" (268). From here she proceeds to a discussion of doctrinal development (she means by this simply theological development and not the development of official dogmas), arguing that we must avoid looking for overall patterns of development that would lead to either a naively progressive reading of the theological tradition or a naively reactionary one (269-70). The root mistake in either case would be judging the validity of theological claims solely according to their place in history, valorizing or damning claims simply for being early or late.

As a contrast to this naive understanding of the Christian theological tradition, Ludlow highlights the "creative role of the individual theologian" in developing the theological tradition (268-69). It is precisely on this point that Ludlow's comparative study of two eschatological theologies almost transcends itself to become a meta-reflection on the nature of theology. She seems to be arguing that in Gregory and Rahner we see something like a *grammar* of Christian theology. Ludlow does not use this term, but it seems to be her

working assumption: the imprecise core of the Christian theological tradition, summarized by the six points of agreement between Gregory's and Rahner's eschatologies (262-63), is something like a shared grammar that allows for a variety of different creative theological expressions. Working within their shared grammar Gregory and Rahner can say truly different things about the afterlife prior to resurrection or about the nature of human decision, all the while making creative use of terminology and concepts from Neoplatonism or Transcendental Thomism, and yet their creativity operates within a context because they are part of a common tradition with a discernible grammar. For example, part of Rahner's merit as a theologian, Ludlow explains, is his understanding that Christian doctrines need to be continually re-expressed in new contexts "whilst keeping faithful to Christian tradition and learning from their theological predecessors" (271, 274). Accordingly, Ludlow closes her study of the Christian theological grammar (if I may continue to call it that) underlying Gregory's and Rahner's eschatological thought with a reflection on some aspects of our current cultural situation and an invitation for creative responses to it in theological eschatology. Her suggestions are interesting, but it is more interesting still that she thinks to close her comparative analysis of Gregory and Rahner in this way. Her final pages are not themselves fully developed theological reflections, yet ending a very intelligent study of figures from the history of theology with reflections on the possible directions of Christian eschatology in the future was itself a very intelligent move. It demonstrates in practice what she had been saying all along about the importance of studying these two creative theologians in the first place.

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