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INCARNATE KNOWING: THEOLOGY AND THE CORPOREALITY OF THINKING IN THOMAS AQUINAS'S *DE UNITATE INTELLECTUS CONTRA AVERROISTAS*

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IT IS NOT OFTEN that Thomas Aquinas allows passion to break through the calm dispassion of his words. Yet the tone of his little treatise, *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas*, or *On the Unity of the Intellect against the Averroists*, shows surprising flashes of impatience and even anger at his philosophical opponents. This is not to say that Thomas loses self-command; he marshals his arguments with the same precision as ever. Nevertheless, the reader gets a distinct feeling that something in the doctrine of the "Averroists" has touched a nerve. What is it precisely that has "touched" this "nerve"?

I. DEFINING THE PROBLEM

The immediate cause for Thomas's concern is a particular doctrine of the intellect associated with the great Muslim philosopher and jurist Ibn Rushd (hereafter, "Averroës"), and his followers writing in Latin in the Christian West in the thirteenth century. As Thomas puts it,

> He [Averroës] tries to assert that the intellect that Aristotle calls the possible intellect, but that he himself calls by the unsuitable name 'material', is a

substance separate in its being from the body and not united to it in some way as its form, and furthermore that this possible intellect is one for all men.[1]

Now, this is clearly destructive of religion as understood by any informed Christian:

It is not now our intention to show that the above-mentioned position is erroneous in this, that it is opposed to the Christian Faith. For this can easily enough become evident to everyone. For if we deny to men a diversity of the intellect, which alone among the parts of the soul seems to be incorruptible and immortal, it follows that after death nothing of the souls of men would remain except that single substance of the intellect; and so the recompense of rewards and punishments and also their diversity would be destroyed.[2]

It should be clear that such a doctrine is in conflict with the core tenets of the Christian faith as it had always been understood. If there is no individual intellect, then there is no personal responsibility before God, making rewards and punishments in the hereafter meaningless. But, as Thomas notes, this is not his main concern. At the outset of his little treatise he remarks, "we intend to show that the above-mentioned position [of the Averroists] is no less against the principles of philosophy than against the teachings of the Faith."[3] That is, the position of the Averroists is not only theologically untenable, but also philosophically untenable. If Averroës and his Latin followers are right, every act of understanding on the part of the human being would constitute a miracle, since, on their account, human knowing is the work, ultimately, of an extrinsic and, indeed, supernatural principle. The writings of certain Latin Averroists, like Siger de Brabant, seemed to argue for a bifurcation between natural and supernatural knowledge: philosophy deals with *rationes naturales* and, as such, cannot grasp what exists in the world due to

[1] *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas*, proem., n. 1. English translation taken from *On the Unity of the Intellect against the Averroists*, trans. Beatrice H. Zedler (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1968). Latin text: *Thomas d'Aquin contre Averroës: L'Unité de l'intellect contre les Averroistes*, Latin text edited with a facing French translation by Alain de Libera (Paris: Flammarion, 1994), 47.

[2] *De unitate intellectus*, proem., n.2

[3] Ibid.

"*miracula Dei*." With regard to the *testimonia prophetarum*, however, we can derive a content that can be understood in terms of human reason, even if the "miraculous" content can only be understood through faith.[4] Philosophy deals only with *causae inferiores*, that is, with only the "horizontal dimension" of reality, whereby things of the same ontological status or perfection affect each other; theology or faith, on the other hand, deals with *causae superiores*, that is, the effects of God's direct action in the world (such as through miracles).[5] On the Averroist account, it turns out, *any act of intellection is a miracle because it is the operation of a superior cause*. If that is the case, then there would really be no such thing as revealed truth or revealed knowledge, since what we call "revelation" would simply be natural knowledge considered under a different aspect.

Thus, paradoxically, Thomas sees defending a purely naturalistic, philosophical account of human knowing as a defense also of the possibility of an authentic revelation—which is, of course, for Thomas a specifically Christian revelation. This revelation is specifically an incarnate revelation in which God reveals himself as *person*, that is, an "individual substance of a rational nature" who orders all finite truths to himself in a right ordering of person to person in love. So, while Thomas's focus in this treatise will be on the philosophical cogency of the Averroist account of human knowing, his argument is, indirectly, a defense of a specifically Christian theology that posits as its basic datum the reality of a divine, incarnate revelation. In making this defense, Thomas will not use any particularly new arguments: most of the arguments he marshals in *De unitate intellectus* are already present as far back as his *Sentences* commentary and developed in more detail in his *Summa contra Gentiles*.[6] What is new, I think, is that Thomas is

[4] Zdzislaw Kuksewicz, "Das 'Naturale' und das 'Supernaturale' in der averroistischen Philosophie," in *Mensch und Natur im Mittelalter*, ed. Albert Zimmerman and Andreas Speer, *Miscellanea Medievalia* 21/1 (1991): 372.

[5] Ibid., 374.

[6] For a survey of Thomas's treatment of the subject over his career, see Edward P. Mahoney, "Aquinas's Critique of Averroës' Doctrine of the Unity of the Intellect," in *Thomas Aquinas and His Legacy*, ed. David M. Gallagher (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 83-106.

concerned to defend a view of the intellect that preserves what he sees as the proper relationship between the truths of reason and those of revelation and that lays the philosophical groundwork for a proper and authentic understanding of divine revelation. Crucial to Thomas's strategy, I will argue, is to develop and defend the ontological status of the human intellect as the lowest in the order of intellects; the human intellect is in the hierarchy of intellects as prime matter is in the realm of material substances. As such, the human intellect is at once immersed in the vulnerable contingency of individuated matter and yet, as intellect, open to all that is. The human intellect, as the "prime matter" of intellects, is therefore capable of being in-formed and trans-formed by divine grace revealed in and given by Christ. Averroism hopelessly confuses the place of the human intellect in the ontological order of things, making it unclear what is the order of nature and what is the order of grace, what is the order of philosophical knowledge and what is the order of revealed knowledge.

To fulfill his project, Thomas must engage in exegesis: in this case, the exegesis of a secular, philosophical text, Aristotle's *De anima*. This, for Thomas, is fitting, because it challenges the Averroists on their own ground to be adherents of "pure philosophy" by showing how their reading of Aristotle grossly distorts the thought of their self-proclaimed master. It is in the proper interpretation of the philosophy of Aristotle in particular that all these issues come to a head. As Anton Pegis remarks:

> The problem which thus faced the thirteenth century was a fundamental one, and the positions adopted by the various thinkers marked decisively the different mentalities of the age; for in their attempt to express to themselves and to others their attitude towards the philosophy of Aristotle, the theologians of the thirteenth century were called upon to formulate in an explicit way their own philosophical decisions.[7]

It was, therefore, not essential for Thomas's purposes to distinguish carefully between the doctrines of Averroës himself and

[7] Anton Pegis, *St. Thomas and the Problem of the Soul in the Thirteenth Century* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1934), 12.

the often quite different (and "radicalized") doctrines of his Latin followers.[8] The whole objective of Thomas was not to "oppose one fiction by another fiction" but to "replace the doctrine of Averroës in the entirety of the interpretive tradition of Aristotle's *De Anima*."[9] What is at stake, then, is the very meaning of Aristotle's philosophy in the context of Christian revelation. Is Aristotle a radical rationalist essentially opposed to revelation (or, as Averroës would have it, expounding a purer and more complete version of the truth given imaginatively and rhetorically in revelation)? Or does the true understanding of the meaning and import of Aristotle's philosophy force the inquirer to make a distinction between natural knowledge and revealed knowledge, between nature and grace? For the true import of the corporeality of human thinking and acting, while certainly present *in potentia* in Aristotle's thinking, especially in his teaching on the soul, does not become evident until the very doctrine of the Incarnation and the goodness of material creation is at stake. It is with this in mind that Thomas takes up his pen against the "Averroists."

II. Philosophy and Interpretation

Thomas begins his argument with a few basic definitions. He starts, of course, with the definition of "soul" found in *De anima*: "the soul is the first act of a physical organic body."[10] He adds, "For he says, 'It has been stated in a universal way what the soul is. For a substance is what it is by definition; now this is the essence of this body', that is, the substantial form of a physical organic body."[11] Aristotle, according to Thomas, clearly states that the human soul by its very essence is the form of a material body. Without the soul, there would be no organic, human body; there

[8] Recent research, however, seems to suggest that the Latin Averroists' understanding of their master was much more faithful and accurate than previously supposed. See the introduction to *Averroës (Ibn Rushd) of Cordoba: Long Commentary on the "De Anima" of Aristotle*, trans. with an introduction and notes by Richard C. Taylor (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), xcvi-cvi.

[9] De Libera, *Thomas d'Aquin contre Averroës*, 47.

[10] Aristotle, *De anima* 2.1.412b5.

[11] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 1, n. 3.

would be no formed matter at all. But is not the human soul a *rational* or *intellective* soul? Is not its "specific difference" "reason" or "intellect"? And is not reason or intellect an immaterial "thing," since it is able to know universals and contemplate immaterial substances? Does that not make the human soul an immaterial substance? And if it is an immaterial substance, then how can it be the form of a body? These are all good questions. But right from the beginning Thomas notes that, while the intellect is included under this general definition of "soul," it does not follow that soul and intellect are coterminous.[12]

The root of the problem in thinking about the relationship of the soul to the intellect is a fallacy that, for Thomas, causes us to err not only in this question but in several others as well. This fallacy is to confuse *what* we understand with *that by which* we understand. This is a fallacy as old as Plato, who, in discovering the fact that we think by means of immaterial concepts concluded falsely that what we understand exists in its own right as an immaterial and separate "form." Many confuse that by which the human soul thinks and reasons with that which acts and thinks, a subsistent immaterial being in its own right. But, as Thomas argues, following Aristotle, knowledge and thinking are no more the substance of the soul than health is the substance of the body: knowledge is present in a well-functioning rational soul as health is present in a well-functioning body.[13] The soul, therefore, is not a *thing* but a *principle*.

The soul, as form of the body, is not a thing but a principle of being and acting. Moreover, a form that is the formal cause of a material substance can also have an immaterial power. This is not strange if we view, as Thomas always does, the human soul within the ontological gradation of substances clearly visible to us in nature:

[12] "Adhuc autem manifestius ex sequentibus apparet quod sub hac generalitate deffinitionis etiam intellectus includitur" (*De unitate intellectus*, c. 1, n. 5).

[13] "Et sic patet scientiam esse formam anime, et sanitatem corporis" (*De unitate intellectus*, c. 1, n. 10).

Now that it is possible that the soul is the form of the body and some power of the soul is not a power of the body, is not hard to understand if one would consider [the point] in other things as well. For we see in many instances that a form is indeed the act of a body made of a mixture of elements, and yet it has some power which is not the power of any element, but which belongs to such a form by reason of a higher principle, for example, a celestial body; just as a magnet has the power of attracting iron, and jasper of checking the blood flow. And gradually we see that the more noble the forms, the more they have powers that transcend matter. Whence the highest of the forms, which is the human soul, has a power totally transcending corporeal matter, namely the intellect. So therefore the intellect is separate because it is not a power in the body, but is a power in the soul; moreover, the soul is the act of the body.[14]

Here Thomas becomes more precise. The intellect is "separate because it is not a power in the body, but is a power in the soul." At the same time, however, "the soul is the act of the body." This is an important qualification: it makes clear that, while the soul has in its essence an immaterial power that does not need a material organ in order to operate, the soul is still the form of a corporeal being. It is within the essence or definition of the soul to exist in a corporeal being; at the same time, the intellect is a power, separate from any bodily organ, but within the essence of the soul. It is the rational soul as the first act of the composite that constitutes the human being. The human being, as any natural being, is, in the terminology of the Schools, a composite of form and matter. Generally speaking, forms in and of themselves do not act and therefore do not subsist (the human soul and angelic beings are quasi-exceptions, although they are composites, according to Thomas, in a different sense from the one under discussion here). Forms do not act; it is the composite or real being which acts *by means of* its form:

Since each thing operates insofar as it is a being, to operate belongs to each thing in the same way as to be belongs to it. The forms, therefore, which have no operation without being joined with their matter, do not themselves operate, but it is the composite that operates through the form. Whence indeed, forms of this kind do not themselves, properly speaking exist, but by means of them

[14] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 1, n. 27.

something exists. For just as it is not heat, but a hot thing, that heats; so also heat is not properly said to exist, but a hot thing exists through heat.[15]

This last passage is an admirably clear and concise statement of Thomas's aversion to the temptation to make "things" of abstractions. To be sure, as the principle of the living thing's being and acting, the soul has actuality and, hence, reality—indeed, preeminently so, since it is the "first act" of the living thing's being. Moreover, as Thomas says elsewhere, since the human soul's most distinctive operation is immaterial, the human soul will indeed be a self-subsistent form. But it is essentially the form of an embodied being and, therefore, it cannot attain fullness of being or operation apart from the body it in-forms.

Thomas does concede that Aristotle leaves at least two things unsettled about the intellect. "First, whether the intellect is separated from the other parts of the soul only by reason, or also in location."[16] The second thing left unsettled is the precise difference between the intellect and the other parts of the soul. Thomas clearly sees this, referring to Aristotle's use of the word "separate" to describe the intellect. Contrary to the error of the Averroists, the intellect is not some separate substance but a power within the human being, who has that power by means of his or her formal cause, which is the soul.[17] What makes the intellect "separate" is not that it is a separate substance but that it does not need a bodily organ in order to perform its operation. In fact, it *must* be free of any corporeal organ in order to function as intellect, as we shall see. But, for the moment, the point that Thomas wants to make is more fundamental: that a form that is the formal cause of a material substance can also have an immaterial power, and that this is clear to us from the gradation of forms in matter.

Formal causes or structures exist only insofar as they give essential being to concrete existents. By "concrete," however, Thomas does not just mean material or corporeal being: angels

[15] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 1, n. 38.
[16] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 1, n. 15.
[17] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 1, n. 25.

have a concrete but immaterial existence. What makes a being "concrete" is not materiality, but its individual act of existence or *actus essendi*.[18] Be that as it may, the rational soul of the human being does not cease to exist after the death of the body. Insofar as the human rational soul has a potency or power that is in principle if not in actuality separate from any bodily organ, it can survive apart from the body. Or as Thomas puts it in *De unitate intellectus*, not all of the rational soul exists through the composite, unlike forms and souls lower down on the ontological scale. Since there is a power in the soul that transcends its existence in matter, it follows that the form in which this power inheres will not disappear or be destroyed by the destruction of the body.[19] While a defense of the immortality of the soul is only incidental to Thomas's purpose here, it is nevertheless relevant. In the first place, as Thomas says in the very beginning of *De unitate intellectus*, unless the soul subsists after death, *qua* individual soul, it is ultimately not responsible to God for its thoughts and actions and, hence, all the requirements of religion and worship are for naught. Second, part of the attraction of the Averroist philosophy was that it seemed both to guarantee both the immortality of the intellect (albeit in an impersonal way) and to acknowledge the materiality of the human being. "To understand [for Aristotle] is said to be the act of the composite not *per se* but *per accidens*, inasmuch as the object of the act, that is, the phantasm, is in a body organ; not that that act is exercised *through* a bodily organ."[20] A big problem for his contemporaries, as Thomas sees it, is that they did not yet have or understand the conceptual tools needed to comprehend how the human being can at the same time be a spiritual creature with an immortal soul and also a fully flesh-and-blood animal—or, to put it another way, how the human being uniquely straddles the boundary between the gradation of material forms and that of intellects. For Thomas, understanding the proper relation between intellect and soul is the way out of this thicket.

[18] See Aquinas, *In de causis librum expositio,* prop. 4, 30.

[19] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 1, n. 38.

[20] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 1, n. 40.

The first and second chapters[21] of *De unitate intellectus*, therefore, not only try to develop a proper reading or exegesis of Aristotle: in doing so, they try to clear the metaphysical ground for the arguments that follow, especially in chapters 3 and 4. The main principle that Thomas wants to establish is that what is primary metaphysically is the existent individual, not the abstracted form or universal. Now this existent individual may be individuated by a material body, or solely by a unique act of existence (in the case of spiritual creatures). Nevertheless, what is primary is the existent individual, a doctrine that Thomas finds latent—present, but not fully developed—in Aristotle. In this way, Thomas combats the Neoplatonic tendency to "reify" or make into concrete things what are merely conceptual abstractions.[22] But even more so, he wants to situate the human being firmly in nature only to underline more clearly the need for the *lumen gratiae* and the unique nature of that light.

III. Thinking and the Individual

With a statement of metaphysical principle in place, Thomas can move onto an argument against the Averroist position proper. The Averroist position is twofold: it argues (a) that Aristotle's possible intellect is ontologically or really separate (i.e., not simply in thought) from the human soul and that the human soul only thinks when "conjoined" to it and (b) that this possible intellect is one for all men. These two positions are related and yet distinct: if the possible intellect is ontologically separate and

[21] The second chapter deals very briefly with the interpretation of Aristotle made by the Greek commentators of late antiquity, such as Themistius and Alexander of Aphrodisias.

[22] "In other words, what St. Thomas has done is to put his finger on what was perhaps the greatest single weakness of the Neoplatonic doctrine throughout its whole tradition, namely, the lack of any adequate metaphysical explanation to safeguard the intrinsic unity of the compositions resulting from participation. He has remedied this by transposing the whole framework into the only adequate theory of unity in metaphysical composition so far developed, the Aristotelian doctrine of act and potency as correlative, incomplete metaphysical principles, intrinsically ordered one to the other so as to form a per se unit" (W. Norris Clarke, "The Meaning of Participation in St. Thomas," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 26 [1952]: 155).

immaterial, then, upon a rigorous application of Aristotelian principles, the possible intellect must be one, since it has no matter to multiply it into individuals. The positions deal, however, with two separate issues: (1) the relation of the individual to the intellect and (2) the nature of the intellect itself.

We must say a word here about the term "possible intellect," because what was distinctive and controversial about the Averroist position in Thomas's day was its assertion that not only the agent intellect but also the possible intellect is ontologically separate and one for all human beings.[23] According to Aristotle, the metaphysical principles in the human mind or intellect must be twofold, just like everything else in nature. There is always, among things that change (and the human intellect, by the very act of coming to knowledge of something, changes) an active principle and a passive principle. In all natural beings, the active principle is the form while the passive one is the matter. Now the human intellect must receive forms or intelligible species of the things it knows. As such, the intellect is receptive and thus, in a sense, passive. This passivity is analogous to that of matter but, it is important to stress, the passive principle in the intellect is not the same as matter, since the intellect, in order to abstract intelligible forms from matter, must itself be free of matter (which is why Thomas claims that the terminology of some commentators who call this mode of intellect the "material intellect" is misleading). But since the human intellect can only receive things that can be sensed and thus are material, it needs another power which Aristotle called the "active" or "agent intellect." The agent intellect "lights up," as it were, the intelligible aspects of a material thing and allows its form to be abstracted from the sensible thing and received by the possible intellect. But the agent intellect can only do this by means of phantasms, or sensible schemata, which constitute the intentional objects of the act of the

[23] The assertion of the separability and oneness of the agent intellect was more common and less controversial in the thirteenth century, in part, perhaps, because it seemed to be easily reconciled with Augustine's doctrine of divine illumination. See R. A. Gauthier, "Notes sur les débuts (1225-1240) du premier «Averroisme»," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 66 (1982): 321-74; 67 (1983): 201-32; and 68 (1984): 3-49.

intellect. The human being cannot think without phantasms, a point that Averroës and his followers conceded and, indeed, stressed. But for Averroës, the phantasm is *all* that the human being, *qua* individual, contributes to thinking.

This position does have an internal logic of its own and one that seemed to follow from rigorous Aristotelian principles.[24] If the human intellect is somehow separate and immaterial, and if matter is the principle of individuation, then it would follow that a separate intellect would not only have to be separate from the soul, as form of the body, but it would also have to be one, since there would be no matter to differentiate it into many individuals. Most importantly, the Averroists reasoned, if the possible intellect itself must be immaterial in order for thinking to occur, must it not also be separate and one like the agent intellect (as some commentators supposed)? Closely connected to this is a second concern: if knowledge is of what is universal and the same for all, how can there be true, scientific knowledge in a plurality of (material) intellects? Averroës' interpretation of Aristotle seemed to solve all these difficulties.

For Thomas, such reasoning is actually remote from true Aristotelian principles. According to Aristotle, Thomas says, if "it is necessary to consider the principles of acts from the acts, it seems that the first point to be considered is the very act proper to the intellect, and this is understanding."[25] Again, Thomas attempts to avoid abstractions, concentrating on what is phenomenologically most immediate and obvious—the very act or operation of the intellect. As W. Norris Clarke has shown, Thomas consistently sees action and being as two sides of the same coin: to be means primarily to act and, in turn, action gives

[24] Indeed, one contemporary scholar of medieval philosophy, Deborah Black, defends Averroës' position as a perfectly legitimate and coherent reading of Aristotle that "saves all the phenomena." As Black points out, Averroës' position is consistent so long as one takes into account that he attributed to the faculty of the imagination, where phantasms are formed, a much more active and independent role in cognition than did Thomas. See Deborah Black, "Consciousness and Self-Knowledge in Aquinas's Critique of Averroës's Psychology" in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 31 (1993): 349-85.

[25] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 3, n. 60.

us a privileged clue to the essential being of that which acts.[26] For something to be and not to act is an absurdity, just as it would be an absurdity for something nonexistent to act. To be totally inert is not to be at all. Thus, we must first look at what the human intellect *does* in order to understand its essence or ontological structure and status.

If we look first at the action or operation proper to the human intellect, then we must reject the Averroist thesis that the possible intellect is separate for all men. Thomas gives three reasons for this rejection. First, "contact of the intellect with man would not be from the beginning of man's generation as Theophrastus says and as Aristotle implies in Book II of the *Physics*." In other words, the intellect would not belong essentially to man. Contact with the possible intellect would not be according to generation but according to the operation of sense. "For the imagination 'is moved by sense in act', as is said in the book, *De Anima*."[27] Contact of the individual human being with the possible intellect would therefore be completely accidental, not essential, to the human soul, just as contact of the senses with their proper sensible objects is accidental.

Second, if contact of the human soul with the possible intellect were something extraneous to the human soul, "this conjoining would not be according to a single principle, but according to diverse principles." On the Averroist account, any cognition that the possible intellect might have of things would be indirect, that is, it would be mediated by more than one principle. For example, one way in which we might imagine the possible intellect knows things is that it cognizes phantasms or sensible images in the human imaginative faculty and thereby "knows" things as one might see the reflection of something in a mirror. But this explanation is unsatisfying to Thomas, because "the action of the mirror, which is to represent, cannot on this account be attributed to the man. Whence neither can the action of the possible intellect be attributed, on account of the above-mentioned joining, to this

[26] See W. Norris Clarke, *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics* (Notre Dame, Ind.; University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), passim.

[27] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 3, n. 64.

man who is Socrates, in such a way that this man would understand."[28] It would simply be an equivocation, on this account, to say that any particular person understands anything, because the human role in such an act of cognition is a mere mediation of images to an ontologically separate possible intellect, which is properly said to understand.

The third reason why Thomas rejects the Averroist thesis of a separate possible intellect follows from the second. To understand human cognition properly, we must, again, make a distinction between *that by which* we understand, the intelligible form or species, and the *power* that does the understanding. The intelligible species is not what understands, but that by which the intellect understands; but if that is all there is in the human being, with the power of understanding separate from him or her, then we cannot properly say that any human being understands at all. As Thomas reads the Averroist position, the phantasms in the human mind, which provide the sensible material for the possible intellect's cognition, are like colors on a wall, which the possible intellect "sees" or cognizes.[29] We human beings are the "wall" on which the phantasms are "seen" and from which the intelligible species are abstracted by the possible intellect, but who are otherwise "inert."[30] In this account, the human being is merely a passive object which furnishes material for the possible intellect to think. The human being on this account thinks thoughts no more than the wall "sees" color. And since "to be" means "to act," insofar as the human being, *qua* his or her intellectual power, is inert, to that extent he or she does not exist as a knowing being.

Nor can we counter by saying that the relationship between the possible intellect and the individual human being insofar as he or she is thinking is like that between mover and moved. On this account, insofar as we think, we are "moved" by the action of the possible intellect to do so; just as a sailor pilots a ship, the separate possible intellect moves and directs our thinking. The fundamental problem with this position for Thomas is that it

[28] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 3, n. 65.

[29] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 3, n. 66). See also *ScG* II, c. 59.

[30] *ScG* II, c. 59.

violates the essential unity of the human being and, therefore, its status as a true substance. On the Averroist account, we would have to say that this man, Socrates, is not absolutely one being, but that an essential operation of Socrates belongs to some other being "using" Socrates in order to think.[31] Thinking would only seem, then, to be an essential property of human beings. There would be built into the fabric of nature an inherent trick or deception which creates more problems than it solves, for, as Aristotle always insisted, "nature does nothing in vain."

There is one more option for the defender of the Averroist position, namely, to say, "It is I who understands; it is just that the separate possible intellect moves me into the act of understanding just as a fire moves something combustible into the act of burning." Thomas finds this argument unconvincing. First and perhaps most fundamentally, it has the true state of affairs backwards: it is through our own thinking that we come to know other intellects; we do not know ourselves through other intellects. "And if you say that in this way the heaven understands through its mover, the assumption is of something more difficult. For it is through the human intellect that we must come to a knowledge of higher intellects, and not conversely."[32] Thus, this argument violates the hermeneutical principle that all that is received, is received in the mode of the receiver. As Thomas puts it even more succinctly in his *Summa contra Gentiles*: it is not the case that we are united to the intellect by means of an intelligible form, but rather the reverse, which makes much more sense: we are united to the intelligible form by means of the intellect, because the concrete is prior to the abstract.[33] The notion that a separate intellect moves us to understand does not establish that we are intellectual substances: "So therefore, although it be held that the intellect is united to Socrates as a mover, that does not serve to establish that to understand is in Socrates, still less that

[31] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 3, n. 69.

[32] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 3, n. 70.

[33] "Homo autem est intelligens per intellectum sicut per virtutem cognoscitivam. Non igitur coniungitur per formam intelligibilem intellectui, sed magis per intellectum intelligibili" (*ScG* II, c. 59).

Socrates understands, since to understand is an action which is in the intellect only."[34] All in all, it is still necessary to suppose that the intellect is in some way "in" the soul of the person who thinks, "just like that sense by which Socrates senses, that is in potency to all sensibles."[35] Just as our sense faculties could not be moved unless they were "in" us as an essential feature or power of the soul, so must the power of intellection be "in" us as a power of the soul for us to receive and then think anything intelligible. Common to all three counter-arguments is the assertion that the human intellect is the lowest within the gradation of intellects: the human intellect's instantiation in an individual, material substance is essential to its nature as intellect in potency to all there is to know and thus is in the realm of intellects as prime matter is in the realm of material substances. It is essential to the human intellect as the lowest in the gradation of intellects to be actualized as intellect *within* an individual material substance.

All these investigations lead Thomas to the conclusion that the human intellect must be a power within and flowing from the essence of the soul, which is itself the form of a body. This does not mean, however, that the intellect itself, as power, has a bodily organ through which it must operate, like sight needs an eye. "Therefore it is necessary that it [the intellect] be united to the body as form, not indeed so that the intellective power itself would be the act of some organ, but because it is a power of the soul which is the act of a physical organic body."[36] The human intellect, since it thinks by abstracting the intelligible forms from matter, does not have a material operation nor does it have a corporeal organ. As the "place of species," the human intellect is able to consider material substances as immaterial forms.[37] But, by

[34] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 3, n. 71.

[35] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 3, n. 75.

[36] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 3, n. 80.

[37] "Horum autem solutio apparet ex his que premissa sunt. Non enim dicimus animam humanam esse formam corporis secundum intellectivam potentiam, que secundum doctrinam Aristotelis nullius organi actus est: unde remanet quod anima, quantum ad intellectivam potentiam, sit immaterialis et immaterialiter recipiens et se ipsam intelligens. Unde et Aristotles signanter dicit quod anima est locus specierum 'non tota sed intellectus'" (*De unitate*

the same token, the human intellective power is also an "empty" power. It is devoid of any specific content; it is wholly indeterminate. It needs sense data; it needs experience of material substances in order for it to know anything specific. Thus, the human soul is the form of a body not despite but because of the nature of its intellect as akin to prime matter in the order of intellects: informing a body is *perfective* of the human intellect, because the informing of a body allows the possible intellect to receive the sense data that gives it specific content and make it truly the "place of forms" and actualize it as intellect. This does not compromise the dignity of the human soul as intellective or rational.[38] Nothing in the principles of nature or of metaphysics prevents there being a form that is partially immersed in matter and partially transcendent of it. There is nothing in the principles of philosophy that says that forms must either be purely spiritual or purely material. In fact, the whole reason Aristotle posited an immanent formal cause in things is because he noticed how the various properties and operations of material substances transcend more and more their constituent elements the more complex they become.[39] It therefore stands to reason that there would be at least one material substance with an operation that transcends matter altogether. The relation, therefore, of the human being to its intellect is one that is perfectly natural and in accord with the principles of nature, even if the human intellect itself is an immaterial power. The human intellect is rooted in concrete natural substance.

In the fourth chapter of *De unitate intellectus*, Thomas is thus prepared to take aim at the second major Averroist thesis, which is that the possible intellect is one in all men. In asserting the separateness of the possible intellect, one still has not committed oneself to the oneness of the possible intellect for all. But upon Aristotelian principles, this in fact seems to follow necessarily: if the possible intellect is an immaterial substance, and if matter is the principle by which an essential form is multiplied into many different subjects, it would follow that the possible intellect would

intellectus, c. 3, n. 83).

[38] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 3, n. 84.

[39] *ScG* II, 68.

be devoid of any principle of individuation and would therefore be one for all men. But for Thomas, this conclusion does not follow if we suppose, as he has established, that the intellect is a separate power within the soul.[40] To explain his position, Thomas draws, as he is wont, an analogy between intellection and sense perception. He asks us to suppose that there is one eye for all men by which we all see. It then "remains to be asked whether all men would be one who sees or many who see."[41] Would the *power* of seeing be many or one if we all saw through one eye? Thomas makes a careful distinction between the principal agent in the substance and the instrument of that principal agent. Is, then, the eye the principal agent of sight or simply the instrument or organ of sight?

If the eye were the principal agent in man, which would use all the powers of the soul and parts of the body as instruments, the many having one eye should be the only one who sees. But if the eye were not the principal agent in man, if something that uses the eye would be more primary than it—and diverse in diverse men—there would indeed be many seeing but by one eye.[42]

Everything hinges on what is the principal agent in the human being as opposed to what is merely the instrument or organ of that principal agent. Now, for Thomas, "it is clear that the intellect is that which is the principal agent in man, and that it uses all the powers of the soul and the members of the body as if they were organs."[43] It follows that if there were one intellect for all men, then there would be only one principal agent using many different men as organs or instruments for its agency. But this has the nature of things in reverse: it makes the substance, that is, the human being, into a power of a power, properly speaking, which is the intellect. It makes the power of the substance the primary agent and the primary agent, that is, the substance itself, the power or faculty:

[40] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 4, n. 87.
[41] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 4, n. 88.
[42] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 4, n. 88.
[43] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 4, n. 89.

Similarly, therefore, if the intellect were one in all men, it follows that there would be only one intellectual action for all men understanding the same thing at the same time; especially since none of those things by which men are said to differ from one another would share in the intellectual operation. For the phantasms are preparations for the action of the intellect, as colors are for the act of sight. Therefore the act of the intellect would not be diversified by their diversity, especially in respect to one intelligible. . . . But in two men who know and understand the same thing, the intellectual operation itself can in no way be diversified by the diversity of the phantasms.[44]

On the Averroists' account, there can be no way of saying that there are diverse acts of intellection among the human race. We could only say that there is one act of thinking going on at any time, using the phantasms of individual men as the material for its thinking (although there are difficulties here as well). There is no way in which intellectual activity could be diversified by a diversity of phantasms, since the very essence of thought is to abstract from these material particularities.

As was hinted above, some Averroists proposed that there is diversity in human thought due to the diversity of phantasms. We all think through the same act of intellection, goes this argument, but since the phantasm by which this thinking occurs in the possible intellect is different in two people, it follows that each of them think the thought from a different "perspective," so to speak. In this way, thinking is diversified. But if we think this position through, Thomas argues, we see that it throws up insurmountable obstacles. It is a fundamental tenet of Aristotle's doctrine of the soul that the intellect is like a blank tablet before it comes to know anything: the human intellect, as pure potentiality toward receiving intelligible forms, as the "prime matter" in the order of intellects, needs sense data in order to have any content. Knowledge and intellection, therefore, are *habits* or *dispositions* that the soul acquires as it comes into possession of sense data and receives, in its possible intellect, the intelligible forms of things. It then, in turn, uses these intelligible forms "stored" in the possible intellect to think and interpret new data as they come in. In connection with this, Thomas says three

[44] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 4, n. 91.

things must therefore be noted: (1) "the habit of science is the first act of the possible intellect itself, which according to this [habit] comes into act and can act through itself"; (2) "before our learning or discovering, the possible intellect itself is in potency like a tablet on which nothing is written"; (3) "by our learning or discovering, the possible intellect itself is put into act."[45] It follows from these three points that the possible intellect cannot act as intellect on its own: it can only be actualized as intellect insofar as it is a "part" or a power in a composite substance. If the possible intellect is, by definition, pure potency to intellectual activity and intelligible content, then there is no way it could acquire the habit of intellection and thought, for the simple reason that the possible intellect does not come into being, according to Averroës, but is eternal. The activity of thinking is something that it already possesses and cannot be developed and refined as a habit (or virtue).

It should be noted here how much Thomas views the human intellect not as a static essence, but as a dynamic activity. As the lowest intellect in the gradation of intellects, the human intellect needs to be actualized through its body and that body's relations with the material world. If the possible intellect were an immaterial and eternal substance in its own right, there would be no first act of understanding and the intelligible species of the possible intellect would be eternal, making the need for phantasms in order to think anything determinate totally superfluous: "In vain therefore did Aristotle posit the agent intellect, which would make something intelligible in potency to be intelligible in act. In vain, too, did he hold that phantasms are related to the possible intellect as colors are related to sight, if the possible intellect gets nothing from the phantasm."[46] As Thomas points out in other places, the whole reason that Aristotle posits the existence of an agent or active intellect is because the human intellect does not have direct access to the intelligible forms of things, as Plato believed. For Plato, intellection is the simple

[45] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 4, n. 93.
[46] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 4, n. 95.

gazing upon the self-subsistent intelligible form; but if the human intellect is only, initially, pure potentiality to intelligible forms, and if, therefore, human thinking is essentially corporeal, then we need another power by which the intellect abstracts away the material conditions of a thing's existence and considers only its immaterial, intelligible form.[47] On the Averroist account, however, phantasms and, hence, an agent intellect, would be superfluous, since the possible intellect would have the intelligible forms or species within itself from all eternity.[48] Contact of the possible intellect with the phantasms in individual human beings would be in vain and there would therefore be an irrationality at the very basis of human reason. For Thomas, rationality demands that all human thinking be rooted in a material substance in relation to material things, precisely because the human intellect does not know itself directly and immediately, like purely intellectual, separate substances.

IV. Truth and the Individual

Thus, the human intellect is individuated according to the multiplication of bodies and this in-corporation or in-carnation is essential to the very identity and individuality of the human intellect. So strong is this connection to the body that Thomas argues that the human soul retains its individual character, as the formal cause of *this particular body*, even after death separates it from that body.[49] But there still remains a problem—perhaps the most difficult and fundamental problem in view of his ultimate

[47] "Si autem universalia per se subsisterent in rerum natura, sicut Platonici posuerunt, necessitas nulla esset ponere intellectum agentem; quia ipsae res intelligibiles per se intellectum possibilem moverent. Unde videtur Aristoteles hac necessitate inductus ad ponendum intellectum agentem, quia non consensit opinioni Platonis de positione idearum. Sunt tamen et aliqua per se intelligibilia in actu subsistentia in rerum natura, sicut sunt substantiae immateriales; sed tamen ad ea cognoscenda intellectus possibilis pertingere non potest, sed aliqualiter in eorum cognitionem devenit per ea quae abstrahit a rebus materialibus et sensibilibus" (*Q. D. De Anima*, q. 4). Here Thomas is answering the question, *Utrum necesse sit ponere intellectum agentem*.

[48] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 4, n. 95.

[49] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 5, n. 104. See also *STh* I, q. 76, a. 2, ad 2.

concern in this polemic to maintain the distinct character of the natural against the supernatural—that Thomas needs to solve: how can we be said to know the same thing if we each have individual and particular intellects? Indeed, no small part of the attraction of Averroës's interpretation of Aristotle was that it seemed to resolve the problem of how we can all know the same thing, even though human beings are individuated, material, and numerically multiple—for does not our materiality make knowledge of the immaterial universal impossible? How can a particular intellect, which knows particular, material things, have knowledge of the same universal?

> But it remains to be asked: what is that thing understood? For if they say that the thing understood is one immaterial species existing in the intellect, it escapes their notice that they are in some way going over to the doctrine of Plato, who held that no knowledge can be derived from sensible things, but all knowledge is from one separate form. For it is irrelevant to the question whether someone should say that the knowledge that is had of a stone is from one separate form of stone which is in the intellect; for in either case it follows that knowledge is not of things which are here, but only of separated things. But because Plato posited immaterial forms of this kind, subsisting through themselves, he was also able to posit with this many intellects participating in the knowledge of one truth from one separate form. But because they posit immaterial forms of this kind (which they say are things understood) in the intellect, they must hold that there is only one intellect, not merely for all men, but also absolutely.[50]

If there is a diversity of intellects, how can we say that when two people understand something they understand the same thing? Plato's answer was easy: we all in a way "see" the same separate intelligible form. But, as Thomas notes above, this leads to some very problematic conclusions. For one, it leads to the conclusion that we do not understand anything "here," that is, in the material world of lived existence. For another, if the forms subsist through themselves and intellects are intellects only insofar as they subsist in these forms by participation, then once an intellect fully participates in the form through knowledge there should be no multiplicity of intellects—not only of human intellects, which is what Averroës argues, but of all intellects altogether, angelic and

[50] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 5, n. 109.

otherwise, something which Averroës and his Latin followers were not prepared to admit.

