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THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF GRACE AND CONDIGN MERIT AT THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

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A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING of merit, as defined by the Council of Trent in canon 32 of the *Decretum de iustificatione*, will determine the nature and extent to which an ecumenical *rapprochement* can be made on the issue of justification. In the debate over justification at the Council of Trent, the council fathers addressed two questions concerning merit. First, "Is the unjustified able to merit condignly initial justification?"[1] I will not discuss this question, since there was no serious theologian at any point during the Tridentine proceedings who maintained that it was possible to merit condignly initial justification. A second question, however, did agitate the minds of the fathers, which may be stated as, "Once one is transformed by inhering righteousness in the process of justification, is this justified Christian able to merit condignly?"

Prior to the Second Vatican Council, most theologians seem to have held that Trent had actually defined the claim that the justified Christian is able to merit condignly, while in

[1] This article prescinds from any discussion of the more complicated question concerning the role of congruous merit prior to initial justification. This topic has been treated by Heiko Augustinus Oberman, "The Tridentine Decree on Justification in the Light of Late Medieval Theology," *Journal for Theology and the Church* 3 (1967): 28-54; "Duns Scotus, Nominalism, and the Council of Trent," in H. A. Oberman, *The Dawn of the Reformation: Essays in Late Medieval and Early Reformation Thought* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1992), 204-33; Hanns Rückert, "Promereri. Eine Studie zum tridentinischen Recht- fertigungsdekret als Antwort an H. A. Oberman," *Zeitschrift fur Theologie und Kirche* 68 (1971): 162-94.

contemporary ecumenical discussions there has been a tendency to read the Tridentine doctrine on merit purely in terms of a gratuitous gift.[2] In this article I will attempt to determine whether the fathers of the Council of Trent intended in canon 32 of the *Decretum de iustificatione* to define a doctrine of merit that is notionally equivalent to condign merit. To this end, in the first part of this article I will trace the conciliar debates and various schemata that led to the formulation of canon 32. In the second part I will offer a reflection on the final form of the decree in light of the debates.

[2] F. X. de Abarzuza, O.F.M.Cap., *Manuale theologiae dogmaticae*, 2d ed. (Madrid: Ediciones Studium, 1956), 3:521; Severino Gonzalez, S.J., "*De gratia*," in Iosepho A. De Aldama, S.J., Richardo Franco, S.J., Severino Gonzalez, S.J., Francisco A. P. Sola, S.J., and Iosepho F. Sagues, S.J., *Sacrae theologiae summa*, 4th ed. (Madrid: Biblioteca De Autores Cristianos, 1967), 4:694-95; Jean Herrmann, *Institutiones theologicae dogmaticae*, 7th ed. (Lyons: E. Vitte, 1937), 326; J. M. Hervé, *Manuale theologiae dogmaticae*, 16th ed. (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Bookshop, 1943), 3:243; H. Hurter, S.J., *Theologiae dogmaticae compendium*, 12th ed. (Innsbruck: Libraria Academica Wagneriana, 1908), 3:204; Ludovico Lercher, S.J., *Institutiones theologiae dogmaticae*, 3d ed. (Innsbruck: Feliciani Rauch, 1948), 4.1:109; J. Riviere, "Mérite," *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique contenant l'exposé des doctrines de la théologie catholique, leurs preuves et leur histoire*, ed. E. Amann, E. Mangenot, and A. Vacant (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1928), 10.1: 757; Ludwig Ott, *Grundriss der katholischen Dogmatik* (Freiburg: Herder, 1959), 320; Christian Pesch, *Praelectiones dogmaticae*, 4th ed. (Freiburg im Breisgau: B. Herder, 1916), 5:247; Joseph Pohle and Arthur Preuss, *Grace, Actual and Habitual: A Dogmatic Treatise*, 6th ed. (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co, 1929), 407; Adolphe Tanquerey, *Synopsis theologiae dogmaticae*, 27th ed. (Paris: Desclée et Socii, 1953), 3:195-96.

In postconciliar ecumenical work, theologians have tended either to read Trent by avoiding the use of the terms *condign* and *congruous* as well as the concepts thereof, or to read the council as having affirmed merit as a reward to a promise. Carl J. Peter, "The Decree on Justification in the Council of Trent," in H. George Anderson, T. Austin Murphy, and Joseph A. Burgess, *Justification by Faith* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985); Karl Lehmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg, *The Condemnations of the Reformation Era: Do They Still Divide?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 66-68. Pesch argues that the Catholic Church should "take leave of the *concept* and *word* of 'merit'" (Otto Hermann Pesch, "The Canons of the Tridentine Decree on Justification: To Whom Did They Apply? To Whom Do They Apply Today?" in *Justification by Faith: Do the Sixteenth-Century Condemnations Still Apply?* ed. Karl Lehmann, trans. Michael Root and William G. Rusch [New York, N.Y.: Continuum, 1997], 191).

I. Background to Canon 32

A) Remote Background

The occasion for canon 32 of the *Decretum de iustificatione* was the denial on the part of Protestant theologians of the doctrine of merit as it had been expressed in the medieval period. In the late Middle Ages, the question of condign merit was frequently discussed, perhaps most notably by St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-74).[3] Aquinas treated merit in the *Summa theologiae* within his questions on grace, categorizing it "as an effect of cooperating grace."[4] He also distinguished between merit and reward, for "a reward means something bestowed by reason of merit."[5] Therefore, merit is a function of justice, and justice depends on the equality between agents. Now man is not God's equal, so he cannot by his own nature make a claim on God.[6] For Aquinas the possibility of meriting is a result of divine ordination: in his wisdom God "will bring things to their end in a way appropriate to their natures."[7] God is not "our debtor simply but His own, inasmuch as it is right that His will should be carried out."[8] In order to accomplish this end, God has made this relationship possible by giving man the grace necessary to accomplish what by the power of his nature alone he could not.

There are two types of merit: condign merit and congruous merit. Condign merit is the right in strict justice to a reward,

[3] For Aquinas's view of merit, see Joseph Wawrykow, *God's Grace and Human Action: 'Merit' in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995); Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas,* ed. J. Patout Burns (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1971).

[4] *STh* I-II, q 114, prooem. References to the *Summa Theologiae* are taken from Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (Lander, Wy.: Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012).

[5] *STh* I-II, q 114, a. 1.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Michael Root, "Aquinas, Merit, and Reformation Theology after the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*," *Modern Theology* 20 (2004): 12.

[8] *STh* I-II, q 114, a. 1, ad 3.

whereas congruous merit is based on what is fitting in a given situation. Aquinas noted that, insofar as a man's meritorious work proceeds from his free will, he can merit only congruously. By grace, however, God makes us participators in the divine nature and adopted "sons of God."[9] Therefore, insofar as a meritorious work proceeds from the Holy Spirit working in man, man can merit condignly. Aquinas saw this doctrine of merit as grounded in scriptural affirmations such as, "There is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just judge, will render to me in that day" (2 Tim 4:8).

Concerning the object of merit, Aquinas strictly delineated that which can and that which cannot be merited. Man cannot merit initial justification,[10] nor can one who has committed mortal sin merit his own restoration to grace, either condignly or congruously,[11] nor can one merit the gift of final perseverance.[12] Once one is an adopted son, he can condignly merit an increase in grace.[13] One may merit congruously, but never condignly, the first grace for another, and one can also condignly merit eternal life.[14]

The main elements of Aquinas's teaching—such as the inability to merit condignly initial justification, the necessity of being in the state of grace, the necessity of grace for meritorious acts, and the necessity of being in Christ—are shared by all orthodox theologians. Nevertheless, among late medieval and early modern theologians there were also a number of important distinctions and emphases concerning condign merit. Some theologians such as Thomas Netter (ca. 1375-1430) thought that the terms *condign* and *congruous* should be avoided altogether and that one should simply speak of merit *ex*

[9] *STh* I-II, q 114, a. 3.
[10] *STh* I-II, q 114, a. 5.
[11] *STh* I-II, q 114, a. 7.
[12] *STh* I-II, q 114, a. 9.
[13] *STh* I-II, q 114, a. 8.
[14] *STh* I-II, q 114, a. 2.

gratia.[15] John Duns Scotus (1266-1308) held that works of the justified are condignly meritorious by virtue of the divine promise,[16] while Tommaso de Vio, O.P. (1468-1534) and Domingo de Soto, O.P. (1494-1560) taught that works are condignly meritorious by virtue of the works themselves.[17] What marks almost all views of condign merit is that merit is not merely a function of mercy but also a function of justice.

Martin Luther found this language of merit deeply troubling, but he and later Lutheran theologians were perfectly willing to grant the use of the term as long as it was essentially reduced to a form of mercy, removing any notion of justice from its meaning.[18] As early as 1518, Luther appears to have denied

[15] Thomas Netter, *Thomae Waldensis Anglici Carmelitae, theologi praestantissimi, doctrinale antiquitatum fidei Ecclesiae Catholicae* (Venice: Apud Iordanum Zilettum, 1571), 3: fol. 25.

[16] Scotus is sometimes understood as affirming that merit is based solely on the divine acceptation. Andreas Vega, *De iustificatione doctrina universa, libris XV. absolute tradita & contra omnes omnium errores, iuxta germanam sententiam Orthodoxæ veritatis, & sacri Concilij Tridentini, præclare defensa . . . Cum indice triplici, videlicet* (Cologne: Apud Geruinum Calenium & Haeredes Quentelios, 1572 [repr. Ridgewood, N.J., The Gregg Press, 1964]), 789. Richard Cross argues that Scotus acknowledged both condign and congruous merit. For Scotus, merit is not based on mere acceptation since this would be a gross form of voluntarism. Scotus's doctrine of merit includes other aspects. "For example Scotus argues that God loves acts 'according to their goodness' and that God 'accepts them with reference to some good which ought to be justly awarded to it'" (Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1999], 103). On Bonaventure see Constantino Ferraro, *Doctrina de merito apud S. Bonaventuram* (Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, 1956).

[17] Tommaso de Vio, *Prima secundae partis Summae sacrae theologiae sancti Thomas Aquinatis, doctoris angelici* (Antwerp: Apud Viduam & Haeredes Joannis Stelsii, 1576) on q. 114, a. 3. Cajetan's later *De fide operibus adversus Lutheranos* puts a much stronger emphasis on the pact made between God and man. Tommaso de Vio, *Opuscula omnia Thomae De Vio Caietani. . . in tres distincta tomos, variis quaestionibus, cum suis conclusionibus, ac utilissimis annotationibus appositis, recèns aucta atque locupletata. Quibus accessere ad obiecta aliqua sanè quàm acutae responsiones, aliàque permulta, quae sequens index indicabit. Item tractatus quidam contra modernos Martini Lutheri sectatores, & eorum praecipuos errores, nunquam antehac impressus* (Lyon: Apud haeredes Iacobi Iuntae, 1562), 290.

[18] See, e.g., Chemnitz, *Examen decretorum concilii tridentini: In qvo ex sacrae scripturae norma, collatis etiam orthodoxis uerae & purioris antiquitatis testimonijs*

formally the doctrine of merit. [19] Later, in *The Bondage of the Will*, he argued that the Scholastics were actually worse than the Pelagians, since the Pelagians at least "confess and assert condign merit, simply, candidly, and ingenuously, calling a spade a spade and a fig a fig, and teaching what they really believe."[20] By the time of his *Commentary on Galatians* (1535), Luther's venom against the doctrine of merit was rather more pronounced, for he called it the "theology of the antichristian kingdom"[21] and the "tricks of Satan."[22] When Luther stated, "Trying to merit grace is trying to placate God with sins,"[23] he clearly included works both before and after grace.[24]

There are several reasons why Luther had a fundamental problem with either the justified or the unjustified meriting anything *coram Deo*. First, there is a basic anthropological problem in Luther's doctrine of concupiscence. "A good work, well done, is a venial sin according to the mercy of God, but a mortal sin according to the judgment of God"[25] and therefore

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ostenditur, qualia sint illa decreta, & quo artificio sint composita 1 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Feierabend & Hüter, 1566), 933.

[19] Reinhard Schinzer, *Die doppelte Verdienstlehre des Spätmittelalters und Luthers reformatorische Entdeckung*, Theologische Existenz heute [n.F.], n. 168 (München: Kaiser, 1971), 53-54.

[20] Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, vol. 33 of *Luther's Works*, ed. Philip S. Watson and Helmut Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 268 (hereafter *LW*).

[21] Martin Luther, *Commentary on the Galatians* (1535) (*LW* 27:124).

[22] Ibid. (*LW* 27:125).

[23] Ibid. (*LW* 27:126). See also E. Disley, "Degrees of Glory: Protestant Doctrine and the Concept of Rewards Hereafter," *Journal of Theological Studies* 42 (1991): 85-95, 105, which shows how the early Protestants opposed the idea of condign merit especially. On Calvin's doctrine of merit, see Charles Raith II, "Calvin's Critique of Merit, and Why Aquinas (Mostly) Agrees," *Pro Ecclesia* 20 (2011): 135-66; Charles Raith II, "Aquinas and Calvin on Merit, Part II: Condignity and Participation," *Pro Ecclesia* 21 (2012): 195-210. Calvin's views on merit, however, were not important at the Council in the debates on justification, where he was mentioned only three times: *Concilium Tridentinum: Diariorum, actorum, epistularum, tractatuum nova collection* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1911), 5:269.42; 435.27; 487.32 (hereafter *CT*).

[24] Luther, *Commentary on the Galatians* (1535) (*LW* 27:127).

[25] *Assertio omnium articulorum M. Lutheri per bullam Leonis X* [*The Assertion of All the Articles of M. Luther by the Bull of Leo X*] (1520) (*Weimarer Ausgabe* [Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1897 (hereafter *WA*)] 7:138.25-28, 138.37-139.1);

could never be pleasing to God. Second, Luther argued that merit, understood as a right to a reward, presupposes that man can make a claim on God in justice, but God is not a debtor to any person. Third, Luther introduced into Protestant thought a radical separation of law and gospel which was subsequently advanced as doctrine in the Lutheran confessional documents.[26] For Luther law and gospel are not just distinct but also antithetical.[27] The gospel does not demand one's works in justice or command one to do anything but invites one simply to receive the offered grace of the forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation.[28]

Luther was correct that the major schools of late medieval thought, whether Dominican or Franciscan, made merit at least in part a function of justice. In these schools "condign merit" is partly measured by justice, and thus it gives a real claim to a reward. As we will see, to most of the council fathers of Trent Luther's position on merit was inconsistent with the deposit of faith.

B) Proximate Background

After much delay, the Council of Trent finally opened on December 13, 1545, with four cardinals, four archbishops, twenty-one bishops, and five superior generals of mendicant

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"Omne opus iusti damnabile est et peccatum mortale, si iudicio Dei iudicetur" (*WA* 7:138.29-30).

[26] *Epitome 5, 4-6*, in *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1998), 790-91.