If, however, we look just at corporeal, living creatures, we find three grades of cognitive powers. Sense perception occurs through a corporeal organ, while spiritual creatures understand through infused intelligible species; but as Thomas says in the *Summa Theologiae*:

> The human intellect holds a middle place: for it is not the act of an organ, yet it is a power of the soul which is the form of the body, as is clear from what we have said above [I, q. 76, a. 1]. And therefore it is proper to it to know a form existing individually in corporeal matter, but not as existing in this individual matter. But to know what is in individual matter, not as existing in such matter, is to abstract the form from individual matter which is represented by the phantasms. Therefore we must needs say that our intellect understands material things by abstracting from the phantasms; and through material things thus considered we acquire some knowledge of immaterial things, just as, on the contrary, angels know material things through the immaterial.[51]

Only angelic intellects could have the kind of intellectual knowledge that Plato claims the human philosopher has in that they have infused in them the pure intelligible species of things (although even in angels, the intelligible species are not *what* the angels know, but *that by which* they know other things). But since the human intellect holds but the "lowest place" in the gradation of intellects, it is pure potentiality for knowing and thus needs sense experience for its intellect to be actualized.[52] By its very nature, the human intellect must draw all intelligible content, including the intelligible species by which it knows, from "outside" itself, through its inherent and essential connection with the human body and its powers of sense perception. That is why, fundamentally, the sciences are not ultimately about our *ideas* or *concepts* of things (*pace* Kant), but about the *things themselves*:

> It must therefore be said according to Aristotle's position, that what is understood, what is one, is the nature itself or quiddity of the thing. For natural

[51] *STh* I, q. 85, a. 1.See also *Q. D. De Anima*, q. 2, ad 5.

[52] *Q. D. De Anima*, q. 7), answering the question: *Utrum angelus et anima different specie*. See also *De ente et essentia* IV, n. 10; and *ScG* II, c. 75.

science and other sciences are about things, not about understood species. For if the thing understood were not the stone's very nature which is in things, but a species which is in the intellect, it would follow that I would not understand the thing that is the stone, but only the intention which is abstracted from the stone. But it is true that the nature of the stone as it is in singulars, is potentially intelligible but it is made actually intelligible by reason of the fact that species are abstracted, and these exist in the possible intellect. Now these species are not related to the possible intellect as things understood, but as species by which the intellect understands (just as the species which are in vision are not things themselves that are seen, but those by which vision sees), except in so far as the intellect reflects upon itself, and this cannot occur in sense.[53]

What grounds the unity of knowledge of the various intellects in multiple, individual acts of understanding is the intelligible form in the thing known, which is the same for all. This intelligible form is intelligible only in potency in the thing known, but it becomes actually intelligible when it is abstracted out of the material thing and received by the possible intellect. Thus, what is understood is the form in the material thing itself; the intelligible form or species in the intellect is only that by which the material thing is understood. The intelligible form or species becomes a direct object of knowledge only when the intellect reflects on its own act of knowing in a "second act" of cognition. Self-knowledge is thus a "third" act of the intellect whereby the intellect reflects upon its own act of reflecting upon the intelligible species within itself. For Thomas, then, all human knowing is already immersed, as it were, in the material world; all genuinely human intellective knowledge presupposes an intimate, prethematic contact, even a union of sorts, with material substances.[54] We know material things even before we are aware of our own knowing—indeed, even before we are aware of ourselves. But the essential point here is that the unity of understanding among human knowers is founded upon the unity of the intentional object, the intelligible form. It is precisely the fact that human knowing is about *reality itself*—and not about innate ideas or a priori forms of cognition—that grounds both

[53] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 5, n. 110. See also *Q. D. De Anima*, q. 2, ad 5; *STh* I, q. 85, a. 2.

[54] *ScG* II, c. 75.

human knowledge about the world and its own intersubjective unity and agreement.

This does not mean that two people do not understand the same thing differently. "But because to understand is an action that stays within the knower himself, as Aristotle says in Book IX of the *Metaphysics*, it follows that to understand is according to the mode of the knower, that is, according to the requirement of the species by which the knower understands."[55] And so, for the human intellect, the diversity of intellects according to the diversity of bodies does not hinder universal knowledge, but it ensures that each act of our knowing is *our individual act* of knowing, while at the same time opening us out onto universal being:

> It is therefore one thing which is understood both by me and by you. But it is understood by me in one way and by you in another, that is, by another intelligible species. And my understanding is one thing, and yours, another; and my intellect is one thing, and yours, another. Whence Aristotle says in the *Categories* that some knowledge is singular with reference to its subject "as a certain grammatical [point] is indeed in a subject, that is, in the soul, but is not said of any subject." Whence also my intellect, when it understands itself to understand, understands a certain singular act; but when it understands "to understand" absolutely, it understands something universal. For singularity is not opposed to intelligibility, but materiality is; whence, since there are some immaterial singular things, as was said above concerning separate substances, nothing prevents singulars of this kind from being understood.[56]

I would like here to emphasize in this passage the phrase, "singularity is not opposed to intelligibility, but materiality is." The more intelligible the world becomes to us, the more we become intelligible to ourselves; and the more intelligible we become to ourselves, the more singular and individual we become, because the more we are actualized as an intellectual substance, the more united we are to the truth of things. In other words, Thomas argues that, in the realm of the intellect, singularity and universality are not opposed, but are mutually reinforcing. This is why, as he notes, angels are immaterial, and yet they are perfectly

[55] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 5, n. 111.
[56] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 5, n. 112.

singular or individual—they know themselves through their form, which is their very substance.[57] *Intellectus* has two senses in Latin as does the word '*aql* in Arabic: it can mean both the act of thinking and that which thinks. Thus, there is no distinction between the essence of the intellect and its operation: "its very being is to think."[58] But the human intellect, by its very nature as pure potentiality in the gradation of intellects, cannot come to self-intellection or self-knowledge by direct introspection. It needs this particular body in order to be actualized as intellect. And so, while materiality in itself is opposed to intelligibility, materiality is a necessary condition for the human intellect to have singularity, which is not only not opposed to intelligibility, but is, in many ways, perfective of it, since it both produces and results from self-knowledge. As Thomas repeats throughout *De unitate intellectus*, only concrete existents truly act and therefore exist; abstract universals do not truly act or exit. Therefore, the act of understanding can only exist in a concretely existing, singular subject or intellect, whose power of intellection originates from itself and returns to itself.

Conclusion: Incarnate Word as the Perfection of Incarnate Life and Thought

With this argument we return to the original danger that Thomas saw in the Averroist position: that, on its own principles, the act of understanding is not mine and that I am therefore not responsible for what I think, believe or do. This position is, for Thomas, not only theologically but philosophically untenable. It is important to note here that Thomas does not rely primarily for his argument on the maxim *hic homo intelligit*, that is, on the assertion that each of us has an immediate and self-evident access to our acts of intellection. As Thomas argues in several places, we

[57] *STh* I, q. 56, a. 1.

[58] Jean Jolivet, "Averroès et le décentrement du sujet," in *Le choc Averroès: Comment les philosophes arabes ont fait Europe, Internationale de l'imaginaire* 17/18 (1991): 161-69, at 165.

do not have such an immediate access.[59] He relies, rather, on the argument that the nature of the human intellect, as the lowest in the hierarchy of intellects, needs a body for its actualization and perfection.[60]

But—and here is Thomas's main concern—these arguments have very profound and far-ranging consequences for our understanding of the relation of divine grace to human knowing. Two things concern Thomas, the first explicitly, the second implicitly. The first is that the doctrine of the unity of the intellect destroys individual responsibility for our choices before God. But second is the *way* in which this doctrine is formulated by some—and here he seems to have in mind the arts scholar, Siger de Brabant—who say that philosophical reasoning leads them to conclude that there is one intellect for all men, but that the Christian faith reveals a "higher" truth which states that the intellect is individual for all men and that the choices we make with that intellect determine our eternal destiny. This is the focus of the fifth and final chapter of *De unitate intellectus*:

> But what he [presumably, Siger] says later is still more serious: "I necessarily conclude through reason that the intellect is one in number; but I firmly hold the opposite through faith." Therefore he thinks that faith is concerned with some propositions whose contraries can be necessarily concluded. But since only a necessary truth can be concluded necessarily, and the opposite of this is something false and impossible, it follows, according to his remark, that faith

[59] *STh* I, q. 87, a. 1; *De Verit*., q. 8, a. 6; q. 10, a. 8; *ScG* II, c. 75; III, c. 46; *Q. D. De Anima*, q. 16, ad 8.

[60] Deborah Black argues that Thomas contradicts himself—or nearly does so—in his attack upon Averroës by basing his polemic on the argument that access to our individual self-consciousness is immediate and self-evident, whereas almost everywhere else in his writings he emphasizes how this awareness is mediate and indirect. As is clear from this article, I do not think Thomas's argument rests on this assertion nor does he make much of it. Black does make a strong case for Averroës insofar as she points out that, for Averroës, the imagination is not like a "wall"—inanimate and inert—in which phantasms are cognized, but an active organ much more akin to the eye, which is illumined and activated by the light of the sun. See Black, "Consciousness and Self-Knowledge in Aquinas's Critique of Averroës's Psychology," 349-85. Nevertheless, I think that Thomas's main argument still stands: that for Averroës the primary agent of human thinking still remains an agent external to the human being. Ockham's Razor, whereby *ontological entities* are not to be multiplied beyond necessity, clearly favors Thomas's own "saving of the phenomena."

would be concerned with something false and impossible, that not even God could effect. This the faithful cannot bear to hear.[61]

For Thomas, to assert that a higher truth would conflict with even the best use of human reason is an absurdity: a higher truth should enlighten and strengthen human reason, not contradict it, if it is to be truth at all, for the intellect is a created good and is by its essence directed toward truth. Thus, the doctrine of the unity of the intellect is not some obscure debate concerning philosophical and theological arcana.[62] It goes to the heart of how we are to conceive of the relationship between faith and human reason. Is the human being the source of his or her own intellectual activity or not? If not, then in what sense can human knowledge be *natural* or in what sense can we deny that, in essence, all scientific knowledge is a sort of revealed knowledge, since it comes from an ontologically separate and higher power? On the Averroist account, every act of knowing would be a miracle, as Thomas notes in his *Summa contra Gentiles*:

> If the agent intellect is a separate substance, it is manifest that it is above man's nature. Now, an operation which man performs solely by the power of a supernatural substance is a supernatural operation; for instance, the working of miracles, prophesying, and other like things which men do by God's favor. Since man cannot understand except by the power of the agent intellect, understanding will not be for man a natural operation if the agent intellect is a separate substance. Nor in that case can man be defined as being *intellectual* or *rational*.[63]

If the human intellect were really separate and one for all men, then any act of knowledge would be an act of prophecy, since it

[61] *De unitate intellectus*, c. 5, n. 123.

[62] The whole fraught issue of the existence of a "double truth" and, even more importantly, the whole relation between faith and reason has its origins in the very specific and technical problem of the precise nature of the intellect and its relation to the individual human being. See De Libera, *Thomas d'Aquin contre Averroës*, 54.

[63] "Si intellectus agens est quaedam substantia separata, manifestum est quod est supra naturam hominis. Operatio autem quam homo exercet sola virtute alicuius supernaturalis substantiae, est operatio supernaturalis: ut miracula facere et prophetare, et alia huiusmodi quae divino munere homines operantur. Cum igitur homo non posit intelligere nisi virtute intellectus agentis, si intellectus agens est quaedam substantia separata, sequetur quod intelligere non sit operatio naturalis homini. Et sic homo non poterit definiri per hoc quod est *intellectivus* aut *rationalis*" (*ScG* II, c. 76).

would literally be a reception of intellectual activity from a superior cause. This not only contradicts our own experience, but it also cheapens the act of prophecy as well. If every act of thinking is indistinguishable from a prophetic act, then there really is no such thing as prophecy. So, not only does Thomas's account of the nature of the human intellect and its relationship to the individual human being naturalize human thinking, it does so with a view to preserving the special character of divine revelation as not contrary to the operation of the intellect but as perfective of it. Revelation is precisely of that which is not contrary to human reason, but which human reason cannot know from its own natural resources.

There are a couple of possible objections that can be made against Thomas's critique of Averroës—objections that go beyond the question, which is not our concern here, of whether Thomas understood Averroës or even the Averroists properly. One is that Averroës himself thought of his own interpretation of Aristotle to be not only faithful to the Stagirite, but also a perfectly naturalistic accounting of all the phenomena of human knowing.[64] To accuse Averroës, therefore, of resorting to "supernatural causes" is unwarranted. But this is precisely the confusion that Thomas sees as being at the root of the problem. In refusing to "naturalize" fully the human intellect within the embodied, individual human being, Averroës and the Averroists utterly confuse the exact standing and place of the human intellect within the gradation of intellects. If the act of knowing comes from or is initiated from "outside" the individual human being, that is, from

[64] See Deborah Black, "Conjunction and the Identity of Knower and Known in Averroës," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 73 (1999): 159-84. Marc Geoffroy explores Averroës' attempt to defend against Alfarabi the possibility of the conjunction of the acquired human intellect with the agent intellect as both a natural and essential precondition for all knowing as well as a perfectly natural consummation of all human intellectual activity: see "Averroès sur l'intellect comme cause agente et cause formelle et la question de la junction," in *Averroès et les averroismes juif et latin: actes du colloque international, Paris, 16-17 juin, 2005* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 77-110. Richard Taylor points out the debt that Thomas owed to Averroës in properly understanding the process of abstraction in human cognition, even though Thomas criticizes Averroës for making the agent of that process ontologically separate from the human being. See R. Taylor, "Aquinas's Naturalized Epistemology," *American Catholic Philosophical Association, Proceedings of the ACPA* 79 (2006): 85-102.

an intellect of an order higher than the human soul, then there is no basis for asserting that intellectual thought is "natural," which is to say, inherent in human nature.

A second objection is that Thomas himself is inconsistent: he himself used, even in his earliest writings, the Averroist account of human knowing to explain how the beatific vision is possible. Thomas argued that, since the divine essence is beyond the capacity of the human intellect to know adequately, God "informs" the human intellect in a manner analogous to the way in which Averroës argues the separate agent and material intellects "in-form" the acquired human intellect whenever it knows scientific truth. But the beatific vision, which Thomas is explaining, lies precisely within the realm of grace. Thomas does indeed use Averroës' argument of a separate "agent" intellect as a model for how our intellects will be strengthened by divine grace in the beatific vision. But, of course, this argument appears in a totally different context. We see this especially in his *Commentary on the Sentences* of Peter Lombard, where he writes, "Whatever is the case for other separate substances, nevertheless, we must accept that mode in the vision of God in his essence,"[65] adding:

> Because the relation of the divine essence to our intellect is as the relation of form to matter. For whenever there are some two things of which one is more perfect than the other and these are received in the same recipient, there is a relation of one of the two to the other, namely of the more perfect to the less perfect, as is the relation of form to matter. [This is] just as when light and color are received in the diaphanous [medium] for which light is related to color as form to matter. Similarly, when the intellective power is received in the soul and the divine essence itself is present although not in the same mode, the divine essence is related to the intellect as form to matter.[66]

[65] "Et quidquid sit de aliis substantiis separatis, tamen istum modum oportet nos accipere in visione Dei per essentiam" (IV *Sent*., d. 49, q. 2, a. 1).

[66] ". . . quia proportio essentiae divinae ad intellectum nostrum est sicut proportio formae ad materiam. Quandocumque enim aliqua duo, quorum unum est perfectius altero, recipiuntur in eodem receptibili, proportio unius duorum ad alterum; scilicet magis perfecti ad minus perfectum, est sicut proportio formae ad materiam; sicut lux et color recipiuntur in diaphano, quorum lux se habet ad colorem sicut forma ad materiam; et ita cum in anima recipiatur vis itnellectiva, et ipsa essentia divina inhabitans, licet non per eumdem modum, essentia divina se habebit ad intellectum sicut forma ad materiam" *(*IV *Sent.*, d. 49, q. 2, a. 1).

Indeed, Averroës would agree with Thomas against the so-called "Averroists" in insisting that the agent intellect actualizes knowledge in us not as an extrinsic moving or efficient cause but as an intrinsic formal cause or "form for us" (*al-sura la-na*): "For assurance of the possibility of the conjoining of the [agent] intellect with us lies in explaining its relation to a human being is a relation of form and agent, not a relation of agent alone."[67] Nevertheless, Thomas sees a difficulty in understanding how an agent that is ontologically separate and higher than the human soul can be both "intrinsic" to the soul and a form that is not only "for us" but also our perfection and final form *qua* human being. Hence, throughout *De unitate intellectus* Thomas argues that the ultimate formal agent of the human being is in *this* human being. If there is to be any "in-forming" of the human being by a higher intellect, it cannot occur on the level of nature, but on the level of grace. In fact, Thomas does talk about the workings of grace in terms of formal causality, as "whiteness makes white or justice makes just."[68] The "in-forming" of the human intellect by the divine intellect is perfective of natural knowing and does not replace it, because the object of knowledge in the beatific vision lies beyond the natural powers of the human intellect to know unaided by the light of glory. One can argue here, again, on Thomistic grounds that Averroës and the Averroists confuse the realm of nature with that of grace and natural knowledge with divine revelation.[69]

Averroës, on the other hand, reduced revelation to a merely poetic and imaginative "cloak" thrown over philosophical

[67] *Averrois Cordubensis Commentarium Magnum in Aristotelis De Anima Libros*, ed. F. Stuart Crawford (Cambridge, Mass.: Medieval Academy of America, 1953), 502.

[68] "Gratia, secundum quod est qualitas, dicitur agere in animam non per modum causae efficientis, sed per modum causae formalis: sicut albedo facit album, et iustitia iustum" (*STh* I-II, q. 110, a. 2, ad 1).

[69] Cf. J. B. Brenet, "Vision béatifique et séparation de l'intellect au début du XVIe siècle: Pour Averroès et contre Thomas d'Aquin?", *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 53 (2006): 310-42; Richard Taylor, "Intellect as Intrinsic Formal Cause in the Soul according to Aquinas and Averroës," in *The Afterlife of the Platonic Soul: Reflections of Platonic Psychology in the Monotheistic Religions*, ed. Maha Elkiasy-Friermtuh and John M. Dillon (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), 187-220, at 206.

cognition, which alone gives genuine knowledge, so that it might be accessible to the masses.[70] There is a good deal of evidence that the "Latin Averroists" followed Averroës in this attitude.[71] It is not a "double truth" theory; if anything, it is actually the opposite in that it establishes a sort of "mono-truth" or univocal account of natural and revealed truth. For Averroës, truth is predicated univocally; revealed "truth" presents in imaginative and poetic, sensual form for the masses the same truth that is grasped more perfectly through demonstrative reasoning by the philosophical elite. The difference only lies in the mode in which it is presented. Essential to Thomas's account, however, is an "analogical" account of truth: revealed truths and those truths known by natural reason indeed refer to the same truth, but the former are perfective of the latter in that they raise the believer into a lived and personal relationship with the Truth. Natural knowledge grasps the truth in material creatures, while revealed knowledge contemplates their Truth in the Word in and by which they are created. If this relationship to the Truth or Word is to be a lived and personal one for the human being, then it must be one lived in and through the body; any genuine understanding of God by "this man" must come from "this man." In like manner, if God is

[70] See his *Kitab fasl al-maqal wa tafsir ma bayna al-shari'a wa al-hikma min al-itisal* (*The Decisive Treatise determining the Connection between the Law and* Wisdom), trans. Charles E. Butterworth (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2001); and *Al-kashf 'an manabij al-adilla fi 'aqa'id al-milla* with the text translated into English in *Faith and Reason in Islam: Averroës' Exposition of Religious Arguments,* trans. Ibrahim Najjar (Oxford: One World Books, 2001). Richard Taylor argues that Thomas's critique of Averroës sometimes misses the mark simply because the two philosopher-theologians are operating from different philosophical—and I would also add, theological—principles. Averroës simply cannot see how a universal intelligible can be multiplied among many intellects. Moreover, "for Averroës, while understanding is an activity of intellect itself, not an activity of a bodily power, the human being can be said to understand to the extent that he is involved in bringing knowledge about and in recognizing that knowledge has been attained. The 'understanding' which comes to pass in the individual person is manifested in the ability to classify future experienced things in terms of knowledge already attained. The universal is not literally in the person; this is metaphysically impossible. But the ability to discern by means of what has come to pass in intellect is in the person" ("Averroës' Epistemology and Its Critique by Aquinas" in *Medieval Masters: Essays in Memory of Msgr. E.A. Synan, Thomistic Papers VII* [Houston: University of St. Thomas Press, 1999], 147-77, at 174.

[71] In particular, see Alain de Libera, *Penser au moyen âge* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1991).

to establish this lived and personal relationship with the Truth himself, then he must himself become embodied Word in order to do so.

"Everything that is received, is received in the mode of the receiver." When we know an object, it incarnates itself in us, which is why, according to biblical usage, for a man to "know" his wife is to be united to her in one flesh. So in Christ, we know God insofar as human and divine knowing are united "in one flesh":[72] this, in turn, forms the basis of union with Christ in the "flesh" of the Eucharist and the "flesh" of his "body," the Church. This means that if revelation is to perfect—and not supersede—the human intellect, it must be given in an incarnate mode, not just in material images and symbols, but as an individual material substance of a rational nature, to whom we can relate as mind to mind and not simply as mind to object. The desire to preserve this understanding of a specifically Christian revelation is what is, I contend, at the basis of Thomas's vigorous polemic against the Averroists.

[72] "On peut penser que, pour un scholastique, cette formule renverrait à celle de l'Incarnation, puisque dans le Christ, « vrai homme et vrai Dieu », il y a union sans mélange de deux natures, la divine et l'humaine, en une seule personne, suivant la définition de Nicée. Usant de ce parallélisme, on pourrait dire que lorsque nous connaissons un objet, il s'incarne en nous. De même encore, dans le langage biblique, lorsque l'homme « connaît » la femme, ils font « une seule chair » tout en restant deux. Le mot thomiste de Claudel se justifie alors : si la connaissance est une incarnation, elle est bien co-naissance" (Jean-Luc Solère, "La notion d'intentenionalité chez Thomas d'Aquin," *Philosophie* 24 (1989): 13-36, at 18 n. 15.

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PROPORTIONALITY AND DIVINE NAMING: DID ST. THOMAS CHANGE HIS MIND ABOUT ANALOGY?

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THERE IS A QUASI-"GENRE" of passages in which Aquinas distinguishes varieties of analogy in a theological context. In several works across his career, he introduces analogy as the crucial part of an answer to a question about how to understand the relationship between creatures and God. The elaborations of analogy in these various passages share at least three common features: (1) they locate analogy between univocation and equivocation; (2) they classify at least two, and sometimes more, different kinds of analogy, often with examples of each kind; and (3) they indicate that one of the kinds of analogy thus distinguished is the one most relevant to understanding divine naming.[1] Six such passages which are often discussed are (in chronological order): I *Sentences*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1; I *Sentences*, d. 35, q. 1, a. 4 (in this case, no examples are given); *De Veritate*, q. 2, a. 11; *De Potentia Dei*, q. 7, a. 7; *Summa Contra Gentiles* I, c. 34; and *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 13, a. 5.

Scholars today typically treat one text in this genre—one of the most detailed and apparently comprehensive passages on

[1] Different commentators have explored individual texts with great care. To give just two examples: I *Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1 is the main subject of Lawrence Dewan, "St. Thomas and Analogy: The Logician and the Metaphysician," in idem, *Form and Being: Studies in Thomistic Metaphysics* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 81-95; *De Potentia*, q. 7, a. 7 is treated at length by Mark Jordan in "The Names of God and the Being of Names," in Alfred Freddoso, ed., *The Existence and Nature of God* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983).

analogy in all of Aquinas—as idiosyncratic and unrepresentative of Aquinas's thought. The prevailing view is that question 2, article 11 of *De Veritate* represents an approach to analogy which Aquinas only temporarily entertained, and soon abandoned. As John Wippel describes this view in his magisterial treatment of Aquinas's metaphysics: "Most more recent scholars regard this particular discussion of Thomas as uncharacteristic of his earlier and later thinking on analogical predication of the divine names, and hence as not reflecting his definitive position."[2]

It is intriguing to find it so widely accepted that Aquinas changed his mind about analogy—indeed that he changed it twice, soon before and soon after writing one of his most extensive elaborations of a classification of analogy. In this paper I will discuss Aquinas's classification of analogy in *De Veritate*, and summarize the reasons that recent scholars have given for regarding this classification as atypical. While the text does appeal to the notion of "proportionality" in a way that the other texts do not, we will see that the other texts are diverse enough that *De Veritate* hardly seems to deserve to be singled out. Then, by offering some philosophical clarifications about the notion of proportionality, I will show that the teaching of *De Veritate* is, in principle, philosophically consistent with Aquinas's teachings on analogy in other places, and further that there are good theological and philosophical reasons why Aquinas might emphasize different things in this passage than he might in other passages that are otherwise similar. The hypothesis that Aquinas changed his mind about analogy turns out to be unnecessary once we take sufficient account of his attention to dialectical context.

[2] John Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 553. As Wippel's footnotes make clear, the modern consensus has roots in the work of Klubertanz, Lyttkens, and especially Montagnes, the last to be discussed below.

I. *De Veritate*, Q. 2, A. 11 and Its Cousins

In the *Disputed Questions on Truth,* question 2, article 11, Aquinas raises the question of how a predicate, in this case "knowledge" (*scientia*), can apply both to creatures and to God. The burden of his answer—as always when he poses this sort of question for himself—rests squarely on the notion of analogy. In the body of the article, he first explains analogy in general, introducing it as a mean between univocal and equivocal predication. He then distinguishes several varieties of analogy in order to indicate which one is relevant to the case of predicating names of both creatures and God.

It is the second part of the discussion, about different varieties of analogy, that concerns us. Aquinas first distinguishes two sorts of analogy, according as whether the agreement between the analogous things is (1) an agreement of *proportion* or a determinate relation (e.g., 2 is the *double* of 1; urine is called healthy as the *cause of* health in the animal); or (2) an agreement of *proportionality*, or relation of proportions (e.g., 6 is to 3 as 4 is to 2; or "sight" is predicated of the intellect because understanding is to the intellect as physical sight is to the eye). This latter sort of agreement, agreement of proportionality, is further subdivided into: (2a) metaphor, when the word as applied to one analogate implies something that cannot really be affirmed of the other (as is the case when the term "lion" is predicated of God); and (2b) another sort, not given a technical name but obviously a more proper or genuine form of analogy, obtaining when what is implied by the term as affirmed of one analogate can be appropriately affirmed of another analogate. Giving examples for each type and subtype, Aquinas concludes by answering his question, that knowledge can be predicated of God in the last way mentioned, "according to an agreement of proportionality," in the nonmetaphorical, or properly analogical, way.

The classification of analogy in this text can thus be schematized as follows (including Aquinas's own descriptions and examples):

CLASSIFICATIONS OF ANALOGY IN
DE VERITATE (1256-59), Q. 2, A. 11, CORP.

Designation	Description	Examples
(1) *agreement of proportion*	agreement between two things with a determinate distance or relation	• 2 is the double of 1 • "being" [predicated of *substance* and *accident*] • "healthy" [predicated of *urine* and *animal*]
(2) *agreement of proportionality*	agreement between two proportions	• 6 is related to 4 because 6:3::4:2 • "sight" [predicated of *eye* and *intellect*]
(2a) *metaphor*	the definition of one implies something that cannot be in the other (metaphor)	• "lion" [predicated of *lion* and *God*]
(2b)	the definition implies nothing that cannot be in both	• "being," "good" [predicated of *creature* and *God*]

Like the passage summarized here, the other five passages mentioned above distinguish different sorts of analogy in order to show which sort applies to God. All of them but the one from distinction 35 of book 1 of the *Sentences* commentary also illustrate these different sorts with examples, and do so with the apparent intention of explaining and articulating some important points about analogy, rather than simply recalling or eliciting assent to already accepted doctrines. For my purposes it will be sufficient for me to summarize the teachings of these other five texts in the same simple table format.

CLASSIFICATIONS OF ANALOGY IN FIVE THEOLOGICAL TEXTS

1. I *Sent.* (1252-56), d. 19, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1

Designation	Description	Examples
(1) *according to intention, and not according to being*	the intention refers to many by order of priority and posteriority, but has being only in one	• "health" [predicated of *animal, urine,* and *diet*]
(2) *according to being, and not according to intention*	many equated in common intention, which does not have the same being in all	• "body" [predicated of *corruptible bodies* and *incorruptible bodies*]
(3) *according to intention and according to being*	neither a common intention nor same being, a common nature with greater and lesser perfection	• "being" [predicated of *substance* and *accident*]

2. I *Sent.* (1252-56), d. 35, q. 1, a. 4

Designation	Description	Examples
(1)	agreement in some one thing, according to an order of priority	
(2)	one is an appropriate imitation of the other	

3. De Potentia Dei (1259-1268), q. 7, a. 7, corp.

Designation	Description	Examples
(1) *predicated of two with respect to a third*	two things must be preceded by something to which each of them bears some relation	• "being" [predicated of *quantity* and *quality* with respect to substance]
(2) *predicated of two because of a relationship between the two*	one of the two must precede the other	• "being" [predicated of *substance* and *quantity*]

4. Summa contra Gentiles (1259/60-1264/65) I, c. 34

Designation	Description	Examples
(1) *many-to-one*		• "healthy" [predicated of *medicine*, *food*, and *urine* in relation to *animal*]
(2) *one-to-another*		• "being" [predicated of *substance* and *accident*]
(2a)	order of reality same as order of naming	• "being" [predicated of *substance* and *accident*]
(2b)	order of reality different from order of naming	• "healthy" [predicated of *medicine* and *animal*]

5. Summa Theologiae (1266-68), I, q. 13, a. 5, corp.

Designation	Description	Examples
(1) *many-to-one*		• "healthy" [predicated of *medicine* and *urine* in relation to *body*]
(2) *one-to-another*		• "healthy" [predicated of *medicine* and *animal*]

To present the teaching of the texts in this format is to distill theoretical structures from the prose and larger context in which they are presented; later we will need to take some account of what is ignored in this summary. Acknowledging that inherent limitation, we can say that each table here accurately portrays Aquinas's own presentation of divisions of

analogy. In each case, the table preserves Aquinas's *designations* for the distinguished types (where given), his *explanations or descriptions* for each (again, where given), and the *examples* he uses to illustrate each type of analogy (once again, where given).

The first thing to note about the classification schemes of these five other texts is that in no obvious way do they provide a uniform background against which the *De Veritate* passage jumps out in stark relief. The most uniformity is in the later three passages—from *De Potentia Dei*, *Summa contra Gentiles* and *Summa Theologiae*—which use essentially the same terminology to make (what seem to be) the same sorts of divisions. (Though even here, *ScG* employs an apparently significant subdistinction not employed in *De Pot*. or *STh*.) All three of these texts use terminology that differs from that of the two *Sentences* passages and of *De Veritate*.

It also appears that what differs among the six passages is not just the terminology but also the kinds of conceptual distinctions that are being made. The first passage has three different divisions according to different answers to the overlapping questions of whether the analogy is or is not "according to intention" and "according to being." In the second passage, *reference to one thing* is contrasted with *imitation*. In *De Veritate*, as we have seen, the contrast is between *proportion* and *proportionality*. In the last three texts, we have variations on *many-to-one* versus *one-to-another* relations.

As further evidence that these are not just different verbal formulations for the same consistent theoretical distinctions, we may notice that different phenomena find a place in different divisions. So, for instance, the first *Sentences* passage, and only this passage in the group, finds a place for what is formally a case of univocation[3] (type [2], "body" predicated of corruptible

[3] Univocation can be a form of analogy from a "metaphysical" as opposed to "logical" point of view: while a stone and a man *are equally bodies* ("body" behaves logically univocally, signifying corporeity in both the stone and the man) they are not *equal bodies*—indeed, the actual significate of "body" in man (his corporeity, which is

and incorruptible bodies). Only the classification in *De Veritate* finds a place in its classification scheme for metaphor (2a).

Complicating matters even further, all the passages make different uses of examples. In the first *Sentences* passage, divine names are said to work like "being" as said of substance and accident, but the divine names are distinguished from "being" as said of substance and accident in the *Summa contra Gentiles* and *De Veritate*. Likewise "being" and "healthy" illustrate the same type of analogy in the *De Veritate* examples, but they illustrate different types of analogy in the first *Sentences* passage, and in the *Summa contra Gentiles*.

Even those texts that are fairly similar in their formal divisions use examples quite differently. In *De Potentia*, "being" is an example of both types of analogy, but in the *Summa contra Gentiles* "healthy" is an example of both major divisions (1 and 2b) while "being" is only an example of one kind (2a). In the *Summa Theologiae*, "healthy" illustrates both kinds, and "being" is not used as an example at all. Since in each classification the *last* mode of analogy characterized is supposed to apply to the relation between creatures and God, we find divine names likened in one passages to "being" (I *Sent*., d. 19), while in another passage divine names are said to operate otherwise than "being" (*ScG*), and in two passages divine naming operates like some cases of "being" but unlike others (*De Verit*. and *De Pot*.).

Given the obvious diversity of Aquinas's classifications of analogy, it is not surprising to find scholars either arguing that there is a lack of a consistent teaching, or employing creative interpretation to make some passages more compatible than they may first appear. What would be surprising, at least to someone first introduced to these texts, would be the notion that *De Veritate* stands out as the one text which differs from the others and is therefore unrepresentative of Aquinas's views.

his human soul, given the thesis of the unicity of substantial form) is of a higher grade of reality than the actual significate of "body" in the stone. See Armand Maurer, "St. Thomas and the Analogy of Genus," *The New Scholasticism* 29 (1955): 127-44.

And yet this is the case made by several scholars starting in the 1950s—not incidentally, often as part of a criticism of Cajetan's analogy theory, which cites the text from *De Veritate* as an authority. Studies by Hampus Lyttkens and George Klubertanz are important sources for this view,[4] but one of the most influential interpreters of these passages is Bernard Montagnes.[5]

II. Montagnes's Approach to Aquinas's Classifications of Analogy

Montagnes interprets the texts at issue as different attempts to answer a consistent question about what kind of unity obtains between creatures and God. Finding different answers to the same question, Montagnes proposes an account of how Aquinas's views developed. In his interpretation, the historical progression of the texts reveals two basic movements in Aquinas's thought. First, a unity of *likeness* (in the *Sentences* commentary) is replaced by a unity of *proportionality* (in *De Veritate*). Second, a unity of proportionality is replaced by talk of *reference to one* or "analogy of relation" (in subsequent texts).

Montagnes understands the first move (from likeness to proportionality) as prompted by Aquinas's realization that *likeness* could imply a *common form*, some one thing in reference to which both analogates are defined, or one defined in terms of the other. Since sharing a common factor would

[4] Hampus Lyttkens, *The Analogy between God and the World: An Investigation of Its Background and Interpretation of Its Use by Thomas of Aquino* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells Boktrycheri AB, 1952); and George P. Klubertanz, *Saint Thomas Aquinas on Analogy: A Textual Analysis and Systematic Synthesis* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1960).

[5] Bernard Montagnes, *La doctrine de l'analogie de l'être d'après Saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires; Paris: Béatrice-Nauwelaerts, 1963). For English translation see Bernard Montagnes, *The Doctrine of the Analogy of Being according to Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. E. M. Macierowski (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2004).

ultimately imply univocity, Aquinas experimented with the four-term proportionality relationship as a way of describing likeness that safeguards divine transcendence.

The second move (from proportionality to analogy of relation) Montagnes argues is prompted by further realizations about the metaphysics of participation. Proportionality may have safeguarded divine transcendence, but at the expense of the intrinsic connection and direct relation between creature and creator. According to Montagnes, the development of Aquinas's metaphysics, especially his understanding of causality and the notion of the act of being, prompted him to replace the "proportionality" explanation with an account in terms of participation.[6]

[6] Here is Montagnes summarizing his view in his own words: "In order to . . . bring to the fore the philosophical significance of the doctrinal progress it reveals, we can say that the *De Veritate* functions as an extension of the Sentences. There Thomas accepts the same formalist conception according to which the principle relation of beings to God is that of imitation, but he grasps the danger that it presents: more or less to confuse the creature with the creator and to succumb to the univocity to which our conceptual processes incline us. There is only one means to eliminate this danger: to accentuate the distance, to deny all direct likeness, to refuse every sort of determinate relation. At what price, then, does one safeguard the divine transcendence? By radically separating beings from God, by accentuating the distance to the point of rupture, by running the risk of equivocity and agnosticism. Neither theologically nor philosophically is this a satisfactory solution: it annihilates our knowledge of God; it eliminates the unity of being. The cause of this is the underlying metaphysics which inspires the solution. To escape this impasse, one had to conceive being no longer as form but as act, and causality no longer has the likeness of the copy to the model [i.e. original] but as the dependence of one being on another being which produces it. Now this is exactly what efficient causality implies: exercised by a being in act, it makes a new being exist in act, which being is not confounded with the first, since the effect and the cause each exist on its own account, but which communicates with it in the act, since the act of the agent becomes that of the patient. At the same time the act is that which the effect has in common with the cause and that by which it is not identified with it. Thus, it is by a veritable communication of being that God produces creatures and creative causality establishes between beings and God the indispensable bond of participation so that there might be an analogy of relation between them. It will no longer be necessary to have recourse to analogy of proportion[ality], and Thomas will never come back to the theory of the *De Veritate*" (Macierowski, trans., 78; corresponds to French edition, 91-92]).