[27] Luther writes, "lex est negatio Christi" (*WA* 40-2:18.4-5). "Hic iterum videmus Legem et Evangelium quae inter se longissime distincta et plus quam contradictoria separata sunt, affectu coniunctissima esse" (*In epistolam s. Pauli ad Galatas commentarius* [*WA* 40-1:520.25-26]). On the issue of law and gospel, see G. Söhngen, "Gesetz und Evangelium," *Catholica* 14 (1960): 81-105; F. Böckle, *Gesetz und Gewissen: Grundfragen theologischer Ethik in ökumenischer Sicht* (Lucerne: Räber Verlag, 1965); O. Pesch, "Law and Gospel: Luther's Teaching in the Light of the Disintegration of Normative Morality," *The Thomist* 34 (1970): 84-113.

[28] *WA* 36:30-31.

orders present.[29] The council was to be presided over by three papal legates, Cardinals Giovanni Maria Ciocchi del Monte, Marcello Cervini, and Reginald Pole, two of whom were later elected pope. Early on it was decided that the council would deal simultaneously with questions of dogma and reform, such that at each session there would be a dogmatic decree affirming the faith of the Church and a reform decree.[30] The council also intentionally avoided attempting to resolve those matters that had been debated by the various Catholic schools of thought which were not contrary to the Catholic faith. It also decided not to condemn heretics by name, choosing instead to condemn those errors that were thought to trespass on the teaching of Christ and his Church.[31]

As was customary in councils, one of the first acts was to profess solemnly the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (in the third session). The council wished to take up first the questions of original sin and justification, to which the issue of merit was tied, but on February 7 the legates decided instead to take up the issue of Scripture and Tradition.[32] The council debated these issues, eventually approving its decree in the fourth session, on April 8, 1546.[33] It then took up the question of original sin on May 24, 1546 and approved the decree in the fifth session, on June 17, 1546.[34]

[29] John W. O'Malley, *Trent: What Happened at the Council* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), 75.

[30] Hubert Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, vol. 2, trans. Dom Ernest Graf, O.S.B. (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1957-61), 52-53. Ludwig von Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages,* 3d ed. (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1950), 12:253.

[31] Hubert Jedin, "Council of Trent and Reunion: Historical Notes," *Heythrop Journal* 3 (1962): 8-9.

[32] Jedin, *History of the Council of Trent*, 2:53.

[33] Ibid., 2:90.

[34] Ibid., 2:132, 160.

C) The Beginning of the Discussion on Justification

The discussion on the doctrine of justification opened on June 21.[35] On June 22, 1546, the legates proposed six questions on justification to the minor theologians (theologians who were not bishops).[36] Unfortunately, we do not know by whom or how the questions were formed.[37] The questions were as follows:

1. What is meant by justification both as regards the name and the thing?
2. What are the causes of justification? What is God's part in the process and what is man's?
3. How are the faithful to understand the assertion that man is saved by faith?
4. Do works play a role in the process of justification—both before and after—and in what way? What is the role of the sacraments in that process?
5. What is the process of justification—what precedes, accompanies, and follows it?
6. By what proofs from scripture, the Fathers, councils, and the apostolic traditions is the Catholic doctrine supported?[38]

It is immediately evident that five of the six questions come down to the issue of agency: who is the agent, or who are the agents, in the act of justification? Is it man alone, or is it God alone, or is it a dual agency? This is significant, for any doctrine of merit in the proper sense is dependent on a type of dual agency.

From June 22 until June 28, the discussion of these questions occurred in six congregations of theologians.[39] While most of the speeches of the minor theologians have been lost, Marcus Laureus, O.P., wrote a brief summary of their discussions, concluding that the theologians were in agreement that "works done after justification conserve and increase justification and

[35] *CT* 5:257.

[36] *CT* 5:261.26-35. On the role of minor theologians at Trent, see Nelson H. Minnich, "The Voice of Theologians in General Councils from Pisa to Trent," *Theological Studies* 59 (1998): 420-41.

[37] Jedin, *History of the Council of Trent*, 2:176.

[38] Ibid.

[39] *CT* 5:262-81. Jedin, *History of the Council of Trent*, 2:177-80.

are meritorious of eternal life when they are informed by the grace and merits of Christ." He also noted that "most of the theologians affirmed that . . . works done after justification are *condignly* meritorious of eternal life."[40]

We also have preserved the lengthy speech of the papal theologian Alphonsus Salmeron, S.J. (1515-85), delivered on June 23. This speech was primarily concerned with the issue of first justification, but toward the end Salmeron affirmed that good works performed after justification are meritorious.[41] He also identified ten errors that he wanted condemned by the council, the last four of which directly concern the ability of the justified to merit: (1) the justified are incapable of fulfilling the law, and they sin in all their works; (2) the justified cannot increase in justification; (3) the justified are not able to merit eternal life; and (4) the justified are not able to perform works of satisfaction.[42]

On June 30, 1546, the legates presented to the general congregation a brief document entitled *De iustificatione adultorum,* which was read to the fathers by Cardinal Del Monte.[43] This document had emerged from the discussions of the minor theologians and contained two important elements crucial to subsequent discussions. First and most importantly, the document distinguished three states (*tres status*) in the process of justification. The first state (*primus status*) is that initial justification whereby a person is made a believer out of an unbeliever.[44] The second state (*secundus status*) finds the justified individual in a state of grace, living a life faithful to

[40] "Opera vero post iustificationem conservant et augent iustitiam et sunt meritoria vitae aeternae, cum sint informata gratia et meritis Christi. In haec sententia omnes convenerunt, quamvis supradiciti quatuor visi sunt extenuasse meritum operum. Et maior pars theologorum dixit, quod opera disponentia ad iustificationem sunt meritoria iustificationis de congruo, opera vero post iustificationem sunt meritoria vitae aeternae de condigno" (*CT* 5:280.38-44).

[41] *CT* 5:272.14-15.

[42] *CT* 5:272.24-28.

[43] Jedin, *History of the Council of Trent*, 2:181.

[44] *CT* 5:281-82.

Christ and attempting to obtain the end, heaven, which Christ desires for him. The third state (*tertius status*) is the restoration to justification after the justified has fallen. This tripartite division allowed for conceptual clarity in dealing with the place of works and merit in the Christian life.

Second, the document offered a list of errors, and these twenty-two errors were arranged under the tripartite division. It is useful for identifying what was thought to be at issue at this stage in the debate, particularly as it pertains to the second state of justification (*secundus status iustificationis*). There are two errors that draw our attention:

7. Good works following justice signify only themselves, and they do not justify, that is merit an increase of justice.
8. The works of the just do not merit eternal life.[45]

These errors do not qualify the term *merit* in any way and therefore leave open the possibility that it could be understood as either congruous or condign merit. Nevertheless, we are able to come to a conclusion about the meaning of the term in these errors by looking at another error. Error five condemns the proposition that "the good works of the just are sins and merit hell,"[46] and this can only refer to a merit based on justice. Hell, as Catholic theologians of the time agreed, can only be said to be merited in justice. At this stage it would appear that the term *merit* in errors seven and eight was used univocally for condign merit. While these errors would "play no role" in subsequent debate,[47] they are useful for telling us what was in the mind of the council fathers at this point.

From July 15 to July 23, the council fathers discussed the issues dealing with the second and third stages of justification in

[45] "7. Quod opera bona sequentia iustitiam eam tantum significant, nec iustificant, id est iustitiae augmentum merentur. 8. Quod opera iusti non merentur vitam aeternam" (*CT* 5:282.20-23).

[46] "5. Quod omnia opera iustificati sint peccata et infernum mereantur" (*CT* 5:282.19).

[47] Jedin, *History of the Council of Trent*, 2:182.

eight general congregations.[48] As they did, the theological battle over justification and merit became increasingly antagonistic, as illustrated in the infamous behavior of two bishops. Already in late June, Dionisio de Zanettini, known by his nickname Grechetto, the Franciscan bishop of Chironissa, had accused the entire Augustinian Order of being infected by the teachings of Luther.[49] Then, during a speech to the general congregation of July 17, 1546, Tommaso Sanfelice, the bishop of La Cava, reasserted the theory of double justification and explicitly denied the value of good works.[50] This only confirmed some of Zanettini's suspicions about the extent of the infection. As the council fathers were preparing to leave, Zanettini insulted Sanfelice to another bishop, muttering under his breath that "he is either a knave or a fool." This sentiment was encouraged by the bishop of Bertinoro, who added that he had often told Sanfelice that he "does not understand these things at all." Sanfelice overheard these remarks and reproached his insulter by asking, "What are you saying?" Zanettini repeated his words: "Yes, you are either a knave or a fool." Sanfelice grabbed Zanettini's beard, shaking him so violently that he was left with a handful of hair. Zanettini, unruffled by the violence done to his person, shouted, "I have said that the Bishop of La Cava is either a knave or a fool, and I shall prove it!"[51] Sanfelice had struck a bishop, a crime punishable by excommunication, and he was immediately imprisoned in a local monastery.

Aside from this excitement, very little was said about merit during the debates on the second and third states of justification. On July 16, a number of fathers raised the question of the value of good works and merit. The view of the archbishop of Armaugh, Robert Wauchope, is important, for he became one of the drafters of the so-called July draft, which was the first form of the decree. The archbishop affirmed that,

[48] *CT* 5:340-84.

[49] *CT* 10:539.19. Jedin, *History of the Council of Trent*, 2:181.

[50] *CT* 5:352-54.

[51] This story is recounted in Jedin, *History of the Council of Trent*, 2:191. See also von Pastor, *History of the Popes*, 12:341.

without the grace of God, man can do nothing on his own. After justification, however, "works increase justice and are the fruits but not the signs of justification." He continued, "Works after justification merit and a reward is owed to them *de condigno*, insofar as they proceed from the grace of God." These good works which come from the Holy Spirit also proceed from our free will by the grace of God.[52]

The issue came up again on July 20, when Juan Fonseca, bishop of Castellamare, outlined the different types of works and their relationship to merit. He divided man's works into four categories. First, works that proceed merely from man's will and are not meritorious. Second, works that are aided by prevenient grace and are meritorious *de congruo*. Third, works that proceed from justifying grace and are meritorious *de congruo*. Fourth, works that proceed from the Holy Spirit and are meritorious *de condigno*. Fonseca also specified the two objects of merit as an increase in grace and eternal life. He finally noted that just as evil merits evil, so good merits good. If one's observance of the commandments is not meritorious, then any transgressions of the commandments could hardly be demeritorious.[53]

In the general congregation on July 23, the debate over merit continued. Girolamo Seripando (1493-1563), the General of the Hermits of St. Augustine, the order to which Luther had belonged, did not directly take up the issue of double justice but it pervaded his thought. This is most evident when he came to the question of merit. Seripando asked "Whether the works by which we are led to eternal life can be called merits?" He

[52] "Opera post iusticationem augent iustitiam et sunt fructus, non signa iusticationis. Item sacramenta etiam augent gratiam post iusticationem, quae opera post iusticationem merentur et debetur eis merces, etiam de condigno, quatenus sc. procedunt a gratia Dei" (*CT* 5:346.8-13). Angelo Massarelli also summarized the opinion of an unnamed council father who held that justice received was increased and that "Opera non sunt signa, sed fructus iustificationis, et tunc meretur et debetur eis merces de condigno" (*CT* 5:379.11-12). I suspect that this is actually a summary of Robert Wauchope's view, but it is not certain.

[53] *CT* 5:363.

answered that eternal life is called a reward and a grace; however, while works *"can"* be called merits, they *"must"* be called gifts.[54] He warned of the pride that is associated with those who speak of their merits; while heaven can be spoken of in terms of wage, this should be understood as a grace.[55] He therefore logically concluded that if man is crowned, he is crowned on account of mercy and not on account of his merits.[56]

Seripando was followed by the General of the Carmelites, Nicolas Audet, who set forth with perspicuity the Catholic doctrine on the power of grace in the regenerate. Audet's keen piece began with a consideration of the transformation that takes place in the Christian as a son of God. Through good works the justified is able not only to conserve but also to increase his justification. Audet clearly rejected any suggestion that the works of the righteous are in themselves mortal sin which is not imputed to us on account of the divine mercy. Rather, the good works are not only from God but also from man when moved by the grace of God. This is clear from Christ's words that a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit (Matt 7:18). Finally, Audet insisted that merit does not detract from the grace of God or the merits of Christ. It rather exalts the power of God's grace since it shows how man's fallen nature has been elevated so that man is an adopted son of God and therefore is able to merit.[57]

The General of the Servites, Agostino Bonucci, spoke last. According to the summary of his speech, it was clearly a response to Audet. He first stated that the justified are conserved in justice principally by the grace of God, a position that his opponents would not deny; but he went on to argue that while good works increase justice, they do not do so "effectively" but from the goodness of God and by the merits of

[54] *CT* 5:373.38-41.
[55] *CT* 5:373.42-46.
[56] *CT* 5:374.1.
[57] *CT* 5:377.10-19.

Christ. The good works are meritorious of eternal life in so far as God accepts them and not in so far as they are our own.[58]

D) The July Draft

After these debates, four prelates, Cornelio Musso, Giacomo Giacomelli, Benedetto de'Nobili, and Robert Wauchope, were chosen by secret ballot in order to draw up the first draft of a decree, which became known as the July draft.[59] The draft was presented to the general congregation on July 24, 1546 and contained an introduction, three chapters, and twenty-one canons.[60] This draft clearly rejected a number of points that were essential to the views of the Reformers and to the adherents of double justice. First, it rejected any understanding of the justified person as remaining in sin (canon 4).[61] It also anathematized the restriction of justification to remission of sins alone (canon 5) and the denial of justification as also a gift of righteousness (*donationem iustitiae*). Thus the justified has not only put off the old man, but put on the new, that is, not only has he died to sin, but he also lives in justice.[62] Canon 6 made it clear that this gift of righteousness that makes us just is not the righteousness of Christ but is the habit (*habitus*) of grace.[63]

This transformative understanding of justification logically entailed a certain doctrine of merit and excluded another. There were two canons that dealt with the merit of the justified Christian: canons 14 and 15. Each of these short canons was followed by a longer explanation of the canon. Canon 14

[58] *CT* 5:370.47-54.

[59] Jedin, *History of the Council of Trent*, 2:193. There is debate over the authorship of this first draft. The draft was originally thought to be the work of Andres de Vega. See Jedin, *History of the Council of Trent*, 2:193; Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 258.

[60] *CT* 5:384-91.

[61] *CT* 5:386.12-17.

[62] *CT* 5:386.18-24.

[63] *CT* 5:386.25-33.

anathematized those who deny that good works increase grace *coram Deo,* then asserted that good works of the justified are not only the fruits but also the "cause of justification."[64] Canon 15 introduced several themes that would persist throughout subsequent drafts of the decree. First, the canon anathematized anyone who says that "merit is pride" when speaking of the works of the justified.[65] In the explanatory portion the draft noted that Christians are instructed by the Scriptures "to do good," "to be rich in good deeds," and "to lay up treasure for themselves" (1 Tim 6:18-19). It went on to affirm that those who, like Moses, seek a reward do not sin. Second, while the canon did not use the phrase "true merit" (*verum meritum*), it was the first to modify *meritum* with *verum*: "The merit of those works is true."[66] To make it clear that this is a true merit and not merely a merit *secundum quid*, the canon specified that this "crown of justice" is given "by the just judge."[67] The canon also specified only two objects of this merit: an "increase of grace" and "the glory of eternal life." The canon was also clear that it is only the justified who are able to merit and that this is on account of being engrafted into Christ.

In the subsequent discussions on the July draft, the comments of the theologians were on the whole positive. All but five of the theologians wanted to see the term *habitus* retained, and nothing significant was said on the canon on merit.[68] The council fathers began to discuss the July draft on August 13 in a general congregation, and on the whole they seemed content with the doctrine of the decree but did not like its style or structure.[69] In the general congregation of August 17, many of the fathers admitted to being unprepared to discuss the July draft. Canon 15, however, did not come under scrutiny;

[64] *CT* 5:389.15.

[65] "Si quis dixerit, de bonis operibus iustificati hominis loquens: *Superba vox est meritum*: anathema sit" (*CT* 5:389.16-17).

[66] "Verum enim est meritum operum illorum" (*CT* 5:389.16-21).

[67] *CT* 5:389.16-33.

[68] *CT* 5:392-93.

[69] *CT* 5:402-5.

the reference to merit being true appears to have been sufficient.[70]

E) The September Draft

The legates, however, appear to have decided that the July draft was inadequate on the very day it was set before the council, for on that day Cervini called for Seripando and requested him to draw up a new draft.[71] Seripando drew up a draft known as preliminary draft A (hereafter Draft A) which was submitted to the legates on August 11. He was asked two weeks later to rewrite the document, which was done by August 29 and was known as preliminary draft B (hereafter Draft B).[72] Although neither was presented to the council, these two drafts are important, for Seripando effectively introduced into subsequent decrees long doctrinal chapters preceding the canons, whereas previous decrees were essentially a list of canons with theological explanations appended to the canons. Draft A used the term *merit*.[73] Draft B is noteworthy for two key reasons. First, it introduced the notion of double justice: the eighth chapter was entitled *De duplici iustitia*.[74] Here Seripando avoided an explicit discussion of imputed or infused righteousness, instead preferring biblical terms. Second, the draft contained a number of points that retreated from some positions of the July draft. Both chapter 15 and canon 8 employed the term *merit* in reference to the justified;[75] and while Seripando preferred to speak principally in terms of promise and a reward, he also spoke in terms of justice. He explicitly mentioned "the just judge" who will render to every man according to his works. Both Draft A and Draft B are notable in that Seripando appears to have taken the effort to

[70] *CT* 5:408-9.
[71] Jedin, *History of the Council of Trent*, 2:239.
[72] Ibid., 2:240.
[73] *CT* 5:821-28.
[74] *CT* 5:829.
[75] *CT* 5:831-32.

incorporate the majority views on merit that were clearly inconsistent with his own personal theological views, even introducing the term *merit*.

Cervini found Seripando's Draft B inadequate and had it revised.[76] After consultation with a large number of theologians and bishops, he presented this draft, now known as the September draft, to the general congregation on September 23, 1546.[77] The draft was considerably longer than the July draft, with eleven chapters and twenty-one canons.[78] In Seripando's opinion, Draft B was so "deformed" that he could no longer either recognize or approve it.[79]

For our purposes, there are a couple of key points that must be noted about the September draft. First, the draft was clear that one may not merit initial justification and that all works that precede justification are excluded from initial justification as "merits properly [*proprie*] called."[80] The use of the term *proprie* as a qualifier of merit is helpful, for it makes clear two things. First, the fathers understood that there is a distinction between merit properly called and a quasi-merit, and they intended to make this distinction in non-Scholastic terms. Second, the draft clearly attempted to delineate a transformative understanding of justification whereby it is not only the forgiveness of sin but also the transformation into God's friend. The draft was equally clear that they "are not two justices which are given to us. . . . There is one justice of God through Jesus Christ by which we are not merely considered to be just but we are named and are truly just."[81] This clearly excludes Luther's view as well as Seripando's. Finally the decree explicitly linked

[76] Jedin, *History of the Council of Trent*, 2:241; Jean Rivière, "La doctrine du mérite au concile de Trente," *Revue des sciences religieuses* 7 (1927): 274.

[77] *CT* 5:420-27.

[78] *CT* 5:426-27.

[79] *CT* 2:430.3-5.

[80] *CT* 5:423.16-19.

[81] "Ita non sunt duae iustitiae, quae nobis dantur, Dei et Christi, sed una iustitia Dei per Iesum Christum, (hoc est caritas ipsa vel gratia), qua iustificati non modo reputamur, sed vere iusti nominamur et sumus" (*CT* 5:423.34-36).

its transformationalist understanding with its teaching on works and merits so that those who are justified are called to eternal life, which is both a promise and a reward to good works. God's grace is a fountain leading man to perform works.

The canons presented a clearer understanding of merit. Canon 21 reads:

> If anyone says that the justified man, who has become a living member of Jesus Christ, does not merit eternal life by his good works, or that the good works of the just are the gift of God in such a way that through His grace they are not good merits: anathema sit.[82]

One may note several things about this canon. First, the subject of the canon is the justified. Second, the good works performed are not the result of grace in such a way that they are not also merits. Finally, the use of the word "true" as a modifier of merit is now absent from the text. This is probably due to the influence of Seripando's preliminary drafts, which spoke of merit but dropped the "true" of the July draft.

The September draft was immediately taken up by the minor theologians in three congregations of theologians held September 27-29.[83] Unfortunately, their interventions are only summarized, and so it is difficult to understand precisely what they were getting at. There was only a single objection to canon 21 recorded: Jean de Conseil, O.F.M., wanted the term *bona merita* deleted, but no explanation is given.[84] There is one point in these discussions, however, concerning merit prior to initial justification that helps to clarify how the council understood the term *merit*. The theologians repeatedly discussed the issue of "merit properly [*proprie*] called" with respect to good works prior to initial justification. A number of the theologians argued that all merit is excluded prior to justification, not just merit in

[82] "Si quis hominem iustificatum et vivum Christi Iesu membrum effectum dixerit non mereri bonis operibus vitam aeternam; aut bona opera iustorum ita esse dona Dei, ut per eius gratiam non sint etiam bona merita: anathema sit" (*CT* 5:427.47-49).

[83] *CT* 5:432-33 (27th edition); 5:433-34; 436-440 (28th edition).

[84] *CT* 5:432.31-32. 439.14-15.

the proper sense.[85] Thus the qualification of merit by the term *proper* signifies a merit partially grounded in justice.

From October 1 to October 12, fifty-eight fathers of the council discussed the September draft in nine general congregations.[86] The bishops, like the theologians before them, repeatedly took up the question of *proprie* with respect to good works prior to initial justification. On the whole they expressed disapproval of the phrase and wished to deny all merit prior to justification. For our purposes, what is interesting is that although the expression "merit *proprie*" was non-Scholastic, it was understood as the conceptual equivalent of the Scholastic "condign merit." The General of the Conventuals, Bonaventura Costacciaro, O.F.M.Conv., for example, was clear that congruous merit, or "improper merit" (*secundum quid),* is distinct from condign merit, which is "proper" or "true" merit.[87]

During the nine days on which the draft was discussed, only one of the council fathers took up the issue of merit in canon 21. Costacciaro explicitly affirmed Aquinas's discussion of condign merit, concluding that a just man may both "justly" seek a reward and "can *justly* expect a reward before the tribunal of God" for his works.[88] He not only used the adverb "justly" but immediately noted that the context of the reward is the just tribunal of God. For Costacciaro, man is able to fulfill the law through grace according to the substance of the works and according to the intention of the one who commands, that is, God. Most interesting is that Costacciaro does not appear to have noticed the subtle change that took place between the July and September drafts, and he appears still to have been reading "merit" in the sense of condign merit.[89]

[85] *CT* 5:439. 43-44; 441.29-34.

[86] Jedin, *History of the Council of Trent*, 2:244. There were no general congregations on October 3, 4, and 10 (*CT* 5:442-97).

[87] *CT* 5:480.8-13. See also *CT* 5:452.34-36.

[88] *CT* 5:483.27-37.

[89] Hubert Jedin, *Papal Legate at the Council of Trent, Cardinal Seripando* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1947), 357.

The debates over the September draft reveal that the council fathers were preoccupied with the issues of double justification and the certainty of salvation.[90] On October 15, therefore, the legates decided to pose two questions to the minor theologians on these two issues.[91] Seripando had originally composed the question on double justification, and in his form the question contained no discussion of merit. The question, to Seripando's chagrin, was revised by Cardinal Del Monte. Del Monte introduced a crucial phrase that would help to bring the issue of merit in the justified to the fore. The new question asked,

> Has the justified, who has performed good works in a state of grace and with the help of actual grace—both which stem from the merits of Christ—and who has thus preserved inherent justice, so completely met the claims of divine justice *that when he appears before the judgment seat of Christ he obtains eternal life on account of his own merits*?[92]

The question now directly related the issue of double justification to the issue of merit.

The theologians discussed these two questions from October 15 to October 26,[93] and there were only five supporters of double justice: Aurelius of Rocca Contracta, Marianus of Feltre, Stephen Sestino, Lorenzo Mazochi, and Antonio Solis.[94] What

[90] On double justification, see Stephan Ehses, "Johannes Groppers Rechtfertigungslehre auf dem Konzil von Trient," *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und für Kirchengeschichte* 20 (1906): 175-88; Jedin, *Papal Legate at the Council of Trent, Cardinal Seripando*, 348-92; J. F. McCue, "Double Justification at the Council of Trent: Piety and Theology in Sixteenth Century Roman Catholicism," in Carter Lindberg and George W. Forell, eds., *Piety, Politics, and Ethics: Reformation Studies in Honor of George Wolfgang Forell* (Kirksville, Mo.: Sixteenth Century Journal Publ., Northeast Missouri State Univ, 1984), 39-56; Paul Pas, "La doctrine de la double justice au Concile de Trente," *Ephemerides theologicae Lovaniensis* 30 (1954): 5-53; E. Yarnold, "Duplex iustitia: The Sixteenth Century and the Twentieth," in Henry Chadwick and G. R. Evans, eds., *Christian Authority: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 213-22.

[91] Jedin, *History of the Council of Trent*, 2:249.

[92] Ibid.

[93] *CT* 5:523-633.

[94] See Jedin on the three Augustinians. Jedin, *History of the Council of Trent*, 2:254. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 262.

united all five was their belief that the reception of inhering righteousness leaves man radically incomplete so that his works are equally incomplete without a second justice applied.[95] Merit in the proper sense is simply not possible. Marianus of Feltre, for example, used the theory of the application of the justice of Christ to argue that the good works of the just are not meritorious *de condigno* but are meritorious only "*secundum quid*."[96]

These five theologians were a distinct minority: by the end of the debate of the theologians on October 26, over twenty-eight theologians had rejected double justification.[97] Many of these supported a doctrine of merit based in some respect on justice. Ludovidcus Vitriarius, O.F.M., for example, stated quite bluntly that eternal life is a matter of justice, since God is bound by his own law to give "according to one's works."[98] Other theologians expressed similar attitudes.

It was the Jesuit theologian Diego Laínez who, on the last day of the discussion of the theologians, gave "the most comprehensive refutation of the doctrine of two-fold justice."[99] Laínez was one of the early companions of Ignatius of Loyola and a founding member of the Jesuits. Pope Paul III, impressed with the new order, had asked Ignatius to send some men to serve as the personal theologians of the pope at the council; Ignatius personally chose Laínez, who was already well known to both the pope and the cardinals for his theological expertise.[100]

[95] (Antonio Solis) *CT* 5:576.31-35; (Lorenzo Mazochi) *CT* 5:581-90; (Stephen Sestino) *CT* 5:607-11; (Aurelius of Rocca Contracta) *CT* 5:561-64.

[96] *CT* 5:599.4-10.

[97] Pas, "La doctrine de la double justice au Concile de Trente," 51-52.

[98] Jedin, *History of the Council of Trent*, 2:256.

[99] Ibid., 2:257; Jedin, *Seripando*, 373. Laínez's speech is contained in *CT* 5:612-29, and in Hartmann Grisar, *Jacobi Laínez disputationes tridentinae / ad manuscriptorum fidem edidit et commentariis historicis instruxit Hartmannus Grisar* (Innsbruck: F. Rauch; Neo-Eboraci: Fr. Pustet, 1886).

[100] Juan de Polanco, who became Secretary of the Society of Jesus and an early historian of the order, writes, "Since the learning and piety of Fathers James Laynez and Alphonsus Salmeron were well known to the pontiff and to the principal cardinals of

Laínez began his speech with a simple analogy of a powerful and wealthy king who wants to share his wealth with his subjects. The king has a beloved son who deserved (*promereri*) to inherit all the treasures of the kingdom. The king's son has three servants to whom he offers the reward of a precious jewel, but all three are sick and powerless to fight. To the first servant the son says, "Only believe in me, and I, who merited [*promerui*] the riches of the king's riches, will gratuitously obtain the jewel for you." The second servant is given a large sum of money so that he can redeem himself and be partially healed, buy a horse and weapons, and fight to obtain the jewel. To the third, the son gives freedom, health, and weapons as a gift so that he can fight bravely and merit (*mereri*) the jewel.[101] The state of the first servant is that of the Protestant with merely imputed righteousness. The state of the second reflects the theory of double justice, according to which the servant is not completely healed. This stresses the inadequacy of the servant despite the gifts. The state of the last servant is one in which the servant has been completely healed by the gifts so that the corresponding merits are adequate for obtaining the jewel. Immediately, one should notice a rather striking fact: Laínez's assault was not based simply on the nature of inhering righteousness but rather on the relation of inhering righteousness to merit. Laínez then engaged in a lengthy refutation of imputed righteousness, repeatedly returning to the various Catholic doctrines and practices related to merit.

There are, according to Laínez, twelve arguments against the doctrine of double justification, and many of these relate directly to merit. First, it must be recalled that the rejection of merit is based on the imperfection of inhering justice. Laínez took up this issue first, arguing that inhering justice is not absolutely imperfect: the very possibility of merit suggests that it

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the Roman Curia, in this current year both were sent as theologians of the Pope" (Joseph Ficther, *James Laynez Jesuit* [St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1944], 57). See C. E. Maxcey, "Double Justice, Diego Laynez, and the Council of Trent," *Church History* 48 (1979): 269-78.