To appreciate the influence of Montagne's interpretation, we may note briefly how it has been received, essentially intact, by two recent interpreters of Aquinas. John Wippel follows Montagnes's approach to accounting for the diversity among these passages, differing mainly in that he finds a closer affinity between the earlier appeal to likeness and the later understanding of participation rooted in a causal connection.[7] According to Wippel, the earlier (I *Sent*., d. 35) distinction between sharing a common factor and imitation is just an alternative formulation of what is later referred to in terms of the distinction between analogical relations that are many-to-one and those that are one-to-another.[8] Wippel agrees with Montagnes that the *De Veritate* appeal to proportionality leaves God too distant from creatures; as a proposed solution to the problem of the relationship between creatures and God, it is not as successful in staving off agnosticism as other formulations.[9] So, according to Wippel, it makes sense that Aquinas would move to a preference for analogy of *one to another*, because in such cases the causal connection guarantees a likeness, which need not be a specific or generic likeness, between cause and effect. Like Montagnes then, Wippel finds that Aquinas, in grappling with the relationship between creatures and God, gained a better understanding of "the ontological situation" after *De Veritate*,[10] abandoning analogy of proportionality in favor of analogy of direct attribution founded in a causal relation.

Gregory Rocca also reviews Aquinas's invocations of analogy in characterizing the relationship between creatures and God, and he too finds Thomas experimenting very briefly with the notion of proportionality, but then settling on analogy of

[7] Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*; see especially his treatment of divine names (543-75) and the analogy of being (73-93), along with the chapter on participation (94-131).

[8] Ibid., 547. Wippel finds in another text (*De Veritate*, q. 23, not considered here) a softer, nonexclusive appeal to proportionality.

[9] Ibid., 554.

[10] Ibid., 568, 575.

attribution or a relation to one.[11] Like Wippel, he sees consistency of emphasis on a direct relation between God and creatures, allowing intrinsic causal connections, in texts before and after *De Veritate*. For Rocca, Aquinas struggled with the problem of describing God's relationship with creatures, eventually finding a solution by "retooling" the notion of "*proportio*" to cover a broader range of relationships than strict proportionality had allowed.[12] As Rocca admits, Aquinas's reasons for shifting his preference from analogy of proportionality to analogy of analogy of attribution (or what Rocca prefers to call "referential multivocity") are only "implicit,"[13] but Rocca supplies two: first, proportional similarity often functions "as a genus or quasi-genus" and such a generic notion "must . . . eventually be grounded in the multivocal analogy of direct rapport"; second, there seems to be an epistemological dependence of knowledge learned via proportionality on knowledge learned more directly.[14]

[11] Gregory Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God: Thomas Aquinas on the Interplay of Positive and Negative Theology* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004).

[12] "What Aquinas' ultimate solution hinges on, even in its earliest stages, is his ability to retool and expand the meaning of *proportio*, which from its infancy in Greek philosophy had been closely tied to finding the exact ratios between finite numbers, and to be comfortable enough with its extended sense not to forget it when confronted with God's infinity, for as we have seen, he only decides for proportionality when he also ignores the broad sense of proportion. This broad sense of *proportio* as 'direct relation' is the bridge that allows theological attributes to cross from us to God and, more generally, is the philosopher's stone Aquinas utilizes to transmute *analogia* as four-term proportionality into *analogia* as referential multivocity" (ibid., 123).

[13] Ibid., 125. Cf. Klubertanz, *Saint Thomas Aquinas on Analogy*, 94-95: "Nothing can be explicitly found in the existing texts which gives any reason for St. Thomas' temporary adherence to proportionality."

[14] Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God*, 125-27. Rocca seems to downplay (as an occasional "secondary formulation") those places where Aquinas makes clear that there is proportionality in the analogy between accident and substance (ibid., 125, and n. 77). His point seems to be that the relation of proportionality here depends on a more fundamental and direct relation, which on page 132 he describes in terms of *imitation*.

III. An Alternative Approach to Interpreting *De Veritate*, Q. 2, A. 11

In summarizing their accounts of the significance of *De Veritate* among Aquinas's accounts of analogy in divine naming, scholars sometime describe Aquinas as reversing his position about the priority of proportionality or attribution. But, to be precise, it is not the case that Aquinas in texts other than *De Veritate* makes the *same* distinction he makes there, and then prioritizes analogy of attribution (analogy of direct proportion) over analogy of proportionality. Instead, what we find is that Aquinas explicitly invokes "proportionality" to classify a privileged kind of analogy in *De Veritate*, and he does not invoke proportionality at all—either as a privileged or as a nonprivileged form of analogy—in some of the other key texts. In other words, rather than reversing the priority of a consistent classification scheme, Aquinas appears simply to drop the classification scheme of *De Veritate* and replace it with a different classification scheme (or schemes). If this is a "reversal" it is a more subtle or quiet one.

One might also note that there are a couple of common but questionable assumptions behind this strategy of interpreting *De Veritate* relative to the other comparable texts. The first is that in each text Aquinas attempts to give the comprehensive essential classification of analogy. Only from this assumption would it follow that different classifications are not compatible. But alternatively one could assume that Aquinas does not mean each classification to be comprehensive, or that they are comprehensive in different ways, perhaps because the classifications are made in terms of different kinds of criteria, serving different purposes.

Thus we see another assumption at work in these interpretations: that the various passages are each attempts to answer the very same question. Montagnes makes this assumption explicit, insisting that the texts are "strictly

parallel,"[15] not just in the sense that I have taken them, as having parallel structures of presentation, but as dialectically parallel. For Montagnes, it seems that there is "a" problem of divine naming that Aquinas keeps coming back to, and *De Veritate*'s "solution" to that one problem is only a provisional one later "displaced" by the mature "definitive" solution of later texts.

Wippel essentially retains this assumption, although he is more aware that the dialectical contexts of the relevant texts differ: he notes that in "the more mature" examples, Aquinas's consideration of divine names comes after discussion of quidditative knowledge of God.[16] Rocca is also more attuned to the fact that different passages may have different dialectical demands; even so, he retains the assumption that the various texts should be read as evidence of Aquinas returning to the same basic question and negotiating a choice, between analogy as attribution and analogy as proportionality, as providing the answer to that question.[17]

An alternative hermeneutic strategy is available: to take each text as designed to make just those distinctions relevant to addressing a given problem, and to assume that the given problem is not necessarily the same in each case. For a proper appreciation of the dialectical context of Aquinas's distinctions, it is not necessarily enough to look at the title questions of the relevant articles in which they are made. As medieval teachers knew very well, a given proposition can only be interpreted in light of the larger dialectical context in which it arises. Aquinas's different claims about how something can be predicated of both God and creatures thus do not have to be interpreted as, and should not be assumed to be, different attempts to address the same *one* question. There may be a cluster of questions, or a general question which could be answered on different levels depending on what specific dimension of the question is most relevant in a given situation.

[15] Montagnes, *Doctrine of the Analogy of Being*, 63-64 (French ed., 66-67).

[16] Wippel, *Metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas*, 543-44.

[17] Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God*, 118.

If this is the case, then classification schemes that are very different may in fact be philosophical compatible, and need imply no inconsistency or development.[18]

IV. Clarifications about Proportionality

Before proceeding with this alternative hermeutic strategy and attending to particular dialectical contexts, it is also important to establish some theoretical clarifications about the

[18] In general, we must remember that Aquinas's discussions of analogy are always occasional—analogy is usually brought in as a solution to a particular problem, a problem that is itself located in a larger dialectical context. It is inappropriate, then, to ask what Aquinas's *theory* or *doctrine* of analogy was, if that implies a fully explicated, stand-alone theory, though we can still ask *what he taught* about analogy. We only have to remember that what Aquinas taught about analogy cannot be separated from the question of how he taught it. (It may not be incidental to his teaching on analogy, after all, that he did not choose to write a treatise on analogy, and it may even be that a systematic textbook treatment of the topic would somehow falsify the wisdom contained in Aquinas's more organic discussions.) And how Aquinas teaches about analogy is largely a question of where he teaches about it—that is: in what kinds of texts, in what dialectical circumstances, does Aquinas find it useful to bring up analogy, and what role does analogy play in those dialectical circumstances? (There are so many occasions, so many places where analogy is either briefly invoked or elaborately discussed, that it is difficult to take account of them all. Klubertanz's study is still the most comprehensive review of relevant texts, although other texts could be added, e.g. Thomas Aquinas, *In Aristotelis Libros Peri Hermeneias et Posteriorum Analyticorum Expositio* II, lect. 17, n. 4.)

While the present article deals with a set of theological texts, it should not be forgotten that analogy plays a role in a variety of other kinds of texts, including treatises, like *De Principiis Naturae*, and commentaries on Aristotle (e.g., on the *Metaphysics* and *Ethics*), as well as theological texts where divine naming is not the primary focus. Any careful examination of Aquinas would also have to take account of where analogy does *not* appear, or where the topic appears under different guises without being labeled "analogia." (It is not often appreciated, for instance, that Aquinas discusses analogy, as a kind of unity, in *De Principiis Naturae*, a work of natural philosophy, while his *De Ente et Essentia*—which considers the diverse meanings of being, and its application not only across the categories but also to a self-subsisting nature—never refers to these relations [of words, or of things] as cases of analogy; indeed in this metaphysical and theological work the word "analogia" and its cognates make no appearance at all.)

key notion of proportionality and its relation to the logical and metaphysical orders.

(1) First, as noted, proportionality involves a four-term schema describing a relation of relations: *A* is to *B* as *C* is to *D*. Originally a mathematical notion, this was extended to nonmathematical domains as a way of describing likenesses that do not involve a common form or a generic similarity. Two things are proportionally similar not insofar as they each have a share in the same quality, but insofar as they find themselves in relations or proportions which are similar—*A* is proportionally similar to *C* insofar as *A* is to *B* as *C* is to *D*. Contemporary philosophers have referred to this phenomenon as "isomorphy."[19] Two things are understood to be isomorphic not if they share a common trait, but if they play similar roles or find themselves in similar relationships to other things in their respective domains.[20] In short, *four-term proportionality is a*

[19] I. M. Bochenski, "On Analogy," *The Thomist* (1948): 425-77, §17. (I cite this work by section number as it has been reprinted, with corrections, in Albert Menne, ed., *Logico-Philosophical Studies* [Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1962]; and in James F. Ross, ed., *Inquiries into Medieval Philosophy: A Collection in Honor of Francis P. Clarke* [Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing Co., 1971]: 99-122). Cf. I. M. Bochenski, *A History of Formal Logic*, trans. Ivo Thomas (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1961), 397, commenting on a discussion of "systematic ambiguity" from *Principia Mathematica*: "all the statements in question evidently share the same formal *structure*. We have in fact a case of isomorphy. It is remarkable that the name used for this kind of isomorphy, 'systematic ambiguity', is an exact translation of the common Scholastic expression *aequivocatio a consilio*, synonymous with 'analogy'; for isomorphy is precisely analogy."

[20] It may be possible to argue that some proportional relationships are in fact reducible to identity (mathematically, 2/4 equals 4/8) or that there in fact is a common quality ("half," shared by 2 with respect to 4 and by 4 with respect to 8), but: (1) the assertion of identity is not the same as the assertion of isomorphy (something is lost theoretically, even if not quantitively, in reducing 2/4=4/8 to 1/2=1/2); (2) the identity is not the *basis* of the isomorphy or proportionality (.5 = .5, but that doesn't make them proportional or isomorphic); and (3) it is not always necessary to insist on identity to perceive isomorphy or proportionality (the spine of a mammal and the shell of a lobster play similar roles for those creatures, though clearly not identical roles; and even in mathematics there are proportional relationships that are not reducible to equations, for instance circumference:area::surface area:volume).

way of describing a relation of likeness that need not involve a common quality or form shared by the relata.

(2) Now suppose that two proportionally similar or isomorphic things receive the same name—as, for example, we can use the term "river" to denominate both the Thames and one of the blue lines on my map of Oxford. In the order of imposition, this obviously involves the extension of a term from one semantic context to another: the Thames is a river in the primary sense, and the blue line is a river in the sense that it is related to other marks on the map as the real river is related to the surrounding topography. But then, if even in analogy of proportionality I extend a term from one analogate to another, in a loose sense even analogy of proportionalty involves "attribution" or denomination of one thing by reference to another. Of course, the ability to denominate the secondary analogate by "reference" to the primary analogate is itself based on the discernment of a proportional similarity or isomorphy between the secondary analogate (the blue line) and the primary analogate (the real river). Thus, *applying a common name to proportionally similar things always involves, in the order of imposition, attribution or reference to one.*

(3) Now note further that isomorphy or proportionality between items in their respective structures may or may not imply an intrinsic connection, or causal relation, between those items. There *may be* a causal connection, as in the case of the map, which was produced intentionally to represent the mapped territory. But there need not be any causal connection. Consider two classic examples of proportionality, that a captain is to his ship as a governor is to the commonwealth, and that physical vision is to the eye as intellectual vision is to the intellect. In these cases, the proportionally related things have no metaphysical connection. The captain (or his relationship to the ship) is in no way causally linked to the governor (or his relationship to the commonwealth); and physical and intellectual vision are similar without one causing, or otherwise being intrinsically related, to the other. So we must further remember that *discerning a formal relationship of proportional*

likeness between two things does not address the metaphysical question of whether those two things are causally related.

(4) If, in at least some cases, there is no intrinsic or metaphysical connection between two proportionally related things, it is still the case that two noncausally related but proportionally similar analogates may both be intrinsically denominated by a common term, that is, denominated by that term on account of a relevant proportional "formality" found in each analogate. Intellectual and physical sight are not intrinsically related, but when we extend the term "seeing" from the primary analogate (the eye which sees) to the secondary analogate (the intellect which understands), we denominate the intellect as "seeing" because of its own intrinsic act of grasping intellectual objects. Even if, in the order of *imposition*, by denominating the intellect as seeing we make reference to an extrinsic (and metaphysically independent) primary analogate (the eye's physical vision), it remains the case that in the order of *signification* the analogical term ("seeing") is predicated of the secondary analogate (the intellect) on account of that secondary analogate's own act (the intellect's understanding). In sum, *we must not confuse the metaphysical issue of an* intrinsic connection *between two things, and the semantic issue of the* intrinsic denomination *of something.*[21]

(5) Furthermore, in those cases in which there *is* a causal connection between two proportionally similar things, there would *ipso facto* also be a "direct" relation (of cause to effect). Two things whose formality of likeness is proportional may as a matter of fact be related (as cause to effect), so that in addition to their proportional relationship we may say that one is directly related to another. Thus, Aquinas holds that the being of accidents is caused by the being of substance, but he also holds that accidents have their own intrinsic being which is proportionally similar to the intrinsic being of substances.

[21] Making a similar point, Rocca calls this "analogy's metaphysical neutrality" (*Speaking the Incomprehensible God*, 129). "For Aquinas, analogy formally understood as such is also a logical entity that is neutral as regards the ontological question of whether a subject possesses an analogous predicate intrinsically or not" (ibid., 131).

Likewise, while "healthy" is usually treated as an example of analogy of attribution, it would be easy to argue that organs deserve to be called "healthy" not just by reference to the health of the organism of which they are a part, but also by reference to their own intrinsic good function, which is proportionally similar to the good function of the organism as a whole. But in such a case, the intrinsic health of the liver is understood to be directly, causally related to the intrinsic health of the organism as a whole (indeed, as both helping to cause, and as being caused by), in a way that, for instance, the governor of the state is not causally related to the captain of the ship to which he is proportionally related. So it is possible that, not only in the order of imposition, but in the order of reality, *proportionality does not rule out a direct or causal relation between the two proportionally related things*.

(6) A relationship of proportionality, which is not a determinate relationship but a relation of relations, is nonetheless compatible with the way Aquinas talks about analogy of "one to another." Some scholars have attempted to treat "one-to-another" and "many-to-one" (or "two-to-a-third") as substantive divisions in the mechanism of analogical naming or as relevant to metaphysical relationship between analogates, as if an analogy's being "one-to-another" automatically implies something about the nature of the relationship that obtains between two analogates. Wippel, for instance, assumes that Aquinas expresses a preference for analogy of one to another, as if that implies an affirmation of causal connection and a rejection of proportionality.[22] This confusion may have its roots in Montagnes, who begins by recognizing the modest logical implications of the distinction but attempts to link it to a fundamental development in Aquinas's theory of being.[23] But

[22] Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 561, 565. Cf. John F. Wippel, "Metaphysics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, ed. Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 92.

[23] Montagnes, *Doctrine of the Analogy of Being*, 71-72. Steven A. Long's *Analogia Entis: On the Analogy of Being, Metaphysics, and the Act of Faith* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), otherwise representing a strong critique of

the view that describing analogy as "one to another" implies something about the metaphysical relationship of the analogates is simply not warranted by Aquinas's actual usage. Whenever Aquinas appeals to the distinction between "one-to-another" and "many-to-one" in analogy (as the examples used in *ScG* I, c. 34; *STh* I, q. 13, a. 5; and *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 7 show), all that the distinction addresses is the question whether, between two analogates, one of them is primary by reference to which the other is secondary, or both are secondary and need to be understood by reference to some other, primary, analogate. Whether there is a causal relationship between the analogates, and whether the analogates are related by proportionality, are metaphysical questions, entirely independent of the semantic question of whether one of the two analogates is primary. In other words, *identifying an instance of analogy as "one to another" neither entails a causal connection between analogates, nor rules out a proportional relationship between analogates.*[24]

V. Proportionality and Participation

On the basis of these general theoretical clarifications about the nature of proportionality, it is possible to read the discussion of analogy at *De Veritate*, question 2, article 11 not

Montagnes, nonetheless perpetuates this confusion by treating "analogy of one to another" as a kind of analogy, and one of a piece with analogy of "effect to cause" and "analogy of proportion" (e.g., 33-34, 54, 58-59, 63, 76, 79). Ralph McInerny seems to understand the notion of analogy of one to another correctly (*The Logic of Analogy: An Interpretation of St. Thomas* [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961], 82), although he implicates Cajetan in misreading it as a more substantive division, despite Cajetan's *De Nominum Analogia*, §18, which explains that the distinction between analogy of one to another and analogy of two to a third does not address what sort of cause produces the analogy, only whether the prime analogate is among those being considered, or the analogates considered are all secondary.

[24] The reflections in this section help to account for why the notion of proportionality has such a complicated history in relation to the notion of deliberate equivocation or analogy as a mean between univocation and equivocation. For a brief account of this history see Joshua P. Hochschild, *The Semantics of Analogy: Rereading Cajetan's "De Nominum Analogia"* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 4-10.

as an experiment with an alternative approach to analogy, briefly entertained and then abandoned, but as an analysis of analogy on one level that is fully compatible with the analyses of analogy given in other places. For purposes of this argument, only brief attention to the relevant dialectical contexts is necessary.

The divisions and examples in the passages from the two latest texts (*ScG* and *STh*) appear in similar situations, that is, early in general theological works. They are intended to lend support to the theological method being defended and exhibited, the method of learning about God by reasoning from effects to causes. Not surprisingly, then, their emphasis is on the causal relationships between analogates.[25] Other epistemological and metaphysical issues related to divine naming these passages should not be expected to address.

By contrast, the point of the passage from distinction 19 of book 1 of the *Sentences* is to clarify the differences and relations between truth in God and truth in creatures. Aquinas's divisions and examples there allow him to argue that there is not only one truth (first division of analogy), nor are there many different truths generically the same (second division), but there is one primary truth to which other truths are related although they are not generically the same (third division). The classification framework gives more detail, because the issue is not a general one of a theological method (reasoning from effects to cause), but a very specific metaphysical question about whether and in what sense something is actualized in both God and creatures. The fact of a relationship of causal dependency between analogates, which Aquinas's later texts emphasize as part of a method of theological inquiry, is less relevant here. Instead, the distinction is designed to make clarifications about

[25] It is also worth pointing out that the divisions of analogy are relatively short discussions compared to the reflections on language developed immediately prior to them; Jordan points out that they each serve as a kind of "coda" to prior discussions of how the divine names work (*ScG* I, cc. 30-33; *STh* I, q. 13, aa. 1-4; cf. *De Pot.*, q. 7, aa. 1-6, followed by discussion of analogy in q. 7, a. 7; see Jordan, "Names of God and the Being of Names," 168-69; and 186 n. 14).

sameness and difference both on the metaphysical level and on the level of the semantics of terms.

The dialectical purpose of the passage from *De Veritate* is quite different again. Here, Aquinas sets up the discussion to defend the possibility of a relation between creatures and God which is not a "determinate relationship" (*habitudo determinata*). In other words, although the problem is posed in terms of predication (and so of logic or semantics), the main theological point addressed in the article is not that God and creatures are commonly named by analogy, but that analogically common naming need not imply a "determinate relation" of God to creatures.

This is evident from the objections: the first five of the eight objections all deny, in different ways, the possibility of comparing, or finding likeness between, God and creatures. This general objection is made by appeal in turn to: Scripture (obj. 1), God's infinity (obj. 2), God's simplicity (obj. 3), and the infinite distance between creature and God (objs. 4 and 5). In reply to such objections, Aquinas needs to talk about the possibility of a likeness or comparison between God and creatures that does not imply a determinate relationship. The evidence for the possibility of some likeness between God and creatures is easy to give, from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (*sed contra* 1) and from Genesis 1:26 (*sed contra* 2). And in the body of the article, the reality of likeness is further advanced by appeal to the facts, not argued for here, that God can know creatures through his essence, and that we can learn about God from creatures.

For Aquinas, a "determinate relation" apparently implies that the relata could share something in common or be considered as elements in a common domain; if such a relationship held between God and creatures it would be a threat to divine transcendence. So Aquinas here invokes "agreement of proportionality" in the body of the article in order to explain the possibility of a relation, a comparison of likeness, between God and creatures which is not "determinate" in this way, that is, which still allows a gap or distance between

the related items; God and creatures are similar, but in different domains.

It is worth noting that this general point (that whatever relation obtains between God and creatures must be "non-determinate") remains consistent in Aquinas's later theological works.[26] And understanding such a relationship in terms of proportionality, or a similitude of relations, is also never abandoned. Even though the notion of proportionality is rarely invoked in other attempts to classify types of analogy, that notion remains common currency in Aquinas's discussions of the relationship between God and creatures.

Take, for instance, question 14 in the *Prima Pars* (*STh* I, q. 14, a. 3, ad 2), where Aquinas addresses a sophism regarding God's knowledge. We cannot conclude from the assertion that "God is finite to himself" that God is actually finite, because saying that "God is finite to himself" was only meant as a way of saying that God was able to grasp himself as finite creatures can grasp themselves. What we say about God's knowledge, in other words, presumes a proportional relationship between God and his knowledge, and creatures and their knowledge. Likewise, in question 3 of the *Prima Secundae* (*STh* I-II, q. 3, a. 5, ad 1), a mistaken conclusion about the comparison of human and divine intellect is corrected by restating the schema of proportionality. Human practical intellect is like God only insofar as "it stands in relation to what it knows as God does to

[26] E.g., *STh* I, q. 12, a. 1, ad 4: "Proportion is twofold: in one sense it means a certain relation of one quantity to another, according as double, treble, and equal are species of proportion. In another sense every relation of one thing to another is called proportion. And in this sense there can be a proportion of the creature to God, inasmuch as it is related to Him as the effect to its cause, and as potentiality to its act; and in this way the created intellect can be proportioned to know God." Cf. *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 10, ad 9. It might appear that *STh* I, q. 13, a. 6 denies this, asserting a straight proportion between creatures and God, but surely Aquinas does not here mean to contradict what he said earlier at *STh* I, q. 12, a. 1, ad 4. At issue in this subsequent article is the question of what counts as the primary analogate in divine naming, which Aquinas takes as an occasion to distinguish between the order of imposition and the order of signification; the question of the nature of the causal relationship between creature and God is not at stake here.

what he knows." In short, when Aquinas finds it necessary to clarify the relationship between creatures and God, and especially to be precise about what we can learn about the one from the other, he continues to assert a relation of proportionality.[27]

But then, it is not difficult to read question 2, article 11 of *De Veritate* as consistent with the other passages we find on analogy, and the question of whether one particular passage's teaching is so peculiar as not to fit with the others need not arise. In *De Veritate*, the motivating theological points are ones that are consistent throughout Aquinas's career; and in that sense, we do not have to treat *De Veritate* as idiosyncratic or unrepresentative of Aquinas's thought.

Admittedly, this only goes so far. If we no longer have reason to say that Aquinas *abandoned* the central metaphysical position articulated in *De Veritate*, it is still correct to note that he seems to have abandoned, or at least de-emphasized, the explicit invocation of "proportionality," or the four-term notion of relations of proportions, when making recourse to analogy to account for divine naming.

One could hypothesize that this shift is simply due to Aquinas's experimentation with different terminology over the course of his career, perhaps finding help in a variety of sources and experimenting with different ways in which terminology from different sources can be combined.[28] But apart from such fundamentally philological factors, which may indeed be relevant, I want to draw on the clarifications about proportionality articulated above to discern at least one principled *philosophical* reason why Aquinas might find that the relationship of "proportionality" serves his purpose particularly well in *De Veritate*, while it is not adequate for his purposes in

[27] Another point that Aquinas never abandons, indeed, which he seems to emphasize in later works, is the relation of *imitation* between creatures and God. It is cited in *De Verit.*, q. 2, a. 11, ad 1, on the authority of Pseudo-Dionysius.

[28] Philip Reynolds has argued a similar case with respect to Bonaventure; cf. "Bonaventure's Theory of Resemblance," *Traditio* 58 (2003): 219-56; and "Analogy of Names in Bonaventure," *Mediaeval Studies* 65 (2003): 117-62.

the majority of other theological contexts in which he employs and theorizes about analogy.

In the kinds of passages we are discussing, Aquinas rarely if ever remains only on the level of semantic analysis—his concern is not just the function of analogical names, but the natures of the things analogically named. Moreover, when two things are proportionally similar, the *fact* of their proportional similarity says nothing about the *cause* of that similarity. Two things may be proportionally similar because one was produced as a representation or imitation of the other—as the contours of a map have a proportional relationship to the territory they map, because the map-maker deliberately imitated the geography of the territory in his map. But, as we have already noted, two things proportionally similar may have no intentional, historical or causal connection between them.

In short, the relationship of proportional similarity between two things does not imply that one of the two things has a causal relationship with, and so a degree of participation in, the other. As noted, the eye's vision and the intellect's vision are proportionally similar, but one is not caused by, and is not properly said to imitate or participate in, the other.[29] On the other hand, if one thing participates in (or is an imitation of) another, that does imply that the two are proportionally similar. Participation implies imitation or likeness between the item participating and the item being participated in, and imitation or likeness implies isomorphy, that is, unlike media or domains within which there are nonetheless comparable relations between parts, qualities or items of those media or structures. (A picture "imitates" a thing insofar as the relationships between parts of a picture "map" the relationships between parts of a thing pictured.)

[29] One could make the case that both eye and intellect participate in or imitate divine vision/cognition—but discerning this would be a matter of advanced theological insight well beyond a characterization of the obvious relationship, more known to us, between intellectual and ocular vision; and obviously one can discern the proportional relationship between physical and intellectual vision without being aware of or believing in a common divine exemplar of each.

Aquinas was well aware that the relationship of proportional similarity is necessarily implicit in imitation. Defining *image* as a kind of imitation or proportional likeness, he says,

> it is necessary that there be some adequation in that quality [in respect of which there is imitation], either according to *quality* or according to *proportion*; as it is clear that, in a small image, there is an equal proportion of parts to each other as in the big thing of which it is the image.[30]

So proportionality does not imply a relation of participation, but a relation of participation does entail proportionality. This nonsymmetrical entailment relationship between participation and proportionality helps us appreciate how Aquinas could characterize analogy in different contexts, as he did, without having to posit inconsistent understandings of analogy. If he only remained on the "formal" or semantic level of analysis, he might have chosen "proportionality" to characterize the kind of unity exhibited by analogical concepts. But when he discusses analogy in theological and metaphysical contexts, he cannot leave aside the "material" or real level of analysis, and so he is more likely to choose "participation" to describe analogical relationships between things. Proportionality is inadequate to explain the effect's imitation of its cause, which is usually Aquinas's concern. However, proportionality—likeness understood as isomorphy, or formal similarity between different kinds of pairs or sets—is *implicit* in the effect's imitation of its cause, and does help us to understand how two things can be similar without having a "determinate relation" between them.

Put another way, the *metaphysics of participation* emphasizes causal relationship, drawing attention to the reason why one thing in fact "imitates" another. By contrast, the *logic of proportionality* describes why one thing appears as an imitation of another. Better than the metaphysical relation of participation, proportionality describes the formality of nongeneric likeness or isomorphy, accounting for our ability to perceive or discern "imitation." And insofar as Aquinas consistently recognizes the metaphysical relationship of

[30] I *Sent*., d. 28, q. 2, a. 1.

imitation or participation between creatures and God, he continues to affirm their formal proportionality.

Conclusion

On the basis of these observations, then, we have seen that interpreting question 2, article 11 of *De Veritate* as articulating a temporary or idiosyncratic view is completely unnecessary. The recent marginalization of this passage from *De Veritate* is based on a speculative metanarrative about Aquinas's metaphysical development that is not required by the texts, is based partly on confusions about the nature of proportionality and its implications in the logical and metaphysical orders, and is inattentive to dialectical context.

There is simply no need to say that Aquinas changed his mind about analogy of proportionality—though his mind had to be flexible enough to notice the different demands placed on an articulation of analogy by different theological questions. Most of the time, Aquinas finds proportionality neither necessary nor sufficient for his theological purposes; the metaphysics of participation better answers to what is usually at issue, namely the *causal responsibility* for imitation, rather than the *formal structure* of similarity. However, when the reality of some causal relationship between God and creatures is already assumed, and what is at stake is rather an account of how that relationship can be named and conceived in such a way as not to imply a determinate relation between creatures and God, the notions of imitation or participation are inadequate on their own; these notions do not make explicit how it is possible to avoid the closer or more determinate relationship that Aquinas seeks to deny between creatures and God. In such a context Aquinas must have recourse to the notion of proportionality.[31]

[31] Or, as at *STh* I, q. 4, a. 3, he must have recourse to the notion of "analogy" in its original Greek sense of proportionality (that is, as describing a type of unity or sameness which is not reducible to specific or generic unity or sameness), as opposed to the sense

This is exactly what we find him doing in this passage from *De Veritate*, a text that is distinctive for its detail and language, but otherwise entirely consistent with what Aquinas says about analogy in divine naming in very different dialectical contexts.[32]

of "analogy," more common in his usage, of signification with associated meaning (constituting a middle ground between univocation and equivocation).

[32] The author would like to thank the manuscript reviewers for *The Thomist*, as well as Thomas Joseph White and Stephen Brock, for comments on drafts, and David Burrell, Steven A. Long, and Thomas Osborne for helpful conversations about the central argument. Previous versions of this paper were delivered as the Aquinas Lecture at Emory University in September 2004, and for the Blackfriars Aquinas Seminar in February 2008.

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"*ESSENTIA ET NON GRADU TANTUM DIFFERANT*": A NOTE ON THE PRIESTHOOD AND ANALOGICAL PREDICATION

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EVERYONE KNOWS the passage in *Lumen gentium* (no. 10) wherein the Second Vatican Council states that the priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood, while always ordered to each other, nonetheless "differ by essence and not only by degree." Although this passage is frequently cited by both the magisterium and theologians, there has been little sustained attention to the meaning of this crucial phrase.[1] Why is this phrase important? What is meant by an "essential" difference between the two priesthoods? And does positing an essential difference bespeak a depreciation of the priesthood of the faithful?[2]

Several years ago, I offered an analysis of the preliminary schemata of Vatican II in which the paragraph containing this

[1] The full sentence reads: "*Sacerdotium autem commune fidelium et sacerdotium ministeriale seu hierarchicum, licet essentia et non gradu tantum differant, ad invicem tamen ordinantur; unum enim et alterum suo peculiari modo de uno Christi sacerdotio participant*."

[2] In a recent volume, Lawrence B. Porter adduces several theologians who claim that Vatican II offers very little light concerning the "essential difference" between the two priesthoods. For his brisk treatment of Gisbert Greshake, André Feuillet, and others, see *The Assault on Priesthood* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock, 2012), xliv-xlv.

significant phrase was debated.[3] In the present essay, I undertake not another historical review of the *Acta synodalia* (although the conciliar documents, at all stages, are at the basis of this discussion). Instead, I offer a more speculative consideration of the relationship between the two priesthoods and of the meaning of the phrase "*essentia et non gradu tantum differant*." I propose that the Thomistic notions of participation and analogy are the two philosophical themes undergirding this distinction. They help to explain how there is a real sharing in the one priesthood of Jesus Christ by both the faithful and their ministers, even though Christ's priesthood subsists in a proportionately different way in each state of life. I further argue that this passage of *Lumen gentium* offers a good example of the "hermeneutic of reform" that Benedict XVI endorsed in his well-known Christmas address of 2005 on the proper interpretation of Vatican II.[4]

Of course, the very language of "essential difference" is a cause for some uneasiness in contemporary theology. The primary reason for this anxiety is that all Christians, whatever their state in life, are first and foremost disciples of Jesus Christ, sharing a common vocation to holiness. This was, indeed, the point of inserting the chapter on the "people of God" in *Lumen gentium* prior to discussing any particular states of life or offices within the Church. To speak, then, of an "essential difference" among Christians appears to smack of an "unequal" approach to the Church rather than a perspective that views the Church as the one people of God journeying toward fulfillment.[5]

[3] See Thomas G. Guarino, "The Priesthood and Analogy: A Note on the Formation and Redaction of *Lumen Gentium* 10," *Angelicum* 67 (1990): 309-28.

[4] The pope spoke of "the 'hermeneutic of reform,' of renewal in the continuity of the one subject-Church which the Lord has given to us." See "Christmas Address to the Roman Curia" (22 December 2005) in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 98 (2006): 40-53 at 45-46.

[5] Yves Congar says that chapter 2 of *Lumen gentium* sought to surpass the image of the Church as a "*societas inaequalis*" in *Le Concile de Vatican II: Son Église, Peuple de Dieu et Corps du Christ* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1984), 109-22, particularly 113.

The very idea of an essentially different ministerial priesthood appears, at least on the surface, to purvey a kind of elitism and social stratification characteristic of the *ancien régime*, an idea entirely outdated given our long experience of egalitarian democracy. Isn't it truer to the nature of the Church to emphasize the equality of all the baptized on their pilgrim journey to the heavenly Jerusalem? Is it proper to speak of one Christian priesthood as substantially distinct from another without reverting to an obsolete ecclesiology? Already in *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, Martin Luther had forcefully railed against this distinction, saying,

> They [his opponents] have sought . . . to set up a seed bed of implacable discord, by which clergy and laymen should be separated from each other farther than heaven from earth, to the incredible injury of the grace of baptism and to the confusion of our fellowship in the gospel.[6]

In the following paragraphs, I hope to show that Vatican II hardly intended to endorse an elitist chasm between clergy and laity, but it did intend by the phrase "they differ by essence and not only by degree" to show that the ministerial priesthood is a particular state of life within the Church, with a unique participation in the priesthood of Jesus Christ, a participation which, as *Lumen gentium* also insists, is ordered toward the faithful. How, then, is this crucial phrase properly understood?[7]

I. The Participationist Understanding of Reality

A few comments on the participationist understanding of reality can help shed light on Vatican II's teaching on the

[6] Martin Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," in *Luther's Works*, vol. 36, trans. A. T. W. Steinhäuser, et al. (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), 112.

[7] It should be noted that the phrase under discussion finds its immediate source in the allocution of Pius XII, *Magnificate Dominum,* delivered on 2 November 1954. See *Acta Apostolicae Sedis (AAS)* 46 (1954): 666-77. The pope refers to the priesthood of the faithful, which "*non gradu tantum, sed etiam essentia differre a sacerdotio proprie vereque dicto*." An English translation of this speech may be found in *American Ecclesiastical Review* (*AER*) 132 (1955): 52-63.

priesthood. I shall briefly review some passages central to St. Thomas's thought on this matter.[8]

In question 3, article 5 of his disputed questions *De Potentia*, St. Thomas says:

> If in many things we find some attribute common to all, then this attribute occurs because of a single cause. For an attribute common to many cannot be derived from its own self, since each one is distinguished from the others, and a diversity of causes produces a diversity of effects.

In this passage, he is arguing that since the act of existence (*esse*) is common across diverse beings, this act is communicated by another, by one who is the basis for the common attribute or perfection shared by many. In other words, whenever a common attribute is shared by different entities, the only possible grounding for this participated attribute is a common source which possesses this perfection in its fullness.[9] The issue is this: how can beings which are very different also possess a real similarity and unity? Diversity, in and of itself, cannot ground unity; consequently, there must be a common source of the unifying perfection or attribute.

Saint Thomas makes a very similar observation in the *Summa Theologiae* (*STh* I, q. 65, a. 1):

> If different things are united on some point, there must be some cause for this union, since things that are different in themselves cannot be united. And so whenever in diverse things some one common attribute is found, it must be that these diverse things receive this attribute from one particular cause, just as diverse bodies are hot from the heat of one fire. This is the case with being,

[8] Participationist understandings of existence have gained new traction in contemporary theology, particularly as a way of overcoming narrowly rationalist modern philosophies. It is my intention to limit myself to the thought of St. Thomas on this matter. For the best study of the role of participation in St. Thomas, see Cornelio Fabro, *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione*, Complete Works of Cornelio Fabro, vol. 3 (Segni: Editrice del Verbo Incarnato, 2005; orig., 1939). Also, *Partecipazione e causalità* (Turin: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1960). In this section, I rely on texts cited by Fabro and by W. Norris Clarke in *The Philosophical Approach to God* (Winston-Salem, N.C.: Wake Forest University, 1979).

[9] Clarke, *The Philosophical Approach*, 39.

which is commonly found in all things, however diverse they may be. It is necessary, then, that there is one principle of being, by which all possess *esse* in their own way.

In this passage, too, St. Thomas is primarily concerned with how the *actus essendi* is shared by profoundly diverse beings, all of whom participate in the common perfection of the act of existence. As Bernard Montagnes notes, one finds here an "essential diversity of participants" who nonetheless share a common perfection or attribute having its source in the primary instance.[10] Saint Thomas offers clarifying remarks on a participated perfection in his *Commentary on the Metaphysics*. He observes that a perfection belongs to one being essentially and by participation to others.[11] Elsewhere he states that God himself possesses nothing by participation, but only *per essentiam*.[12]

Saint Thomas's fundamental points are easily transferable to thinking about the priesthood. Vatican II affirms that a real priesthood is shared by both the laity and the ministers of the Church. Indeed, it explicitly states as much when it teaches that the priesthood of the faithful and the hierarchical priesthood "*suo peculiari modo de uno Christi sacerdotio participant*" (*LG* 10). What is the ontological source of this shared attribute of priesthood? It is, of course, the one priesthood of Jesus Christ, the high priest who offers himself to the Father. The Epistle to the Hebrews testifies at length to this unique priesthood of Christ, and it is this priesthood that is proportionately shared by both the laity and the clergy.

[10] Bernard Montagnes, *La doctrine de l'analogie de l'être d'après saint Thomas D'Aquin* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1963), 44. The book is translated into English as *The Doctrine of the Analogy of Being according to Thomas Aquinas*, trans. E. M. Macierowski et al. (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2004), 34. Citations will be of the English translation, with the corresponding page number of the French edition in parentheses.

[11] Montagnes, *Doctrine of the Analogy of Being*, 32 (39), citing I *Metaphys*., lect. 14, no. 224.

[12] *STh* I, q. 4, a. 2.

In the case at hand, then, the priesthood is realized in Christ *per se et per essentiam* and in the ministers and faithful *per participationem*. As St. Thomas says in the *Sentences*, "the one who possesses the form by participation imitates the one who possesses it essentially."[13] In other words, Christ fully possesses the perfection of priesthood which is communicated to both his ministers and all the baptized faithful.

II. The Analogical Sharing in the One Priesthood of Christ

For Vatican II, then, both the faithful and the clergy proportionately participate in the one priesthood of Jesus, who is the source and ground of this commonly shared perfection. How did this understanding of an analogical sharing in Christ's priesthood develop at the council?

The original draft of *De Ecclesia* (discussed in early December 1962) spoke of those who are properly called priests (*proprii quoque nominis sacerdotes sunt*). Several bishops reacted negatively to this phrase, arguing that it gives the unmistakable impression that the universal priesthood is only a *sacerdotium improprium*. This impression was buttressed by the fact that the theological commentary accompanying the schema states, "the text is so redacted that the nature of the universal priesthood, both *metaphorical and analogical*, may appear."[14] The clear conciliar concern was that the term "priesthood" was only improperly attributed to the laity. But is not the common priesthood, too, a *sacerdotium veri nominis*?

In fact, the first draft of *De Ecclesia* simply imitated the language found in Pius XII's allocution *Magnificate Dominum* of 1954. In that document, the pope states that the chief duty of a priest is "to offer sacrifice" and "where there is no true and

[13] "Unum quod participative habet formam imitatur illud quod essentialiter habet" (Montagnes, *Doctrine of the Analogy of Being*, 35 [45], citing I *Sent.*, d. 48, q. 1, a. 1).

[14] *Acta Synodalia*, v. 1, pars 4, note B, p. 44 (emphasis added). See Guarino, "Priesthood and Analogy," 312-14, for further details on this early draft of *De Ecclesia*.

proper power of sacrificing [*potestas sacrificandi*] one finds no priesthood properly and truly [*proprie vereque*] so called."[15] Pius XII further says that the priest alone offers sacrifice since the Christian people, while they participate in the Eucharistic sacrifice, do not themselves enjoy sacerdotal power. He goes on to state that those who are simply present at Mass (whether laity or clergy reverently assisting at the liturgy) "in no sense sustain or act in the person of Christ sacrificing."[16]

In both *Magnificate Dominum* and the first schema of *De Ecclesia*, the faithful do not share in Christ's priesthood except metaphorically. In both documents, the term "priesthood" appears to be attributed to the Christian faithful only by way of extrinsic denomination. At just this point, however, we need to be cautious. For while Pius does indeed argue that only the ministerial priest possesses the priesthood *proprie vereque*, he nonetheless acknowledges that the faithful "possess a certain 'priesthood' [*quoddam habere 'sacerdotium'*] that one may neither depreciate nor minimize." A kind of priesthood exists in the faithful, the pope reasons, since we read in Scripture that the faithful are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (1 Pet 2:9). Saint Peter further states that the faithful possess "a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 2:5).[17] At just this point Pius XII makes the crucial theological distinction which finds its way into *Lumen gentium*:

> Whatever is the full meaning of this honorable title and claim [the term 'priesthood' attributed to the faithful], it must be firmly held that the 'priesthood' common to all the faithful, high and reserved as it is, *non gradu tantum, sed etiam essentia differre* (differs not only in degree but also in essence) from priesthood *proprie vereque* so called, which lies in the power of offering the sacrifice of Christ Himself, since the priest fully and properly so called bears the person of Christ, the supreme High Priest.[18]

[15] *Magnificate Dominum* (*AAS*, 667; *AER,* 53).

[16] *Magnificate Dominum* (*AAS*, 669; *AER,* 55).

[17] Moreover, Pius XII had stated in the encyclical *Mediator Dei* that "They [the faithful] participate, according to their condition, in the priesthood of Christ" (no. 88).

[18] *Magnificate Dominum* (*AAS*, 669; *AER,* 55).

We see in the pope's formulation of 1954 a tentative understanding of the priesthood of the baptized, one that remains theologically undeveloped. It was just this hesitant understanding that found its way into the original draft of *De Ecclesia*.

In the second draft of *De Ecclesia*, a schema which appeared in the summer of 1963, the theological commission corrected the equivocal attribution of the term "priesthood" to the faithful. The offending phrase, indicating that only ministerial priests are *sacerdotes proprii nominis*, was dropped, as was any claim to the *indoles metaphorica* of the universal priesthood. However, in reaction against the improper attribution of priesthood found in the first draft, there is, in the second schema, a less pronounced accent on the *difference* between the two priesthoods. While the truly crucial phrase "*essentia et non gradu tantum differant*" was never removed from the second schema, several bishops complained that this second draft failed to outline adequately the difference between the baptismal and ministerial priesthoods, thereby tacking closer to a univocal understanding of the two *sacerdotia*.[19] Only in the final draft would a clearly analogical resolution emerge, with Christ's priesthood actually subsisting in both the faithful and their ministers, although in a proportionately different way.

The council resolved the issue of the two *sacerdotia* by way of analogical predication. This is clearly reflected in the aforementioned statement of *Lumen gentium* that both priesthoods "*suo peculiari modo de uno Christi sacerdotio participant*." Here, the priesthood is fully realized in Christ who is, as St. Thomas says, the *verus sacerdos*.[20] His priesthood (which is the priesthood *maxime et verissime*) is participated in formally and intrinsically by both the ministers and the faithful.

[19] Of course, a baldly univocal reading of the second schema would not have been possible since the crucial phrase remained. However, the second schema *tends* toward univocity insofar as it eliminates several key sentences found in the first draft. For details on the second schema, see Guarino, "Priesthood and Analogy," 314-21.

[20] *Summa contra Gentiles* IV, c. 76.

Diversity arises from the fact that each of the analogates has a different relationship with the primary and exemplary instance. In the final schema, there is an *intrinsic but proportional participation* in Christ's priesthood by both the laity and the clergy.

But why did the council insist on an *essential* difference between the two priesthoods? Clearly, Vatican II intended to reject the univocal predication of Christ's priesthood to the faithful and their ministers. Univocal predication occurs when there exists "a single specific form possessed more or less intensely by a subject," for example, a person who is more or less virtuous, or water that is more or less hot. This type of gradation, *secundum magis et minus*, does not, and is not intended to, overcome univocity.[21] If the two priesthoods were distinguished only in this way—a single form possessed with various grades of intensity—there would exist a simple difference in degree between the universal and the ministerial priesthoods since the same attribute (Christ's priesthood) would be shared by the two *sacerdotia*, but with no substantial difference between them. If that were the case, the ministerial priest would not be exercising an "essentially different" priesthood, but simply his baptismal priesthood in a new, pragmatically designated, capacity. To overcome precisely this kind of univocal attribution, diverse "forms" of Christ's priesthood must be specified in the common and ministerial priesthood, even though both are intrinsic participations in the one priesthood of the Redeemer.

III. The Priesthood of the Faithful

While I cannot offer here anything resembling a comprehensive theology of the priesthood, I do want to

[21] Montagnes, *Doctrine of the Analogy of Being*, 30-31 (37), commenting on *De Ente et Essentia* 5 (ed. M.-D. Roland-Gosselin [Le Saulchoir: Kain, 1926], 41). For an English translation, see *On Being and Essence*, trans. Armand Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1949), 53.

differentiate, in accord with the conciliar affirmation of an "essential difference," the kind of *sacerdotium* exercised by the common and the ministerial priesthood.[22]

Intrinsically connected with the notion of priesthood is the idea of sacrifice. As St. Augustine says, "*Ideo sacerdos, quia sacrificium*."[23] In the baptismal priesthood, Christian men and women strive to live holy lives by placing their entire being at God's disposition, or, as Scripture says, by "offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." Yves Congar describes this exercise of the universal *sacerdotium* as "the priesthood of self-offering, the offering of one's very life." And again, "for the faithful to be a priest is first of all to offer one's life, to make of one's own person a reality constantly directed to God."[24] Saint Augustine aptly says, "*Totum sacrificium ipsi nos sumus*": We ourselves are the whole sacrifice.[25] All of the actions, then, by which a person consecrates his or her life to the Father, with and through Jesus Christ, constitute the exercise of the baptismal priesthood. Perhaps we can say that the *potestas sacrificandi* of the universal *sacerdotium* has a deeply interior and personal dimension; it is the self-oblation of each individual Christian. But it is not limited to a private element alone, since there is a significant liturgical aspect to it as well.

Scholarship prior to Vatican II sought to re-emphasize the exercise of the priesthood of the faithful that occurs within the liturgy. In a 1937 essay, Dom Gregory Dix complained of a

[22] There exist innumerable exegetical and theological treatises on the priesthood of the faithful. My fundamental interest is in understanding how the concepts of participation and analogy stand at the basis of distinguishing the two Christian *sacerdotia*.

[23] Augustine, *Confessions* 10.43. For a detailed analysis of the relationship of priesthood and sacrifice, see Jean Galot, *Theology of the Priesthood* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1984), 131-34.

[24] Yves Congar, *At the Heart of Christian Worship*, trans. and ed. Paul Philibert (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 2010), 74 and 96.

[25] Augustine, *City of God* 10.6 and 10.19. Cited by Congar, *At the Heart of Christian Worship*, 79. Saint Thomas also speaks of the universal priesthood as the self-offering of one's life to God. See IV *Sent.*, d. 13, q. 1, a. 1, qcla. 1, ad 1.

tendency, dating from the fourth century, "to concentrate it [the liturgy] in the hands of the ministers, so that it becomes in fact something done *by* the clergy *for* the laity, instead of the action of the Body of Christ." [26] Congar appreciatively notes Dix's essay, but argues that any early deficiencies had been significantly remedied by the encyclical of Pius XII *Mediator Dei*, and even more insistently by Vatican II.

Mediator Dei, for example, explains that the faithful exercise their priesthood in the liturgy by "the offering of themselves as a victim" (*MD* 98). Moreover, "all Christians, especially those who are present at Mass, are said to offer the sacrifice." But what is precisely meant by the phrase "to offer" in this context? The encyclical explains:

> It is necessary, in order to avoid giving rise to a dangerous error, that we define the exact meaning of the word "offer." The unbloody immolation at the words of consecration, when Christ is made present upon the altar in the state of a victim, is performed by the priest and by him alone, as the representative of Christ and not as the representative of the faithful. But it is because the priest places the divine victim upon the altar that he offers it to God the Father as an oblation for the glory of the Blessed Trinity and for the good of the whole Church. Now the faithful participate in the oblation . . . because they not only offer the sacrifice by the hands of the priest, but also, to a certain extent, *in union with him*. It is by reason of this participation that the offering made by the people is also included in liturgical worship. (*MD* 92 [emphasis added])

Sacrosanctum concilium repeats this accent on the baptismal priesthood exercised in the liturgy, stating:

> They [the faithful in the liturgy] should give thanks to God. By offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, *but also with him*, they should learn also to offer themselves, too. (*SC* 48 [emphasis added])

The same idea is intensified in *Lumen gentium*:

[26] See "The Idea of 'The Church' in the Primitive Liturgies," in *The Parish Communion*, ed. A. G. Hebert (London: SPCK, 1937), 97-143 at 132-133.

> Taking part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life, they [the faithful] *offer the Divine Victim to God*, and offer themselves along with him. . . . All perform their proper part in the liturgical service, not, indeed, all in the same way, but each in that way which is appropriate to himself. (*LG* 11 [emphasis added])

Finally, let us attend to the comments on the universal priesthood found in Paul VI's 1965 encyclical, *Mysterium fidei*. After noting that in the liturgy "the whole Church plays the role of priest and victim along with Christ, offering the sacrifice of the Mass," he adds:

> To be sure, the distinction between the universal priesthood and the hierarchical priesthood is something essential and not just a matter of degree, and it has to be maintained in a proper way. Yet we cannot help being filled with an earnest desire to see this teaching [the exercise of the common priesthood in the liturgy] explained over and over until it takes deep root in the hearts of the faithful. (*MF* 31)

In all these passages, one may discern a marked accent on the universal priesthood as a power bestowed by the sacrament of baptism through which one offers one's own life, and Christ himself, to the Father. This oblation takes place both in the liturgy and in daily life. Congar sums this up succinctly, "Jesus offers himself and he offers us. The faithful, his members, offer him as well, and themselves along with him."[27]

IV. The Priesthood of Ministerial Priests

Congar lamented the fact that the Reformers, in their legitimate desire to restore the role of the faithful in the liturgy, did so "under catastrophic conditions" causing them to deny the ministerial priesthood.[28] The Council of Trent reacted to this denial by insisting on the unique and lasting character of the priestly office, an office which, as Pius XII and Vatican II taught, is essentially different from the priesthood of the

[27] Congar, *At the Heart of Christian Worship*, 33.
[28] Ibid., 45.

faithful. But how is this "essential difference" properly understood?

The form of Christ's priesthood which exists specifically in the ordained minister is conferred through the sacrament of holy orders, which configures the priest to stand in Christ's place, *in persona Christi capitis*, offering the Lord's unrepeatable sacrifice. For this reason, *Mediator Dei* teaches that when Christ is made present on the altar, this action "is performed by the [ministerial] priest and by him alone" (*MD* 92). Writing in 1967, Congar observed that Pius's encyclical "correctly wanted to reject the idea that all the people might be the true celebrant, with the ordained priest merely their delegate. We absolutely have to respect this teaching of *Mediator Dei* as dogmatically fundamental."[29] In a similar vein, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in a 1983 statement, rejected the claim that the sacrament of holy orders did not "impart any character with ontological significance . . . but would simply give expression before the community that the original power conferred in the sacrament of baptism had become effective."[30]

What is at stake here is the unique role of the ministerial priest in the sacramental realization of Christ's oblation. Through the gift of holy orders, the priest liturgically actualizes the Lord's sacrifice at Golgotha.[31] *Lumen gentium* affirms this when it states, "the priest alone can complete the building up of the Body in the Eucharistic sacrifice. Thus are fulfilled the words of God, spoken through his prophet: 'From the rising of the sun until its setting, my name is great among the gentiles, and in every place sacrifice and a pure oblation is offered to my

[29] Ibid., 52. He notes, however, that *Lumen gentium* 11 has a somewhat different accent, since the dogmatic constitution says that the faithful "offer the divine victim to God and offer themselves along with him."

[30] See "*Sacerdotium Ministeriale*," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 79 (1983) 1:1001-1009. What is rejected in this document is precisely the univocal understanding of the priesthood, *secundum magis et minus,* noted above.

[31] See Cyprian Vagaggini, *Theological Dimensions of the Liturgy*, trans. Leonard J. Doyle and W. A. Jurgens (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1976), 150-55.

name'" (*LG* 17). A little later the dogmatic constitution says, "Acting *in persona Christi*, and proclaiming his mystery, priests join the offering of the faithful to the sacrifice of their Head. Until the coming of the Lord, priests re-present and apply in the sacrifice of the Mass the one sacrifice of the New Testament (*LG* 28). Of course, in the very paragraph under discussion, *Lumen gentium* states that the priest "acting *in persona Christi*, brings about the Eucharistic sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all the people" (*LG* 10).

In his capacity as a minister, then, the priest has received the form of Christ's priesthood in a unique way. With all the faithful, of course, he offers his own spiritual sacrifices to the Father, and so exercises his baptismal priesthood. But he is now enabled, by a sovereign gift of God's unmerited grace, to re-present in the liturgy the mystery of Christ's own oblation. All of the faithful join him in offering Christ to the Father, but they do so with and through the ministry of one who uniquely stands, by God's grace, *in persona Christi.*

In this objective sense, then—in contrast with the priest's subjective offering of his life to the Father—there cannot be a univocal predication of Christ's priesthood to the two analogates. A *potestas sacrificandi* exists in both the faithful and the ministers, but it is proportionately realized, just as any attribute or perfection is realized diversely, according to the capacity of those receiving it. Men, for example, participate in the perfection of the *actus essendi* insofar as they are human, while angels, animals, plants, and rocks participate in the perfection of *esse* according to their own, essentially different, natures. As St. Thomas says, participated perfections are limited by the measure of the subject. That is to say, a participated act or attribute is diversified according to the nature of the one receiving it.[32] In the case at hand, there exist essentially different, although analogically related, instantiations of the unique priesthood of the Redeemer.

[32] Montagnes, *Doctrine of the Analogy of Being*, 40 (54), citing *STh* I, q. 75, a. 5, ad 1.

One may conclude that Christ's priesthood (and so his priestly act of self-oblation) is such that both the laity and clergy share in this perfection, but distinctly so. The sacrament of holy orders allows the ministerial priest to receive Christ's priesthood in such wise that he is now enabled to stand at the altar *in persona Christi capitis*.[33] Through the sacrament of baptism, the faithful join with the priest in offering Christ, even as they offer their entire lives to the Father. In each instance, the *ratio* of the Lord's priesthood subsists in real, but essentially different ways.

The principle of participation, then, allows for true similitude, but without requiring the univocal predication of an attribute or perfection. The two priesthoods cannot be distinguished simply by degree (*secundum magis et minus)* since the ministerial priest alone, through the grace of the sacrament, is empowered to bring about the anamnetic re-presentation of the Redeemer's self-oblation. While all the faithful join in this offering, they do so with and through the ministry of the one standing *in persona Christi*. It is precisely this notion of diversified participation in a perfection that undergirds the conciliar claim that both *sacerdotia* truly share, with proportional differences, in Christ's unique priesthood.

CONCLUSION

This note intends to offer a modest contribution to understanding one of the most disputed phrases to emerge from

[33] The Church has traditionally spoken of the unique grace (and *character indelebilis*) bestowed on the ministerial priest through ordination. Vatican II reaffirms this when it refers to "that unique sacrament through which priests, by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are marked with a special character and are configured to Christ in such a way that priests can act *in persona Christi capitis*" (*Presbyterorum ordinis* 2). Congar observes that the notion of sacramental character "was developed on the basis of the New Testament, the events and texts of the early church, and above all the teaching of St. Augustine against the Donatists" (*At the Heart of Christian Worship*, 30-31). For a suggestive historical and speculative reading of St. Thomas on sacramental character, see Guy Mansini, "A Contemporary Understanding of St. Thomas on Sacerdotal Character," *The Thomist* 71 (2007): 171-98.

Vatican II. It is clear that the council resolved the question of how Christ's unique priesthood exists in both the universal and ministerial *sacerdotia* by means of the classical Thomist themes of participation and analogical predication.[34]

By its positive adoption of Pius XII's phrase "*essentia et non gradu tantum differant*"—a phrase which appeared in every schema of *De Ecclesia*—Vatican II intended to avoid any serious rupture with preconciliar thinking about the nature of the Catholic priesthood. Pius XII had aptly indicated that the two *sacerdotia* are related, but proportionately distinct, an insight that the council appropriated as its own. With the prior tradition, Vatican II acknowledged that the ministerial priest is marked by another "*character indelebilis*" indicating his unique participation in Christ's priesthood.

But neither does this passage of *Lumen gentium* defend a simple and unnuanced continuity, as if Vatican II intended no reform of the prior theological tradition. At the council, Pius XII's teaching on the baptismal priesthood was more fully developed, and the idea that "priesthood" was attributable to the faithful only by way of improper or metaphorical attribution was entirely eliminated. If one compares *Lumen gentium* with *Magnificate Dominum* of 1954, one observes how the council reformed Pius XII's ordinary magisterium, which had spoken only tentatively about the universal priesthood. Precisely here one may see what Pope Benedict XVI has called Vatican II's "innovation in continuity."[35] The council accented the fact that all the baptized participate in Christ's *sacerdotium*,

[34] John O'Malley has recently argued that Vatican II, in both its genre and vocabulary, "largely abandoned the Scholastic framework that had dominated Catholic theology since the thirteenth century" (*What Happened at Vatican II* [Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2008], 46). While O'Malley's comment is generally correct, in the instance under discussion, it was precisely Scholastic precision that provided the necessary solution.

[35] "Christmas Address to the Roman Curia," 46. In the same speech, the pope states that at Vatican II there exists a "combination of continuity and discontinuity at different levels" and in this "the very nature of true reform consists."

and so the word "priesthood" belongs to the faithful, too, by way of intrinsic attribution.

If there still remains in the Church, fifty years after the council's beginning, some theological uneasiness with the phrase "*essentia et non gradu tantum differant,*" it should be remembered that this distinction is not intended to purvey elitism and social stratification. The unique "form" animating the ministerial priesthood is never at antipodes with the *sacerdotium* of all the baptized. On the contrary, there is a common mission and striving for holiness which encircles all disciples of Christ. Vatican II wisely instructed the Church to understand the two priesthoods as ordered to Christ and to each other (*ad invicem . . . ordinantur*).[36]

Further theological questions remain about the phrase "they differ by essence and not only by degree." Taken from *Magnificate Dominum*, this expression was elaborated within the context of the priest as leader of the Christian cult. As Pius XII repeatedly argues, priesthood is primarily about offering sacrifice (*postestas sacrificandi*). The original context for the phrase, then, is the liturgy, with no other aspect of priestly ministry mentioned. At Vatican II, however, there was an attempt to supplement the cultic dimension of the priesthood by accenting other aspects as well. One indication of this is that the traditional word for priest, "*sacerdos,*" was often replaced by the word "*presbyter*" in the conciliar documents, signifying that priestly ministry is not limited to its cultic function, but involves leadership of the Christian community in a variety of aspects, particularly in the preaching of the Word of God. In his 1954 allocution, Pius XII teaches that the priest's "chief power and duty is to offer the unique and divine sacrifice of the Most High

[36] One may fruitfully explore, just here, the philosophical link between substantiality and relationality. W. Norris Clarke has noted that St. Thomas's notion of *esse ut actus* is intrinsically ordered toward self-communication. Surely the ministerial priesthood is itself self-communicative, ordered toward God and toward the faithful, as the council insisted. See W. Norris Clarke, *Person and Being* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1993).

Eternal Priest, Jesus Christ Our Lord."[37] If one compares his words to those of recent popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI, a difference in emphasis may be observed.[38] Discerning the precise meaning of the important conciliar phrase "*essentia et non gradu tantum differant*" for other aspects of priestly life and ministry demands continuing theological investigation.

[37] *AAS*, 667; *AER*, 53.

[38] *Presbyterorum ordinis* states, "Priests . . . have as their primary duty the proclamation of the Gospel of God to all" (*PO* 4). Commenting on this passage, the young Joseph Ratzinger noted that the patristic and, especially medieval, understanding of the priesthood made a marked "association between *sacerdos* and *sacrificium*." But Vatican II "eliminated the one-sided emphasis on the idea of priesthood as sacrifice." See Joseph Ratzinger, *Theological Highlights of Vatican II*, trans. H. Traub et al. (New York: Paulist Press, 2009; orig., 1966), 249-50. In his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini,* Benedict XVI says: "I would recall the words of Pope John Paul II, who in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, stated that 'the priest is first of all a *minister of the word of God*, consecrated and sent to announce the Good News of the Kingdom to all'" (see *AAS* 102 [5 Nov. 2010]: 751). The words of Pius XII and Benedict XVI/John Paul II are complementary surely, but the accent is placed differently in their elaboration of priestly identity. Perhaps these differences are reconciled by the words of Vatican II, which encourage priests to nourish the faithful "at the double table of the Sacred Scripture and the Eucharist" (*PO* 18).

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THE BIOLOGY OF WOMAN IN THOMAS AQUINAS

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PRUDENCE ALLEN'S *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution, 750 B.C.–A.D. 1250*[1] tells a story both uncontroversial and deeply problematic. As the title implies, her overall narrative is that Aristotle's views on women gradually triumphed over all others in Western thought. This "revolution" culminated in Aristotle's triumph over the university thinkers of the thirteenth century, including St. Thomas Aquinas.

She concludes, "St. Thomas nearly perfectly mirrors Aristotle's arguments for sex polarity"—that is, the view that men are better than women—"on the level of nature. Because of his explicit repetition of the Aristotelian rationale, he became one of the most important sources for defending Aristotelian sex polarity."[2] The greater part of her study examines that Aristotelian view.

"The most striking aspect of Aristotle's analysis," according to Sr. Allen, is the way he combined metaphysics and biology with gender theories perhaps more proper to philosophical anthropology and political philosophy.[3] In biology, Aristotle "claimed that previous philosophers were intuitive in their arguments, while he was offering scientific evidence that woman

[1] Prudence Allen, *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution, 750 B.C.–A.D. 1250* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1985).

[2] Ibid., 386.

[3] Ibid., 83.

did not contribute seed to reproduction. It is ironic that the intuitive insights of his predecessors have turned out to be correct while Aristotle's 'scientific' evidence has turned out to be false."[4]

Sr. Allen's description of Aristotelian "metaphysics" might raise some eyebrows: "The two primary opposites, cold and hot, were the metaphysical bases that Aristotle applied to his theory of generation." But her conclusion is uncontroversial: "As a consequence, the mother provided only material to generation, while the father provided form. . . . Aristotle described woman as infertile, imperfect, deformed, and containing a basic inability."[5]

Finally, in an apparent *non sequitur*, Aristotle applied his metaphysical and biological theories to woman herself: "the greater coldness in woman meant that she was an inferior kind of human being."[6] "Women have an inferior reasoning capacity. . . . Women could not be philosophers."[7] "As a consequence of woman's inferior rational capacities, she was not considered capable of virtuous activity. . . . He argued that a woman becomes virtuous by placing herself in obedience to a virtuous man."[8] "Therefore, the foundation for the sex-polarity theory in ethics followed from the sex polarity in epistemology, which in turn followed from the sex polarity in natural philosophy and metaphysics."[9]

Sr. Allen's attempt to save St. Thomas gives a clue to why her uncontroversial account of Thomas's Aristotelian gender theory is deeply problematic for Thomism more generally. "This giant in Christian philosophy," she says, "developed a new support for a theory of sex complementarity"—that is, the view that men are *not* better than women—"when considering male and female identity on the level of grace and in heaven. . . . Thomas achieved a new kind of consistency by arguing that while

[4] Ibid., 84.
[5] Ibid., 95.
[6] Ibid., 97.
[7] Ibid., 103.
[8] Ibid., 111.
[9] Ibid., 111.

woman begins life as imperfect in relation to man, she may end in eternal life in a full relation of sex complementarity."[10] Nature and grace exist in happy discontinuity.

The "giant of Christian philosophy," it appears, uses a philosophical account of woman that is metaphysically risible, biologically groundless, and epistemologically not rooted in the senses—and this, indeed, is the philosophy of Thomas's paradigmatic "philosopher," Aristotle. Thomas is only saved through a theology fundamentally unhinged from this problematic philosophy.

Sr. Allen's uncontroversial account on an apparently marginal issue ends up being decisive for our understanding of Thomas's use of philosophy, his metaphysics, his epistemology, and his interest in Aristotle. It is all the more problematic if one appreciates the centrality of biology to Aristotle's thinking; explicitly biological works fill twenty-nine percent of the pages in a standard edition of his works.

R. J. Hankinson writes of the core principle of Aristotle's biology:

> we must seek for organization and purpose in even the most apparently unpromising natural subjects; in so doing we will be led to marvel at nature's providentiality, and be able to discern the causal links which tie natural products together. . . . [Aristotle] is consistent in his commitment to the methodological slogan enunciated and approved at the beginning of [*On the Parts of Animals*] that a natural scientist should begin by grasping the phenomena, and only then proceed to try to uncover the causes.[11]

Thomas himself explains the place of Aristotelian biology in his greater theological vision. In introducing the final set of questions in the *Prima pars*, he says, "the sure ordering of [natural] things manifests the governing of the world, as if one entered a well-ordered house."[12] Two questions later he says that to deny the intelligibility of the material world would "redound to the impotence of the Creator, for it belongs to the

[10] Ibid. 385.

[11] R.J. Hankinson, "Philosophy of Science," in *Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 138-39.

[12] *STh* I, q. 103, a. 1.

power of an agent to be able to give the power of agency to his effects."[13] And when he comes to the substantial articles on biology with which he concludes the *Prima pars*, he repeats, "the more powerful the agent, the more it can diffuse its action at a distance"—a principle he applies both to the biological power of procreation and to the Creator's ability to give his creatures such an awesome power.[14] For Thomas, a denigration of biology would be a denigration of God; the seriousness or unseriousness of Aristotle's biology is key to his Christian significance.

This paper will examine Thomas's Aristotelian approach to the biological question of gender. Reviewing his biblical commitments, his Aristotelian interpretation of those commitments, his biology of gender, and his understanding of biology's place in the human person, we will find that, here too, Thomas integrates the Bible and Aristotle, nature and grace, body and soul, observation and metaphysics. We will conclude with some indications for how Thomas can contribute to current discussions about woman.

I. Man and Woman in Thomas

Thomas's commitments as *magister in sacra pagina* provide certain challenges for his thinking about man and woman.[15] For example, the First Letter to Timothy (2:8-15) states:

[13] *STh* I, q. 105, a. 5.

[14] *STh* I, q. 118, a. 1.

[15] Other studies on Thomas's view of women include Prudence Allen's successor volume, *The Concept of Woman,* vol. 2, *The Early Humanist Reformation, 1250-1500* (Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans, 2006); Kari Elisabeth Børresen, *Subordination and Equivalence: The Nature and Rôle of Woman in Augustine and Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Charles H. Talbot (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981); Michael Nolan, "The Aristotelian Background to Aquinas' Denial That 'Woman is a Defective Male,'" *The Thomist* 64 (2000): 21-69; idem, "The Defective Male: What Aquinas Really Said," *New Blackfriars* 75 (1994): 156-66; idem, *Defective Tales: The Story of Three Myths* (Ireland: Printcomp, Ltd, 1995); and Michele M. Schumacher, "John Paul II's Theology of the Body on Trial: Responding to the Accusation of the Biological Reduction of Women," *Nova et Vetera* 10 (2012): 463-84, esp. 464-66.

I desire therefore that the men [*viros*] pray in every place, lifting pure hands without wrath or contention. Similarly too the women: in ornate apparel [*in habitu ornato*], adorning themselves with remorse and sobriety, not in plaited hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but what befits women professing piety through good works. Let the woman learn in silence, with all subjection. I do not however allow woman to teach or to lord over man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve, and Adam was not led astray, but the woman was led astray in transgression. But she will be saved by the generation of children, if she remains in faith and love and sanctification, with sobriety.

Paul's text is perplexing, and modern exegetes have had little success untangling it.[16]

Thomas's treatment of the text is based on his own explanatory principles. He begins with a point about equality, making much of "similarly too the women" (*similiter et mulieres*).[17] He has just given the short sentence about men a 366-word commentary, arguing that prayer should be constant, pure, and peaceable. Men must pray "spiritually and with the mind," their "interior affect should be excited," and "the soul of the one praying should be free" by neither "murmuring against God's word" nor "breaking peace with neighbor." Thomas takes advantage of what in the text seems an insignificant

[16] E.g: "the only truly viable hermeneutical option . . . is to engage the words of Paul in a dialectical process of criticism within the public discourse of the church, both academic and liturgical. Such readings should note the peculiar features of the texts that make it probelmatic as normative: that it is gratuitous in context, going beyond what is required for the situation; that it is based solely on Paul's individual authority . . , rather than on a principle intrinsic to the good news; and that the warrant for the injunction is, in fact, a faulty reading of Torah. They should also acknowledge the history of harm done to women within the church (exclusion from leadership functions, silencing of voices, restriction to domestic roles) based on this passage. . . . Finally, as we think about that growth, we might even be grateful to this passage as well as others in the Pauline corpus for reminding us that the noblest Christian ideals ('in Christ there is neither male nor female' or 'God wills the salvation of all') must always be negotiated within the hard and resistent circumstances of cultural contexts in which the power and privilege – as well as the complex and ambiguous embodiments – of difference are always present" (Luke Timothy Johnson, "The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary," *The Anchor Bible*, v. 35A (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 210-11.

[17] *Super I Tim.*, c. 2, lect. 2.

conjunction to assert that, despite all that is about to be said, woman is equally capable of this high calling.

But despite this similarity, woman is greatly different. Again, the biblical text says much about women, but Thomas says much more. His opening salvo gives the principle: "it is natural that just as women have softer bodies than men, so too they have weaker reason."[18] Paul says they should be "in ornate apparel," but emphasizes internal virtues. Therefore Thomas takes "not in plaited hair, etc." to mean not that they should avoid such exterior adornment—in fact, he argues that they should so adorn themselves—but that Paul is indicating this is not the kind of "ornate apparel" he means. Instead, Thomas says, Paul is talking about "spiritual beauty." *Ornatus*, he says, is related to *ordinatio*, and *rationis est ordinare*: therefore Paul means that woman, with her weak power of reason, needs special help creating the kind of rational order that will make her truly beautiful.

The emphasis on spiritual beauty is an arguable reading of the text, but the concerns about reason appear wholly extrinsic. The connection of weaker reason with softer bodies is a biological import with no apparent basis in the text.

Paul identifies this adornment with "remorse [*verecundia*] and sobriety." Remorse, says Thomas, is for shameful deeds; thus it is especially necessary to those who easily fall into those deeds. Such are women and young people, as opposed to older people and *perfecti*. Sobriety is about maintaining the power of reason, which is especially weak in women. That, says Thomas, is why drunkenness is a bigger problem with women—and why the Romans did not let women drink wine. Note again that his explanations go far beyond the text, or even the historical evidence. One might equally have said that women are better than men at remorse and sobriety, and there is no obvious reason to connect any of this to *debilis ratio*.

Paul says, "Let the woman learn in silence, with all subjection." Thomas says learning, silence, and subjection all

[18] "Naturale est quod sicut mulieres sunt molioris corporis quam viri, ita et debiliois rationis" (ibid.).

proceed from a common cause: woman's defect of reason.[19] He adds, with a gloss from Sirach but no explanation, that women's words are inflammatory. Commenting on subjection, he says,

> It is natural that the soul command the body, and reason the inferior powers. Thus, as the Philosopher says, whenever two things are related to one another as soul to body and reason to sensuality, command naturally belongs to the one which abounds with reason, and this one is principal, and the other, namely that which lacks reason, is subordinate. Thus Genesis 2: "you will be under the man's power."

He then has to step away to say that it is different when mothers privately teach their children, and that the grace of the Holy Spirit, including the spirit of prophecy, does not distinguish between man and woman—but that even prophecy leads a woman not to preach publicly but to give counsel privately. These qualifications are not insignificant, in that they show that woman's reason is not entirely lacking, and that distinctions of sex do not hold in the spiritual realm.

When Paul does not "allow woman . . . to lord over man," Thomas simply notes, "the philosopher says that the rule of women is the corruption of the family, like tyranny in a kingdom."[20] Note the presence of Aristotle, the way Thomas goes beyond the biblical text (marital consensus would have been sufficient to oppose female domination), and the moral implications (Thomas, following Aristotle, defines tyranny by lack of concern for the common good).

Paul's comments about Adam and Eve are baffling. It is worth noting, however, that in the scriptural text, the subordination of women is explained entirely in terms of biblical history; there is no obvious need to add explanations about reason or the natural inferiority of women.

Instead, Thomas notes that Adam was created before Eve, but that Eve was the first to sin. He summons a complicated

[19] *Super I Tim.*, c 2, lect. 3.

[20] Commenting on a parallel text in *Super I Cor.*, c. 14, lect. 7, Thomas says this is "philosophus, in politica sua," apparently referring to *Pol.* 3.9 (see below); he finds a parallel statement in Chrysostom: "semel est locuta mulier, et totum mundum subvertit."

principle[21] to explain why, in the creation narrative, man comes first because he is perfect and woman is imperfect. Thus "man is perfect in human nature; woman is *vir occasionatus*." Michael Nolan has argued that *vir occasionatus* refers only to the particular biological puzzle of how the active seed of a male should produce a female offspring.[22] Here, Nolan's argument unravels: in this passage, woman is not just *occasionatus* and imperfect in relation to man as sexual agent, but in relation to human nature itself: that is why she is created second.