[101] *CT* 5:612.11-14.

is not.[102] He further noted that both Scripture and the doctors of the Church teach that that one can merit eternal life.[103] Laínez also argued that double justification leads to a denial of the Catholic doctrines of purgatory and satisfaction. In purgatory, the imperfections of those who die in the state of grace are atoned. Yet if one admits of a second imputed justice that supplies for these imperfections, purgatory is rendered superfluous.[104] Moreover, Laínez suggested that double justice undermines the Catholic doctrine of satisfaction. This is of some import, for between merit and satisfaction there is not a formal but only a material distinction based on their respective effects. Satisfaction is the full payment of a debt, that is, it is nothing more than compensation for an injury done to another.[105] It is therefore part of justice and not merely a part of mercy. Lastly, the credal affirmation that Christ will come to judge the living and the dead, for example, would be emptied of any significance if Christ does not render to the just a reward for their works.[106] Laínez rather forcefully asserted that imputed justice "sins against the throne of justice, and makes it into a throne of mercy."[107]

While Laínez's speech was devastating to the adherents of double justice and their peculiar doctrine of merit, the council fathers had already shown themselves to be utterly unsympathetic to the theory. The Florentine conventual Clemente Tomasini observed, "I know no doctor who taught it, nor did I find it in Scripture," and Gentian Hervet dismissed the theory of double justice as "newly excogitated."[108] Subsequently, the

[102] *CT* 5:614.25-26.

[103] *CT* 5:615.15-20.

[104] *CT* 5:615.45-616.8.

[105] Satisfaction takes on the character of punishment. See *Catechismus romanus seu catechismus ex decreto concilii tridentini ad parochos Pii quinti pont. max. iussu editus*, ed. Petrus Rodríguez et al. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana/Ediciones Univ. de Navarra, 1989), 876.

[106] *CT* 5:616.16-25.

[107] *CT* 5:617.32.

[108] Jedin, *History of the Council of Trent*, 2:257.

drafts of the decrees were increasingly altered so that merit was not only affirmed but also specifically based on justice and not simply on mercy.

F) The November Draft

What was now clear to the council fathers was that the notion of double justice could in no way be affirmed, for it entailed in part a rejection of true merit in the justified. Although Seripando's view of double justice was now defeated, he was again entrusted with revising the draft;[109] this was the draft of October 31.[110] After ten days of drafting, it was given to Del Monte to modify. The "November draft" was presented to the general congregation on November 5, 1546.[111] There were a number of important structural and doctrinal modifications introduced into the discussion. This draft now addressed the question of the "causes" of justification first raised on June 22 and delineated these in Aristotelian terms. Trent is sometimes faulted for the insertion of Aristotelian causation into an otherwise biblical presentation; however, the genius of this insertion is that it helps to make clear two central claims: the theocentric/Christocentric orientation of justification and the relationship between God's work and man's. Perhaps most importantly, the draft identified "the formal cause of justification" as "the *one* righteousness of God" (*causa formalis iustitia una Dei*), a phrase that had been in Seripando's October 31 draft. The introduction of this schema of causation eventually led, as we will see, to the exclusion of the theory of double justification.[112]

There were, however, also a number of important differences between Seripando's October 31 draft and Del Monte's November 5 draft in the formulation of chapter 16 and canon

[109] Jedin, *Seripando*, 377.
[110] *CT* 5:510-17.
[111] *CT* 5:634-41.
[112] *CT* 5:636.36-37; 512.12-20.

31 on the fruit of justification and merit. Although chapter 14 of Seripando's draft used the term *merit*, it seems to be understood in terms of reward.[113] Del Monte's text was quite a bit stronger:

> nothing further should be said to be lacking in the justified to prevent them (provided they have acted with that affection of love which is required in this mortal life) from being regarded as having fully satisfied the divine law and as being bedewed by divine grace, having merited [*promeruisse*] eternal life.[114]

There are two things to note about this passage. First, the descriptor "truly" (*vere*) before merit is absent. Second, Del Monte's text asserts that it is possible to satisfy the law "fully." Seripando wrote in marginalia that "the whole passage seems to be the work of a man who does not know whereof he speaks, or who is fearful of falling into Lutheran errors."[115]

Canon 30 of the November draft reads:

> If anyone says that man having been justified and made a living member of Jesus Christ, by good works, which he performs through the grace of God and the merit of Christ, does not truly merit eternal life, or that those good works are the gifts of God in such a way that they are not also the good merits of a man: let him anathema.[116]

There are a number of points to make about this canon. First, and most importantly, it significantly intensified the council's position on merit. Canon 31 of Seripando's draft anathematized those who deny that one can "merit [*mereri*] with good works

[113] *CT* 5:515.12ff.

[114] "nihil ipsis iustificatis amplius deesse dicendum est, quominus plene (dummodo eo caritatis affectu, qui in huius vitae mortalis cursu requiritur, operati fuerint) divinae legi satisfecisse ac velut undique divina gratia irrorati, aeternam vitam promeruisse censeantur" (*CT* 5:639.33-36).

[115] Jedin, *Seripando*, 378.

[116] "Si quis hominem iustificatum et vivum Christi Iesu membrum effectum, dixerit bonis operibus, quae ab eo per Dei gratiam et Christi meritum proficiscuntur, non vere mereri vitam aeternam, aut ipsa bona opera ita esse dona Dei, ut non sint etiam bona hominis merita: anathema sit" (*CT* 5:641.40-43).

an increase in grace."[117] Del Monte's draft, now canon 30, significantly intensified Seripando's text by the addition of "truly to merit" (*vere mereri*). Second, the subject who performs merit is the justified who merits through the grace of God. Third, man's merit is not reducible to the merit of Christ. Merit is at least in part also the merit of the agent performing the good works. This is, of course, necessary since man may cooperate with God through grace so that the works he performs are his works.

The majority of bishops were in support of the proposed changes. The November decree underwent extensive debate in fourteen general congregations from November 9 through December 1.[118] Decisively, on November 23, the Jesuit Claude Le Jay, who suggested that the "one" in the phrase "the formal cause of justification is the *one* righteousness of God" (*causa formalis iustitia una Dei*) should be moved so that it now read "the *one* formal cause" of justification "is the righteousness of God" (*causa formalis una, iustitia Dei*)."[119] This was a substantial step toward formally excluding the theory of double justice. These discussions surrounding the draft primarily concerned the issue of double justice, but the issue of merit surfaced repeatedly, and in each case it was based in part on some conception of justice. Thus Balthazar Heredia, O.P., Juan Bernal de Luco, Sebastiano Pighino, Bonaventura Costacciaro, and Tommaso Stella, O.P., all took up the topic in a similar respect.[120]

On November 26 and 27, Seripando delivered a speech that was intended as one last push of a position that was dying a

[117] "dixerit non mereri bonis operibus gratiae augmentum" (*CT* 5:517.18-20).

[118] The fourteen General Congregations were held on November 9 (*CT* 5:643), 10 (*CT* 5:644), 12 (*CT* 5:646), 13 (*CT* 5:648), 18 (*CT* 5:643), 19 (*CT* 5:650), 20 (*CT* 5:652), 22 (*CT* 5:656), 23 (*CT* 5:658), 24 (*CT* 5:659), 26 (*CT* 5:662), 27 (*CT* 5:664), 29 (*CT* 5:676), and December 1 (*CT* 5:678).

[119] *CT* 5:658.24-26.

[120] (Balthazar Heredia, O.P.) *CT* 5:646.21-5; (Juan Bernal de Luco) *CT* 5:653.22-24; (Sebastiano Pighino) *CT* 5:651.37-41; (Bonaventura Costacciaro) *CT* 5:662.42-44; (Tommaso Stella, O.P.) *CT* 5:678.10-17.

slow death. He had already in his short treatise on good works repeatedly referred to the works of the justified as menstrual cloths (Isa 64:6).[121] In this speech he went on to argue that the only true justice is the justice of Christ, thereby implying the radical insufficiency of any other justice. He then argued that eternal life is a grace which God awards us not in justice but in mercy.[122] Such a position was hardly compatible with a doctrine of merit. Seripando raised again the question of works and suggested that the justice of our works cannot be considered perfect, giving a series of reasons why this is so.[123] He concluded by appealing to the fathers: if the justice of our works is so flawed, what recourse does anyone have other than appealing to mercy?[124]

On the basis of these discussions the legates decided to revise the November draft. The council fathers met in eight general congregations from December 7 through December 17.[125] It was during this period that the council finally decided to exclude once and for all the doctrine of double justification. On December 11, during the discussion of chapter 8, the "one formal cause" was replaced by "sole formal cause" (*unica formalis causa*) of justification. The draft now affirmed that "the sole formal cause" of justification "is the justice of God, not that by which He Himself is just, but that by which He makes us just in His sight."[126] This is important, for not only was double justice excluded, but the phrase also made it impossible to argue that one's transformation is so radically incomplete that one needs a second application of Christ's justice. This deprived the adherents of double justice of one of their main arguments

[121] *CT* 12:632.11-15; 635.36-42.

[122] *CT* 12:632.11-15.

[123] *CT* 5:669.23-24.

[124] *CT* 5:670.14-16.

[125] Jedin, *History of the Council of Trent*, 2:293.

[126] "Demum unica formalis causa est iustitia Dei, non qua ipse iustus est, sed qua nos coram iustos facit" (*CT* 5:700.25). On the development and importance of the phrase "unica formalis causa," see Christopher J. Malloy, *Engrafted into Christ: A Critique of the Joint Declaration* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 69-78.

against a doctrine of "true merit." Chapter 16 was discussed on December 14 and canon 32 (formerly canon 30) on December 15 and 16. The fathers' suggestions for the revision of chapter 16 were relatively minor,[127] and the fathers had no real objection to canon 32. The few objections mostly suggested that either the identification of an increase in eternal life or the attainment of glory were superfluous as objects of merit in the canon.[128] In the case of both chapter 16 and canon 32, no one objected to the notion of true merit.

The legates then decided to select only those bishops who were theologians to review the draft again. This was done in eighteen conferences, held from December 17 to December 31, but these conferences only touched on our topic lightly.[129] Chapter 16 was discussed again in a general congregation on January 2 and 5,[130] but nothing further of relevance developed; the same is true for canon 32, which was discussed again on January 6,[131] and the final form was presented on January 10.[132]

II. The Final Decree

The final decree, the *Decree on Justification,* was unanimously accepted on January 13, 1547 in the sixth session by the fifty-nine bishops present.[133] It is a masterpiece of theology. There are a number of points in the *Decree on Justificatio*n not touched upon in the above historical analysis that help to contextualize and lay the foundation for a proper understanding of chapter 16 and canon 32. Among other things, the decree formally repudiates the merely imputed righteousness of Protestant theology and the theory of double justification in favor of inhering righteousness. This entails a corresponding

[127] *CT* 5:710-12.
[128] *CT* 5:717.19-20; 717.32-33; 719.45; 720.30-31; 723.38-40.
[129] Jedin, *History of the Council of Trent*, 2:293.
[130] *CT* 5:753; 758-59.
[131] *CT* 5:760-62.
[132] *CT* 5:778.7-11.
[133] Jedin, *History of the Council of Trent*, 2:304, 307.

affirmation of merit and the exclusion of all views that make merit into something other than merit in the justified. This can be most clearly seen in the language of chapter 16 and canon 32.

In chapter 7, the council explains that initial justification has two aspects: the forgiveness of sins and the sanctification and renewal of the interior man.[134] In canon 11, the council anathematizes those who claim that initial justification consists in "the remission of sin alone."[135] God not only mercifully forgives sins but also transforms the sinner internally, constantly sustaining him so that the justified man is a new creation who is both gifted and who, by living the life that Christ wills for all men, is able to obtain the reward of eternal life. Trent is clear that this transformation in man occurs through the infusion of inhering righteousness or sanctifying grace, which it holds is the "sole formal cause of justification."[136]

The transformation that takes place in justification has profound implications for the nature of Christian life after initial justification. Trent affirms that after initial justification, one's justification is not static but is capable of growth: there is an ongoing transformation that takes place in the justified Christian. Thus Trent defines that "through observance of the commandments of God and of the Church, they increase in that very justice received through the grace of Christ, by faith cooperating in good works, and they are even more justified."[137] It cannot be stressed enough that this is a growth in justification itself.[138] This growth, of course, is impossible according to many

[134] Peter Hünermann, Helmut Hoping, Robert L. Fastiggi, Anne Englund Nash, and Heinrich Denzinger, eds., *Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals*, 43rd edition (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012) (hereafter *DH*), 1528.

[135] *DH* 1561.

[136] *DH* 1529. Christopher J. Malloy, "The Nature of Justifying Grace: A Lacuna in the Joint Declaration," *The Thomist* 62 (2001): 93-120.

[137] *DH* 1535.

[138] Post-Tridentine Lutheran confessional documents make it clear that one may not increase one's justification through works. The Lutheran view is stated in the *Solid Declaration*, "It is clear from God's Word that faith is the only real means through

Protestant theologians, given their understanding of justification as the mere imputation of the righteousness of Christ, which is the same in all Christians.[139]

There are two fundamental elements that make it possible for the justified Christian to fulfill the law. First, the council defines that Christ is a "lawgiver" and anathematizes those who teach that the gospel is "a mere absolute promise of eternal life, without the condition of observing the commandments."[140] Furthermore, law and gospel are not antithetical, for the gospel contains within itself the law of Christ, which reveals the divine will for man. This law is not impossible for the justified to observe, since he has been engrafted into Christ. Second, the justified man is a new creation, and this new objective condition, accomplished by the infusion of sanctifying grace, leads not only to the possibility but even to the necessity of observing the commandments for salvation. Indeed, in canon 18 Trent anathematizes those who teach that "the commandments

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which righteousness and salvation not only are received but also are preserved by God. Therefore, it is proper to reject the decree of the Council of Trent and whatever else is used to support the opinion that our good works preserve salvation or that our works either completely or only in part preserve and maintain the righteousness received by faith or even faith itself" (*Solid Declaration*, 4:35; in Robert Kolb, Timothy J. Wengert, and Charles P. Arand, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000], 580).

[139] *Apologia Confessionis Augustanae*, 4:195-96, in *Die Bekenntnischriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, 198.

[140] *DH* 1570 and 1571. The issue of law and gospel has been largely ignored in ecumenical discussions. See Dietz Lange, *Überholte Verurteilungen? Die Gegensätze in der Lehre von Rechtfertigung, Abendmahl und Amt zwischen dem Konzil von Trient und der Reformation, damals und heute* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 38. Saint John Paul II was quite emphatic about Christ's role: "From the very lips of Jesus, the new Moses, man is once again given the commandments of the Decalogue. Jesus himself definitively confirms them and proposes them to us as the way and condition of salvation. The commandments are linked to a promise" (*Veritatis Splendor* 12). In John Paul II's general audience of October 14, 1987, he stated that Christ "conducted himself as a lawgiver" but not merely with "the authority of a divine envoy or legate as in the case of Moses" (John Paul II, *Jesus, Son, and Savior: A Catechesis on the Creed* [Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1996], 231-32).

of God are impossible to observe even for the man who is justified."[141]

With this in mind, the first thing to notice about chapter 16 is that it is only concerned with the justified. To the justified, life eternal is proposed, both as "a grace mercifully promised to the sons of God" and "as a recompense" which, according to the promise of God, is to be given for their good works and merits. Christ Jesus continually infuses his virtue into the justified, a virtue that always precedes, accompanies, and follows their good works. These works make men "pleasing and meritorious before God," and the justified are considered to have satisfied the divine law by these works. Because these works are done in God, they have "truly merited" (*vere promeruisse*) eternal life. [142]

Trent rejects any view that simply reduces our justice to the justice of Christ; however, the council is clear that "our justice" is not "considered as coming from us." Chapter 16 asserts that even the justice one receives in justification not only is "called ours" but is indeed "our own personal justice" since it inheres in us.[143] This affirmation does not necessarily lead to pride, since we are to glory "in the Lord." Nevertheless God bestows on the justified his gifts in such a way that these gifts become their own merits.

This background helps to contextualize canon 32. In order to evaluate canon 32 theologically, it will be helpful to break it down into its constituent pieces, which will give us a better sense of what the council intended.[144] The approved canon reads:

[141] "Dei praecepta homini iustificato ad observandum esse impossibilia" (*DH* 1536). See also *DH* 1568.

[142] *DH* 1546.

[143] "propria nostra iustitia" and "iustitia nostra dicitur" (*DH* 1547).

[144] The canons carry significant doctrinal weight. On the relative doctrinal value of canons and chapters, there is a great deal of debate over which is more significant. George Tavard argues that the chapters are more authoritative doctrinally (George Tavard, *Justification: An Ecumenical Study* [New York: Paulist Press, 1983], 128 n. 14). Most theologians are arrayed against him, holding that the canons are more significant

If anyone says that the good works of the justified man are gifts of God in such a way that they are not also the good merits of the justified man himself; or that by the good works he performs through the grace of God and the merits of Jesus Christ (of whom he is a living member), the justified man does not truly merit an increase of grace, eternal life, and (provided he dies in the state of grace) the attainment of this eternal life, as well as an increase of glory, let him be anathema.[145]

The subject of the canon is the "justified man" who, by his justification, has become a member of Christ. It is precisely the infusion of sanctifying grace and the engrafting into Christ that makes one able to merit, for as chapter 16 makes clear, Christ's influence always "precedes, accompanies, and follows" the good actions of a justified man.[146]

In addition, the council fathers anathematize those who say that merits are understood merely as the gift of God. The

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doctrinally. Edward Schillebeeckx argues, for example, that "these *capita* were, however, not discussed in detail by the Council itself and, unlike the canons, they have no precise dogmatic value. They form, as it were, an explanatory *nota praevia*, although of a more official kind" (E. Schillebeeckx, *The Eucharist*, trans. N. D. Smith (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968), 40 n. 35). See also E. Iserloh, "Luther and the Council of Trent," in K. Lehman, ed., *Justification by Faith: Do the Sixteenth-Century Condemnations Still Apply?* (New York: Continuum, 1997), 170; Jedin, *History of the Council of Trent*, 2:309; Jedin, "Council of Trent and Reunion," 10-12; and Francis A. Sullivan, *Creative Fidelity: Weighing and Interpreting Documents of the Magisterium* (New York: Paulist Press, 1996), 49. There are two reasons that neither side is quite correct. First, it is not universally true that the canons received more attention than the chapters, as is evident from the formulation of certain sections of chapter 16 of the sixth session, for example. Second, the council itself does not seem to privilege the canons over the chapters. Trent is quite clear that adherence to both the canons and the chapters is necessary in order to be justified. Thus Trent states, "No one can be justified unless he faithfully and firmly accepts the Catholic doctrine of justification, to which the holy council has decided to add the following canons, so that all may know, not only what they should hold and follow, but also what they should shun and avoid" (*DH* 1550).

[145] "Si quis dixerit hominis iustifati bona opera ita esse dona Dei, ut non sint etiam bona ipsius iustificati merita, aut ipsum iustificatum bonis operibus, quae ab eo per Dei gratiam et Iesu Christi meritum (cuius vivum membrum est) fiunt, non vere mereri augmentum gratiae, vitam aeternam et ipsius vitae aeternae (si tamen in gratia decesserit) consecutionem, atque etiam gloriae augmentum: anathema sit" (*DH* 1582).

[146] *DH* 1546.

fathers deliberately phrased this canon in Augustinian terms.[147] Both Luther and Seripando had suggested that merits are not properly the merits of the one justified but rather are imputed to him from Christ. Canon 32 is quite clear that each merit is truly and properly "the good merits of him [*ipsius*] who is justified" and thus in part the result of the activity of the agent. This was necessary, since chapter 16 asserts that even the justice one receives in justification is not only "called ours" but is even "our own personal justice" since it inheres in us.

One should also note the use of the phrase "truly merit," *vere mereri*. As shown above, the fathers of Trent almost without exception were convinced that the merit inherent in good works is a true *meritum* based upon divine justice. They purposely employed the term *vere* to exclude the *quasi*-merit which, in the technical terminology of the Schools, is called *meritum de congruo*. They simply refrained from using the term *meritum de condigno*, because *meritum verum* is "a plain and adequate term," and they thereby avoided certain theological controversies regarding the nature of *meritum de condigno* and

[147] See *DTC*, s.v. "Mérite." Augustine on this point is frequently abused on account of a number of statements which are usually taken out of context, particularly from his *Letter* 194. Augustine writes: "When God crowns our merits, He crowns His own gifts" ("cum Deus coronat merita nostra, nihil aliud coronet quam munera sua?" [*Letter* 194, 5.19 (*CSEL* 57.190). Some argue that Augustine is quite clear that merit is reducible to grace, citing the following passage: "For, if eternal life is given in return for good works . . . how is eternal life a grace since grace is not repayment for works. . . . It seems to me, then, that this question can only be resolved if we understand that our good works themselves for which eternal life is our recompense also pertain to the grace of God" (St. Augustine, *Answer to the Pelagians, IV: To the Monks of Hadrumetum and Provence*, trans. Roland J. Teske, S.J., ed. John E. Rotelle, O.S.A., The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, I/26 [Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 1999], 83 [hereafter *WSA*]). Augustine also writes, "If they understood our merits so that they recognized that they were also gifts of God, this view would not have to be rejected" (*On Grace and Free Choice* [*De gratia et libero arbitrio*], 6.15 [*WSA* I/26:81). Here Augustine is really describing the dual agency that takes place in merit. By affirming that "our merits" are "also" the gifts of God, he does not say that they are exclusively the "gifts of God."

its requisites.[148] This phrase is even more significant when one recalls that it was used prior to the Reformation against the Scotists, whose "*mereri* was not *vere mereri*."[149]

Some contemporary scholars, such as Otto Hermann Pesch, have argued that the Tridentine doctrine of merit can be done away with and replaced by the original biblical concept of reward. Merit for Pesch is simply a concept that was introduced into theology in the postbiblical period.[150] The Tridentine concept of merit, however, cannot simply be collapsed into the concept of reward without making the council say something that it certainly did not intend to say. The concepts are not identical but correlative, for, as Bellarmine explained, a reward is that which is rendered to merit.[151] Reward and merit cannot

[148] Pohle and Preuss, *Grace, Actual and Habitual: A Dogmatic Treatise*, 407. The various pre-Tridentine theories of condign merit were often quite elaborate and had elements that were distinctive to particular schools of thought. Some emphasized the divine pact and others the good works themselves. Trent sought to avoid resolving questions that were freely debated by the schools. On the various schools prior to Trent see Bellarmine, *De controversiis* 15.2.5.16-22 (*Disputationes Roberti Bellarmini politiani societatis Jesu, de controversiis christianae fidei, adversus huius temporis haereticos*, 4 vols. [Paris: Triadelphorum, 1613], 4:1009-22).

[149] C. Feckes, *Die Rechtfertigungslehre des Gabriel Biel und ihre Stellung innerhalb der nominalistischen Schule* (Münster i.W.: Verlag der Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchh, 1925), 84 n. 251, cited in Jedin, *Seripando*, 364.

[150] Otto Hermann Pesch, "The Canons of the Tridentine Decree on Justification: To Whom Did They Apply? To Whom Do They Apply Today?" in Lehman, ed., *Justification by Faith*, 190f.; Otto Hermann Pesch, "Die Lehre vom 'Verdienst' als Problem für Theologie und Verkündigung," in *Wahrheit und Verkündigung. Michael Schmaus zum 70. Geburtstag* (München: Schöningh, 1967), 2:1865-1907.

[151] Bellarmine, *De Controversiis*, 15.2.5.2 (Paris ed., 4:970). The *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (1999) must be praised for its preservation of the distinction between merit and reward when it states: "When Catholics affirm the 'meritorious' character of good works, they wish to say that, according to the biblical witness, a reward in heaven is promised to these works." The consensus on the preservation of this distinction is a true ecumenical advancement toward more perfect communion. Dulles notes, however, in his discussion of the *Joint Declaration* that it "softens the opposition by teaching that when Catholics speak of merit they mean that 'a reward in heaven is promised.' This is true enough, but it is incomplete because it fails to say that the reward is a just one. Without reference to justice, the true notion of merit would be absent" (Cardinal Avery Dulles, "Justification: the Joint Declaration,"

be read as synonyms in the conciliar text. The council used the term *merit* in four crucial places: twice as a noun and twice as a verb. If we were to conflate the two concepts, then chapter 16 would absurdly read: the justified "can also be regarded as having truly rewarded eternal life." And canon 32 would read "The justified truly rewards an increase of grace, eternal life," etc. One can immediately see the absurd and Pelagian reading of Trent into which one would be forced, whereby man now is the agent rewarding some unknown subject.

In order to clarify what Trent was attempting to do, it is useful to compare it to the Council of Nicaea. The use of the term *merit* is analogous to the Council of Nicaea's use of the nonbiblical term *consubstantial* (*homoousios*) for Christ's equality to the Father in order to explain precisely the correct meaning of revelation.[152] Similarly, what was at dispute in the controversy over merit was in part the meaning of the term *reward* as used in the Scriptures. All parties in the dispute, whether Protestants, adherents of double justice, or opponents of double justice, used the term *reward* but without any agreement as to the meaning of the substance of the doctrine. So Trent used the extrabiblical term *merit*, not simply because it had come to be used in the schools, but in order to define more precisely what was meant by the biblical concept of reward.

Moreover, the Council of Nicaea felt compelled to add the term *true* in the phrase "true God from true God." This was deemed necessary in order to ensure that the Arian interpretation of the phrase "God from God" would be rejected. By adding "true" to God, the council ensured that the term "God" was being used not only univocally but in the proper sense. As

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Josephinum Journal of Theology 9 (2002): 115). As the *Joint Declaration* acknowledges, it does not "cover all that each church teaches about justification," and my analysis of the Tridentine decree shows that there is more ecumenical work to be done on the doctrine of merit.

[152] Alois Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition* trans. John Bowden (London: Mowbrays, 1975), 1:269; Khaled Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2011), 127, 283.

in the Arian controversy where all parties could happily call Jesus "God" as long as the sense of the term "God" was left ambiguous, so both Protestants and the adherents of double justice could use the term *merit* as long as it was not a merit grounded at least in part in justice.[153] Like Nicaea, Trent added the term *true* as a modifier of merit in an attempt to ensure that the term *merit* would be understood in the proper sense. This usage of the term is clear from the debates above and is confirmed by the council's other and frequent usages of *verum*. For example, the council in its decree denies that concupiscence is truly and properly (*vere et proprie*) sin.[154] Man is described as "truly [*vere*] justified" in contradiction to being justified in a merely imputed sense.[155] The seven sacraments are "truly and properly [*vere et proprie*]" sacraments, to distinguish Catholic doctrine from that of many Protestants, who were willing to employ the term "sacraments" in a broad sense.[156] "True" water must be used in baptism against those who thought that John 3 was to be understood metaphorically.[157] In the Eucharist are contained "truly [*vere*], really and substantially" the body and blood together with the soul and divinity of Jesus.[158] In every case, the term "true" is used to delineate the use of a term according to its proper (nonmetaphorical) and strict (nonbroad,

[153] See note 18.

[154] "If anyone denies that the guilt of original sin is remitted by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ given in baptism, or asserts that all that is sin in the true and proper sense is not taken away but only brushed over or not imputed, let him be anathema" (*DH* 1515).

[155] *DH* 1534.

[156] "If anyone says that the sacraments of the New Law were not all instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord; or that there are more or fewer than seven, that is: baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, penance, extreme unction, orders, and matrimony; or that any of these seven is not truly and properly a sacrament, let him be anathema" (*DH* 1601).

[157] "Si quis dixerit, aquam veram et naturalem non esse de necessitate baptismi, atque ideo verba illa Domini nostri Iesu Christi . . .: anathema sit" (*DH* 1615).

[158] "If anyone denies that in the sacrament of the most Holy Eucharist the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore the whole Christ, is truly, really, and substantially contained, but says that he is in it only as in a sign or figure or by his power: let him be anathema" (*DH* 1651).

fully determinate) sense—that is, as formally comprehending the intelligible content defining the primary instance of the term which, in the case of "merit," implies an intrinsic worthiness based on a good work, as opposed to mere fittingness based on suitable agreement.

Certain contemporary scholars have suggested that Trent's doctrine of merit is an "eschatological statement about grace" rather than a "practical-ethical thought."[159] This is clearly a false dichotomy. It is true that the reward for merit is beatitude, but this eschatological reality is the end of merit rather than merit as such. This is clear from the fact that merit is not merely an "eschatological statement about grace" since one merits in this life and one of the objects of merit is an increase of grace in this life. Second, merit occurs through the conformity of the justified's life to the law of Christ, in whom the justified have been engrafted. Merit therefore has a decidedly practical-ethical dimension, since according to the council, heaven is rewarded in part on account of one's obedience to the commandments. It may also be noted that heaven is lost on account of one's disobedience. Trent is incredulous in the face of Protestant theology's insistence that man is ever unable to do that which is desired of him. Instead Trent affirms the possibility of observing the commandments and notes that the basic stance of the Christian is that "those who are sons of God love Christ, and those who love him keep his words."[160]

Of course, this ethical component is grounded in the Tridentine affirmation of the conversion that takes place through the infusion of inhering righteousness and engrafting into Christ. This engrafting leads, as we have seen, to the possibility of man fulfilling the law which Christ as the lawgiver has given. This is why the sixteenth chapter is clear that the justified "can be regarded as having entirely fulfilled the divine law by the works they have done in the sight of God."[161] Such a

[159] Pesch, "Canons of the Tridentine Decree on Justification," 190.
[160] *DH* 1536.
[161] *DH* 1546.

position is impossible to affirm for most Protestant theologians and adherents of double justice.

One may also note that Trent specified the true and proper objects of merit: first, one may merit an increase in grace; second, one may merit eternal life; and finally, one may merit an increase in glory.[162] Here we see the actual eschatological significance of merit, which has as its end not merely a good work but a good work that is ordered to attaining eternal beatitude.