Man is formed from the dirt because he is first and perfect; woman from man because she is imperfect coming from perfect. "Thus man [*homo*] is not said to be made for woman, but to the likeness of God. . . . But woman is for man, and thus man must be first."[23]

In the order of sin, however, woman comes first, because "first in generation is last in corruption." Man is stronger, so "the tempter began with the weaker, that he might easily seduce the stronger." The woman was deceived by ignorance of the universal, because she believed the serpent; the man was deceived only in the particular, because he followed the ways of the woman, and thought God would not be severe. Thomas is trying to explain Paul's strange claim that "Adam was not led astray." The biblical text is difficult, but Thomas adds more, by insisting on imperfection and weakness as the defining features of woman, even before the Fall.

[21] "In ordine rerum perfectum et imperfectum diversimode ordinantur, quia in uno et eodem imperfectum praecedit tempore, et perfectum praecedit natura, quia natura tendit ad perfectum; sed in diversis perfectum est prius tempore et natura, quia natura semper incipit a perfectis. Et hunc ordinem agit hic, quia vir perfectus est in natura humana, mulier vir occasionatus" ("In the ordering of things, perfect and imperfect can be ordered differently. In a single thing, the imperfect comes first in time, but the perfect precedes by nature, because nature tends to the perfect. But in multiple things, the perfect comes first both in time and by nature, because nature always begins from perfect things. And that is the order here, because in human nature, man is perfect and woman is *vir occasionatus*"; *Super I Tim*., c 2, lect. 3).

[22] See Nolan, "The Aristotelian Background."

[23] "Inde est quod homo non dicitur factus propter mulierem, sed ad similitudinem Dei. Gen. I, 26: *faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram*. Mulier autem propter virum, ideo vir debet praeesse" (*Super I Tim*., c. 2, lect. 3).

Finally, when Paul says, "But she will be saved by the generation of children, if she remains in faith and love and sanctification, with sobriety," Thomas says he is responding to a tacit question: given all that has been said above, wouldn't man do better without woman? Thomas says no, on both the temporal and the eternal level. On the temporal level, she is necessary for the generation of children. On the eternal, despite everything, "in her soul she is capable of grace and glory."

Thomas concludes his lectures on the second chapter of First Timothy with a figurative reading, according to which man is higher (i.e., contemplative) reason, woman is lower (i.e., practical) reason: she gives birth to good works, which she conceives by the man's charity, and thus is saved.

Similar arguments appear in Thomas's systematic works. For example, in the questions on Adam and Eve in the *Prima pars*, it is true, as Nolan says, that Thomas twice deflects objections about woman being misbegotten (*occasionatus*), saying that she is misbegotten only in regard to man, not in regard to nature, so that it was appropriate for God to make Eve, and other daughters would have been born even if man had never sinned.[24]

He also says, however, that Eve would naturally have been subject: "Woman is naturally subject to man, because the discretion of reason is naturally greater in man."[25] His opening argument for why there would generally have been inequality and rule even before the Fall is simply that "there would have been some disparity in the first state, at least with regard to gender, because without gender, there would be no generation."[26] The inferiority of women goes without saying.

Woman was created out of man, Thomas says, because man is her head.[27] And in response to an objection citing another puzzling text from Paul,[28] he notes that in Genesis it first says

[24] *STh* I, q. 92, a. 1, ad 1; q. 99, a. 2, ad 1.

[25] *STh* I, q. 92, a. 1, ad 2.

[26] *STh* I, q. 96, a. 3.

[27] *STh* I, q. 92, a. 2.

[28] "A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man" (1 Cor 11:7).

that man and woman are both made in God's image, but in a certain sense, man has an image of God that woman does not, "for man is the principle and end of the woman, just as God is the principle and end of the whole creation. Thus when the apostle says that 'man is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man,' he shows why he says that, adding, 'for man is not from woman, but woman from man, and man is not created for woman, but woman for man.'"[29]

In the *Tertia pars*, when discussing the excellence of Mary, he is sure to note, citing our text from First Timothy, that though she certainly had the gift of prophecy, she never taught publicly.[30] In regard to the same text, he notes that Mary did not have anything to learn from her husband—but simply states that this breaks the ordinary rule; we should not expect other Christian women to have such excellence.[31] Indeed, although Christ was born of a woman so that women too could benefit from the redemption, Christ himself was a man because men are more noble.[32]

Anna appears in Luke's story of the Presentation in the Temple to show that women are also included (though, of course, Simeon gets the speaking part).[33] And Eve is taken from Adam's rib to show that woman is to be neither an authority over man's head nor a slave at his feet.[34] But when Thomas discusses whether there would have been sex in Eden, he gives woman a distinctly backhanded compliment: yes, there would have been sexual procreation, because otherwise there would have been no point in creating woman: "Genesis 2 says woman was made to help man, but this can be for no other reason than for sexual generation, because for any other work, the man would have been better helped by a man than by a woman."[35]

[29] *STh* I, q. 93, a. 4, ad 1.
[30] *STh* III, q. 27, a. 5, ad 3.
[31] *STh* III, q. 30, a. 2, ad 2.
[32] *STh* III, q. 31, a. 4, ad1.
[33] *STh* III, q. 36, a. 3.
[34] *STh* I, q. 92, a. 3.
[35] *STh* I, q. 98, a. 2, s.c.

In some ways, Thomas certainly feels himself constrained by scriptural authority. In the text we have reviewed from First Timothy, eighty-five words in the scriptural text merit no fewer than eighteen references to other passages in Scripture on the role of women.[36] But it is hard to miss Thomas's introduction of the inferiority of reason in women as an explanatory principle.

II. The Biology of Reason

"It is natural that just as women have softer bodies than men, so too they have weaker reason."[37] It should be clear that Thomas, like Aristotle before him, approaches the question of woman from two directions simultaneously. On the one hand, it would be ridiculous to claim that their opinions about women are due entirely to their biology. The conclusion that woman in some way has weaker reason clearly comes, above all, from their experience of society. Aristotle's most prominent reference to the inferiority of woman occurs (fleetingly) in the discussion of friendship in the *Ethics*, where he makes no reference whatsoever to biology.[38]

On the other hand, Thomas is insistent that gender is a function of biology. Ultimately what distinguishes man and woman is only the role they play in procreation.[39] Indeed, the

[36] Gen 2:7; 3:12; 3:16; Prov 7:10; Sir 9:11; 25:30; 26:19; Isa 3:17, 24; Zeph 2:11; I Cor 11:5, 8, 15; 14:34, 35; I Pet 3:3. Prov 31:1 and Judg 5:1ff. are cited as texts needing interpretation.

[37] *Super I Tim*., c. 2, lect. 2.

[38] See *Ethics* 8.10-11. Thomas's quote about the rule of women destroying a city seems to come from the discussion of the Lacedaemonians (Spartans) in *Politics* 3.9, though Aristotle's principal concern there seems to be with the particular vice of these women, not women in general. In any case, there is no reference to biology. But cf. *Hist. anim*. 9.1, reviewed below.

[39] See for example *STh* I, q. 98, a. 2, s.c. Marguerite Deslauriers, examining Aristotle's understanding that gender is accidental, not essential, notes that in his thinking, even within procreation, the male and female contributions are themselves asexual. "Sex and Essence in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and Biology," in *Feminist Interpretations of Aristotle*, ed. Cynthia A. Freeland (University Park, Penn.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 150.

soul itself is entirely without gender, except insofar as it relates to a particular body.[40]

Thomas discusses the relation of body to reason when he discusses the ages of consent for betrothal and marriage in his commentary on the *Sentences*.[41] Betrothal and marriage, he says, require "prudence about future things." In the first seven years of life we cannot truly understand much of anything. Around age seven ("*in fine primi septennii*"), we begin to be able to understand things with help, which is why we begin school at that age. "Natural reason most quickly gets stronger" in regard to things pertaining to our own person. Thus around seven the laws of Thomas's time allowed children to make promises about the future, "especially regarding those things to which natural reason is more inclined"—such as the mutual interest of boys and girls. But a seven-year-old does not yet have "a firm will," and so cannot be fully bound in matrimony. Seven-year-olds can get engaged, but not married.

Around the age of fourteen ("*in fine secundi septennii*") we begin to be able to understand things ourselves. We are thus able to bind ourselves to real obligations regarding ourselves, such as marriage or religious life. Interestingly, he adds that it is only after another seven years have passed, around the age of twenty-one, that we attain the solidity of mind to manage property: it is harder to focus our minds on things less directly related to ourselves.

The principle, Thomas says, is that "reason slowly grows stronger in a person as the motions and flux of the humors grow quiet." That is, it has to do not (as we might expect) with experience, but with greater solidity of body. A five-year-old, perhaps, is just growing too fast to be able to think straight about anything. A nineteen-year-old has too much going on hormonally to make major economic decisions.

The objections focus our attention on the body. There was apparently a rule allowing age limits to be bent by as much as six months. Thomas says, "It is better to determine according to

[40] See for example *STh* I, q. 93, a. 4, ad 1. Also *Metaphysics*, 8.9.1058a29-b2.

[41] IV *Sent.*, d. 27, q. 2, a. 2.

the condition of the parties": some thirteen-year-olds are more settled and thoughtful than others.[42] The standard rule also allowed girls to marry at twelve, somewhat bending the idea of *secundi septennii*. Referencing an argument we might find more familiar, Thomas says that alongside the use of reason, we must also consider the disposition of the body: girls' bodies are "apt for procreation" sooner than boys'. But he quickly adds, referencing *De animalibus* 9,[43] that "the use of discretion" comes at the same time as the ability for procreation. Filling in the blanks using the principle he previously gave, we might say that both the ability to procreate and the ability to think have to do with a certain maturity of body.[44] The use of reason requires stability of body.

Thomas seems to explain male headship in exactly these terms. Aristotle says that a natural slave (if such a thing exists; Aristotle treats slavery as a limit case)[45] would be defined as one who "in no way is *consiliativum*." Since he cannot take counsel

[42] Ibid., ad 7.

[43] Ibn al-Batriz translated Aristotle's books on animals into Arabic in the ninth century. Michael Scot put the Arabic into Latin in 1217, under the single title *De animalibus*, of which books 1-10 were Aristotle's *Historia animalium*, books 11-14 *De partibus*, book 14 *De motu*, and books 15-19 *De generatione animalium*. The whole was known under Scot's title and numbering through the Renaissance, including in Theodore Gaza's new translation of 1450. These books were also the first of William of Moerbeke's translations from Greek, appearing at the end of 1260. (Despite William of Tocco's protestations at the canonization proceedings, Moerbecke had no special relationship with Thomas.)

Thomas seems to have begun to refer to these works by their individual titles (thus *De generatione* instead of *De animalibus*) after acquiring Moerbeke's translations, but current editions still have him referring to "*De animalibus*" as late as *De malo*. Thomas tends to refer to all five books of *De generatione* as a single book: "in libro *De generatione animalium*."

See A. L. Peck's introductions to the Loeb Classical Library editions of *Historia animalium* (v. 1, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965) and *Parts of Animals, Movement of Animals, Progression of Animals* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1937) and René-Antoine Gauthier, O.P., *Somme contre les gentils: Introduction*, Collection Philosophie Européenne (Paris: Éditions Universitaires, 1993), 74-77, 84-88.

[44] IV *Sent.*, d. 27, q. 2, a. 2, ad 3.

[45] See Thomas, I *Pol.*, lect. 3; lect. 4.

or deliberate about his actions, he must be subject to another. Women and children, by contrast, do have the ability to take counsel, but the child's ability is imperfect and the woman's is *invalidum* (weak).[46] Aristotle does not explain what *invalidum* would mean here, but Thomas says that this weakness has to do with being morally unable to adhere to the counsel she has taken.[47] This is how Thomas describes headship: "man is the head of the woman, and it is in the head that the sense of sight is strong. Thus man ought to govern the woman as her head."[48]

Now, women are not children. Indeed, Aristotle says it is the mark of barbarians to treat women like slaves,[49] and spends most of the first book of his *Politics* emphasizing such distinctions among different kinds of people and relationships.

In both the *Ethics* and the *Politics*, he compares family relationships to political relationships. In the *Ethics*, he says that the relation of father to son is like monarchy, the relationship of man and wife like aristocracy, and the rule of brothers like timocracy, a kind of republican rule.[50] The matrix as a whole helps us to understand the point of the argument. Ordinarily, the central thing defining these different kinds of political rule

[46] *Politics* 1.13.1260a10-14: "Omnibus insunt quidem partes anime, set insunt differenter. Seruus quidem enim omnino non habet quod consiliatiuum; femina autem habet quidem, set inualidum, puer autem habet quidem, set imperfectum." The Latin translation is William of Moerbecke's, reprinted in Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri Politicorum* (Leonine edition, vol. 48 [Rome: Ad Sanctae Sabinae, 1971]). The Greek for *invalidum* is *akuron*.

[47] I *Pol*., lect. 10: "Sed femina cum sit libera, habet potestatem consiliandi, sed consilium eius est invalidum. Cuius ratio est, quia propter mollitiem naturae ratio eius non firmiter inhaeret consiliatis, sed cito ab eis removetur propter passiones aliquas, puta concupiscentiae, vel irae, vel timoris vel alicuius huiusmodi" ("But the woman, being free, has the capacity for counsel [*potestatem consiliandi*], but her counsel is *invalidum*. The reason is that, because of softness [*mollitiem*] of nature, her reason does not firmly adhere to counsels [*consiliatis*], but is quickly removed from them because of various passions, such as desire, anger, or fear, and the like").

[48] E.g., *Super Eph*., c. 5, lect. 8: "Ratio autem haec est, quoniam vir est caput mulieris, in capite autem viget sensus visus, Eccle. II, 14: *sapientis oculi in capite eius*, et ideo vir debet gubernare mulierem ut caput eius. I Cor. XI, 3: *caput quidem mulieris vir*."

[49] *Politics* 1.2.1252b5-9.

[50] *Ethics* 8.10.

is the number of rulers: monarchy is rule of one, aristocracy rule of a few, timocracy rule by all worthy citizens. Obviously this cannot be the point of the comparison: in fact, children are subject to two parents, but wives to only one husband. Rather, the point is that wives are more equal to their husbands than children are to their parents—though less equal than brothers to one another. Thus Thomas identifies the corruption of each kind of relationship by the corrupt forms of government: if a father uses his sons like slaves, he is like a tyrant; if a husband fails to recognize the decision-making abilities of his wife, it is like oligarchy;[51] and if chaos rules among brothers, it is like the corruption he calls mob-rule, "democracy."

Within the marital relationship the key point is that "he lets the woman do whatever befits her." It is an abuse if the man dominates in all matters, instead of focusing on what works best. Thomas's commentary casts some light:

> It is immediately obvious that the human works which are necessary for life [that is, the household works belonging to marriage] are distinct between man and woman, such that some are appropriate for the man, for example things which are done outside the home, and some for the woman, such as weaving and other things which are done within the home.[52]

His example of weaving is telling, since it seems to involve a kind of intelligence that children do not have.[53]

[51] VIII *Ethic*., lect. 10: "Ponit duos modos respondentes oligarchiae. Quorum unus est, quado vir vult omnia disponere et nullius rei dominium relinquit uxori. Hon enim non est secundum dignitatem nec secundum quod melius est. Alius autem modus est, quando uxores totaliter principantur eo quod ipsae sunt haeredes, et tunc principatus non fit secundum virtutem sed propter divitias et potentiam, sicut accidit in oligarchiis" ("He identifies two situations akin to oligarchy. One is when the man wants to determine everything, and leaves no dominion to his wife. This is not befitting her dignity, nor for the best. The other is when women completely rule because they are heiresses. This kind of rule is not based on ability but on riches and power, as happens in oligarchy").

[52] VIII *Ethic*., lect. 12.

[53] But why weaving should be assigned to women is not clear. It could be that, for practical reasons, mothers need to stay close to the home. But it could also be that such concerns are a better fit for the female intellect, just as, above, a child could deal with

In any case, Aristotle and Thomas clearly do not think that women are the same as children. In the *Politics* Aristotle emphasizes this even more.[54] In this book, apparently written after the *Ethics*, he again compares the rule of the father over his children to monarchical rule. But rather than comparing marriage to aristocracy, he compares it to republican rule—even more equal. This is especially interesting in that he notes an inconsistency in his argument. In republican rule, different parties take turns; this is not what Aristotle thinks should happen in marriage, where the man is ordinarily always the head. Nonetheless the ruled is treated as nearly equal to the ruler.

In fact, he allows that "sometimes, despite nature, it happens otherwise."[55] Sometimes the woman can be the wiser party. But this is contrary to the ordinary state of things. On the one hand, this remark emphasizes the near equality of man and woman, such that accidents can overpower it. On the other hand, even the possibility that some women should be heads over their husbands emphasizes that rule is about intelligence; in Aristotle's thinking, man rules because he has greater powers of reason.

Thomas identifies the "softness" of the woman's body as the cause of her weakness of reason. As we saw above, in his commentary on First Timothy, he first says, "Just as women have softer bodies than men, so too they have weaker reason." In his commentary on the *Politics*, apparently written during the same period (the second regency in Paris, 1268-72),[56] he says something similar:

> the woman, being free, does have the power of taking counsel, but her counsel is weak. The reason for this is that, because of the softness of her nature, her

issues that immediately involve him long before he could deal with economic issues that require a wider scope of vision.

[54] *Politics* 1.12.1259a39-b11.

[55] *Politics* 1.12.1259b2-4.

[56] The current authority for the dating of Thomas's texts is Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1, *The Person and His Work*, rev. ed., trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005).

reason does not firmly adhere to the counsel she has taken, but is quickly removed from it because of various passions, such as concupiscence, or anger, or fear, or other such things.[57]

The next sentence in the commentary on First Timothy says that women, like children, "easily fall into disgraceful acts." The theory appears to be that a "soft body" is more passionate, and thus harder for reason to rule over. The next statement in this commentary says that women need to preserve sobriety because "in women reason is weak, and sobriety conserves the power of reason." Softness of body seems to be a little like inebriation.

Later in the same commentary he says that "although delights are an occasion of death for all men, they are especially so for women, because they have by nature softness of soul. Therefore, since delights soften the soul, it follows that women are made much softer."[58] Given the other passages quoted above, and given the immateriality of the soul, "softness of soul" seems to refer to how "softness of body" affects the soul.

Once in this commentary Thomas suggests a positive side to this softness. "Because women, having a soft heart, are naturally compassionate, therefore Paul proposes hospitality."[59] The picture that emerges is of someone more sensitive to the world around her, in such a way that a receptivity—a softness—in her body penetrates into her "heart" and her "soul," so that reason cannot fully overcome sense.

Commentators offer various interpretations. Prudence Allen proposes that Thomas thinks "woman is held under the sway of the lower parts of her intelligence, and that it is therefore more difficult for her to sustain the constancy of the rational investigation that is necessary to intellectual virtue."[60] In a study of the relevant text in Aristotle, A. W. Price notes that women seem to be "more emotional than men (*Hist an* 9.1.608b8-11)"

[57] I *Pol*., lect. 10.
[58] *Super I Tim*., c. 5, lect. 1.
[59] *Super I Tim*. c. 5, lect. 2.
[60] Allen, *Aristotelian Revolution*, 399.

or "they keep changing their minds (cf. *NE* 7.9.1151b15)."[61] And in a commentary on the *Politics*, Peter Simpson seems to read the text in light of premenstrual syndrome: "Women, as constitutionally more subject to bodily functions (the functions associated with generation), and to the passions attendant thereon (what we now speak of as the effect of hormones and the monthly cycle), seem to be less able to impose the results of deliberation on themselves."[62]

III. The Biological Activity of Woman

A review of Thomas's Aristotelian understanding of sexual biology will cast some light on this apparently significant "softness" of woman.[63] It is well known that Thomas thinks

[61] A.W. Price, *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 171.

[62] Peter L. Phillips Simpson, *A Philosophical Commentary on the "Politics" of Aristotle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 67.

[63] It seems that the only authors who defend Thomas's biology of gender and embryology without qualification are William Wallace, O.P. ("Nature and Human Nature as the Norm in Medical Ethics," in *Catholic Perspectives on Medical Morals*, ed. Edmund D. Pelligrino [Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer, 1989], 23-52; and "Aquinas's Legacy on Individuation, Cogitation and Hominisation," in *Thomas Aquinas and His Legacy*, ed. D. Gallagher [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1994]) and Michael Nolan (see n. 15). A. L. Peck is the most prominent exponent of Aristotle's biology (see his introductions in *Aristotle: Parts of Animals, Movement of Animals, Progression of Animals*; *Aristotle: Generation of Animals*; and *Aristotle: Historia animalium*, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Press, 1937, 1942, 1965]).

Certain of Thomas's conclusions are defended by Henri de Dorlodot ("A Vindication of the Mediate Animation Theory," in E. C. Messenger, ed., *Theology and Evolution* [London: Sands and Co., 1942]); Joseph Donceel, SJ ("Abortion: Mediate v. Immediate Animation," *Continuum* 5 [1967]: 167-71; and "Immediate Animation and Delayed Hominization," *Theological Studies* 31 [1970]: 76-105); and Thomas A. Shannon ("Delayed Hominization: A Response to Mark Johnson," *Theological Studies* 57 [1996: 731-34]), but their primary concerns seem to be Teilhard de Chardin, Rahner, and abortion rights. (Thomas is firmly opposed to early abortion; see Lombard's *Sentences* IV, cc. 184-85, with Thomas's assenting commentaries; and *ScG* III, c. 122.)

A sample of the many Thomists who have rejected aspects of Thomas's biology includes Rudolph Gerber, "When Is the Human Soul Infused?" *Laval théologique et philosophique* 22 (1966): 234-47; Benedict Ashley, O.P., "A Critique of the Theory of

woman is somehow "passive" in the act of conception. This theory can only be understood, however, if we first understand the ways that woman is active.

The key point is that something happens at conception. Thomas's view that man is active is sometimes mistakenly interpreted as if sperm were "proto or miniature human beings, which will, upon entering the uterus, begin to grow and develop."[64] Thomas treats this idea as a kind of foil—"*nisi forte*

Delayed Hominization," in D. G. McCarthy and A. S. Moraczewski, ed., *An Ethical Evaluation of Fetal Experimentation: An Interdisciplinary Study* (St. Louis: Pope John XXIII Medical-Moral Research and Education Center, 1976), 113-33; Michael Allyn Taylor, "Human Generation in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas: A Case Study on the Role of Biological Fact in Theological Science," (S.T.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 1982); Jean de Siebenthal, "L'animation selon Thomas d'Aquin: Peut-on affirmer que l'embryon est d'abord autre chose qu'un homme en s'appuyant sur Thomas d'Aquin?," in *L'Embryon: Un home,* in *Actes du Congres de Lausanne 1986* (Lausanne: Societe suisse de bioethique, 1986), 91–98; Norman M. Ford, S.D.B., *When Did I Begin?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988); D. Balme, "Human is Generated by Human," in *The Human Embryo: Aristotle and the Arabic and European Traditions*, ed. G. R. Dunstan (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1990); Gordon Wilson, "Thomas Aquinas and Henry of Ghent on the Succession of Substantial Forms and the Origin of Human Life," in *The Ethics of Having Children*, ed. L. Schrenk, Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association 63 (Washington, D.C.: American Catholic Philosophical Association, 1990); Stephen Heaney, "Aquinas and the Presence of the Human Rational Soul in the Early Embryo," *The Thomist* 56 (1992): 19-48; Mark Johnson, "Quaestio Disputata—Delayed Hominization: Reflections on Some Recent Catholic Claims for Delayed Hominization," *Theological Studies* 56 (1995): 743-63; idem, "Quaestio Disputata: Delayed Hominization: A Rejoinder to Thomas Shannon," *Theological Studies* 58 (1997): 708-14; Kevin L. Flannery, S.J., "Applying Aristotle in Contemporary Embryology," *The Thomist* 67 (2003): 249-78; Nicanor Austriaco, O.P., "Immediate Hominization from the Systems Perspective," *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 4 (2004): 497-516; David Albert Jones, *The Soul of the Embryo: An Inquiry into the Status of the Human Embryo in the Christian Tradition* (London: Continuum, 2004). See also Enrico Berti, "Quando esiste l'uomo in potenza? La tesi di Aristotele," in *Nascita e morte dell'uomo: Problemi filosofici e scientifici*, ed. S. Biolo (Genoa: Marietti, 1993), 115-23; and Robert P. George and Christopher Tollefson, *Embryo: A Defense of Human Life* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 59-60 and 65-66. But as will be explained below, reference to DNA in many of these works, often with the word "obviously," suggests widespread unfamiliarity with the substance of Thomas's Aristotelian biology.

[64] George and Tollefson, *Embryo*, 34. Although they claim this opinion "once was thought," they give no indication who thought it. The only medieval references I have found use this opinion as a foil. Prudence Allen's *The Concept of Woman* attempts to

quis dicat"—and dismisses it as "*inconveniens*": the generation of animals is not like the separation of mud from mud.[65] The reference to mud points us to what will be the central concern of Thomas's embryology: form.

His fullest treatment of the metaphysics of procreation is in *De potentia*, question 3, article 9, response to the ninth objection: a twelve-hundred-word treatise on embryology, twice the length of the body of the article. There too he opens by dismissing the idea that "the soul already exists in the father's seed." Although Thomas will go on to discuss the divine origins of the rational soul, he first cites two different texts in which Aristotle makes clear that the father's seed is not an embryo even for animals.[66]

Whatever the mother's passivity means, she is not merely a vault in which the protohuman grows. It is fundamental to Thomas's Aristotelian biology that the mother provides something not extrinsic but intrinsic, without which conception cannot happen.

Following Aristotle, Thomas calls this maternal contribution "purest blood." Blood, according to Thomas, is the last stage as nutrition is prepared to become part of the body: the last step between an apple and my cells.

> Clearly food, which at the beginning is unlike the body, at the end is made similar by being given a form. But the natural order is that something is reduced from potency to act gradually. Thus in things which are generated, we find that first something is imperfect, then perfect. Now clearly what is common relates to what is proper and determinate in the same way. . . . Thus

review every Western thinker's view on women, with multitudinous details about theories of procreation; she does not seem to have found anyone who holds this view. Aristotle confronts the theory in *De gen anim*. 1.18.722b4-5. René-Antoine Gauthier, O.P., explains Aristotle and Thomas's method of disproving opinions that no one holds as a way of manifesting the truth; see "L'intention," in the Preface to *Sentencia Libri de Anima*, *Opera Omnia* 45/1 (Rome: Leonine Edition, 1984), 288*-94*.

[65] *STh* I, q. 119, a. 2.

[66] The rest of *De Pot*., q. 3, a. 9, ad 9, is essential for understanding the metaphysical questions central to Thomas's embryology, but less important for understanding the biology of the parents. Aristotle's treatment of the origin of the "divine," immaterial human soul is much more tentative. See *De gen. anim*. 2.3.737a8-13.

food too first receives some common power in respect to every part of the body, and finally is determined to this part or that.

Since procreation is ordered to the whole body, not to just one part—semen does not beget semen, but a human person—the material of procreation must be of this indeterminate kind.[67]

"Blood," says Thomas, is "what the nutritive power uses on the way to nourishing the members of the body."[68] In fact, when he discusses the resurrection of the body, he distinguishes three kinds of fluids. The first kind is meant to leave the body, either because it purges a corruption (such as urine, sweat, and bloody discharges, *sanies*), or because it serves the body of another (such as semen and milk); these do not rise. The third kind is the sort of glue that binds the body together; this is part of the body, and will rise.[69]

The middle member of the series is most interesting: fluids that are on the way to becoming part of the body, which the medicine of the time identified as "blood and the other three humors." These are properly human stuff, and so they will rise as part of the body. But they are distinct kinds of things; indeed, Thomas goes out of his way to distinguish these humors, which will rise, from the sort of beings-in-flux (the medicine of his day called them *ros* and *cambium*) that are halfway to becoming a humor or halfway between being a humor and being part of the body. Since these are not distinct kinds, they will not rise. Thus in Thomas's theory, blood is a very particular kind of nutritive stuff, "from which the members are generated": on the one hand distinctly human, but on the other hand not yet determined to a particular part of the body. What Thomas calls "blood" is the stuff from which the human body is made, as stones and cement are the stuff from which a house is built.[70] It is human flesh in potency.[71]

[67] *STh* I, q. 119, a. 2.
[68] III *Sent.*, d. 3, q. 5, a. 1, arg. 5.
[69] IV *Sent.*, d. 44, q. 1, a. 2, qcla. 3.
[70] III *Sent.*, d. 3, q. 5, a. 1, ad 4.
[71] *STh* III, q. 31, a. 5, ad 2.

The material of procreation, however, is "not just any blood, but blood led forth to a greater digestion by the mother's generative power, so that it might be the apt material for conception."[72] The early Thomas calls this blood "menstruous,"[73] but by the time of the *Tertia pars* he goes out of his way to distinguish "purest blood" from menstruation. Menstruation is a kind of corruption, something that the body by nature expels, "a kind of purging from that pure blood which is, by a sort of digestion, prepared for the conceptus, purer and more perfect than other blood."[74]

The mother, in other words, has a specific power to create the stuff without which human conception cannot happen, the stuff that babies are made of. Various authors criticize Thomas in his embryology for supposedly not knowing that the mother supplies DNA to the conceptus.[75] To the contrary, if we distinguish matter from form, that is, if we understand that DNA is the building blocks of the human body, and distinguish it from life itself—dead bodies and fingernail clippings have DNA—then DNA is almost precisely what Thomas says the mother contributes. Though the particular chemical structure was obviously completely unknown to Thomas, DNA is an excellent reference point for thinking about his embryology, both because it helps us see how very wonderful is the material of human life (and thus the "activity" of the mother, who can not only reproduce her own material, but even make matter apt for generation) and also because it helps us focus on the

[72] *STh* III, q. 31, a. 5: "Haec autem materia, secundum philosophum, in libro de Generat. Animal., est sanguis mulieris, non quicumque, sed perductus ad quandam ampliorem digestionem per vertitutem generativam matris, ut sit materia apta ad conceptum."

[73] II *Sent*., d. 18, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2: "menstruum materia embrionis dicitur;" see also II *Sent*., d. 18, q. 2, a. 3; III *Sent*., d. 3, q. 5, a. 1, s.c. 2; d. 3, q. 5, a. 1; d. 4, q. 2, a. 1.

[74] *STh* III, q. 31, a. 5, ad 3.

[75] Thus Allen, *Aristotelian Revolution*, 100: "The father was interpreted as being the single source of the formal structure, or what we might call the genetic or chromosomal structure of the fetus"; Jones, *Soul of the Embryo*, 124: "the scientific revolution . . . vindicated Galen's view that both male and female supply seed"; Heaney, "Aquinas and the Presence of the Human Rational Soul in the Early Embryo," 30: "Genetic material from the sperm does not work independently."

difference between that material and the *form*, which is life itself (and thus the higher "activity" of the father).[76] Ironically, in Aristotle's theory, for reasons that he does not entirely explain, it is the father who does not supply "the building blocks of human life."[77]

The mother's "purest blood," indeed, can even be called a kind of seed. Thomas calls it "the seed of the woman" (*semen feminae*), though he says it is "imperfect in the genus of seed."[78] He quotes Aristotle's definition of seed in *De anima* 2: whereas a living body is that which potentially has life and is informed by a soul, a seed is that which potentially has life but is not informed by a soul. According to this definition, the mother produces a "seed."[79]

Thus Aristotle, noting that the mother's reproductive blood is "*sperma, non purum autem*," says that this material lacks only the principle of soul: "when the female secretion participates this soul, it becomes a fetus."[80] He compares her reproductive

[76] On the difference between body and soul, see *STh* I, q. 75, a. 1; q. 76, a. 4; or Aristotle, *De anima*, passim.

[77] Indeed, when Thomas criticizes the theory that both man and woman provide seed, he says, "in *De animalibus* 15 the philosopher destroys this opinion, showing, both by reason and by sensible experience (which is more trustworthy in natural science), that *the man contributes no material* for the human body" (III *Sent*., d. 3, q. 5, a. 1; emphasis added). We will discuss this further below. Ashley accurately describes Thomas's position: "Aquinas . . . concludes that the menstrual blood is an inanimate chemical mixture of nutritional materials in the mother's body" ("A Critique," 117); the semen "consisted of two portions. One was merely an inactive fluid which, after intercourse, became mixed with the menstrual blood and constituted the male contribution (a minimal one compared with that of the mother's). The other, active portion was a 'vital spirit' which was the actual instrument of the male efficiency. . . . Once the semen had been discharged in the maternal vagina, the passive portion was absorbed, but the active spirit remained as an independent agent acting on the menstrual blood" (ibid., 119).

[78] *STh* III, q. 31, a. 5, ad 3.

[79] *ScG* II, c. 89: "Aristoteles dicit, in II de anima, quod *semen et fructus sic sunt potentia vitam habentia quod abiiciunt animam*, idest anima carent: *cum tamen id cuius anima est actus, sit potentia vitam habens, non tamen abiiciens animam*." Deslauriers discusses *De gen. anim.* 1.9.727a2-9, 26-30, and 2.4.737a27 as central texts on the parallels between male and female seed (153).

[80] *De gen. anim.* 2.3.737a28-34: "Femella enim est quemadmodum orbatus masculus, et menstrua sperma, non purum autem. Unum enim non habet solum, anime

substance to eggs (*ova*, in Moerbecke's translation), which are said in a sense to "live," so that the mother who produces the blood or ovum can "up to a point" (*usque aliquid*) procreate on her own.[81] Going even further, Thomas says that the woman's almost-seed is almost alive: "it has from the beginning a vegetative soul, but with only first act, not second, as the sensitive soul is in one sleeping."[82]

principium. Et propter hoc quibuscumque fiunt ypenemia animalium, ambas habet partes constitutum ovum, sed principium non habet, propter quod non fit animatum: hoc enim affert masculi sperma. Cum autem participaverit tali principio superfluum femelle, fetus fit" ("For the female is in a way a deprived male [*orbatus masculus*], and the menstrual blood is seed [*sperma*], but not pure. For it lacks but one thing, the principle of soul. Because of this, in those animals that have *ypenemia* [Peck translates this as "wind eggs": unfertilized, yet still with some principle of development] the established [*constitutum*] egg has both its parts, but it does not have this principle, and so is not animated; it is the male's seed that brings this. But when the female's excretion [*superfluum*] participates in this principle, it becomes a fetus."

[81] *De gen. anim.* 2.5.741a17-26: "quod habet rationem dicta dubitatio manifestum in avibus ypenemia parientibus, quia potest usque aliquid femella generare. Adhuc autem habet et hoc dubitationem, quo modo aliquis ipsarum ova dicet vivere. Neque enim sic ut gonima ova contingit (fieret enim ex ipsis actu animatum) neque sic quemadmodum lignum aut lapis. Est enim et horum ovorum corruptio quedam, tamquam participantibus modo aliquo vita prius. Palam igitur quod habent quandam animam potentia. Qualem igitur hanc? Necesse itaque novissimam. Hec autem est nutritiva; he enim existit omnibus similiter animalibus et plantis" ("But it is obviously reasonable to ask about birds who bear wind-eggs, because the female can generate up to a point. But still this question remains, in what way one of these eggs is said to be alive. For it is neither the same as fertilized eggs [for from them comes something actually alive], nor the same as something like wood or stone. But the corruption of these eggs is like those that in some way have first participated in life [that is, they seem to die]. Therefore it is clear that they have some kind of soul in potency. What kind? It must be the lowest kind—and this is the nutritive soul, for this exists similarly in animals and plants").

[82] *STh* I, q. 118, a. 1, ad 4: "in animalibus perfectis, quae generantur ex coitu, virtus activa est in semine maris, secundum philosophum in libro de Generat. Animal.; materia autem foetus est illud quod ministratur a femina. In qua quidem materia statim a principio est anima vegetabilis, non quidem secundum actum secundum, sed secundum actum primum, sicut anima sensitiva est in dormientibus. Cum autem incipit attrahere alimentum, tunc iam actu operatur. Huiusmodi igitur materia transmutatur a virtute quae est in semine maris" ("In perfect animals, which are generated by coitus, the active power is in the male's seed, according to the Philosopher in *De gen. anim.*; but the material of the fetus is that which is presented by the female. Indeed in that material, immediately from the beginning, there is a vegetative soul, not indeed with regard to second act, but with regard to first act, as a sensitive soul is in those who are asleep. But

It is essential to see that in Thomas's usage, as in ours, "seed" is an ambiguous term. Sometimes it means whatever is contributed to generation, so that Thomas can say, "this blood in the woman is just like the seed in the man." *Semen* could also refer, as it does in English, to sexual excretions, so that later in the same article Thomas can say, referring to something else by the same name, "the *semen* of woman does nothing in the act of generation; thus sometimes women conceive without seminating."[83] (Although on the contrary, never, even in the case of Christ, is a child conceived without the female's preparation of "purest blood.")

But the primary way Thomas uses 'seed' refers not to the parental act of inseminating nor to material contributions to conception, but to the instrumental efficient cause, that which brings about the substantial form. Thomas works out the meaning of efficient cause in his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*. After describing material and formal causality, and before describing final causality, he says, "in another way 'cause' refers to that from which comes the principle of motion and of rest" (the new nature of the thing). In fact, there are four kinds of efficient causes:

> 1. The "*perfecting*" is that which completes (*quod dat complementum*) a motion or change, such as that which produces the substantial form in generation. 2. The "*preparing*" or "disposing" is that which makes the matter or subject ready (*quod aptat materiam seu subjectum*) for the final completion. 3. The "*helping*" is that which works not for its own end, but toward the end of something else. 4a. And, in those which act with intention, the *counseling* is that which gives to the agent the form according to which he acts . . . . 4b. Similarly, in natural things the one that generates is said to move heavy or light things, insofar as it gives the form by which they move.[84]

when it begins to draw nutrition, then it is being made actual [*tunc iam actu operator*]. Therefore it is matter of this kind that is transformed [*Huiusmodi igitur materia transmutatur*] by the power which is in the seed of the male").

[83] III *Sent*., d. 3, q. 5, a. 1. Note that the word "ovum" is similarly analogical: the *ova* of mammals have no shell, no yolk, no white, and no baby animal inside.

[84] II *Phys*. lect. 5.