Finally, a clear understanding of merit, as defined by the council in canon 32 of the *Decretum de iustificatione*, will determine the nature and extent to which an ecumenical *rapprochement* can be made on the issue of justification. One must therefore discern the dogmatic value of the Tridentine teaching. Pesch, for example, has argued that Trent's teaching on merit is a "dispensable theologoumenon."[163] He attempts to preserve the Tridentine teaching by distinguishing between the substance of Trent's teaching, which is binding, and the concept and word, which are not.[164] Certainly Pesch is correct to distinguish between the term *merit*, which one could do away with, and the substance of the doctrine that must remain. For Pesch, however, the substance of the doctrine of merit is reducible to the biblical concepts of fruitfulness or grace.[165] There is absolutely no basis either in Scripture or the council for such an assertion other than theological wishfulness; one must remember that Trent's teaching on this matter is irreformable as such and therefore perpetually binding. While one could do away with the word *merit*, nevertheless, the concept of merit is part of the substance of that teaching. Vatican I defined that the "understanding of its [the Church's] sacred dogmas must be perpetually retained, which Holy Mother Church has once

[162] Pesch, "Canons of the Tridentine Decree on Justification," 190f.

[163] Pesch, "Die Lehre vom 'Verdienst'," 1905.

[164] Ibid., 1902.

[165] Ibid., 1907.

declared"; thus there can be no retreat from this meaning.[166] Trent affirmed the content of the faith, and the substance of its teaching is that the justified man is able to merit truly an increase in grace and eternal life.

CONCLUSION

Both Protestant theologians and most adherents to *duplex iustitia* were led by their peculiar theories to reduce merit to an absolutely gratuitous reward. The council repudiated both positions and taught that in justification not only are the sins of the faithful forgiven but also the faithful are made innocent, immaculate, pure, guiltless and thereby become friends and adopted sons of God, so that there is nothing whatever to impede their entrance into heaven. It is clear that the council did not employ the Scholastic terms of *condign* or *congruous* merit, instead preferring terms such as *proprie*, *improprie, vere,* and *verum* to convey the essential elements of the same teaching. What one sees in the development of the drafts with the addition of the term *true* before merit is that the council wanted to make clear it was not indicating either a merit *secundum quid* or a quasi-merit. Moreover, there is significant intertextual evidence that use of the term *true* by the council was intended to signify merit in its proper sense. The council fathers used terms that have the same logical comprehension as "condign merit," insofar as it is in part a function of justice. Yet, those theologians who believe the council's use of "merit" means condign merit as understood by the schools go, I believe, too far. Moreover, some contemporary readings of the Tridentine doctrine of merit seem in fact to be a denial of the teaching which the council took such pains to define.

[166] "Hinc sacrorum quoque dogmatum is sensus perpetuo est retinendus, quem semel declaravit sancta mater Ecclesia, nec umquam ab eo sensu altioris intelligentiae specie et nomine recedendum" (*DH* 3020).

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AN INDUCTIVE STUDY OF THE NOTION OF EQUIVOCAL CAUSALITY IN ST. THOMAS

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ALTHOUGH THE FUNDAMENTAL kinds of causality—material, formal, agent, and final—are well known among students of St. Thomas and Aristotle, a particular mode of agent causality is unusual both for being of profound importance and for rarely receiving the attention it deserves. I refer to what St. Thomas calls "equivocal" or "non-univocal" agent causality, as distinct from the more straightforward univocal agent causality of one man generating another, hot things making other things hot, and moving bodies causing other bodies to move.

Saint Thomas employs the idea of equivocal agency throughout his corpus as a way to understand many instances of agent-patient relationship in nature, art, and the supernatural. Surprisingly, however, neither St. Thomas nor Aristotle, from whom he appears to draw the notion, explicitly mentions equivocal causality where one might expect it: in their most formal and complete discussions of causality as such.[1] Likewise, one is hard pressed to find extended discussions of it in the scholarly literature centered on agent causality.[2] This may have

[1] I have in mind *Phys.* 2.3; *Metaphys.* 1.3-6; 5.2; and St. Thomas's commentaries on each, as well as *De Princip. Nat.*, c. 3.

[2] Rather than performing the impossible task of listing the works on agent causality that say little or nothing about equivocal causality, I will point out the few I have found that have something to say on it. See John F. Wippel, *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas II* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 50-68; although Fr. Wippel frequently references equivocal causality, his is an exclusively

something to do with the fact that St. Thomas's paradigm example seems to rely on an outmoded component of ancient and medieval cosmology. His paradigm example is the sun, and the incorruptible heavenly substance in general, causing various phenomena here below.[3] One wonders whether this example is itself the primary reason for such silence among Thomists afraid that it acquires guilt by association with the geocentric vision of the universe.

These lacunae and this example, then, when combined with the frequency with which St. Thomas employs the concept of equivocal causality—especially in the context of understanding divine action—make all the more useful an extended consideration of the idea. The following is intended to be a first attempt at such a discussion, an essay in the original sense of the word. It will be inductive in the sense that it will gather, not only all the relevant passages in the Thomistic corpus, but also the various and lesser-known examples of this sort of causality. If this essay only impels other students of St. Thomas to think in a more sustained way about this kind of agency, and possible examples of it, then it will have accomplished its purpose.

The essay is divided into six parts, each of which is interspersed with examples of equivocal causality other than the sun. First, I will explain at length what St. Thomas means by equivocal agent causality by presenting two apparently distinct ways in which he describes it, namely, as an agent that bears the form it gives in a different way than it is received or as one that bears it in a more eminent way. Second, I will argue that this

historical study of St. Thomas's references to the more general axiom about like causing like. See also Michael Dodds, O.P., *Unlocking Divine Action: Contemporary Science and Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2012); Fr. Dodds refers frequently to the distinction between univocal and nonunivocal agency, though he seems not to intend precisely the same thing as St. Thomas does; in Dodd's usage it seems to be identical to the difference between causes of radically different orders, such that it appears that God is the *only* nonunivocal cause. The only academic article I have found that has much to say about equivocal causality is John M. Quinn, "The Third Way: A New Approach," *The Thomist* 42 (1978): 50-68.

[3] In the texts that follow I will cite several instances where St. Thomas uses the sun as his chief example, but any reader who has come across St. Thomas's references to equivocal causality knows what I am talking about.

apparent distinction is significant, implying that one is broader and more rudimentary, whereas the other is narrower and more proper. In the third and fourth parts, I will further elucidate equivocal causality and the aforesaid distinction by comparing it to two other sorts of agency, namely, instrumental and universal causality. Using these comparisons I will, in the fifth section, show how the greater eminence of possession in the equivocal cause itself exists in different ways. Having gathered from St. Thomas's work many examples of equivocal causality that on the whole are less in conflict with science as we know it now, in a final section I will suggest several other instances of causality in contemporary science that might be profitably interpreted through equivocal agency.

I. Two Descriptions of Equivocal Causality

A) Names Univocal, Equivocal, and Analogical

It is likely that one will not understand equivocal causality unless one first understands what an equivocal name is, so we will begin with a brief review of the fundamental difference between equivocal and univocal naming. Aristotle begins the *Organon* by distinguishing such names:

> Things are spoken of equivocally when the name alone is common to them, but the account of the substance belonging to the name is different (such as when both a man and a drawn figure are called "animals"). . . . For if one were to give what each of these is as being an animal, one would give an account peculiar to each one. However, things are spoken of univocally when the name is common and the account of the substance belonging to the name is the same (such as when both a man and an ox are called "animals").[4]

Things named univocally have one name and one definition, whereas things named equivocally have one name but different definitions.

[4] *Categories* 1.1a1-8. All translations of Aristotle and St. Thomas in this essay will be my own, though I will give the original Greek or Latin where it seems helpful.

A further distinction can be made among equivocal names, however, bearing on the idea of equivocal causality. These definitions can be either wholly different—such as when I call both the flying rodent and the baseball club "bats"—or only partly so—such as when I call both the animal and the weather "healthy." In the former case, there is nothing intelligible about the fact that both receive the same name, simply because there is no intelligible connection between baseball and flying rodents. In the latter case, however, the connection between the condition of the animal and the weather conducive to it is intelligible; it makes sense that both would be called "healthy." Whence, because the former sort of equivocation is a pure case, it is antonomastically called "equivocation," whereas the latter receives a new name, "analogy," to indicate the proportionality of the two *rationes* receiving the same name.[5] However, at least as far back as Boethius the same distinction is sometimes made by calling the former "fortuitous equivocals" (*aequivoca a casu*) and the latter "deliberate equivocals" (*aequivoca a consilio*) to preserve the connection of both with the general notion of equivocation.[6]

This foundation having been laid, one might wonder which kind of equivocal St. Thomas has in mind when he speaks of equivocal causes: pure equivocation or intelligible and advised equivocation? An answer will become clear as we consider the two basic ways in which he describes equivocal causes.

[5] Saint Thomas says that this implies that even Aristotle's example of an equivocal use of a word, namely, "animal" said of the figure in a picture, is really an instance of analogy; see *STh* I, q. 13, a. 10, ad 4. On analogy and equivocation, see IV *Metaphys*., lect. 1 (passim); XI *Metaphys*., lect. 3 (2197); and *STh* I, q. 13, a. 5. All citations of St. Thomas's commentaries on Aristotle and Pseudo-Dionysius are from the Marietti edition; parenthetical numbers refer to paragraph numbers in this edition.

[6] See Boethius, *In Categ. Arist. Libri Quatuor*, 166B-C. Saint Thomas follows Aristotle himself in occasionally referring to pure equivocations as *aequivoca a casu* (I *Metaphys.*, lect. 14 [223]). It is, of course, ironic (and confusing) that "equivocal" turns out to be itself an equivocal word.

B) Equivocal Causality as Articulated in "Summa contra gentiles" I, c. 29: The "Different Mode and Account"

Saint Thomas presents perhaps his most straightforward account of what an equivocal agent is, and how it is related to equivocal naming, in a discussion in the *Summa contra gentiles* of how creatures are like God. In this context it is understood that a univocal cause is one that is specifically the same as its effect: just as a father generates a son, and both are univocally called "men," a univocal agent has the form it gives in the same way that the patient receives it. Thus, St. Thomas describes the opposite of a univocal cause as follows:

> Effects falling short of their causes do not agree with them in name and account [*ratione*], yet it is necessary that there be found a certain likeness [*aliquam similitudinem*] between them. For it is of the nature of action that the agent would effect a like to itself [*agens sibi simile agat*], since each thing acts according as it is in act. Whence the form of the effect is found in a certain way [*aliqualiter*] in an exceeding cause, but according to a different mode and a different account [*alium modum et aliam rationem*]—by reason of which it is called an equivocal cause. For the sun causes heat in the lower bodies by acting according as it is in act; whence it is necessary that the heat generated by the sun holds a certain likeness to the active power of the sun, through which the heat in these lower things is caused—by reason of which the sun is called "hot," although not with a single account. And so the sun is said to be like all those things in which it effectively induces its effects, and yet it is still unlike all of them inasmuch as effects of this sort do not possess heat (and things of this sort) in the same mode as it is found in the sun. So too God also brings forth all perfections, and through this has a likeness with all things—and an unlikeness at the same time.[7]

Here we have, not only the classic example of the sun (in this instance, as a cause of heat),[8] but we also have a clear statement of the principle: When an agent possesses the form the patient

[7] *ScG* I, c. 29.

[8] The following is just a sampling of other places where the sun is described as an equivocal cause of heat: *STh* I, q. 57, a. 2, ad 2; I *Sent*., d. 8, q. 1, a. 2; II *Sent*., d. 1, q. 2, a. 2; IV *Sent*., d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, ad 4; *ScG* I, c. 31.

receives in a different way[9] than the patient receives it, the agent is called an "equivocal cause." There is an ambiguity in St. Thomas's distinction here, however, especially as it pertains to the way in which this connects with equivocal and univocal naming. He says that the equivocal agent does *not* receive the same name as the patient, so it would seem that an equivocal agent is not called "equivocal" for the same reason as some names are. And yet in St. Thomas's very example he also says that the sun is called "hot."[10]

The most plausible way of understanding this apparent contradiction is to read the first claim in light of the second: The name "equivocal cause" is an abbreviated way of saying that the name of the effect is not commonly said of the agent—the sun is not usually thought of as hot (in the ancient cosmology)—or if in some contexts, or in some languages, the same name *is* given to both, then that name is being used equivocally, that is, under a significantly different meaning. Such an equivocation would obviously not be by chance, but in virtue of the recognition of a sort of proportion between the sun's active nature and its effects. That this is the drift of St. Thomas's thought is clear from the context, for he seems to be recapitulating the argument for thinking of the sun as hot when he recalls the axiom that because an agent can act upon another only in virtue of its own actuality, what it brings forth in the patient must make it like itself. Thus, if the noonday sun heats my brow, the sun too must be hot. In the case of the equivocal agent, however, we must make the proviso that the effect is like the patient in only a qualified way. Heat is equivocally, but advisedly, attributed to both the sun and the brow, the latter according to the ordinary meaning of the word but the former because its capacity to bring about heat (in the ordinary

[9] For now we will treat the difference in *modus* and *ratio* as unimportant, largely because St. Thomas does not elsewhere mention both, but one or the other. However, we will consider possible differences in St. Thomas's intent later. See note 78.

[10] We might compound the contradiction by noting that in some passages St. Thomas will also say that the sun is *not* hot; see I *Sent*., d. 8, q. 1, a. 2.

meaning of the word) must contain something of the nature of this heat—otherwise it would not be able to bring it about.[11]

It appears that, in spite of St. Thomas dubbing them *equivocal* causes, such causes do not have the form of the effect in a purely equivocal way: If the name of the effect is given to the equivocal agent, it is said according to an analogy.[12] He says this explicitly elsewhere, again invoking the axiom about an agent being able only to make a thing become like itself:

> Every agent effects a thing like to itself, so the effect of the agent must be in some mode in the agent. For in some it is the same according to species, and such are called univocal agents (e.g., heat in a fire heating something), but in some it is the same according to a proportion or analogy [*proportionem sive analogiam*] (e.g., when the sun heats something). For there is something in the sun that thus makes it a heating thing just as heat makes a fire hot, and following this, heat is said to be in the sun equivocally.[13]

On ancient cosmology, if one is calling the sun "hot" (and is not speaking merely metaphorically), then he is either onto something, or he is using the word univocally and is therefore making a mistake.

One might also want to distinguish among equivocal causes insofar as some more than others readily and customarily deserve the name of their effect. For example, some men are wise, as are some books, and so is God. But whereas we might, in a rather extended sense, call a book "intelligent" or "wise" (because of the intelligence it can communicate or because of its author), a man is called "wise" more properly, for he, unlike the

[11] In ancient cosmology the sun and all celestial matter were thought to be incorruptible (as consistent observation suggested). Because alteration is the qualitative change a body undergoes on the way toward its corruption, alteration and the qualities that alter would also be impossible for a heavenly body. However, since being heated up and heating up other things are instances of alteration, heavenly bodies are neither heatable nor hot; see Aristotle, *De Caelo* 1.3.

[12] This is not, however, to say that every analogous use of a name is an equivocal cause; sometimes not the cause but the effect receives the name analogously, as when we say one's complexion is healthy or one's actions are wise. Every equivocal agent is named by the effect analogically, but not everything named analogically is an equivocal agent.