Thomas's descriptions of the male and female roles in generation follow the first two parts of this set, identified by the words *apta* and *complementum*.

> The active power is in the seed of the male, as the Philosopher says in the book *De generatione animalium*; but the matter of the fetus is that which is provided by the woman.[85]

> But this matter, according to the Philosopher, in the book *De generatione animalium*, is the blood of the woman; and not just any blood, but that brought forth to a greater digestion by the generative power of the mother, so that the material might be ready [*ut sit materia apta*] for conception.[86]

> The seed of the women is not ready for generation, but is something imperfect in the genus 'seed,' which cannot be brought forth to the perfect completion of seed [*ad perfectum seminis complementum*].[87]

> In the conception of Christ the Blessed Virgin did nothing active, but only provided the matter. Nonetheless, she did something active before the conception, by preparing the matter so that it would be ready [*praeparando materiam ut esset apta*] for conception.[88]

The mother is an efficient cause in the second sense of the word: one who makes the matter ready. But the father, in Aristotle's understanding, is the efficient cause in the most perfect sense of the word: that which actually brings the substantial form to completion. As we shall see, this is no small distinction: the father properly gives form, the mother does not. But neither is the similarity insignificant.

There can be only one efficient cause in this most proper sense. Thomas explains why in, among other places, the context of his embryology, using principles from his general understanding of physics and metaphysics.[89] "The substantial

[85] *STh* I, q. 118, a. 1, ad 4.

[86] *STh* III q. 31, a. 5.

[87] *STh* III q. 31, a. 5, ad 3.

[88] *STh* III q. 32, a. 4.

[89] See Steven A. Long, *Analogia Entis: On the Analogy of Being, Metaphysics, and the Act of Faith* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011) for an explanation of why Thomas thinks the same kinds of causes are appropriate to

form makes something be not in a particular respect, but *simpliciter*." Thus "the substantial form is not brought into act gradually or successively, but in an instant." In this case, the first kinds of act which the *conceptus* performs are "vegetative": nutrition and growth. "It cannot be that nutrition and growth, which are proper acts of a living thing, would be in the embryo by an extrinsic cause, such as the mother's soul. The nutritive power of the mother assimilates food to the body of the mother, not to the body of the embryo. The nutritive power serves the individual."[90] Before there is a nutritive power, there is not a living thing; when there is, there is.

The embryo comes to be as a living thing when it has the power of assimilating nutrition to itself. It either has this power or it does not; the change is instantaneous. Although various causes can, and indeed must, work to prepare for (and help, and "counsel") the substantial form, and thus be called efficient causes in a limited sense, there can be only one proper efficient cause of the thing changing over from not having a substantial form to having it. Thus when Thomas and Aristotle call the father the efficient cause of conception, far from denying any activity of the mother, they are simply denying that she is the efficient cause in this particular, albeit most essential, way. In Thomas's little treatise in *De potentia* (q. 3, a. 9, ad 9), he thinks this singularity—the singularity of substantial form, and the singularity of proper agency—is the key point for a metaphysically coherent account of embryology.[91]

discussions as various as physics, biology, morality, the theology of creation, and the theology of grace.

[90] *De Pot*., q. 3, a. 9, ad 9.

[91] Thomas's understanding of formal and efficient causality seems to be missing when, for example, Stephen Heaney says Thomas's understanding "seems implausible. . . . Genetic material from the sperm does not work independently, any more than does that from the mother; it is only when they come together that there is any development in the direction of the maturity of the individual" ("Early Embryo," 30). But Thomas does not say they work independently. The efficient cause brings about the substantial form in apt matter. Nor is the principle in the sperm "genetic material"; to the contrary, as noted above, Aristotle incorrectly believes the sperm makes *no* material contribution; and *genes* are not *life*, not the *form* that distinguishes a living body from a dead one.

Given that only one partner can be properly called an efficient cause, why does Thomas think it is the man and not the woman? The only apparent answer is a question Aristotle poses and answers three times in *De generatione animalium*: "If the female has the same soul, and [her generative power produces the same kind of] matter, why does she need the male, instead of procreating on her own?" He responds, "If she could, the male would be useless—and Nature produces nothing that is useless."[92] One recalls something about a fish and a bicycle. Aristotle ascribes ultimate biological agency to the male instead of to the female not because he thinks females do nothing, but because they seem to do everything else.

At times Thomas and Aristotle's biology certainly appears over-imaginative. They say male semen is "foamy" because it contains a *spiritus*, an immaterial energy;[93] they even claim, referring to a medical phenomenon now known as

Similarly, Benedict Ashley writes, "In fact, the mother's contribution is the *ovum*, which, as a part of her own body, is ensouled by her own spiritual soul. At ovulation it is separated from the mother's body and becomes a distinct living entity. . . . We now know that the seminal fluid does not consist of a passive material . . . and active spirit, but material which is active by reason of the sperm, which, again, is already a living entity, originally part of the father's body, and living by his human life, which then becomes a separated entity living by its own very real, if brief and imperfect life" ("A Critique," 117, 121-22). Benedict Ashley was one of the twentieth century's finest exponents of Thomas's Aristotelian natural philosophy, from whose *Theologies of the Body: Humanist and Christian* (St. Louis: Pope John Center, 1985) many learned the rudiments of that approach to Thomas; one shudders to criticize him in this area. One can only note that his ideas get strange when he discusses human life—how many times does Thomas exemplify material essence by saying that "flesh and bones" is essential to man, yet *Theologies of the Body* ends by proposing that in the resurrection we might be nothing but brains, and "our brain might be reconstructed out of some configuration . . . of waves of light" (603-4; cf. *STh*, supp., q. 80, a. 2, reproducing IV *Sent*., d. 44, q. 1, a. 2, qcla. 1-5; see also *ScG* IV, c. 84; etc.). Ashley's River Forest confrere, William Wallace, wrote, "My view is that Catholic teaching on the time of hominization and associated issues is more disciplinary than veridical—establishing an *orthopraxis* that is on the 'safe side,' as it were" ("Nature and Human Nature," 51).

[92] *De gen. anim.* 2.5.741a5-9, 32-24, b2-6; see also 1.21.730a27-30 and 4.1.765b8-11, 15. See also ibid., 1.2, where Aristotle's first definition of male and female is that which generates in another and that which generates in itself.

[93] II *Sent*., d. 18, q. 2, a. 3; *ScG* II, c. 89; IV, c. 46; *STh* I, q. 118, a. 1, ad 3; *De Pot*., q. 3, a. 9, ad 9; q. 3, a. 11, ad 8; *De Malo*, q. 4, a. 1, ad 12.

"hematospermia," that if a man has too much sex, he might run out of *spiritus* and ejaculate only the underlying blood, which the *spiritus* normally causes to look white and foamy.[94] Similarly, they say it is a "sign" of the relation between digestion (which makes blood) and procreation that animals with big bodies and thus big nutritional needs, and even big men, produce relatively smaller ejaculates and relatively fewer children.[95] It is tempting to dismiss this biology as mythological.[96] But to do so would be a misunderstanding of Aristotle's method. Consider, for example, his assertion in the *Politics* that unlike an even number, which can be the sum of odd numbers, a happy city cannot be composed of unhappy citizens.[97] The comparison serves in no way as a proof, but as a heuristic, helping point our minds to something we might otherwise not notice. (Maybe we are supposed to laugh.)

Thus along with foaminess, Aristotle describes semen through metaphors of archery,[98] whereby a body causes motion at a distance (so that the father's living body causes life in the embryo without the seed itself being alive), and art, in which the artisan (a metaphor for the seed) puts into his work a form that he does not personally possess in a physical way.[99] The mechanism is hard for us and for Thomas and Aristotle to imagine. But the point is that conception results not just in the physical substrate of life—not just in DNA, as modern objectors

[94] III *Sent*., d. 3, q. 5, a. 1. Note that the assumption that blood underlies the seminal *spiritus* opens the way for the modern discovery that fathers do contribute matter to conception. Though there can be only one efficient cause, there are often multiple material causes.

[95] See *STh* I, q. 119, a. 2. Note that this is not as absurd as it sounds: nutritional needs probably do have something to do with why elephants do not have mouse-sized litters.

[96] Thus in an otherwise fine examination of "Sex and Essence in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and *Biology*," Marguerite Deslauriers gets derailed thinking about the role of "heat" (157). Especially comic (or tragic) is her focus on Aristotle's apparent claim that this heat is generated by sexual friction (148).

[97] *Politics* 2.6.1264b18.

[98] *De Pot*., q. 3, a. 11, ad 5; *Q. D. De Anima*, a. 11, ad 2.

[99] *De Pot*., q. 3, a. 11, ad 4; q. 3. a. 12, ad 4. II *Sent*., d. 18, q. 2, a. 3, Thomas cites *De animalibus* 17 as his source for this metaphor.

insist—but in a new living and (at some point) sensate being. Along with matter, there must be form and its efficient cause. What happens at conception is not merely the production of a new chemical compound, but *life*, the preeminent instance of substantial form.

That is what Thomas and Aristotle mean by "seed." Far from an over-simplification of procreation (as in the proto-human theory), it is a metaphysical complication of procreation. Thomas and Aristotle refuse to let us ignore form.[100] Somehow we have to account for the difference between a dead body (which also has DNA) and a living one.

IV. The Deeper Importance of Gender

In the wake of Bl. John Paul II's "Man and Woman He Created Them" there has perhaps been a tendency to speak as if having gender means all of life is about gender. In Thomas's

[100] Interestingly, they think that the father's procreative blood (which carries the *motio* or instrumental causality by which the father acts at a distance as efficient cause) is not incorporated into the *conceptus*: in their theory, only the mother would contribute DNA. Aristotle's argument is that usually an agent is not incorporated into that which it brings about, or an instrument into its product: the saw is used for building, not for becoming part of the couch (*De gen. anim.* 1.21.729b8-20). Unlike the need for a single efficient cause, however, this argument is not metaphysical but, as Aristotle says, "in general." It is, in fact, typical of an efficient cause to bring together multiple material bodies under one new form. Thus the discovery of male DNA is a helpful addition to their theory; it would help solve some questions of heredity with which Thomas seems to struggle (II *Sent*., d. 30, q. 2, a. 2, ad 4 and ad 5; d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1; III *Sent*., d. 15, q. 1, a. 3, arg 2 and ad 2): if the material of procreation carries not only the potency to human life in general but also particularities accidental to human nature (i.e., heredity), there is good reason to include the man's material as well. Nor is there any reason, in principle, such a material could not both carry the "*spiritus*" and be used as matter. In fact, Thomas thinks the *spiritus* attaches itself to the *conceptus* after the disappearance of the *semen* anyway (*De Pot*., q. 3, a. 9, ad 9). Aristotle notices the problem of heredity but, focusing on other bigger problems, does not attempt to solve it (*De gen. anim*., 1.17.721b1-35; cf. 1.18). Note that though this partly undermines Aristotle's "fish-needs-a-bicycle" argument that the father must be the cause of the soul because he is not the cause of anything else, this ascription of roles still explains various data (biblical, microscopic, perhaps social, etc.); it is helpful for explaining the need for sexual intercourse; and it is very helpful for explaining why intercourse must be proximate to conception.

account, to be sure, sexuality is at the service of procreation and procreation at the service of man's social nature, which is pervasive. But interestingly, he argues that the distinction of male and female serves not to make life more sexual, but to make it less so. He says that if a being could impregnate itself (as he thought plants could), all of its life would be oriented to that act. The distinction of man and woman, on the other hand, allows us to spend most of our time, as it were, refraining from the sexual embrace.[101]

Nonetheless, Thomas thinks that gender penetrates to the core of the person, such that woman is different from man not only in the acts of procreation, but in her whole self. She has a soft body, a soft heart, or even a soft soul, causing difficulties with reason, especially with reason's ability to execute counsel.

Peter Simpson interprets Aristotle to mean that "the functions associated with generation," including hormones and passions, variously interfere with woman's power of deliberation.[102] But Thomas seems to go further.

The key, again, has to do with Thomas's concern with form and not only matter. The first question Thomas considers when he discusses procreation in the *Prima pars* is whether God creates the souls of animals: a helpful highlight on the nondivine elements of human procreation.

The objections note that the generative power is properly vegetative: common with the plants, and proper to animals only with regard to their biology.[103] But how can a vegetative/biological power bring about a sensate being?[104] Similarly, in

[101] *STh* I, q. 92, a. 1. Charlotte Witt examines Aristotle's insistence on the instrumentality of gender, but the finality of soul: though woman is feminine in relation to procreation, she is more radically human ("Form, Normativity, and Gender in Aristotle: A Feminist Perspective," in Freeland, ed., *Feminist Interpretations*, 132).

[102] Simpson, *Philosophical Commentary*, 67.

[103] Cf. this description of personhood: "The question that needs to be asked is: When is there a single biological system with a developmental trajectory, or active developmental program, toward the mature stage of a human being?" (George and Tollefson, *Embryo*, 39).

[104] *STh* I, q. 118, a. 1, obj. 2.

Thomas's understanding, the semen is not itself alive[105] or sensate, yet it is the efficient cause in the generation of something that is alive and sensate. In any case, the embryo is a human embryo, eventually consisting of all the parts of a human body, not just the procreative parts.[106] In short, the parental seed gives what it does not itself possess.[107]

Thomas responds in terms of instrumental causality. A saw or an ax does not have the form of the couch it is being used to build; it receives its motion not from its own intrinsic principle, but from the one who is using it. So too the active power which is in the seed is derived from the soul of the parent, as if it were being moved thereby.[108] The generative power of both parents, because it is essentially ordered to something greater than just the production of inanimate generative stuff, "generates not only by its own proper power, but by the power of the whole soul of the parent, of which it is only a power."[109]

For this reason, Thomas makes the otherwise inappropriate-sounding comment: "*quanto enim anima fuerit perfectior, tanto virtus eius generativa ordinatur ad perfectiorem effectum*": to produce a greater effect, the generative power must be the power of a somehow greater soul.[110] Generation is basically the same kind of function whether it is generating a plant, an animal, or a human being. But generating an animal is an essentially higher function than generating a plant; only the generative power *of an animal* can do that.

[105] If it were, it would be generated by being cut off from the parent, it would be a different kind of lifeform born from a human, it would be killed by conception, and it would cause a lifeform of a different kind, none of which work with Thomas's understanding of substantial form. See *De Pot*., q. 3, a. 9, ad 9.

[106] *STh* I, q. 118, a. 1, obj. 3.

[107] Again, DNA is not a metaphysically sufficient response to this problem, because the body of the embryo has not only DNA but life and sense. A dead body has DNA, as do fingernail clippings.

[108] *STh* I, q. 118, a. 1, ad 3. Thus, he says, the "spiritus" causes the semen to be "spumosus," not in a physical sense, but precisely in a nonphysical sense: somehow—Thomas does not pretend to know how, though it is must be so—this physical body carries not only something physical, but the form of a greater body: a soul.

[109] *STh* I, q. 118, a. 1, ad 2.

[110] Ibid.

The same thing can, and for Thomas must, be said of male and female. The female produces something that is almost alive, the stuff of the human body. But the male produces the spark that can actually bring that matter to life. *Tanto eius generativa ordinatur ad perfectiorem effectum, quanto anima fuerit perfectior*. In one sense, the male soul is identical to the female soul: they are simply the essence of human being. But in another sense, somehow, the difference is that males produce not only males and not only semen, but human life (at least on the animal level). Somehow, the male soul is more powerful than the female soul, at least in the way it relates to the body.

According to Thomas's Aristotelian biology, man is, in some sense—to the extent that man and woman are defined by gender, and not by their humanity—superior. He is biologically superior because, in the central biological act of gender (and, indeed, of the material world) he alone is efficient cause of the soul, the form, of the embryo, while the woman can only cause the material substrate.

The biological act of procreation results in something greater than biology: the sexual organs produce not just sexual organs, but a whole body, and that body is endowed not only with the biological powers of growth and reproduction but also with the animal powers of movement and sensation.[111] Thus the biological act of procreation is rooted not just in sex organs, but in the body's relationship to the soul; gender, the two different roles within procreation, is rooted not just in bodily difference, but somehow in differences of how the soul relates to the body.[112] Thus, Thomas claims that just as the woman's soul is

[111] Again, we prescind from the intellectual soul, which is a red herring. Although God must intervene to cause the immaterial, rational soul, that soul is infused into an animal body, brought about through animal means. Animal reproduction is in some sense paradigmatic for understanding human sexuality. To create a radical separation between our animality and our spiritual soul is Manicheeism. Thomas Aquinas, member of an order recently founded to fight Manicheeism, insists on continuity between the animal and the human.

[112] Much hinges on how one attributes gender differences to the soul. Thomas apparently thinks one can talk about different sorts of human souls. (See also I *Pol*., lect. 3.)

unable to gain enough purchase on her generative powers to bring about a human soul in the embryo, so too her reason is less able to gain purchase over her sensitive powers. Softness of body causes softness of soul and a relative deficiency of reason. (We should not, however, lose sight of the relative insignificance of this deficiency: women, according to Thomas, are much more rational than children, vastly different from natural slaves, equally capable of holiness and prayer, and able in some instances to be more rational than some men.)

In Thomas's Aristotelian understanding, the generative powers are matters of more and less, not just of complementary difference. Both male and female generative powers are ordered to the exact same effect: the procreation of an embryo of the same species. The woman presents something that is almost alive; the man causes it to be alive. She gives one kind of actuality; he gives an essentially higher and perfecting kind. It is precisely the activity of woman in generation that requires Thomas to judge her as "lesser," rather than simply different. For Thomas and Aristotle, man is, in a more than biological sense, superior to woman.

CONCLUSION: AN ARISTOTELIAN-THOMIST FEMINISM?

Two charges may be laid against Thomas's understanding of woman. The first is that it results in an intolerable misogyny. The second is that it results from an intolerable bias. Aristotle, it is often argued, lived in a world in which women were treated as second-class citizens; failing to distinguish nature from convention, he read inequality into femininity itself. The result is an intolerable circularity: Women are uneducated, therefore they are unable to think, therefore they should not be educated, etc. Thomas, himself a conservative, apparently accepted this view without criticism.

But to the contrary, we can find in Aristotle and Thomas the resources for a kind of feminism.

Consider first the work of Charles De Koninck, Third Order Dominican, prominent proponent of Aristotelian natural philosophy and Thomist Mariology, and doyen of the

influential Laval school of Thomism, in Quebec City. In *Ego sapientia: La sagesse qui est Marie*, De Koninck, drawing extensively from the *Mariale* of Albert the Great (an even greater devoté of Aristotelian biology than his student, Thomas Aquinas), takes precisely the lowliness of matter as the starting point for understanding the exaltation of Mary in grace.[113] The liturgical tradition ascribes to her the words of the Song of Songs, "*Nigra sum sed formosa*."[114] In Luke's gospel she says "be it done unto me," and "he has looked with favor on my lowliness . . . he has cast down the mighty from their thrones and lifted up the lowly . . . he has filled the hungry with good things." Thus the ultimate beauty, De Koninck shows, is not in human strength, but in the power of God's grace, made perfect in weakness. The liturgy ascribes to Mary the words of Proverbs, "*Ego sapientia*,"[115] not because she is the strongest, but because she is the weakest. In the order of grace, being inferior is not a bad thing: the last will be first.

But even in the natural order, Aristotle's view of the inferiority of women does not work out as badly as we might think. In another classic work, "On the Primacy of the Common Good," De Koninck argues that human dignity is best maintained not through an egalitarian individualism, but through Thomas and Aristotle's vision of the essentially social nature of man.[116] Those who are "inferior" in a limited sense may yet be absolutely necessary to the body politic. Woman would seem to be the paradigmatic example.

[113] Charles de Koninck, *Ego sapientia: La sagesse qui est Marie* (Québec, Canada: Laval, 1943). Recently printed in translation in *The Writings of Charles de Koninck*, vol. 2, trans. Ralph McInerny (South Bend: Notre Dame, 2009).

[114] For example in the third antiphon of Vespers in the old *Commune Festorum B. Mariae Virginis*.

[115] For example in the first reading of Matins in the old *Commune Festorum B. Mariae Virginis*.

[116] Charles de Koninck, *De la primauté du bien commun contre les personnalistes: Le principe de l'ordre nouveau* (Montreal: Laval, 1943); and idem, "In Defense of St. Thomas: A Reply to Father Eschmann's Attack on the Primacy of the Common Good," *Laval théologique et ph ilosophique* 1.2 (1945): 9-109. Both reprinted in *The Writings of Charles de Koninck*, vol. 2.

But to take our reading of Aristotelian-Thomist feminism deeper, consider a collection of essays published under the title *Feminist Interpretations of Aristotle*.[117] Although these essays range throughout Aristotle's corpus, the key text might be the opening of the final book of *Historia animalium*. "In all genera in which the distinction of male and female is found," says Aristotle, "Nature makes a similar differentiation in the mental characteristics of the two sexes. This differentiation is the most obvious in the case of human kind." We are not surprised to find one key idea: "the female is softer in character" (*malakóteron to éthos*); "the female is softer in disposition" (*ta théleia malakótera*).[118] Aristotle describes what this looks like in practice. The female is

> sooner tamed, admits more readily of caressing, is more apt in the way of learning. . . . The female is less spirited. . . . More mischievous, less simple, more impulsive, and more attentive to the nurture of the young. . . . Woman is more compassionate . . . more easily moved to tears . . . more jealous, more querulous, more apt to scold and to strike. She is, furthermore, more prone to despondency and less hopeful than the man, more void of . . . self-respect, more false of speech, more deceptive, and of more retentive memory. She is also more wakeful, more shrinking, more difficult to rouse to action.[119]

We may note two things about this list of traits. First, whatever stereotypes it may involve, it appears more inductive than deductive, more a list of observations than any kind of theorizing.[120] But to the extent that there is a theme, it might be that Aristotle finds females more likely to be moved by the world around them. Here, "soft" seems to indicate a tendency to be affected, rather than standing firm on principle.

If the essays in *Feminist Interpretations of Aristotle* are any indication, Aristotle makes an interesting feminist. Charlotte Witt notes, "Most feminist philosophers of science think that the values that appear in theory originate on the subjective side,

[117] See above, n. 38.

[118] *Hist. anim*. 9.1.608a19-23, 608b1.

[119] *Hist. anim*. 9.1.608a24-608b13.

[120] So observes Deslauriers, "Sex and Essence," 155.

in the theorizer."[121] According to Witt, the feminist critique of standard theories of epistemology is precisely that they fail to recognize personal values; feminism, in fact, can be more objective precisely by recognizing the subjective values at stake.[122] Women make good philosophers because they are softer: more aware of the subjective. Deborah K. W. Modrak notes, in fact, that one of the most feminist things about Aristotle is his insistence, contrary to post-Cartesian and post-Kantian moderns, that philosophical topics from ethics to biology are ruled not by the strictly demonstrative, but by an openness to reality, a willingness to accommodate.[123]

Carol Poster notes that in traditionally female disciplines, such as English and speech departments within the university, and governesses, schoolteachers, and composition instructors outside it, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is seen as "a work of overwhelming importance . . . forming the foundation of their own discipline"—whereas in traditionally male "scholarly" disciplines, it is treated as "minor" and "peripheral."[124] This well-noted observation suggests that some aspects of patriarchy are read onto Aristotle by a subsequent tradition that devalues feminine emotional concerns, in contradiction to Aristotle's own opinion. Barbara Koziak argues that, as opposed to Hobbes, Locke, and Kant, Aristotle appreciates the role of emotion in making sound political judgments.[125]

Ruth Groenhout finds in this epistemology a better basis for feminist theories of "care." Whereas some modern feminist philosophers (her list includes Edith Stein) have tried to defend empathy as not "merely" emotional, Aristotle gladly accepts that true "understanding incorporates both intellectual and emotional response, as intellect and emotion are not exclusive

[121] Witt, "Form, Normativity, and Gender," 119.

[122] Ibid., 119-20.

[123] "Aristotle's Theory of Knowledge and Feminist Epistemology," in Freeland, ed., *Feminist Interpretations*, 111-12.

[124] "(Re)positioning Pedagogy: A Feminist Historiography of Aristotle's *Rhetorica*," in Freeland, ed., *Feminist Interpretations*, 327-50.

[125] "Tragedy, Citizens, and Strangers: The Configuration of Arsitotelian Political Emotion," in Freeland, ed., *Feminist Interpretations*, 260-88.

concepts."[126] Since Descartes, the West has sought a philosophy that works only from the neck up; feminists believe this denigrates other modes of knowing and understanding. Aristotle actually values emotion.[127]

Thus some feminists have set out to define an ethics of care, defined not by pure reason, but by a distinctively feminine "concern for maintaining and nurturing relationships." The paradigm example of such "care" is the mother's ability to respond to the needs of her child, tailoring her response to each particular personality.[128] Interestingly, Aristotle, with his unique focus on the ethical importance of friendship, himself singles out mothering as the paradigmatic example of what it means to care for another person. "Most people seem, owing to ambition, to wish to be loved rather than to love; which is why most men love flattery." But friendship is desirable in itself, and "it seems to lie in loving rather than in being loved, as is indicated by the delight mothers take in loving" (which he then examines).[129] Aristotle is also uniquely aware of the situated, particular, and social aspects of ethics—to all of which women seem especially attuned.[130]

Aristotle's account of reason integrated with emotion, however, corrects the dangers latent in an ethics of care. Aristotelian justice brings together care and reason.[131] This is especially critical to a feminism that wants to affirm the dignity of the woman who cares, and to maintain an objectivity that allows it to be critical of false objectivity.[132] The "central tenets . . . feminists share," according to Groenhout, are that women have equal worth and the ability to live a full human life, that female experience is truly representative of human experience,

[126] "The Virtue of Care: Aristotelian Ethics and Contemporary Ethics of Care," in Freeland, ed., *Feminist Interpretations*, 171-200, see 183.

[127] Ibid., 182.

[128] Ibid., 184.

[129] See *Ethics* 8.8.1159a26-37; cited by Groenhout, "Virtue of Care," 193.

[130] Groenhout, "Virtue of Care," 172.

[131] Ibid., 191.

[132] Witt, "Form, Normativity, and Gender," 121-22.

and that women deserve legal and moral protection.[133] In many ways, Aristotle's views of women as uniquely embodying emotional receptivity, of the essential importance of emotion, but also of rational truth, make him an ideal defender of these values.

Martha Nussbaum argues that "Aristotle does have a good deal to offer to a feminism that is struggling to surmount the limitations it perceives in contemporary liberalism." She cites, on the one hand, his appreciation of emotion, bodily needs, and contingency, and on the other hand, echoing De Koninck, his understanding of the person in community and the one and the many.[134]

In these feminist reflections on Aristotle, we can note two points. On the one hand, Aristotle's conclusions, far from devaluing women, actually preserve them in precisely the ways some modern feminists want: he agrees with these modern feminists that women are uniquely receptive, and he agrees with them that this is essential to the human good. It would appear that women could make very good philosophers.

It must be said, of course, that Aristotle maintains a clear hierarchy between ordering reason and receptive passion. Modern feminism is unlikely to embrace this hierarchy. Nonetheless, it is a hierarchy in which the lower member, far from being denigrated, is considered essential. Aristotle is not a misogynist.

On the other hand, and this may be even more interesting, neither is he biased. Consider the following irony. Marguerite Deslauriers insists that Aristotle "fails to suggest any difference that would justify the subordination of women."[135] She notes, as we have noted above, that he argues that one of the partners must be biologically deficient, but gives no explanation for why

[133] Groenhout, "Virtue of Care," 174.

[134] This despite her claim, which I hope I have contradicted, "I believe that Aristotle's biology is, as Hirshman says, both misogynist and silly. But its sheer silliness, in a man who was one of the greatest researchers in the history of biology, is evidence that it was not a topic to which he devoted much effort" ("Aristotle, Feminism, and Needs for Functioning," in Freeland, ed., *Feminist Interpretations*, 248-59, see 249).

[135] Deslauriers, "Sex and Essence," 155-56.

the deficient one should be the female and not the male.[136] Yet Aristotle's observations about what is distinctive about female behavior are precisely the observations made by many modern feminists. Some Modern feminists agree with and embrace Aristotle's determination that "the female is softer in character."

Aristotle has argued that, biologically, there must be a "softer" partner who provides the material for procreation. He has argued that this biological softness would show up in the personality of the person. And he has noted empirically, in observations that the modern feminists considered here confirm, that it is females who have this personality trait. His argument is not deductive, but empirical. His identification of the female as the material partner is not a metaphysical deduction, nor is it a pure assertion of male dominance (since male reason in a sense depends on the woman's greater sensitivity). He has simply made an observation, confirmed by some modern feminists.

Thomas's Aristotelian biology, then, is neither misogynist nor biased. It is metaphysically coherent and observationally sound, both on the biological level, where we have argued he does not make the mistakes about "seed" that are imputed to him, but does maintain a metaphysical seriousness lacking in most biological discussions, and on the social level, where many feminists agree with him on key points. And it is politically astute, contributing to our understanding of friendship, the family, and the social order.

This is the Aristotle to whom Thomas assents: one whose metaphysical conclusions are rooted in solid, sensible observation.

[136] Ibid., 140.

BOOK REVIEWS

Augustine and the Trinity. By LEWIS AYRES. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pp. 374. $83.00 (cloth) ISBN: 978-0-521-83886-3.

The older reading of Augustine's Trinitarian theology as primarily philosophical, static, and monistic continues to crumble as scholars such as Lewis Ayres and Michel Barnes make clear that it is much more dynamic, scriptural, and ecclesial in character. With his recent book, *Augustine and the Trinity*, Ayres provides scholars of early Christian thought with an important work that will serve as a basic point of orientation for anyone venturing onto this difficult theological terrain. Ayres, on his own account, does not intend the book to be an exhaustive treatment of Augustine's Trinitarian theology or a focused, in-depth commentary on Augustine's *De Trinitate*, but he offers rather a complex and challenging overview of the development of Augustine's Trinitarian theology against the backdrop of its historical intellectual context. To that end, Ayres's exposition links two thematic foci: (1) the distinctive character of Augustine's mature account of the unity of the divine three, in which the principles of divine simplicity and immutability enable him to argue that the Son's and Spirit's being from the Father paradoxically ground their substantial identity with him; and (2) the organic relation of theological reflection and Christian life in Augustine's Trinitarian vision, according to which the analysis of the human mind as an "analogy" of the triune God enables ascent precisely inasmuch as it illustrates just how different God is from his creation—a process whereby the believer is drawn out of him or herself and grows in humility and love within the communal body of Christ.

The book is divided into four parts comprising a total of twelve chapters. Part 1 explores the sources and themes of Augustine's earliest Trinitarian theology. In chapter 1 Ayres treats the Trinitarian theology found in Augustine's earliest writings of 386-87, showing that his adoption of Neoplatonic themes is less thoroughgoing than the scholar Olivier du Roy would have it and is at many points conditioned by Augustine's likely reading of the Latin pro-Nicene theologians Ambrose and Marius Victorinus.

The second chapter begins with an exposition of the basic principles of Latin pro-Nicene Trinitarian theology: the substantial unity of Father, Son, and Spirit as well as their inseparable, common operations. Ayres shows how these pro-Nicene principles inform Augustine's writings from 388 to 391, which are marked by an anti-Manichean agenda. In particular, the pro-Nicene doctrine of the inseparable operation of the divine three in the act of creation enables Augustine to counter Manichean denigration of creation. Augustine links the economies of creation and salvation conceptually—the same triune God who gives form and order to the world then reforms and reorders the

fallen soul—thereby anticipating his later use of creation and especially the human *mens* as analogical loci for reflection on the Trinity *in se*.

Ayres devotes the third chapter to further situating Augustine's early thought within the longer tradition of Latin Trinitarian theology, in this case, anti-modalist arguments that frequently date back as far as Tertullian but by Augustine's time had been reintegrated into an interpretive framework supportive of Nicene orthodoxy. In this chapter, Ayres aims to elucidate the overlooked historical context of such technical theological terms as *persona*, *natura*, and *substantia*, the proper understanding of which must take into account anti-modalist arguments that emphasize the irreducible distinction between the Father, Son, and Spirit.

Chapter 4 marks the beginning of part 2, which investigates the relationship between belief and understanding in Augustine's theology in the first fifteen or so years of the fifth century. Through a particular focus on the first book of *De Trinitate*, Ayres illustrates how, in the process of explaining what is to be believed, Augustine employs classical forensic rhetoric and dialectic to interpret Scripture through the lens of Nicene faith. In chapter 5, Ayres follows Augustine in the movement towards understanding. In so doing, Ayres first looks at Plotinus and the latter's twofold understanding of ascent to intellectual vision of the One. On the one hand, ascent language in Plotinus has to do with the achievement of immediate vision; on the other, it is concerned with the educational process of training the mind to distinguish intellectual from material reality, preparation necessary for the attainment of vision. Against this historic backdrop, Ayres charts Augustine's development from early plans to construct a Christian educational program in the liberal arts—understood in a Platonic light and optimistic about the power of the mind to attain vision of spiritual realities—to one that increasingly acknowledges the weakness of the fallen human mind, subordinates the classical liberal arts to the study of Scripture, and reassesses ascent as a function of humility and the grace of God.

Chapter 6—one of the most important of the book—builds directly upon the preceding chapter; Ayres shows how, in the first four books of *De Trinitate*, Augustine reconceives the goal of advancing from knowledge of material to knowledge of spiritual realities, a goal originally gleaned from non-Christian Platonic sources, by integrating it anew into a complex Christological framework. What at first glance appear to be a set of interpretive rules for the reading of Scripture are in fact a "Christological epistemology" for the whole of Christian life: in the Church, the body of Christ, Christians of all stripes—not just the intellectual elite—have faith in Christ in the form of a servant. Paradoxically, for Augustine, the humility taught by such communal faith in the incarnate Christ gradually transforms Christians by reorienting their love and hope towards the eschatological vision of Christ in the form of God, that is, in his unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

In part 3 Ayres discusses Augustine's increasingly sophisticated articulation of the eternal inner-Trinitarian relations of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as it emerges between 410 and 420. Chapter 7 establishes the dogmatic foundation of Augustine's "Christological epistemology," inasmuch as Augustine proposes in *De Trinitate* 1-4 a second interpretive rule for allegedly subordinationist scriptural passages such as John 5:19 and 5:29: there the task is not to distinguish between the Son in *forma servi* and in *forma Dei*, but to show the Son's eternal generation from the Father in their substantial unity. Ayres then shows how Augustine, more so than any of his Latin predecessors, presents the Son's and Spirit's processions from the Father as divine source, and the substantial equality and unity of the divine three, as a means of grounding the divine missions as well as the Trinity's mysterious transcendence of and presence in creation. No proper understanding of salvation or of the distinction between creator and creation is possible apart from a grasp of the Son's and Spirit's processions from and unity with the Father.

In chapter 8 Ayres addresses the complicated and in many ways still provisional exposition of unity and distinction within the Trinity, as it is presented by Augustine in *De Trinitate* 5-7. The unique character of the communion between Father, Son, and Spirit can only be understood in the context of Augustine's principles of divine immutability and simplicity. These principles, which distinguish the essence of God from all forms of created being, lead Augustine to reject the predication of any accidental qualities in God as well as the philosophical terminology of genus and species when talking about the divine. In the Trinity, there are not three individuals who share in a common property of wisdom, but rather there is simply wisdom itself who is God irreducibly as Father, Son, and Spirit. In his hesitancy with regard to the terminology of genus, species, and even "person," Augustine shows how the unique character of unity in the Trinity explodes the categories of human thought and speech.

In chapters 9 and 10, Ayres turns more specifically to the character of distinction between "persons" in Augustine's Trinitarian theology and the theological practice of appropriation which it enables. Chapter 9 focuses primarily on several of Augustine's *Tractates on John* in which he interprets the potentially subordinationist John 5:19-20, where Jesus says that the Son can only do what he sees the Father do. Augustine's solution hinges on the principle of divine simplicity: the Son is identical to the acts that are predicated of him. The Son is constituted as distinct by his seeing, as is the Father is by his showing. These eternal relations have their root in the Father's role as *principium* or source, which in turn grounds all common operations of the three divine persons. Yet paradoxically, to say that the being of the persons is constituted by their relations—which suggests mutual interdependence—derives from the unity of essence they share: the Father gives the fullness of divine being to the Son, and does so because that being is simple.

The principle of divine simplicity similarly governs Augustine's mature pneumatology, as Ayres shows in chapter 10. The Spirit is the Gift of the Father and the Son as the love between them, and because God is love, love *qua* Holy Spirit must be substantial and of one essence with the Father and Son. Ayres then responds to the criticism often leveled against Augustine by Orthodox theologians that, by speaking of the Spirit as from the Father and the Son, Augustine jeopardizes the monarchy of the Father. Ayres contends, rather, that Augustine's doctrine of inseparable operation does not in any way injure the Father's status as *principium*. Rather, the Father is *principium* precisely because he works through the Son and the Spirit eternally. Finally, Ayres compares Augustine's account of Trinitarian relations to that of Thomas Aquinas. In so doing he resists those critics who would lump both thinkers together into a "Western tradition" that, in its common use of mental models for the Trinity, borders dangerously close to modalism. Ayres stresses that readers ought to be more attentive to the different contexts and conversations that shaped Augustine's and Aquinas's respective accounts. Augustine, for example, is almost as principled in his aversion to philosophical terminology as Aquinas is in his incorporation of Trinitarian theology into a broad metaphysical framework.

In part 4 (chapters 11-12), Ayres turns to perhaps the most famous and contentious aspect of Augustine's Trinitarian theology: the mental analogy worked out in books 8-15 of *De Trinitate*. Ayres's explicit goal is to combat the longstanding view that Augustine conceives of the Trinity primarily as a "unitary self-thinking mind" (276). What Ayres finds instead in Augustine is an analysis of the mind constantly drawn outside itself even as it reflects on itself, a mind in a process of growth and transformation towards a more adequate imaging of the triune God. Ayres makes a convincing case that the point of the latter half of *De Trinitate* is less to analyze the structure of the mind *qua* image than it is to become that image. In that regard, Augustine's elucidation of the mind as an analogy is, according to Ayres, as much if not more dependent on the principles of Nicene Trinitarian faith than the other way around. The dynamism of Augustine's analysis turns on the paradox of a mind that, as immaterial, is fully present to itself even as it falls short of true self-knowing on account of its disordered love of temporal things. Yet insofar as it is capable of knowing itself truly through the Word, it is capable of being reformed into a life of knowing and rightly ordered loving that images the eternal dynamic life of the Father working inseparably through his Son and Holy Spirit.

Ayres has not written a work for beginners. In resisting a reductive reading of Augustine's Trinitarian theology as purely Neoplatonic, Ayres must survey many of Augustine's possible Christian sources. For the scholar with some familiarity with the material, this level of detail is essential; for those less acquainted with the basic outlines of Augustine's Trinitarian thought, it can be overwhelming. The difficulty one encounters in reading the book is compounded by the method Ayres employs when providing historical

background. In general, Ayres treats his subject matter chronologically. Yet whenever something new emerges in Augustine's Trinitarian thought, Ayres stops to provide detailed historical surveys of theological or exegetical traditions informing that development. Given the complexity and volume of source material Ayres must marshal, as well as the long period of development in Augustine's theology, this reviewer cannot think of a better method for historical contextualization. To have presented so much background material all at once at the outset would have dulled the reader's sense of Augustine's continued search in many places and over many decades for insight into the triune God.

So are there lingering questions? At points, Ayres gestures towards, but does not expound, the ecclesial (and ecclesiological) context in which Augustine's Trinitarian thought develops. And although he expends a great deal of energy trying to demonstrate how even Augustine's most philosophical or speculative Trinitarian moments are themselves dependent upon prior theological commitments, the question—posed most strongly in recent years by Johannes Brachtendorf and Roland Kany—of what exactly Augustine means in *De Trinitate* when he promises to provide reasons to the more skeptical members of his audience can at times feel as if it has gone unanswered. To be sure, Ayres has argued that, for Augustine, to strive to reason at all about the triune God is to bump against the weakness of the fallen human mind and the need for ongoing transformation and reorientation of one's errant desires, if one is ever to attain to anything like understanding in the Augustinian sense. The more historically minded will possibly chafe at Ayres's persistent use of the first person plural throughout the work, but, viewed from another perspective, perhaps this challenging style is fitting for a book aimed at showing the unity of Trinitarian theology and the dynamic, decentering method Augustine employs when pursuing it.

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Christ Our Hope: An Introduction to Eschatology. By PAUL O'CALLAGHAN. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011. Pp. 358. $35.00 (paper) ISBN: 978-0-8132-1862-5.

Tides ebb and flow in theology. The twentieth century witnessed a blossoming of interest among both Catholics and Protestants in eschatology, especially as an overarching category for understanding the fundamental nature of Christian faith. Catholic theologians in the second half of the

century engaged in wide-ranging speculation about the nature of death, judgment, hell, and purgatory. The leading figures of the day—Rahner, Balthasar, Ratzinger—put forward novel ideas: death as a privileged moment for the exercise of the "fundamental option," the possibility of universal salvation, resurrection occurring immediately at death, purgatory as an aspect of the encounter with Christ. Liberation theology recast eschatology in a this-worldly mode. These ideas were not always greeted with approbation. In 1979 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a monitory "Letter on Certain Questions in Eschatology," followed by a more detailed statement from the International Theological Commission in 1992 on "Some Current Questions in Eschatology."

Signs are now appearing, however, of a certain return to normalcy in Catholic eschatology. Two comprehensive eschatologies by Catholic theologians have appeared in English recently: the book here under review and Cándido Pozo's *Theology of the Beyond* (New York: Alba House, 2009, translated from Spanish). In both, some new conceptions from recent discussions are appropriated, but the outlook of the tradition is given a greater weight. O'Callaghan consistently respects magisterial teaching (which is not very extensive on eschatological topics). His book seeks to introduce the reader to the Church's faith and theological tradition in relation to last things, rather than to argue for a unique perspective.

O'Callaghan notes that he has taught seminary courses on eschatology for many years (at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome) and the text seems intended for the seminary classroom. It is not introductory in the sense that one might recommend it to lay people interested in last things; it assumes too great a grasp of the fundamentals of theology. The ideal reader is someone who already has such a grasp and is interested in a thorough review of eschatology. For such a reader, the book is now the best option available. (Pozo's book contains much good material, but is not as well focused; Joseph Ratzinger's *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life* [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988] contains less historical information.) My own experience is that *Christ Our Hope* works well as the basic textbook for a seminary class on eschatology.

Conspicuous virtues of the book are balance and integration, each supporting the other. Two temptations in eschatology are to emphasize it as a guiding perspective for all Christian faith to the exclusion of an adequately detailed discussion of specific last things (heaven, hell, judgment, etc.) or to focus on those last things as particular loci, obscuring how these topics are not random information about the future, but aspects of the saving gospel. O'Callaghan avoids these dangers. He provides detailed analysis of particular topics (e. g., the nature of resurrected bodies [102ff.]), but consistently relates the specific loci to certain overarching themes, especially the two indicated in his title: Christ, who is himself the eschaton in person, and hope as a theological virtue. Balance is also achieved in the presentation of biblical, historical, and contemporary systematic perspectives; the systematic per-

spective is controlling, but biblical and historical material is regularly brought in. O'Callaghan notes (x) that Aquinas plays a prominent role in the presentation, but he is not followed slavishly (e.g., O'Callaghan rejects Aquinas's understanding of how the will becomes fixed at death [208]).

The book opens with a discussion of "The Dynamic of Hope," in which the sources of our knowledge of last things and the nature of hope as a virtue are explored. The bulk of the text falls into three central parts, beginning with universal eschatology, the fate of all humanity and all things, as "The Object of Christian Hope" (the return of Christ, resurrection, judgment, heaven, hell). A brief discussion follows of "The Stimulus of Hope in the World," which addresses the ways in which the reality of the End is present today in Church and world. Topics of individual or intermediate eschatology, the fate of the individual between this life and resurrection, are then taken up under the heading "Honing and Purifying Christian Hope" (death, purgatory, and the nature of the self or soul after death but before resurrection). A brief final section, "The Power and the Light of Hope," returns to eschatology as both embedded in and orienting the major topics of theology: Christology, anthropology, ecclesiology, ethics, spirituality.

This structure already shows how O'Callaghan's presentation differs from that of such older works as Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange's *Life Everlasting and the Immensity of the Soul* (St. Louis: Herder, 1953) or Louis Billot's *Quaestiones de novissimis* (Rome: Ex officina polygraphica editrice, 1908). Universal eschatology, the end of all things in the public triumph of Christ that ends history, is presented first and forms the framework for understanding the destiny of individuals. O'Callaghan does not deny (as too much Protestant theology of the last century did) that souls subsist beyond death and enter their retribution immediately. That intermediate state, however, is always presented as oriented toward the resurrection and the consummation of history. Traditional teaching about the soul is preserved, but integrated into a total picture that more accurately reflects the biblical and patristic understanding of last things.

While in this way adopting a basic tenet of recent eschatological discussions, O'Callaghan is generally less sympathetic to the eschatological speculations of the second half of the twentieth century, for example, Gisbert Greshake's argument for resurrection immediately at death, Ladislas Boros's and Karl Rahner's similar (though not identical) understandings of death as a privileged moment of completion and self-realization. These ideas are fairly presented and the reasons behind them noted, but forceful objections are stated. He is even-handed in his assessment of Balthasar's openness to the possibility of universal salvation. He cites (215) the response of the Doctrine Commission at the Second Vatican Council that quotations in the indicative mood from Jesus about future loss presume that some will be lost (a text which Balthasar does not discuss in *Dare We Hope 'That All Men Be Saved'?* [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988]). O'Callaghan concludes that there are strong reasons to hope that few will be lost, but that such hope is not, strictly

speaking, an object of Christian hope as a theological virtue, unlike hope for one's own salvation, which is inseparable from one's own response to grace (221).

A recent idea that O'Callaghan does adopt is the assertion that not only does the self rise on the last day, but the life lived rises also. He approvingly quotes Romano Guardini: "Man's deeds and his destiny are part of him, and, set free from the restrictions of history, will remain for all eternity" (111). This conception has its attractions; this life is not a mere proving ground, but forms the material out of which eternity is formed. O'Callaghan, however, does not develop the idea adequately enough for us to understand what it means to say that events rise, nor does he address a decisive problem related to evil. If all history, with its horrors, rises (Guardini is cited again: "all its good and all its evil . . . all will rise"), then is Auschwitz eternal? Must such a vision posit a purgation not only for persons, but also for events? These questions can perhaps be answered (Eberhard Jüngel goes a way toward answering them in his *Death: The Riddle and the Mystery* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974], cited by O'Callaghan), but O'Callaghan fails to ask the question.

The virtues of *Christ Our Hope* are many and its few weaknesses are mostly the reverse side of those strengths. O'Callaghan's reading in eschatology is prodigious and the cliché that the footnotes are worth the price of the book is in this case applicable. While his focus is on Catholic theology, he does discuss contemporary Protestant and, to a lesser extent, Orthodox authors. (As he notes, he especially draws on the works of the Lutheran theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg.) On occasion his reading of Protestant theology seems slightly off; for example, it is odd to label Albrecht Ritschl a biblical scholar (44), and to treat Karl Barth as a straightforward universalist, even with some nuance, is not accurate (182, 208, 218). The book's usefulness for students is somewhat hindered by the author's tendency to omit any reference to the English-language translations of foreign-language books cited (e.g., Josef Pieper's *Tod und Unsterblichkeit*/*Death and Immortality*). On a few occasions, long quotations in French or Italian are given untranslated in footnotes. These are minor flaws, however.

Individuals will inevitably find theological points with which to disagree. O'Callaghan notes the recently revived debate on the relation of grace to nature and on the natural desire for the beatific vision (10), but the presentation throughout the book assumes a position much like that of de Lubac. I would prefer a greater recognition of the necessary complexity of the relation, but again, my objection is minor.

O'Callaghan keeps his focus on theology and doctrine, and so the desires of some readers will not be met. Historical discussions are subordinate to systematic considerations; the book is not a history of eschatology. In addition, the concern with eschatology in the wider culture is not taken up. Dante is cited only twice in 337 pages. No mention is made of the recent discussion of the significance of near-death experiences. Readers interested in

these wider questions should look at the recent *Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*, edited by Jerry Walls (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Christ Our Hope is not just a good book, but an encouraging sign, both for the specific field of eschatology and for Catholic theology as a whole. Recent theology is integrated into a framework set by the larger theological and doctrinal tradition. Catholic teaching is fundamental, but non-Catholic theologians are treated as valued participants in the discussion. Doctrines fundamental within the hierarchy of truths—especially Christology and pneumatology—play an orienting role. *Christ Our Hope* is an exemplar for how contemporary textbooks on specific theological topics should be written.

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God without Parts: Divine Simplicity and the Metaphysics of God's Aboluteness. By JAMES E. DOLEZAL. Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick Publications, 2011. Pp. 259. $29.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-1-61097-658-9.

"God without parts"—it is an unusual phrase and makes a rather striking title. Even the author himself calls it "curious verbiage" (1). Language about "parts" tends to conjure up images of Lego blocks or perhaps IKEA furniture ("some assembly required"). It all sounds rather mechanical—but for that very reason talk about divine "parts" may be theologically therapeutic. For many of today's theologians, God seems to be something that "requires assembly," something that we put together piece by piece from our own human thoughts and imaginings. The title of this book is a stark reminder of how univocal many theologians have become in the ways they think of God and creatures. *God without Parts* intends to tell us about the God who is in no way the product of our thoughts but rather exceeds all we can think.

James Dolezal is well equipped to speak of this God. He brings together two traditions that have long been committed to pondering the mystery of God but have unfortunately been less frequently engaged in dialogue with each other: Thomism and Reformed Scholasticism. Dolezal himself is a Reformed Baptist minister who received his doctorate from Westminster Theological Seminary and is currently a research fellow at the Craig Center for the Study of the Westminster Standards. In this work, he brings the two traditions together on the question of divine simplicity: "Throughout this volume I make extensive use of both classic Thomist and Reformed sources" (xviii). The volume may be seen as a work of *ressourcement*, retrieving

classical theological sources to address contemporary questions: "I deploy these older writers simply in order to rehabilitate the power and subtlety of their insights for our modern philosophical-theological milieu" (xviii).

In addition to being intimately familiar with the Reformed tradition, Dolezal is well acquainted with Aquinas and employs arguments from an impressive variety of his works. At times, Dolezal is even more "Thomistic" than some Thomists, arguing against Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, for instance, when they disagree with Aquinas's views on whether divine simplicity is compatible with divine freedom (191-94, 197-201).

Dolezal starts with what he sees as the common Christian affirmation that God is absolute: "Orthodox Christians are universally committed to the confession that God is absolute" (xvii). The question for theologians is then "how to characterize" such absoluteness: "What is the ontological condition by which such absoluteness is ascribed to God?" (xvii, 1).

He discovers the answer in certain words from the Westminster Confession of Faith that also find their way into the title of his book: "There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions . . . most holy, most free, most absolute" (1). God is "without parts," and "only if God is 'without parts' can he be 'most absolute'" (2). Divine simplicity is the "ontological condition" for our confession of divine absoluteness: "It is this argument that forms the central thesis of this volume: *Simplicity is the ontologically sufficient condition for God's absoluteness*" (ibid.).

The notion of divine simplicity itself, however, is not without its problems and critics. The task Dolezal sets himself is to explain what divine simplicity means and doesn't mean, to explore its advantages and problems, and to address its critics—especially by marshalling its supporters, both past and present.

In the first chapter, Dolezal begins with a brief account of the history of the doctrine of divine simplicity (DDS). He notes that it "reaches the zenith of expression and sophistication in the thought of Thomas Aquinas" and that the "Protestant Reformers and their scholastic heirs did not alter Thomas's account of the DDS in any significant way except to make the biblical motivations for the doctrine more explicit" (6, 8). He then presents a brief account of contemporary criticisms of the doctrine from analytic philosophers such as Richard Gale, Christopher Hughes, Thomas Morris, and Alvin Plantinga, and from evangelical theologians such as Ronald Nash and John Feinberg.

The second chapter explains the meaning of divine simplicity by examining six types of act-potency composition and showing why each must be denied of God. Here, Dolezal closely follows Aquinas's analysis in question 3 of part 1 of the *Summa Theologiae*. He argues that no composite being can be the first cause of all things since such a being would itself depend in some way on its own parts. The third chapter shows the biblical roots of the DDS and demonstrates that it is "indispensable" for the traditional understanding

of other theological doctrines "such as God's aseity, unity, infinity, immutability and eternity" (67). The fourth chapter looks at the DDS in view of God's identity as *ipsum esse subsistens*, in whom essence and existence (*esse*) are identical. Here again, Dolezal employs Aquinas's thought and recognizes that the "consideration of God as *ipsum esse subsistens* and *actus purus* is crucial for any confession of God's absolute existence" (214).

The fifth chapter explores whether or not predicating multiple attributes of God violates the DDS. Dolezal introduces the arguments of a number of contemporary thinkers who contend that such a predication must either mitigate divine simplicity in some way or render all such attributes synonymous and so meaningless. He responds through a careful explanation and sustained defense of Aquinas's teaching that "all that is in God is God" (125).

How divine knowing and willing are compatible with divine simplicity is discussed in the sixth chapter. Here Dolezal provides a careful explanation of arguments found in Aquinas and the Reformed tradition that God knows all things in knowing himself and wills all things in willing himself. The subtleties of Aquinas's views on how we should understand and affirm the presence of many ideas in the absolutely simple being of God are also clearly presented.

The final chapter considers the difficult question of the relation between divine simplicity and divine freedom. We tend to think of freedom in terms of an openness to different options. How is such an openness possible for an absolutely simple being? Dolezal sees that the problem arises from univocal thinking—from believing that God's freedom must be like ours. To resolve the problem, we must admit that this is not the case: "The modality of volitional freedom cannot be abstracted from the nature of the volitional agent and, thus, the modality of human freedom cannot be univocally attributed to God's exercise of free will" (201). Citing the Dutch Reformed theologian Herman Bavinck (1854-1921), Dolezal argues that God's freedom, unlike ours, does not involve choice: "[I]n God there is actually no such thing as choice inasmuch as it always presupposes uncertainty, doubt, and deliberation" (202). Rather than trying to explain divine freedom by reducing it to human terms and categories, Dolezal wisely confesses our human ignorance before this mystery: "The precise character of a free will that never moves from 'could will' to 'does will' seems to be beyond all human analysis. Indeed, the DDS adherent readily owns such inscrutability inasmuch as it is of a single piece with the incomprehensibility of God as *ipsum esse subsistens* or *actus purus*. But this impenetrability is no conclusive argument against the necessity and usefulness of these doctrines for confessing God as 'most absolute'" (207).

Dolezal recognizes that univocal thinking about God and creatures lies at the root of many contemporary objections to divine simplicity: "The outstanding common denominator in each of these serious and sophisticated arguments against the DDS is the strong commitment to ontological univocism" (29). He finds it "not at all surprising that most modern opponents of the DDS are firmly committed to a univocal doctrine of being" (213). The DDS is the best corrective to such thinking: "By appealing to God's

simplicity I aim to show that God and the world are related analogically and that the world in no sense explains or accounts for God's existence and essence" (xviii).

Dolezal sees that the doctrine of divine simplicity is integrally related to the teaching that essence and existence (*esse*) are identical in God. Indeed, he defines simplicity in terms of the identity of essence and *esse*: "[I]t is God's real identity with his own act of being—that is, his simplicity—that both accounts for the possibility of the actual coming to be of all non-divine existents and for the entirely non-derived and non-contingent manner of his own existence" (112-13). Divine simplicity, seen in terms of the identity of essence and existence in God, is the foundation for our affirmation of God's absoluteness: "It is the contention of this study that to forfeit the doctrine of divine simplicity is to jettison the requisite ontological framework for divine absoluteness" (xvii). "[T]he reason God is *a se* is because he is absolutely simple. It is God's identity with his existence and essence that ensures that he is *wholly* non-derived and sufficient in himself" (71).

It seems that an essential aspect of the doctrine of divine simplicity is its association with the doctrine of the identity of essence and existence in God. Without that association, the DDS might enable us to affirm God's permanence and immutability in being (since a simple thing, having no composition, is incapable of change), but it would not reveal the dynamic perfection of God's changelessness. Rudi te Velde alludes to this while arguing for the concrete nature of divine *esse* in his book, *Aquinas on God*, in a passage quoted by Dolezal: "This impression of abstractness, with its connotations of being inert, static, and lifeless, may be partly due to the fact that the received picture of Thomas's conception of God is particularly dominated by the doctrine of divine simplicity without taking sufficiently into account how the idea of simplicity is intrinsically qualified by the idea of perfection and subsistence" (109).

Dolezal seems aware of this danger and, by integrally associating the DDS with the doctrine of the identity of essence and existence in God, is able to overcome it. The God whom he affirms is by no means lifeless or inert: "This is precisely what the DDS disallows of God when it denies that he is composed of act and potency and insists instead that God is existence itself" (87-88). In this way, the doctrine of divine simplicity and that of the identity of essence and existence in God work together to reveal God as possessing "the unchangeableness of an absolute life and activity" (88).

Dolezal's book is a delight to read—insightful, well-researched and clearly written. It is also a promising work since it unites two streams of Scholasticism that have often remained apart and so opens the hope of further collaboration and mutual enrichment. In addition, it is a needed and timely work, as a healthy corrective to the kind of univocal thinking that is so widespread in contemporary theology. Most especially, it is a prophetic work, providing a resounding call to recover and reaffirm the absolute God of the Christian tradition who is not pieced together from univocal fragments of human

thought but is rather the transcendent Creator who has formed us in his own image and likeness. In this respect, one might suggest an alternative subtitle for the book: *God without Parts: "No assembly required."*

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"Analogia entis": On the Analogy of Being, Metaphysics, and the Act of Faith. By Steven A. LONG. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011. Pp. 152. $26.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-0-268-03412-2.

With this new work, brief but incisive, "on the analogy of being, metaphysics, and the act of faith," Steven A. Long pursues his crusade in support of the restoration in Christian culture of a philosophy that is likely to help in understanding the faith, as the encyclical *Fides et Ratio* clearly hopes for. To fulfill this purpose, philosophy, and above all metaphysics, must begin by being truly itself and taking note of its autonomy as well as its proper value. Long does not cease to warn against the "supernaturalist" temptation, widespread today, which consists in making the philosophical disciplines depend intrinsically on data that belong to the properly supernatural order. In this "philosophy from above," the density of nature is overshadowed, both on the ontological and on the epistemological level, to the (presumed) advantage of grace. (Cf. Steven A. Long, *Natura Pura: On the Recovery of Nature in the Doctrine of Grace* [New York: Fordham University Press, 2010]; and my review in: *Revue thomiste* 111 [2011]: 287-91.) In response, it is important to recall that metaphysics, prescinding from revelation, can be constituted by itself as a science and, as wisdom, is capable of accounting for the unity of reality in its diversity. The analogy of being plays an essential role here since it gives metaphysics its proper object, *ens commune*, and it constitutes the foundation of the possibility of a natural knowledge of God, the cause of the object of metaphysics.

In *Analogia entis*, on the question of the analogy of being, Long defends general theses to which every Thomist worth his salt, if not every Christian conscious of the philosophical demands of his faith, would subscribe without difficulty. The author's insistence on the coherence of the philosophical order and the central role of the analogy of being, in metaphysics as in theology, concurs as well with the teaching of Benedict XVI. At his 16 June 2010 audience, dedicated to the figure of St. Thomas Aquinas, the pope in effect underscored that "the historical mission of the great master" was to "show this independence between philosophy and theology, and at the same time, their

reciprocal relations" and he recalled how much the doctrine of analogy was fundamental for grounding the validity of our speech about God.

But Long also defends more specific and consequently more polemic theses. He judges in effect that a vast sector of contemporary Thomism has encountered an impasse in abandoning the doctrine of the analogy of being essentially conceived as the analogy of proportionality. This doctrine had become classical among the Scholastics at least since Cajetan, and Jacques Maritain has developed it more recently. According to this model, it is legitimate to attribute "being" to God and to man analogically by reason of a likeness of relations between the being of God and the being of man: God's being is related to his essence as man's being is related to his. Now, in place of the primacy of the analogy of proportionality, some have wanted to substitute the analogy of attribution. It is legitimate to attribute "being" to God and to man analogically because man's being depends on and participates in the divine *Ipsum Esse*. For Long, this substitution presents a double obstacle. First, it threatens the Creator's transcendence since it seems to establish a direct relation between created perfection and divine perfection. Second, it undermines the autonomy of the natural order by introducing the relation to God into the very definition of being. But, our author hammers home, "it is not by the relation to God that the creature is constituted, it is by God that the creature is constituted, and following upon that constitution it is really related to God" (71). Thus maintaining the opposite of this pronounced tendency of Thomistic studies, Long proposes to rehabilitate both the intrinsic truth and the Thomistic authenticity of the doctrine of the analogy of proportionality applied to being, both in the predicamental and in the transcendental order: "The *analogia entis* is correctly understood as analogy of proper proportionality according to the likeness of diverse *rationes* of act and potency—most centrally, according to diverse *rationes* of the *actus essendi*, the act of being, and essence as limiting potential principle" (53).

To bring his project to a successful conclusion, Long will not give himself over to a new historical-critical study of Thomas's account of analogy. He does not feel any sympathy for this approach which he accuses, not unjustly, of "submerg[ing] speculative questions in historical obscuration" (2). He prefers to practice a speculative exegesis, that is, he interprets the texts of Aristotle or Thomas in terms of what Thomas himself would call the *intentio auctoris*, namely, the internal logic of a system flowing from its first principles regardless of individual awareness or of the texts of the author in question (cf. 29).

Chapter 1 ("First Principles and the Challenge of Parmenidian Monism") clarifies the permanent theoretical foundation of the doctrine of analogy and of being, and manifests the principial character of this doctrine for metaphysics. To the Parmenidian problem of the one and the many, Aristotle responds with the distinction between being in act and being in potency. For Long, this distinction logically implies the Thomistic principle according to which act cannot be limited by itself. In this sense, only the theory of the

composition of act with potency "enables the reconciliation of the principle of non-contradiction with the data of many, limited, changing beings" (22). All acts—and especially the act of being—have in common that they have a similar relation to potency which receives and limits them. Such is the *analogia entis*. This fundamental structure of reality is presupposed to the causal *resolutio* of the totality of beings in God ("The analogy of being as the likeness of diverse *rationes* of act is the foundation and precondition for causal resolution in God" [4]), as well as to the doctrine of participation.

Long then (chap. 2: "St. Thomas on *Analogia Entis* in the *Scriptum super Sententiis* and in *De Veritate*") moves on to the study of texts in which the Common Doctor presents the analogy of proportionality as the key to understanding the relations between creatures and God: I *Sent*., d. 19, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1; *De Veritate*, q. 2, a. 11; q. 23, a. 7, ad 9. But a sizable historical problem remains: after *De Veritate*, Thomas no longer explicitly turns to the model of the analogy of proportionality but favors the analogy of attribution (*unius ad alterum*) when it concerns giving an account of the relations between *Ipsum esse* and *entia*. Several interpreters of Thomas, especially Bernard Montagnes in his renowned thesis *La doctrine de l'analogie de l'être d'après saint Thomas d'Aquin* (1963), have concluded that Thomas modified his position. Long doesn't believe any of them. For him, Thomas never called into question the primacy of the analogy of proportionality. Rather, having clearly and definitively established it in *De Veritate*, he does not feel the need to return to it afterwards.

Chapter 3 ("Consideration of Objections to the View that the *Analogia Entis* Is the Analogy of Proper Proportionality") is a response to alternative interpretations of the analogy of being. Long concentrates his attacks on three authors: G. Klubertanz ("The Historical Objection" [54-63]), B. Montagnes ("The 'Two Thomisms, Two Analogies' of Montagnes," [63-73]), and R. McInerny ("Two Critical Objections of R. McInerny," [73-79]), who reduces analogy to a pure question of logic. Whatever the case as regards its relevance on other points, the critique addressed to B. Montagnes misses its goal to the extent that it omits any discussion of his essential thesis: the change of model for thinking about transcendental analogy comes in Thomas's thought from a deepening in the manner of conceiving divine causality: Thomas no longer thinks of the creature's relation to God "as a resemblance of the copy to the model (formal causality) but as the dependence of one being in relation to another that produces it (efficient causality)" (Montagnes, *La Doctrine*, 91). Long's response to the properly historical objection has not convinced me either. Admittedly, the importance of a doctrine is not measured by its textual proliferation, and it is also true that Thomas never explicitly repudiated the doctrine expressed in his *De Veritate*, but the argument from silence is never very conclusive. In addition, I doubt that one can consider the whole of the Thomistic corpus as one single oeuvre in which the different works would be like parts. On this point, the purely "speculative" method of the author reveals its limitations to the extent that it tends to marginalize the text.

To my way of thinking, on the question of the model of transcendental analogy that Thomas favors, one must be more attentive to the theological nature of his approach. Just as it is legitimate that the philosophical approach begins by unifying the multiplicity of beings at the level of *ens commune* by means of the analogy of proportionality, extended then possibly to God, so the theological approach first grasps the unity of beings in light of their divine source and thinks of creatures first in terms of their relation to God by means of the analogy of intrinsic attribution (which does not necessarily imply the negation of their autonomy).

Chapter 4 ("The Analogy of Being and the Transcendence and Analogical Intelligibility of the Act of Faith") clarifies the crucial importance in theology of the doctrines developed in the preceding chapters. It is clear, in effect, that a poor comprehension of analogy "clouds the essential conditions for all knowledge of God and for the understanding of the transcendence and intelligibility of the act of faith" (4).

In an appendix (107-21), Long proposes an interpretation of the renowned text of *In Boethii de Trinitate*, q. 5, a. 3, where Thomas takes interest in the intellectual process that makes possible the entry into metaphysics. How is one to grasp the "judgment of separation" by which, according to Thomas, our understanding attains the formal object of metaphysics, *ens inquantum ens*? Comparing this text to *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 85, a. 1, Long envisions an abstraction that rests on the judgment by which we affirm that being transcends its essential modes of realization. This judgment does not thus flow from the previous demonstration of the existence of a substance really separated from matter (the soul or God). In effect, in opposition to the Thomists who judge that the entry into metaphysics is made through physics, Long defends the specific and immediate character of the intellectual grasp of *ens inquantum ens*.

In the end, the reading of *Analogia entis* leaves me with mixed feelings. The basic intention is excellent. Against "a certain fideizing of the metaphysics of *esse* in certain quarters" (139), Long pleads intelligently in favor of the autonomy of metaphysical reasoning. The notion of being does not fall from heaven. It emerges from our intellectual experience which, by the analogy of proportionality, seeks to offer an account of the unity of an intrinsically diversified reality. But the extension of this analogous concept to God must be guarded against univocalizing ambiguities of a "transcendental analogue" that would include both God and creatures (cf. 103): "The middle term is not a third thing under which both God and creature fall, but rather the proportionate identity of perfection limited by potency in creatures with perfection in its utter fullness in God without limit of potency." That said, two questions of method are left dangling. First, how might one better articulate speculative exegesis and historical exegesis? Both have something to gain here. Second, to what extent can the properly theological perspective, without ever contradicting or minimizing the validity of the philosophical approach, justify

the emphasis placed by Thomas on the analogy of attribution for thinking about the relations between God and creatures?

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Wisdom in the Face of Modernity: A Study in Thomistic Natural Theology. By THOMAS JOSEPH WHITE, O.P. Ave Maria, Fla.: Sapientia Press, 2009. Pp. 320. $39.95 (paper). ISBN 978-1-9325-8955-9.

Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Fides et Ratio* calls for a recovery of confidence in the capacity of philosophical reflection to engage in metaphysical reasoning about God. The project that it lays out is admittedly complex. It calls for the articulation of a case for belief in God that will be compelling for our age. It also calls for the establishment of a sound basis for resolving contemporary questions about the meaning of human existence and a wide range of current issues in ethics, politics, and culture.

But restoring such confidence in reason is no easy task. It is not uncommon to find people holding that only particular religious traditions can offer answers to such ultimate questions. It is far less common to find an author who both makes a thoroughgoing case for the natural knowledge of God and traces the connections between that topic and the various cultural and moral questions that *Fides et Ratio* addresses, let alone one who makes it as well as Thomas Joseph White does in the present volume.

The ranks of modern Christian thinkers who are skeptical of the resources of philosophy for such tasks are headed by the likes of Soren Kierkegaard and Karl Barth. In their very different ways they argue for the impossibility of any natural knowledge of God. For them, the doubtful capacities of philosophical reason can only be compensated for by promoting the trustworthiness of divine revelation.

No doubt, some of the excesses in the claims for reason that were made by the philosophers of the Enlightenment left a great distaste for philosophy. In its survey of the ravages that pragmatism, relativism, and nihilism have brought upon the philosophical landscape, *Fides et Ratio* shows a certain sympathy for the view that the typical strategies of modern philosophy are not the sort of approach that we need. But that encyclical inveighs against simply abandoning the field when it comes to assessing the possibilities and prospects of reason. It urges a renewal of the *philosophia perennis* as a more likely way to offer valid and valuable contributions to such tasks as showing the

reasonableness of belief in God and answering some of the ultimate questions before humanity.

The question, thus, is whether a strategy of keeping faith and reason in separate silos—perhaps for their own protection—is the best if not the only route available. The project at the heart of White's volume—natural theology in the Thomistic tradition—grants that faith and reason are distinct. But White steadfastly resists the suggestion that we adopt the silo strategy by treating them as uninvolved with one another. At the core of the approach in this book is the conviction that nature is an important point of conjunction for faith and reason. This is so because nature has the objectivity needed for success in philosophical inquiry and yet has a theological resonance. Creation can reveal much about the creator, just as any effect can show much about its cause. There is much that we can learn from the book of nature by the methods proper to philosophy and science, and yet inquirers can also profit from the illumination that divine faith gives. Sometimes the assistance that faith provides consists simply in showing reason where best to look.

Admittedly, the preponderance of thinkers in what today count as science and philosophy treat the very notion of nature as suspect. In contemporary science, the success of statistical approaches in calibrating the predictive power of concepts has been accompanied by a broad skepticism about the legitimacy of the traditional concept of nature. For many postmodern philosophers in the wake of such masters of suspicion as Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche, the idea of nature is regarded as enchained by the pretenses by which the powerful have tried to make themselves masters of the powerless. For those operating in the very different philosophical confines of analytic philosophy, the essentialism that is characteristic of many analytic approaches can find no way beyond such conundrums as the naturalistic fallacy, and so nature seems to be a closed book for questions of morality. And in none of these cases is there a route from nature to natural theology, and the standard critiques of ontotheology claim to make a philosophical demonstration for the existence of God impossible.

For White, the fideist route taken by such figures as Barth and Kierkegaard is as unsatisfying as the radical secularization of philosophy by those who would advocate the strict separation of faith and reason. Carrying the battle to one of the favorite redoubts of modern fideism, White argues that a theology that is unable to provide a philosophically defensible account of the natural human capacities for knowing and responding to God cannot even do the job that it claims to do, namely, to make intelligible the possibility of any approach to God by grace.

After carefully reviewing the central terminology, the main assumptions, and the typical argument patterns of Aquinas's natural theology, White dedicates the central chapters of his text to a review of three important twentieth-century Thomists who each tried in a distinctive way to appeal to the notion of analogy in addressing the problems of ontotheology: Etienne Gilson, Jacques Maritain, and Karl Rahner.

Of special interest is White's lucid account of the Thomistic doctrine of analogy as providing the grounds for a resilient case against the complaints of contemporary ontotheology. He examines with great care the origins of the charges raised against ontotheology by Kant and Heidegger. His choice to put the focus on analogy is quite sound. Much as in the recent work of such Thomists as Steven Long, Joshua Hochschild, and Reinhard Hütter, it is clear here in White's account that appreciating the appeals to causality in the demonstrations of the existence of God offered by Thomistic metaphysics requires an accurate understanding of the workings of analogical reasoning.

The chapters on Gilson, Maritain, and Rahner provide sympathetic treatments of the efforts of these thinkers to respond to some of the main problems at the basis of modern critiques of natural theology. In White's view, however, each of them in some way neglects certain crucial dimensions of Aquinas's insights about analogy and causality. Gilson, White argues, substitutes a theologically inspired metaphysical doctrine of creation for Aristotle's philosophical doctrine of causality. The inadvertent effect of doing so is to risk imposing the notion of creation typical of Christian theology upon a genuinely philosophical study of being. Secondary causes are invariably treated as participated beings dependent on the unparticipated pure being of God in ways that risk begging the question.

However rich Maritian's basal notion of the "intuition of being" may be for some of the projects in which he deployed it, it produces an inadvertent effect in the area of natural theology. This approach privileges the analogy of proper proportionality in such a way as to risk treating the notion of divine being as if it were virtually univocal with the notion of being involved in the discussion of substance and accidents. Maritain, White avers, bases his understanding of the attributes of God not on causality but on the logical extension of concepts. Rahner, by contrast, tends to substitute an a priori apprehension of the infinity of God's being for the a posteriori causal demonstrations of God's existence typical of Thomism. The result is an inadvertent tendency to treat God as identical with the greatest possible metaphysical truth that the human mind can engender rather than to reconcile God's utter transcendence with the legitimacy of a causal metaphysics.

The final two chapters offer White's own account of how to understand the Thomistic view of analogy and how to extend the Thomistic metaphysics of causality. In defending the validity of natural theology on this basis, White keeps his double focus on staying grounded in the texts of Aquinas and on providing an answer to some of the main challenges mounted by contemporary philosophy against the possibility of a natural knowledge of God. It is a splendid example of precisely the sort of work that *Fides et Ratio* called for.

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The Biblical Interpretation of William of Alton. By TIMOTHY BELLAMAH. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. 368. $74.00 (cloth) ISBN: 978-0-19-975360-4.

With the wealth of information now widely accessible online, one might be led to believe that what remains to the scholarly enterprise is not so much discovery of the new as synthesis of the known. Yet much medieval biblical interpretation is found in manuscript form and so accessible only to the expert few. Timothy Bellamah, O.P., takes a step toward expanding our knowledge in this area. In this book, he sets out to identify William of Alton's "authentic commentaries and to examine them in comparison with those of other thirteenth-century regent masters, particularly those of Hugh of St. Cher, Bonaventure, Albert the Great, and Thomas Aquinas" (vii).

This is an ambitious book. In addition to the main study, it contains a comparison of biblical commentaries attributed to William, editions of the prologues to his authentic commentaries, exhaustive citation of contemporary U.S. and European scholarship, a lengthy bibliography, and an index. It reveals an author with an impressive grasp of his field.

Little is known of William of Alton except that he was an early English Dominican who studied at St. Jacques in Paris and may well have succeeded Thomas Aquinas in one of the Dominican chairs at the University of Paris. In addition to sermons, some twenty-five biblical commentaries have been attributed to him.

Following an introduction to this medieval figure, Bellamah devotes a chapter to developing a set of criteria for determining the authenticity of the many commentaries attributed to him. He bases the criteria on the style of the four commentaries William almost certainly wrote—on Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, and John. From these four and from a careful reading of seventeen other contemporary commentaries, Bellamah identifies several elements of style, including the prologues, the use of textual division, vocabulary, length, types of interpretation (e.g., literal and spiritual), sources, and use of the question format. These elements form a matrix that permits him to identify three additional commentaries (on Ecclesiastes, Wisdom, and Ezekiel) as authored by William. He dedicates the thirty-eight-page Appendix I to a careful review of the evidence for and against the authenticity of the twenty-five commentaries. He devotes the sixteen-page Appendix II to his editions of six of the authentic prologues.