[13] IV *Sent*., d. 1, q. 1, a. 4. See also *STh* I, q. 45, a. 8, ad 3.

book, possesses the knowledge *as knowledge*, that is, as a perfection of his intellect—and God is said to possess wisdom in the same way, only far more so, inasmuch as he not only possesses a greater wisdom than might be found in any book or any created intellect but also because he is wisdom itself. Hence, there are degrees of equivocity among equivocal causes: some receive the name of the effect in a less equivocal way than do others, and the others possess it in a way that is closer to pure equivocation. This may be why St. Thomas sometimes says that it is something of an understatement to call God an equivocal cause of wisdom; it might be more illuminating to say he is an agent cause of wisdom according to analogy:

> Each of these things [i.e., wisdom, goodness, etc.] is in God according to the truest account of it [*secundum sui verissimam rationem*]. . . . And thence it is that he himself is not a wholly equivocal cause of the things [*causa rerum omnino aequivoca*], since according to his own form he produces effects like himself not univocally but analogically [*analogice*].[14]

God is not called "wise" in a wholly equivocal way but rather in a robust way that is better expressed by calling it an analogy.

Yet, can we articulate more clearly in what this analogy consists? Can we do no more than take refuge in the, admittedly fundamental, axiom that an agent always brings about its like, and insist that therefore there must be some sense in which the form of the effect is in the equivocal cause, *whatever that sense might be*? In the *Summa contra gentiles* passage cited above St. Thomas is fairly minimal in his description of equivocal causes when he says they possess the form they give simply in a "different" way. This minimalism is not unique to this passage: St. Thomas uses similar language elsewhere, for instance in the *Prima secundae* saying that in nonunivocal causality the patient "receives the form from the agent not according to the same account as it is in the agent."[15] Could the form, then, be present in the agent in a higher way than the patient receives it? Could

[14] I *Sent*., d. 2, q. 1, a. 2. See also *ScG* I, c. 31.

[15] *STh* I-II, q. 60, a. 1. See also IV *Sent*., d. 44, q. 3, a. 1, qcla. 3, ad 2 (quoted below).

it be present in a lower way? Indeed, what do "higher" and "lower" mean in this context? Here St. Thomas is not intent on settling this question. Yet he does hint at a more determinate account when he notes that equivocal causality happens when the effects are "falling short" (*deficientes*) of an "exceeding" (*excedens*) cause. In fact, he defines equivocal causality more narrowly elsewhere.

C) Equivocal Causality as Articulated in "Summa Theologiae" I, q. 4, a. 2: The "More Eminent Mode"

In discussing the divine perfection, St. Thomas distinguishes equivocal and univocal causality as follows:

> Whatever there is of a perfection within an effect must be found within the efficient cause, either according to the same account, if it is a univocal agent (for example, a man generates a man), or in a more eminent mode, if it is an equivocal agent (for example, in the sun there is a likeness of those things that are generated through the power of the sun).[16]

Again we find the example of the sun, this time causing not so much heat as generation, presumably the seasonal burst of life called spring.[17] When the sun quickens plants so that seedlings sprout and flowers bloom, one cannot call the sun a sprout, or a bloomer, or even alive (even in ancient cosmology) without equivocating in some measure, that is, without extending the meaning of "alive."

Here St. Thomas uses the distinction to argue that God is an equivocal agent of all perfections in creation and therefore possesses them in advance—albeit "in a more eminent mode" (*eminentiori modo*). Thus, the word "different" has been replaced by "more eminent." Nor is this way of speaking the exception. Saint Thomas more often than not describes the way the equivocal agent possesses the form it gives as "more eminent" or some synonym such as "nobler," "more excellent,"

[16] *STh* I, q. 4, a. 2. See also *De Malo*, q. 1, a. 3.

[17] On its other effects, see note 81.

"higher," or "more sublime."[18] What exactly this more eminent mode consists in, however, is often difficult to pin down.

Yet in certain instances, the presence of a genuine hierarchy stands out. For example, St. Thomas seems to suggest that an animal's growing hair is an instance of equivocal causality, for while this generation might be "properly called 'ennaturing'" (*nativitas*), still hair is not one in species with the animal: "This is why fur, or hair, does not have the account of one begotten, and offspring" (*rationem geniti et filii*), but only when what comes forth is like the agent "in a nature of the same species, as a man comes forth from a man, and a horse from a horse."[19] It is obvious that the animal is a higher sort of being than is its hair, so proposing that the animal bears the form it generates in a higher way is intelligible.[20] Likewise, St. Thomas says that "a mule comes to be not from a mule but from a horse and an ass"; thus, although "there is a certain likeness" between the horse and the mule, this generation is "not wholly univocal."[21] Just as the mule bears the nature of a horse in a deficient way, this nature is in the parent horse in a more perfect way. The same is true when Aristotle gives the example of a man fathering a daughter; based on his (admittedly erroneous) view of the father as the sole agent in conception, he naturally concludes that the parent is an equivocal cause and that the father, *qua* male, more completely possesses the nature the daughter receives.[22]

[18] For other uses of *eminentius*, see II *Sent*., d. 15, q. 1, a. 2, ad 4; *ScG* II, c. 98; for *nobilius*, see I *Sent*., d. 2, q. 1, a. 3; II *Sent*., d. 15, q. 1, a. 2, ad 4; for *excellentius*, see *STh* I, q. 6, a. 2; *De Malo*, q. 4, a. 3; I *Sent*., d. 2, q. 1, a. 3; for *altior*, see VIII *Phys*., lect. 10 (1053); IV *Sent*., d. 41, q. 1, a. 1, qcla. 5, sol. 1, ad 1; for *sublimior*, see *De Pot*., q. 7, a. 1, ad 8.

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

[20] We might add alongside hair any number of bodily secretions, from sweat and tears to skin oils and mucus. These all seem to be equivocally generated by the body. See *STh* I, q. 119, a. 1, ad 3, on the nature of blood, fundamental humors (*humidum radicale*), and *alia huiusmodi* in the body that have the *virtus specei* but "do not reach all the way toward perfectly attaining the nature of the species."

[21] VII *Metaphys*., lect. 8 (1452).

[22] Ibid. Granted that Aristotle and St. Thomas conceive of the female as a defective male, the point does not necessarily hinge upon this claim. Even if we were to update

Because St. Thomas as a rule describes equivocal agents as possessing the forms they give in a higher way, one wonders whether he intends this higher possession of the form *whenever* he speaks of equivocal agents; after all, as was noted, even in the passage from the *Summa contra gentiles* he speaks of the equivocal agent as "exceeding" the patient in some way. Indeed, if this is not the case, it would seem that St. Thomas employs two ways of conceiving equivocal causality, one more rudimentary and generic, and another more specific and perhaps the principal notion. And such a multiplication of notions is undesirable, at least *prima facie*.

II. A Different vs. A More Eminent Mode

A reason for thinking St. Thomas is not simply misspeaking in the *Summa contra gentiles* when he says that equivocal agents possess the form they give in a "different" way is the fact that he occasionally identifies as equivocal causes agents that appear to bear the form they give in a *lower* way than do the patients that receive them. For instance, in the *Sentences* commentary, in the context of speculations about how the souls of the damned will be united to their bodies at the general resurrection, he says:

> The likeness of the agent is in the patient in two ways: in one way, through the same mode in which it is in the agent, as it is in all univocal agents (e.g., the hot makes a thing hot, and a fire generates a fire); in another way, through a mode diverse from the mode in which it is in the agent, as it is in all equivocal agents. In these, however, sometimes it happens that the form received in the patient materially is in the agent spiritually (e.g., the form that is in a house made through art is in itself materially and is in the mind of the artisan spiritually); but sometimes, conversely, it is materially in the agent, and it is received spiritually in the patient (e.g., whiteness is materially in the wall,

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the physiology and embryology and consider a woman conceiving and giving birth to a son, there still seems to be a degree of equivocal causality here, and the boy would bear the (admittedly only accidentally different) feminine form in an inferior way than would his mother. Perhaps it is worth adding that St. Thomas thinks the woman has a seed (*semen*), but it is passive; see *STh* I, q. 115, a. 2, ad 3; q. 118, a. 1, ad 4. See also note 90 below.

from which it is received spiritually in the pupil, and even in the medium carrying the whiteness to the pupil). And so it is in the proposed matter.[23]

This text is particularly interesting both because it proposes a distinction among sorts of equivocal causality and because here St. Thomas does not have recourse to the sun but to two less time-bound examples: The artisan causing the artifact and the color in the object causing its impression in the transparent medium between itself and the eye, and then even in the eye itself. One does not call the architect a house nor the sensible species of white received into the eye (or the transparent air) white, at least not without equivocating.

But there the likeness stops and the distinction becomes paradoxical. The first case is straightforward: The agent possesses the form in a higher way—that is, cognitively, in the practical intellect: the plan of the house in the builder's mind is the form in virtue of which he turns the lumber into a house. We will return to this example later; at the moment the other case is more urgent, for here something strange seems to happen: If it is clear that a spiritual (i.e., an immaterial or intentional) mode of being is higher than a material mode, then here the lower seems to cause the higher, for the equivocal agent (the white wall) possesses the form of the effect in an *inferior* way than it is received in either patient (the eye or the air), since both receive it spiritually. Indeed, the difficulty is most apparent with the eye, for it possesses the sensible species not only intentionally (as does the transparent medium) but cognitively, such that it *knows* the white in virtue of it. It is not readily apparent how we can think of the white wall as having the form in a "more eminent way."

This puzzle is compounded by the fact that the *Sentences* passage is not unique, for St. Thomas offers a similar example in the *Prima pars*, in the course of showing that truth is principally a thing of the intellect. There he entertains the objection that whatever is the cause of something must be what it causes all the more so, and since real things outside the mind cause the

[23] IV *Sent*., d. 44, q. 3, a. 1, qcla. 3, ad 2.

truth of our thoughts, these things must be true as well. Saint Thomas responds in terms of equivocal causality:

> Although the truth of our intellect is caused by the thing [*a re*], yet it is not necessary that the account of truth is found there foremost [*per prius*], just as neither is the account of health found foremost in the medicine rather than in the animal. For the medicine's power, and not its health, causes the health [of the animal], since it is not a univocal agent. And in a similar way the thing's existence [*esse rei*], not its truth, causes the truth of the intellect.[24]

Again we find what amount to two more examples of equivocal causality. If medicine were the sort of thing that causes health by being healthy, it would be a univocal agent. In fact, however, medicine causes health without being healthy—taking the word univocally, to describe a condition exclusive to organisms. Rather, medicine possesses health, not as a constitutive order and equilibrium among organs and humors, but as a power to bring about this order. Medicine is rightly called "healthy," of course, but this is an equivocal (or better, analogical) use of the word, and (more importantly for our concerns) medicine clearly does not possess health in a higher or more eminent way than does the animal. Likewise, St. Thomas indicates that the real existence of something is an equivocal cause of the mind's conforming to it. This amounts to another version of the example of the white forming the eye, for St. Thomas here says that what is truth in color vision preexists within the color in the visible object and its ability to effect that truth in the eye.

Still other examples of equivocal agents that seem to bear the form they give in a lower way are found in St. Thomas's commentary on Aristotle's discussion of the likeness between an agent and its effect in book 7 of the *Metaphysics*. He enumerates several examples of agents and generations that are "in no way univocal," where the "generated thing's entire form does not itself precede in the generator, but only a certain part of it, or a certain part of a part."[25] After again giving another version of the medicine example—here hot medicine is the equivocal

[24] *STh* I, q. 16, a. 1, ad 3.

[25] VII *Metaphys*., lect. 8 (1446). See also Aristotle, *Metaphys*. 7.9.1034a22-33.

cause of the heat that is "a part of health, or is something leading to a part of health"[26]—St. Thomas elaborates on how Aristotle modifies the example by introducing local motion into the causal sequence:

> When heat is generated through a motion, the heat is in a certain mode in the motion itself as in an active power. For the very power of causing heat, which is in the motion, is something of the genus of heat. And this heat existing by power within the motion effects the heat in the body, yet not by a univocal generation but by an equivocal one, since the heat in the motion and in the hot body is not of a single account [*unius rationis*].[27]

Aristotle and St. Thomas are here somewhat ambivalent on the exact relation between heat and health. Health either contains in its notion a certain mean body temperature, or this body temperature itself causes something integral to health. Perhaps it is to clarify the relationships of equivocal causality he is considering, then, that Aristotle replaces the example of hot medicine causing the salubrious heat in the sick man with a heat source of a different sort: motion—more specifically, Aristotle says earlier, "the doctor produces heat by friction [*tēi tripsei*]" (1032b26). Just as the man's heating is an equivocal cause of his healing, so is the therapeutic massaging of his body an equivocal cause of the doctor's heating of the man and therefore even of his healing.[28] Now, it is true that local motion's natural priority over alteration renders more intelligible the notion that rubbing might be said to bear in a more eminent way the heat it brings about. Nevertheless, like the medicine, this rubbing motion does not obviously contain health itself in a more eminent way than does the animal. Thus, it is not clear that every agent St.

[26] VII *Metaphys*., lect. 8 (1446).

[27] Ibid. (1448). Although Aristotle gives the illustration of the motion causing heat in turn causing health in 9.1034b27-30, he had already brought it up in 7.1032b1-b32. In several other places, Aristotle notes that it is in the nature of motion to heat and ignite bodies; see *De Caelo* 2.7.289a11-35; *Meteor*. 1.3.341a17-28; for St. Thomas's reflections, see also I *Meteor*., lect. 5 (33-35); II *De Caelo*, lect. 10 (387-88, 391).

[28] Here the modern kinetic theory of heat may render plausible the idea of vibratory motions as possessing heat in a higher, more eminent way; see note 69. Indeed, the Maxwellian notion of energy as a whole suggests that one form of energy may be an equivocal cause of another.

Thomas calls an equivocal cause must possess the form in a more eminent way.

As the *Metaphysics* passage continues, Aristotle offers several more examples of equivocal agents, and again they appear to be inferior to their effects. Comparing the generative power of an animal's seed to the aforementioned causality of the architect, St. Thomas glosses Aristotle by saying that

> A seed works toward a generation just as do those things that come to be through an art. For just as the architect is not actually a house, nor does he have the form that is the house in act but in his capacity, so too the seed is not the animal in act, nor does it have the soul that is the animal's form in act but in its capacity alone. For in this way there is within the seed a formative power that is related to the matter of conception just as the form of the house in the mind of the architect is related to the stones and lumber—except that the form of the art is wholly external to the stones and lumber, whereas the power of the seed is intrinsic [to the matter of conception].[29]

Just as the architect is an equivocal cause of the house, so is the seed an equivocal cause of an animal. Saint Thomas sheds some light on this possession "by capacity" (*potestate*) in words similar to the aforementioned passage in the *Sentences* commentary: The architect has the form of the house "not indeed according to the same mode of being [*modum essendi*]" as does the house itself, that is, "not according to a material existence [*esse materiale*], but according to the immaterial existence [*esse immateriale*] that it has in the mind of the artisan." Thus, in a way "this generation is partly due to something univocal, with respect to the form, but partly due to something equivocal, with respect to the existence of the form in the subject."[30] So the builder is related to his materials in the same way that the parent's seed is related to the matter disposed to become a new life. Yet, just as the mode of existence of the house-form in the builder's mind is distinct from that in the building materials underlying the finished house, so too the animal's seed possesses the form it will educe in a different mode than does the newly conceived animal.