Having established the authentic commentaries, Bellamah dedicates a chapter to their exegetical character, including their prologues and literal and spiritual senses. He next studies the different sources William uses and how he uses them. Finally, he examines the commentaries' theological themes including their accounts of prophecy, divine condescension, Christ's works, preaching, contemplation, spiritual sensation, and evangelical poverty.

Bellamah concludes with an epilogue that is both retrospective and prospective. He acknowledges that his findings are provisional. His

identification of some commentaries as authentic and others as not is based on assumptions that might prove to be false in the future. Despite his thorough analysis, Bellamah readily admits that much remains to be done on William's commentaries themselves, on his sermons, and on other medieval exegetical material, so much of which remains in manuscript form. Bellamah's work represents a foundation and example that others can build on and emulate in their research on William and medieval exegesis in general.

If success equates to influence, then Bellamah has faint praise for this "interesting commentator" (166). A later Dominican cited a discussion in William's commentary on Ecclesiastes and another borrowed from his commentary on Lamentations. Thomas Aquinas may have borrowed from his commentary on John. His commentary on Wisdom survived under the name of Bonaventure, and Bonaventure seems to have borrowed material from Albert the Great who identifies a William, perhaps William of Alton, as its source.

But there is more to this study and more to William of Alton than his modest influence. As noted above, the study increases access to medieval exegesis. It provides a foundation and example for further study. Moreover, it illuminates not only William's exegetical practices but those of his sources and contemporaries. It also raises important questions, such as the very enterprise of biblical commentary and its practice then and now.

One of Bellamah's concerns throughout is exactly what William was. He "was not an author, if this means writing principally what is one's own" (105). Instead, he compiled compilations (105); he brought "order to an unwieldy commentatorial tradition" (99). That is, he gave his audience organized access to the rich body of Christian biblical interpretation up to that point, an important contribution on its own.

Bellamah highlights the implications of William's interpretation for spirituality, an interpretation that some today might dismiss as subjective but that can also be seen as anticipating the playfulness of postmodern work. His practice of compilation dissolves temporal distinctions between biblical text and the long history of Christian interpretation. More generally, it suggests the plasticity of time by which the past can become present and vice versa. As a result, "biblical history [can be] a continuing reality encompassing even the present" (5). "By compiling and complementing the diverse elements of the tradition before which he stood, William endeavored to become a part of it" (158), "to immerse himself in it, to swim in the same sea" (166). The benefit for the aspiring preachers he taught and for the congregations they would go on to exhort was their assimilation into "the company of Moses, the prophets, John the Baptist, the apostles, and Christ himself" (126). Through compilation, William and his audience can be transformed because they no longer relate to these spiritual greats in the abstract but in person.

Yet, to our own age that prizes apparent originality and independence, Bellamah is keen to present his subject's work as more than "mere compilations" and him as more than "mere compiler" (21-22). In this regard,

Bellamah argues that William not only compiled but also complemented (158). His was a synthesis. As such, he was a "commentator" not a "compilator" (81, 106). Bellamah's careful comparisons with William's predecessors and contemporaries show that William often offered alternative readings without resolving in favor of one or the other. Yet, he also, and without fanfare, could add his own meanings to the received tradition. In addition, and much as biblical scholars do today, he utilized contemporary scholarly advances. "Even by the norms of his period, William was particularly attentive to authorial intention. Toward the end of grasping it, he made use of an elaborate range of techniques for textual, linguistic, and rhetorical analysis, as well as careful historical inquiries" (79). Bellamah marvels at William's "remarkable capacity for appealing to the imagination" (77). He opened up new perspectives on the Bible for his own time and, with Bellamah's assistance, continues to do so for us today.

Bellamah's study of William of Alton suggests important questions for scholars today. What is a commentator/commentary? What is the relationship of the present to the past? Have others in times past considered the problems that scholars today are addressing? We cannot know the answer to this final question without careful studies like Bellamah's and thorough compilations like William's.

One issue that floats implicitly behind the entire study is the merit of William's exegesis (and premodern exegesis in general) in comparison to biblical scholarship today. This is a concern for theologians in part because the history of biblical interpretation can serve as a resource for contemporary faith (a point made for example in the Pontifical Biblical Commission's *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*). When this issue becomes explicit, Bellamah treats his contemporaries in much the same way that William and other medievals treated theirs, that is, mostly anonymously. This is uncharacteristic of Bellamah, given the exhaustive documentation elsewhere in his book.

Thus, Bellamah notes similarities between William's approach and "the historical-critical method." Yet, he quickly inoculates William against charges that apply to "some kinds of modern biblical scholarship," namely, that the Bible's "essential context is . . . its isolated prehistory," that it was a "mere [product] of history," "radically historically contingent," or "an isolated artifact," that he was "'historicist'" or interested "in subjecting it to a reductionist fragmentation into isolated elements," that he had "any tendency remotely resembling a hermeneutic of suspicion," that he needed "to reconstruct historical narrative" or "deconstruct the traditional one" (62, 79-80).

Bellamah uses technical language in his critique of modern exegesis and support of William's, yet the meaning of this language is not always self-evident and so needs further explanation. Furthermore, William likely avoided these pitfalls not because he considered such questions and rejected them but because they were not his questions. Also, given the variegated nature of

modern biblical scholarship, it is unclear whether many scholars today would recognize themselves in this discussion. The relative merit of premodern exegesis is well worth considering, and the question deserves the care that Bellamah devotes to other parts of this valuable study.

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The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas's Ethics: Virtues and Gifts. By ANDREW PINSENT. New York: Routledge, 2011. Pp. 172. $125.00 (cloth) ISBN: 978-0-415-89994-9.

An appropriate metaphor can do much to illuminate concepts that would otherwise remain opaque and obscure. Andrew Pinsent believes that the gifts of the Holy Spirit—or at least Aquinas's account of them—are in need of an explanatory metaphor, and he has just such a metaphor to propose: "joint attention," or what he sometimes refers to as the "second-person perspective." In this case the metaphor itself requires some explaining. The notion of "joint attention" arises from autism research, and it refers to an autistic child's inability to share experiences with others. When parents and children engage in activities together, the children tend to adopt the attitudes of the parent: the child exhibits awareness of the parent's attitudes and exhibits that same attitude toward the activity they are engaged in. The parent and child, that is to say, pay "joint attention" to some third thing; they experience the world "together," with a shared attitude. Autistic children, however, are incapable of such "joint attention": though they can communicate with others and engage in activities with them, they are incapable of such shared attitudes and experiences. Pinsent argues that "joint attention" is an excellent metaphor for Aquinas's understanding of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The gifts of the Holy Spirit make it possible for us to experience the world "with" God—to share God's attitudes toward the things we encounter. To lack the gifts, conversely, is to suffer from a sort of spiritual autism—to be incapable of experiencing the world with God. Pinsent's hypothesis is both original and insightful. His fundamental intuition—that a personal relationship with God is the precondition of the Christian moral life—is absolutely correct. Whether or not this was Aquinas's view, it certainly should have been his view, and Pinsent does well to remind us of this. The details, however, matter, and Pinsent's details need development.

Pinsent's book consists of four main chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter is intended to motivate the rest of the book; it argues that Aquinas's

moral theory as a whole is in need of new interpretive metaphors. The second chapter proposes a new interpretive metaphor for Aquinas's account of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and argues that this metaphor is superior to other, more traditional metaphors. The third and fourth chapters argue that the metaphor of "joint attention" is consistent with Aquinas's account of both the moral and theological virtues (chapter 3) and the beatitudes and fruits (chapter 4).

The first chapter assesses existing scholarship on Aquinas's moral theory. Aquinas's account of the virtues has received marginal treatment, even amidst the contemporary revival of virtue ethics, and a large reason for this is the assumption that Aquinas's virtue theory largely reiterates Aristotle's (2). Pinsent argues that such an assumption ignores the dramatic difference between Aquinas's theory and Aristotle's. Specifically, it ignores Aquinas's theory of the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, notions integral to Aquinas's account yet entirely foreign to Aristotle's (3-4). Pinsent argues that existing scholarship has inadequately accommodated the infused virtues in particular and Aquinas's entire moral framework (the structural relationships between the virtues, gifts, beatitudes, and fruits, which Pinsent refers to with the abbreviation VGBF) in general. According to Pinsent, Thomist scholars most commonly ignore the infused virtues and the question of their relationship to the gifts, fruits, and beatitudes (5). Those who do not ignore these issues typically argue that they are unnecessary and ad hoc elements of Aquinas's moral theory (5-6). While a small minority maintains that the infused virtues and the VGBF structure are integral to Aquinas's account, their attempts to explain this, Pinsent argues, have been largely inadequate. Scholars who concede the importance of the infused virtues account for them by (a) claiming that while the acquired virtues order man to his natural end, the infused virtues order man to his supernatural end (7), and by (b) explaining the difference between infused and acquired virtues in terms of the metaphor of height: infused virtues are "higher" or "more elevated" versions of their acquired counterparts (11). Pinsent argues that (a), while correct, clarifies little and that (b) is altogether inadequate: the infused and acquired virtues differ so dramatically that the former simply cannot be understood as "elevated" versions of the latter. Pinsent raises similar objections against scholarly attempts to explain Aquinas's view of the VGBF structure. He argues that historically, those who don't either ignore or dismiss questions of the VGBF structure tend simply to paraphrase Aquinas's text without themselves illuminating it (26). Although some contemporary scholars do mention the VGBF structure, Pinsent claims that there has been no systematic study of it (28). Given all this, Pinsent argues that a fresh approach and fresh metaphors are needed.

Especially since it will be relevant for what follows, it is important to point out that not all scholars would accept Pinsent's survey of the terrain of moral theory. Making things even more problematic, Pinsent offers virtually no supporting evidence for his claims. If one primarily examines broad overviews

and popular treatments of Aquinas's moral theory, it can certainly seem that most scholars either ignore or dismiss the infused virtues and the VGBF structure. I was once of this opinion myself. In reality, however, a vast body of serious scholarship has been devoted to Aquinas's account of the infused virtues (an extensive bibliography of this scholarship can be found in Marcus Christoph's 2010 dissertation, *Justice as an Infused Virtue in the Secunda Secundae* [University of Fribourg, 2011]). Many will find Pinsent's survey of existing interpretations of the infused virtues and VGBF structure equally controversial. Although it can certainly seem that those who recognize both infused and acquired virtues merely assert that the acquired virtues order man to his natural end while the infused virtues order man to his supernatural end, most of these scholars prove on inspection to hold vastly more complicated views. Although they disagree on the details, most scholars maintain that the cultivation of the acquired virtues (albeit somehow redirected or transformed by grace) is essential even for the pursuit of man's supernatural end (for an overview of the different interpretations, see Cristoph, chap. 3). This is because—at least according to such theories—the infused virtues alone are insufficient for advancement in the moral life. More importantly, while some of these theories certainly do describe the infused virtues as "elevated" versions of their acquired counterparts (a view which Pinsent is rightly critical of), a great many scholars explicitly resist such an interpretation (Cajetan, for instance, rejects such a view). As will become clear in what follows, Pinsent's survey of existing scholarship on the VGBF structure will strike many as similarly controversial. I think Pinsent could greatly improve his account by incorporating the tradition of scholarship on the infused virtues and VGBF structure.

After dealing more broadly with existing scholarship on the infused virtues and the VGBF structure, Pinsent turns in the second chapter to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Although he alludes to his own interpretation of Aquinas's view of the relationship between the gifts and the virtues, his twofold goal in chapter 2 is different: he wishes to argue that traditional metaphors for the gifts are inadequate, and he wishes to develop his own metaphor: the metaphor of joint attention. Traditional scholarship understands Aquinas's account of the gifts through variations on the metaphor of movement: the gifts enable man to be "moved" in some way. All scholars agree that this "movement" is not coercive. Pinsent takes issue, however, with what he argues is the most traditional understanding of the movement that the gifts enable, an account which he refers to as the "nautical metaphor" (36). As he interprets this metaphor, the gifts are like sails that enable the soul to catch the "wind" of the Holy Spirit. Rather than laboriously "rowing" towards its end through the acquired virtues, the soul is enabled to "sail" towards it by means of the gifts, while nonetheless retaining the ability to "steer" the ship (ibid.). Pinsent argues that this metaphor is deeply flawed, not least because it leads to a distorted account of the gifts themselves: it implies that the difference between "human zeal and industry and gift-based movement are different in degree not

in kind" (ibid.). Such an implication, he argues, is flawed: Aquinas clearly argues that the infused and acquired virtues are specifically different; the former are not merely "elevated" versions of the latter (ibid.). As Pinsent understands the nautical metaphor, then, it understands graced action (the combined activity of the infused virtues and gifts) to be merely an elevated version of acquired virtue. (There is an important confusion here, which I will address in the next paragraph.) He argues that other explanations of the gifts are equally unsatisfactory. Some describe the gifts as "antennae" that allow man to receive information, but this wrongly reduces what is provided by the gifts to mere information (37). He gives a very brief mention of another term that scholars use to describe the motion that the gifts make possible—*instinctus*—which as he describes it interprets the gifts as giving man a "taste" for things of God (38). Pinsent indicates a sympathy for this metaphor, but does not dwell on it, saying merely that the modern translation of *instinctus*—instinct—has the unfortunate connotation of animal behavior (ibid.). He then proceeds to develop his own metaphor, the metaphor of "joint attention."

Before turning to the details of Pinsent's own metaphor, I want to address his survey of existing accounts. Considered in isolation, the "nautical metaphor" might well seem to imply the sort of account Pinsent suggests: a comparison between unaided human effort (the activity of acquired virtue) on one hand and graced effort on the other. But the metaphor—as offered by, for example, John of St. Thomas and Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange—is actually designed to describe something different: that is, the distinction between *two kinds of graced action*: the difference between acting out of infused virtue alone (rowing) and acting (thanks to the gifts of the Holy Spirit) under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (sailing). Aquinas may not use this exact metaphor, but it is intended to capture a claim that he does make repeatedly in his *Commentary on the Sentences* and in other early texts, namely, that there are two kinds or "modes" of supernatural action: a purely human mode, where man pursues supernatural beatitude through the infused virtues alone, and a superhuman mode, where man pursues supernatural beatitude with the assistance of the gifts (for a thorough analysis of Aquinas's texts and of traditional interpretations of them, see James Stroud's 2012 dissertation, *Thomas Aquinas's Exposition of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit: Developments in His Thought and Rival Interpretations* [The Catholic University of America, 2012]). Understood in this light, Pinsent's criticism of the nautical metaphor does not stand. The nautical metaphor contrasts two kinds of supernatural activity, not natural and supernatural activity. It is only in this context that Aquinas's other major notion, *instinctus*, can be understood. At least some scholars believe that Aquinas eventually opted for a different account of the relationship between the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and that in his mature thought he actually held that *all* acts ordered to supernatural beatitude require the direct assistance of the Holy Spirit (for an overview of this debate, see Stroud, chap. 2). In this account, the gifts are necessary constantly rather than merely occasionally; man cannot perform *any*

act ordered to supernatural beatitude without the guidance of the Holy Spirit. These latter scholars also maintain that Aquinas's view of what the gifts make possible is best understood through his use of *instinctus*. Aquinas uses this term infrequently in his early works, but frequently in his later works, to describe what it is the gifts make possible, suggesting that it is the key to understanding his mature view of the gifts (for an overview of his use of this term, as well as a survey of scholarship on this topic, see Stroud, chap. 4). All of this is to say that both accounts have deep roots in central texts of Aquinas. I agree that the "nautical" metaphor is inadequate, but I believe it is inadequate because it reflects Aquinas's immature view of the gifts of the Holy Spirit rather than his mature view. But—especially because Pinsent indicates sympathy for the notion of *instinctus*—Aquinas's own description of the motion the gifts make possible (and it is not clear that he even intends it to be a metaphor) surely deserves more attention than Pinsent gives it. Two points are especially relevant. First, although Pinsent dismisses *instinctus* because of the unfortunate connotations of the translation "instinct," the very scholars Pinsent cites dwell extensively on the proper interpretation of *instinctus*. Though they defend the use of the word to describe the motion of the Holy Spirit, they also describe what the gifts provide as "inspiration" (see Servais Pinckaers, "Morality and the Movement of the Holy Spirit," in *The Pinckaers Reader*, trans. John Berkman and Craig Stephen Titus [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005], 389). Second, if Pinsent wishes to argue that "joint attention" does a better job of capturing Aquinas's true meaning than Aquinas's own *instinctus* does, he would be well served to offer a detailed account of Aquinas's use of *instinctus*.

After addressing traditional metaphors, Pinsent devotes the remainder of chapter 2 to developing his own metaphor for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the metaphor of "joint attention." As I noted above, the ability to pay "joint attention" refers to the ability to experience the world "with" others—the ability to be "moved" by others (49). Pinsent argues that this metaphor accurately captures what is made possible by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Aquinas, Pinsent argues, describes the gifts as either enabling one to share God's stance towards something or as enabling a union with God, and he argues that the metaphor of joint attention captures both of these notions (49, 62). Moreover, such a metaphor avoids unfortunate connotations of other metaphors (50). He argues for the validity of his "joint attention" metaphor by speaking briefly about each of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, arguing that that each gift can be understood either in terms of sharing God's stance towards something or in terms of union with God.

Pinsent's proposed metaphor is interesting and creative. There is certainly something appealing about describing a life devoid of the Holy Spirit as a kind of spiritual autism. Nonetheless, one cannot help but feel that a great deal is left unsaid here. Exactly what does it mean to "share God's stance" or to "share God's attitude" towards something? Can God really be said to have stances and attitudes? If he can, can anyone really be said to "share" them?

Most important of all, why is this metaphor superior to Aquinas's own explicit description of what the gifts make possible, namely, that they enable man to receive the inspiration of the Holy Spirit? Interesting as Pinsent's metaphor is, *instinctus* (inspiration) seems to me to be a much more intuitive account of how the Holy Spirit works in man. We need the guidance of the Holy Spirit in this life precisely because—even after we are made sharers in the divine life through grace—we *still* need God's help and guidance. Even those in a state of grace cannot "see" God; he is not directly present to them. We need help, and we receive this help through the interior promptings of the Holy Spirit. Given all this, it seems to me that inspiration is the superior metaphor for the abilities the gifts confer. The metaphor of inspiration captures human dependency on divine guidance and our own inability to act without it; the metaphor of joint attention implies a direct connection to God that is simply not possible in this life.

After developing the metaphor of "joint attention," Pinsent devotes the remaining chapters to the virtues (chap. 3) and the beatitudes and fruits (chap. 4). He argues that the infused virtues enable "a person to be well-ordered internally to be moved in a second-personal manner" (83). He argues that some of the infused virtues do so by uniting man to God, while others do so by enabling a shared stance. He explains that the beatitudes are "promissory narratives," while the fruits should be understood in terms of the metaphor of resonance—the state of affairs that occurs "when coupled systems are almost exactly in harmony with each other" (96). The fruits, that is to say, reflect a perfect attunement between man and God.

Although Pinsent's metaphor of resonance as a means of understanding the fruits is promising, I want to raise a worry about his description of the infused virtues. In chapter 3 Pinsent makes explicit a claim he alludes to in chapter 2, namely, that the infused virtues are subordinate to the gifts and even exist for the sake of their successful operation. This claim, it seems to me, is very difficult to square with Aquinas's text, even (or perhaps especially) if one restricts oneself to the treatment of the gifts that Aquinas offers in the *Prima Secundae*. In the second article of question 68, Aquinas explains the necessity of the gifts by contrasting man's ability to order acts to his natural versus supernatural ends. He explains that man is ordered to his natural end by the light of reason, and to supernatural beatitude by the theological virtues. Since his possession of the latter is imperfect, he cannot order his acts to his supernatural end unless he receives the *instinctus* and motion of the Holy Spirit (*STh* I-II, q. 68, a. 2). The entire point of Aquinas's discussion here is to argue that the gifts assist man by remedying the insufficiencies of the theological (and by extension, the infused moral) virtues, not vice versa. At the very least, I wish Pinsent offered more by way of argument for his interpretation.

The criticisms raised above make this review sound more critical than I intend it to be. I have objected to some of Pinsent's claims, but I do not want to diminish the value of what he has set out to do. This book reminds us of an

important fact too often omitted by Christian scholars: the acknowledgment of our direct and continual dependence on God must lie at the very core of any Christian moral theory. Pinsent's reminder is both timely and valuable.

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Catholic Sexual Ethics: A Summary, Explanation, and Defense. By WILLIAM E. MAY, RONALD LAWLER, and JOSEPH BOYLE, JR. Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, 2011. Pp. 352. $18.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-1-59276-083-1.

William E. May and his coauthors have distinguished themselves as moral theologians par excellence with a superabundance of books and articles in the field. A profound defender of the Magisterium of the Church, who appeals to reason in order to bring intelligibility to some very hard moral demands, May shows no less scholarship and insight into very difficult intellectual and practical challenges in this latest edition of *Catholic Sexual Ethics*. With over 509 endnotes and three times as many books and articles referenced, he shows other Catholic theologians the road to becoming a master in the field. Much of this branch of theology concerns itself with advanced or "third level" questions that only the "wise" can grasp (cf. *STh* I-II, q. 100, aa. 1, 3, and 11; *STh* II-II, q. 49, a. 3) since the desire for pleasure obscures reason's ability to discover the norms of behavior in the sexual sphere.

After a foreword by Donald Cardinal Wuerl, the first five chapters take the reader through the Church's teaching on sex, the biblical teaching, the Catholic Tradition down through the ages, the way to think about matters in moral theology, and finally conscience informed by truth. Following on this, three final chapters deal with Christian marriage and virginity, chastity and love in the marital vocation, and lastly, chastity for unmarried persons. The authors explain, "Catholic teaching follows necessarily from the whole scriptural vision of what man and woman are, of what sexuality means, and of the nature of morality." So, many concepts within the later chapters depend upon earlier ones and are brought back to one's mind, so that the reader can grasp the unity of the subject matter. A "Pastoral Conclusion" offers suggestions of a pastoral nature for motivating the followers of the Lord to learn and acquire the virtue of chastity.

The authors show, in accordance with a virtue-based morality, the underpinnings of the virtue of chastity, and its contrary, the various species of

the vice of lust. Virtue is the result of choosing to follow the precepts of God and, in the case of the married, the counsels of Christ concerning marital acts, as articulated by St. Paul and as taught by the sacred Magisterium of the Church. One can understand neither premarital nor perpetual chastity unless one studies the meaning of sex in marriage, which is why the authors chose to conclude their analysis with a consideration of the single state, whether of those waiting to get married or those who by force of circumstances may not have a vocation to marriage.

Throughout the book, the authors attempt to give the authentic teaching of the Church on the goods of marriage and why they are to be pursued in the marital state especially through authentic conjugal acts. The many vices are those human habits that attack and undermine these goods of marriage. Authentic conjugal acts express the following: openness to offspring as a gift from God, a permanent bond whether sacramental or not, and the friendship and affection between the spouses who are meant to achieve holiness. All of these goods can be attacked by any of the vices against chastity, whether contraception, fornication, rape, or adultery. But the authors do not stop there. They cast light on why the pursuit of the goods of marriage is the road to authentic fulfillment and why choosing moral evils that make sexual pleasure an end in itself is a false road.

The authors also choose to face dissenters from the received teaching on sexuality, and they attempt to refute the many rationalizations that come principally from proportionalism, a method that attempts to defend the goodness, on occasion, of masturbation, contraception, fornication, homosexual acts, and adultery. They do so politely but forthrightly, citing almost all of the main dissenting authors and their works during the past sixty years. The efforts of the dissenters are based upon the dubious assumption that there are almost no intrinsic evils in the matter but rather ontic evils that can become good in certain circumstances with the right intention.

The authors begin their work in chapter 1 with what the Church teaches about marriage and sexuality, and only then proceed to chapter 2 on the teaching of sacred Scripture, because one cannot clearly understand Scripture exclusively on one's own ability. The sacred text has for its primary author the Holy Spirit, who communicates in human language in ways whose comprehension often lies beyond the capacity of reason to fathom completely. The authors likewise show that the general councils of the Church, and past popes and catechisms up through Pope Benedict XVI have all taught the same norms concerning marriage and the goodness of marital acts. The authors show the continuity between Church teaching and the Scriptures with an illuminating exposition of both the Old and New Testament teaching on sex, wherein the reader can see the skeleton of the Magisterium's teaching already present in the Scriptures.

When we come to chapter 3, we see how the pre-Nicene Church Fathers had to deal with a very corrupt society of debauchery which killed its offspring, and believed in contraception, fornication, and adultery. Con-

sequently, these Fathers sometimes overemphasize the importance of the procreative end of marital act in relation to its other ends. Later, theologians such as Sts. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Bonaventure clarified the ideas of the sacred Scriptures and the early Fathers by refuting many of the false teachings of their times. In addition, while Augustine only alluded to the good of friendship and fidelity as a defense of marital intercourse, Thomas and Bonaventure more robustly showed that this could also become part of the intention of the act as well. Furthermore, they taught that marital intercourse could not only be an expression of the virtue of chastity (as we use the term today) but also of the virtues of justice and religion under divine charity.

Chapter 4 reminds us that the "Christian life is not primarily the following of a moral code. It is, most fundamentally, living as adopted sons and daughters of God." As the authors assert later on, this puts muscle into the intellect, as well as into the sensible appetite, that is, its concupiscible and irascible functions. We are living in an atmosphere of redemptive love, and the Church teaches that love implies morality. In this chapter, entitled "Patterns of Thinking in Moral Theology," the authors give a short lesson in what is traditionally called fundamental moral theology, delineating the principles that guide virtue theory. Moral norms based upon fundamental goods are to be rightly pursued in a way that fulfills human nature. Following the guidance of Pope John Paul II's encyclical letter *Veritatis Splendor* rather than proportionalism, the authors highlight the view that good actions respect these goods and seek them according to reason and faith. Pleasure in sex is part of the moral life of human sexuality, not its essential or primary element. Good actions based upon right reason or moral norms produce character, another word for virtue.

Chapter 5, on conscience, contains the important reminder that human beings do not create right and wrong but discover them from within, and must follow the teachings of Christ and his Church. The word "conscience" has many meanings, but the authors criticize a concept called transcendental conscience as enunciated by Walter E. Conn among others. The latter maintain that there are no objective standards of conscience that can be derived from human nature. Ultimately then conscience's judgment is rendered arbitrary which, for a follower of Christ, empties much of his teaching. By its ordinary magisterium the Church teaches many truths of the practical life that are infallible and others worthy of trust even when not so definitive in newer moral problems. Ignoring the Church ultimately comes down to thinking that the individual is infallible. No matter how scholarly a moral theologian's opinion might be, Catholics do not follow theologians but the official teachers of the Church, as guides for choosing the true good and avoiding morally evil acts.

Upon reaching chapter 6, the reader is primed for a fuller treatment of "Chastity, Christian Marriage and Virginity." One can pursue marriage either for self-gratification, viewed as an end in itself, or as a vocation to holiness. The latter calls for growth into self-possession before marriage so that one

might be able to give one's whole self to embracing the common goods involved in family life, with the help of God's grace. This requires daily sacrifices, directed by virtue, to treat one's spouse as nonsubstitutable and irreplaceable, namely, in a permanent commitment that gives warmth, affection, and dedication to the goods of marriage for one's spouse. Achieving a truly one-flesh union, exclusive and faithful love becomes then a true and active vocational and ecclesial sign of Christ's own love for the Church. Conjugal acts in marriage, when they are truly authentic self-giving, become holy. Now, someone can choose with the help of grace to bypass these great goods of marriage with a commitment to virginity for the sake of the Kingdom and thereby also potentially come into full possession of one's sexuality.

Chapter 7 analyzes the various vices that oppose the goods of marriage: adultery, contraception, sterilization, wrongful intentions in the marital act, artificial insemination, *in vitro* fertilization, and condom use to prevent HIV/AIDS. By reflecting on the nature of these acts, the authors observe that their evils come down to directly separating the ends of the marital act and making pleasure, rather than personal communion, the goal or end. The authors also show why NFP is such a great help in facing the situation where the avoidance of children is a good for many reasons, and how the method is good since it does not harm or damage the marital act.

Chapter 8 turns to the "obligations" or "love-based demands" of unmarried persons. As the authors say, "the lure of pleasure is great and the instincts of selfishness are strong." So, the demands of chastity require courage. Here the authors might have mentioned the quasi-virtue associated with chastity, namely, continence, which is the way most people develop chastity. Most people grow slowly into the peace and calm of chastity by not choosing to follow the disorderly emotions associated with sex that often come up in daily life. One stays the course of grace by winning the battle in the mind when faced with emotions that agitate, especially in youth. The authors show that the teachings of Christ and the Church against fornication are not mere cultural taboos. Young and old have to realize that their sexual powers are meant to serve life-uniting and life-giving objectives which are undermined by masturbation, fornication, bestiality, rape, and impure thoughts and desires consented to, whether in viewing pornography or simply conjuring images from one's own imagination. Further, even though the homosexual condition is a disorder because right sexual desire aspires to marriage, the condition as such is not per se a personal sin. But, one cannot call any homosexual act a good of marriage because there is nothing transcendent in it that touches any of the unified goods of marriage. There is no one-flesh union here that would allow one to call the love of homosexuals for each other a marriage, strictly speaking.

For high-school teachers or university professors, this book shows the way to think correctly about sex, and its good and its evil uses. Hopefully this

work will change some viewpoints of those who live in and with the culture of death.

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Poetry, Beauty and Contemplation: The Complete Aesthetics of Jacques Maritain. By JOHN TRAPANI, JR. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011. Pp. 188. $32.00 (paper) ISBN: 978-0-8132-1825-0.

"Let us tell her that there is an ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry" (Plato, *Republic* 10.607b).

Ever since Plato there have been philosophers who have claimed that there is a war between philosophy and poetry. As Jacques Maritain suggests, philosophers often desire to pull away from the sensual world with their abstractions and theories. Among other things, like truth and goodness, they seek to learn, apart from their own concrete experience, how their concepts and theories might cohere with one another. The poet is decidedly different. He wishes to dwell in the land of the Heraclitean flux. He sits down in the sensual, the individual, the momentary and the transient. Hence, when any philosopher tries to write a philosophy of poetry, especially if he appreciates poetry, he may have a very divided mind. On the one hand, he wishes to appreciate and explore the depths of the inner being of individual persons, things, and their actual concrete existence in space and time, and on the other hand, he will want to extricate himself from these very same things in order to develop clear, abstract, timeless and universal principles concerning poetry. And these may seem to his poetical self as dry as dust. Indeed, as Maritain wrote in his *Degrees of Knowledge* and elsewhere, "The metaphysician breathes an atmosphere of abstraction which is death for the artist. Imagination, the discontinuous, the unverifiable, in which the metaphysician perishes, is life itself to the artist. They are playing seesaw, each in turn rising up to the sky."

Thus, there is a constant danger for the philosopher. He may, like the literary critic, wish to be closely bound to individual authors or texts, restrict his scope to them and so lose out on providing a properly philosophical benefit. Or the philosopher may, like the proverbial ivory-tower or armchair philosopher arranging abstractions, lose his real-life blood ties to individual works. In this work, John G. Trapani, Jr. has done a wonderful job of balancing this seesaw. On the one hand, he colorfully communicates his

insights into the unique influences upon Maritain's life and work as well as illustrating Maritain's own poetic insights. On the other hand, he has done the painstaking work of delineating the historical and ahistorical conceptual parameters of Maritain's chief aesthetic concepts of poetry, beauty, and contemplation. In addition to conceptual charts diagramming the concepts of intuition and connaturality and in addition to the helpful summaries of Maritain's thought, we are provided with, in effect, miniature philosophical lexicons delineating the major notions. And for those exploring Maritain's aesthetics, these are invaluable.

As there are now many Thomistic works on beauty and quite a few on Maritain's aesthetics, some might ask what makes Trapani's work unique. Several things are worth mentioning. First, his work on the history and conceptual parameters of the basic terms in Maritain's aesthetics surpasses others in depth and quality. Take, for example, the terms of poetry and intuition. Trapani carefully shows their roots in Henri Bergson's philosophy, causing the reader to want to read Bergson again. He traces the journey of these concepts from their inception in the later versions of *Art and Scholasticism* and *Art and Faith*—the correspondence with Jean Cocteau—to their emergence into full-fledged notions in *The Situation of Poetry* and *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*. Trapani tells us that we should not mix and match the terms of poetry and poetic knowledge because, as he cogently argues, poetry is ontologically prior to the latter. He makes us aware of the priority as he illumines Maritain's famous definition of poetry in *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* as "that intercommunication between the inner being of things and the inner being of the human Self which is a kind of divination." With Trapani's inspiration, the reader can appreciate in a deep way how poetry is in all of us. While modern philosophy in its quest for clarity and analysis is often blind to this, Trapani shows us that Maritain was not. With a rich tradition rooted in St. Thomas and the whole of the perennial tradition, Maritain had a profound respect for mystery. Escaping from the positivism of the Sorbonne and assisted by Bergson's notion of intuition, he was able to affirm that there is indeed a depth to things and the self, beyond the measureable and conceptual surfaces of things. There is a constant preconscious trafficking, interpenetration, and life shared between the inner being of things in reality and the depths of the self. Only a small portion of this activity makes it to the conceptual realm. This is Maritain's view of poetry and Trapani guides us through it well.

Second, Trapani takes care to examine Maritain's concepts as they are used within his aesthetics and, more importantly, outside of his aesthetics. We are treated to full-scale discussions not only of poetry, poetic knowledge, and beauty, but also intuition, connatural knowledge, and contemplation.

Third, where Maritain is sometimes inconsistent in his use of words, Trapani is not. Perhaps because of Maritain's desire to be faithful to the truth of poetry and those poets he knew personally, he is sometimes impatiently

inconsistent, pursuing depth more than clarity. Trapani cleans up Maritain's language and this is a great service.

Fourth, while it is often noted that Maritain's faith, and the supernatural life in general, was a key component of his life, Trapani shows us how it specifically illumines his aesthetic theory. The main point of his book is to show how it makes sense to complete Maritain's aesthetics with a notion of poetic contemplation. He shows poetic contemplation as a natural development from Maritain's ideas of poetry, poetic knowledge as cognitive, poetic knowledge as creative, and beauty. While many might find poetic knowledge to contain a conceptual Gordian knot, since it was, for Maritain, geared and oriented to the making of a work (he dismissed the magical knowledge of the surrealists), Trapani shows that if we examine the historical trajectory of the concepts of poetry and poetic knowledge along with Maritain's treatment of beauty, we will have to admit the veracity of the notion of poetic contemplation. I think he is right.

To appreciate what is going on in poetic contemplation, we must understand how it is different from ordinary knowledge. Trapani expertly guides us through the various distinctions required to understand its nature. Having taken the time to set up the backdrop in terms of Maritain's epistemology and metaphysics, Trapani shows us that this poetic contemplation occurs in the experience of beauty, through the instrumentality of intentional emotion, producing neither a concept nor a work of art, but rather a joy or *gaudium* in the intellect. It is a satisfaction that results from the perception of integrity, proportion and, most of all, radiance. And this is vital to human flourishing.

This experience is one that is rooted in the intellect and is a form of theoretical knowledge, while at the same time it is not discursive. Affirming Maritain's mantra that the "intellect sees," Trapani shows us that here the intellect does see but it is incapable of giving an account of itself. This is because this kind of knowledge, which is "experience" more than it is knowledge, involves the preconscious of the human soul and involves as its *medium quo* intentional emotions that carry the secrets of things and existential radiances in created beings to our awareness. Since beauty is a transcendental, its network (if I may use Francesca Murphy's term) stretches all the way to God who is beauty itself. Since poetic contemplation occurs when our concepts are slumbering, the intellect's aspirations do not have to work with conceptual barriers, it can drink and enjoy being. And, additionally, since the intellect is not operating by itself but involves the will/heart and its desires, it is able to aspire transcendentally to God. Hence, the religious/spiritual aspect of poetry becomes visible.

Trapani gives evidence of Maritain's emphasis here, informing us that the following passage, taken from Baudelaire's quotation of Poe's "The Poetic Principle" (*Creative Intuition*, 166) is used no fewer than six times throughout his works: "'It is the instinct for beauty,' he said, 'which makes us consider the world and its pageants as a glimpse of, a *correspondence* with, Heaven. . . . It

is at once by [P]oetry and *through* [P]oetry, by music and *through* music, that the soul divines what splendors shine behind the tomb; and when an exquisite poem brings tears to the eyes, such tears are not the sign of an excess of joy, they are rather a witness to an irritated melancholy, an exigency of nerves, a nature exiled in the imperfect which would possess immediately, on this very earth, a paradise revealed'" (156).

One of my own favorite quotations in this regard is the one Maritain borrows from C. E. M. Joad: "[I]n the appreciation of music and pictures, we get a momentary and fleeting glimpse of the nature of that reality to a full knowledge of which the movement of life is progressing. For that moment, and so long as the glimpse persists, we realize in anticipation and almost, as it were, illicitly, the nature of the end. We are, if we may so put it, for a moment there . . . and since we are for a moment there, we experience while the moment lasts, that sense of liberation from the urge and drive of life, which has been noted as one of the characteristics of aesthetic experience" (*Creative Intuition*, 309-10). Or as Maritain himself puts it in *Art and Faith*, "Art restores paradise in figure: not in life, not in man, but in the work produced. There all is but order and beauty; there, no more discord; spirit and senses are reconciled, sensual delight pours out in light, bodily heat in intelligence, the whole human reality conspires toward heaven."

And the effect of all of this is vital. Poetic contemplation is not a form of escape as many might charge, it is enrichment. Trapani aptly brings in Josef Pieper concerning leisure: "Leisure is 'non-activity'—an inner absence of preoccupation, a calm, an ability to let things go, to be quiet. It is a form of that stillness that is the necessary preparation for accepting reality; only the person who is still can hear. . . . Leisure is the disposition of receptive understanding, of contemplative beholding, and immersion in the real. It is the surge of new life that flows out to us when we give ourselves to contemplation."

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