[29] VII *Metaphys*., lect. 8 (1451); see *Metaphys*. 7.9.1034a34-b3.
[30] VII *Metaphys*., lect. 8 (1445); see *Metaphys*. 7.9.1034a22-24.

Nevertheless, St. Thomas points out a significant distinction between artificial and natural generations as regards univocal and equivocal causality:

> However, although animal generation from seed is not from the seed as from a univocal [agent] (since the seed is not an animal), nevertheless that from which the seed is [generated] is in a certain way univocal with that which comes to be from the seed. For the seed comes to be from an animal. And in this there is a dissimilarity between natural generation and artificial generation, since it is not necessary that the form of the house in the mind of the artisan be due to a [different] house—although sometimes this happens, as when someone makes a new house according to the model of another. But it is always necessary that a seed be from an animal.[31]

An animal seed is always an instrument that an animal is using to generate another of its kind, and as such, not only is an animal from it, but it itself is from an animal: man generates seed, which generates man. Thus, a seed's agency is essentially intermediate. The house-builder, however, can invent the form of a house without any experience of another house—this is in fact what it is to have the art—so he is more of a first cause than is the seed. This reliance upon, and reduction to, a univocal agent would suggest that seed is an inferior sort of equivocal cause when compared to the artist, for the seed bears the form it educes in a more instrumental and less complete way than does the artist the form in his mind.[32]

Now, because the seed and the medicine examples are instances of what are typically referred to as instrumental causes,[33] it is tempting at this point to jump to two conclusions. First, one might think that instrumental causality is a species of

[31] VII *Metaphys*., lect. 8 (1452).

[32] It also suggests that the parent animal itself is an equivocal cause of the seed itself, although St. Thomas does not explicitly consider this. The relation of the animal to its seed seems quite similar to its relation to its hair, fur, and secretions in general, mentioned earlier. For just as the hair, sweat, tears, saliva, and various bodily fluids are naturally brought forth by the animal to protect, cool, cleanse, and feed itself, so too its seed is emitted during copulation to reproduce. The two ways the nutritive soul participates in immortality are at work here: self-nourishment/self-preservation and reproduction. See *De Anima* 2.4.415a20-b3.

[33] See, for instance, *STh* I, q. 118, a. 1.

equivocal causality, for some but not all of the latter are instances of the former. Second, one might therefore think that this distinction explains why St. Thomas sometimes says the equivocal agent has the form it gives in a *different* way and other times that it has it in a *more eminent* way, such that noninstrumental equivocal causes possess the form they give in a higher way, but instrumental equivocal causes possess it in a lower way. In order to show that this interpretation of St. Thomas, although taxonomically neat, is nevertheless not the whole story, we will need to consider more carefully what is meant by instrumental causality. By pointing out the ways in which equivocal agents are like and unlike instrumental agents, we will have greater precision in our understanding of the nature of equivocal causality and give greater clarity to St. Thomas's claim about the eminence of the preexisting form.

III. Instrumental and Equivocal Causality

A) What Is Instrumental Causality?

Saint Thomas employs the notion of instrumental causality in many contexts, usually with the basic description that "an instrument is what does not perform the action of the principal agent by its own proper power, but by the power of the principal agent."[34] The most common examples he gives are a carpenter's tool, words, and the sacraments.[35] In each case, the instrumental cause is distinguished from both the principal cause and the ultimate effect; again, an instrument is essentially

[34] *STh* I-II, q. 112, a. 1, ad 1; see also *STh* I, q. 18, a. 3. As with equivocal causality, secondary literature devoted to instrumental causality is scarce, and I would suggest that Fr. Romanus Cessario's recent charge that theologians need to think more carefully about the metaphysics of sacramental causality ("Sacramental Causality: *Da Capo!*," *Nova et Vetera* 11 [2013]: 307-16) is doomed if it does not begin with careful thought about instrumental causality. A few exceptional studies of instrumental causality are Sebastian Walshe, O. Praem., "The Notion of Instrumental Causality" (S.T.D. diss.; Rome: Pontifical Institute of St. Thomas, 2006); and J. Albertson, "Instrumental Causality in St. Thomas," *The New Scholasticism* 28 (1954): 409-35.

[35] For the carpentry examples, see below. For grace and speech, see *STh* III, q, 62, a. 1; and *STh* III, q, 62, a. 4, ad 1.

a medium, a "that through which." This intermediacy is what makes it unclear how or whether the instrument bears the form the effect receives. Sometimes St. Thomas seems to go so far as to simply deny that it bears the form it conducts, such as when he says that

> An instrumental cause acts . . . only through the motion with which it is moved by the principal agent. Whence the effect does not become like the instrument, but like the principal agent (such as the bench does not become like the saw, but like the art that is in the mind of the artisan).[36]

On other occasions he speaks with greater nuance by saying that "an instrumental agent need not possess the form that it induces as disposing that very thing [*ut disponentem ipsum*], except only through the mode of intention, as is clear of the form of the bench in the saw."[37] Thus, the instrument is a strange sort of agent cause, for the effect is not strictly speaking being assimilated to it but rather to the principal agent. Insofar as agent causes as such make things become like themselves, it seems that an instrumental agent is not perfectly an agent.[38]

Yet in order for an instrument to be an agent in any sense—and indeed, in order for the instrument to be, not only spatially, but *causally* between the principal agent and the ultimate effect—there must be some way in which the instrument bears the form the patient receives. One cannot give what one does not have, and thus what one in no way has one can in no way give.

An initial way of seeing this comes from the universal experience of amateur fix-it men: there is a right tool for each job because of the congruence of the tool's form or shape to what one wants to do, as anyone using a pipe wrench when a crescent wrench is called for learns, to his grief. Saint Thomas notes this by saying that

[36] *STh* III, q, 62, a. 1.

[37] IV *Sent*., d. 5, q. 2, a. 2, qcla. 5.

[38] Cajetan even goes so far as to cite Alexander of Aphrodisias to the effect that instruments "are not efficient causes," "not properly" (*In I STh*, q. 4, a. 2). Aristotle himself appears to associate instrumental causes more directly with final causality than with agent causality (*Phys.* 2.3.194b35-195a2; *Metaphys.* 5.2.1013a35-b3).

an instrument has two actions. The one is instrumental, according to which it operates not in its proper power, but in the power of the principal agent. But it has another proper action that belongs to it according to its own proper form. For example, it belongs to the saw to cut by reason of its own sharpness, but to make a bed insofar as it is the instrument of the art. Moreover, it does not complete the instrumental action except by exercising its proper action, for it makes the bench by cutting it.[39]

An instrument, in virtue of its own proper character, both amplifies and makes determinate the agency of the principal agent; one might even say that the reason we must use instruments is because of the disproportion between the aims of our intellect and the fact that we have only hands for accomplishing those aims. Thus, an instrumental agent is not simply a second domino in a series, as though to be an instrument is the same thing as to be a moved mover that could simply be swapped for the first or the third domino. An instrument, properly speaking, is something *of* the principal agent, almost a part of it.[40] For instance, the carpenter *himself* cuts the wood *by means of* the saw—which saw, left to itself, and even if placed right next to the wood, could do nothing at all. Thus, the principal agent draws the instrument up into its own agency such that it can actually be an agent, but through the instrument's own character the principal agent is an agent of *this specific* effect. Otherwise the principal agent would have no reason to use this tool, or any tool, at all;[41] the tool must have something of the effect within itself.

[39] *STh* III, q. 62, a. 1, ad 2.

[40] This is perhaps why one of the few divisions St. Thomas makes of instrumental causes is into genuine parts (i.e., those continuous with the principal agent, like the hand) and quasi-parts (i.e., those touching but not continuous with the principal agent, like saws). See *STh* III, q. 62, a. 5; and *ScG* IV, c. 41.

[41] See *STh* I-II, q. 83, a. 1, ad 2. This is not to say that a principal agent must always employ an instrumental cause. To call one agent "principal" and the other "instrumental" is to say that the effect is more properly attributed to the former; as a result, a principal agent often can bring about the effect without the use of the instrument, either by means of a different one or even by itself (as when we admiringly say someone did something "with his bare hands" when one usually uses a wrench, or a bottle opener).

But there is a deeper way of seeing that the instrument bears the form of the effect, albeit in an appropriately intermediate manner. Saint Thomas will say that, whereas

> the power of the principal agent possesses an existence enduring and complete in nature [*permanens et completum esse in natura*], the power of the instrumental agent possesses an existence going across from the one into the other, and an incomplete existence [*esse transiens ex uno in aliud, et incompletum*], just as motion too is the imperfect act [going] from the agent into the patient.[42]

Thus, just as while something is being moved into a new place, it does not have the actuality the agent is in the process of giving it, so too an instrument while being employed does not possess the form it communicates. Nevertheless, it is not true that the body being moved in no sense has the place it is entering, and nor is it meaningless to ask *where* the moving body is; likewise, one cannot say the instrument in no sense has the form, for the latter passes through the former—otherwise this would really be action at a distance.[43] And while the instrument as such participates in this higher agent causality in a transitory way (for it lasts only as long as the principal agent is using it) the instrument is transferring, and therefore bearing "through the mode of a flowing intention [*intentionis fluentis*],"[44] the form which is more static in the mind of the agent and which he intends to put into the patient. Nor is this principle limited to the instruments of intelligent artists. In the case of the aforementioned colored object, the visual medium instrumentally (and yet while remaining transparent) bears the color to the eye.

[42] *STh* III, q. 62, a. 4.

[43] On St. Thomas's rejection of action at a distance and its connection to instrumental causality, see my "The Impossibility of Action at a Distance," in *Wisdom's Apprentice: Thomistic Essays in Honor of Lawrence Dewan, O.P.*, ed. Peter Kwasniewski (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 173-200.

[44] IV *Sent*., d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, sol. 4.

B) Instrumental Causality in Comparison to Equivocal Causality

Having now reviewed what instrumental causality is, we turn to whether it makes sense to think of it as a species of equivocal causality. Besides the fact that some of the aforementioned equivocal causes are also instrumental causes (medicine of health, seed of animal), equivocal and instrumental causes do, after all, hold in common the mark of bringing about an effect without possessing the form in the way that the effect does.

Nevertheless, not only does St. Thomas never assert that instrumental causality is a species of equivocal causality, but he explicitly separates them. Thus, in the *Sentences* commentary he says:

> The agent is twofold: one principal and another instrumental. A principal agent, however, when it makes a thing like itself, must possess the form that it induces through its action (in univocal agents), or some more noble one (in non-univocal agents). But an instrumental agent need not possess the form that it induces as disposing that very thing, except only through the mode of intention, as is clear of the form of the bench in the saw.[45]

Thus, an equivocal agent has more in common with a univocal one than with an instrumental one, for the former two are principal agents, and the instrumental cause is in a class all its own.

Further, we may consider the aforementioned example of the white wall affecting the medium and the eye. As we saw, St. Thomas considers the white to be an equivocal cause of the white species in the air, which in turn impresses itself upon the eye. Yet the species in the air does not itself seem to be an equivocal cause of the species in the eye, for in both cases the white-wall-oriented form seems to be present in the same way, namely, such that it "intends" the white wall. It is true that only in the eye is the form possessed in a knowing organ, forming the foundation for an act of vision; nevertheless, at the level of

[45] IV *Sent*., d. 5, q. 2, a. 2, qcla. 5. See also IV *Sent*., d. 1, q. 1, a. 4; *De Malo*, q. 4, a. 3; and *STh* III, q. 62, a. 3, for similar divisions between instrumental causes, on the one hand, and both univocal and equivocal ones, on the other.

the impression of this form—that is, immaterial existence in a transparent body—the eye and the air receive the form in fundamentally the same way.[46] In short, it seems that the transparent medium conducting the white to the eye is a univocal cause. And yet, clearly the transparent medium is an instrumental cause: it is causally between the white wall and the eye, communicating the white to the eye in a "flowing" manner, such that it accomplishes something that exceeds its proper powers. At least one instrumental cause is not an equivocal cause.[47]

Although instrumental causality is not a species of equivocal causality, the likeness between them is enough to draw the more modest conclusion that the same agent cause might be called instrumental from one perspective and equivocal from another. They might be one in subject but different in account. If one attends only to the sheer otherness between an agent's mode of possessing the form it gives and the effect itself, one would call the seed, for example, an equivocal cause of animal life; yet if one attends also to that agent's intermediacy in causality, and especially the incomplete character of its possession of the form it transmits, one would call the seed an instrumental cause of animal life. Right away, then, one might conclude that this is why St. Thomas speaks of equivocal agents in the two aforementioned ways, that is, as possessing the form in a different way and in a more eminent way. The former is looser so as to include the equivocal agents that happen also to be instrumental agents, whereas the latter gets more to the essence of equivocal agency. But even here caution is needed.

[46] This is why, Aristotle and St. Thomas say, both the air and the lens and eye jelly must be transparent. Before the act of vision is completed or expressed in virtue of the sensitive soul, the white species is present in the eye in the same way as in the air. See II *De Anima*, lect. 14 (418); and *De Sensu*, lect. 4 (48-54), based on *De Sensu et Sensato* 2.438a10-16.

[47] A simpler instance would be where the species-bearing air acts upon another transparent medium (say, water) and communicates the species to it (though it would be refracted); clearly this is univocal instrumental causality. Others are imaginable, especially in the realm of human art, such as machines that make other machines, or vehicles designed to transport other vehicles.

On this interpretation of the two ways of speaking, if it be taken absolutely, any equivocal cause that does not bear the form in an unambiguously more eminent way would have to be an instrumental cause. But again the aforementioned examples check this generalization. We may consider yet again the example of the white object equivocally causing the white in the medium and the eye. Here, as St. Thomas notes, the form materially determining the body engenders a like form spiritually determining the transparent air and eye, an equivocal cause that bears the form in a mode inferior to the mode in which it is received—and yet the white wall is not an instrumental cause of the formation of the transparent medium, but its principal cause. Likewise, the real existence of an en-mattered form, we saw, is an equivocal cause of the truth of one's knowledge of it, and for the same reason the form exists in a higher mode (that is, intellectually) in the mind, and yet the real being is not naturally conceived as an instrumental cause of the knowing but as a principal cause.

Again, a more restrained conclusion seems in order. Some instrumental causes are equivocal and some equivocal causes are instrumental, and it is more appropriate to say that the instrumental equivocal cause bears the form it gives in a different (because inferior) way than to say that it bears it in a more eminent way—but this is not to affirm that *only* instrumental equivocal agents bear the forms they give in this lower way. It would be safer to say that the difference between the two ways St. Thomas speaks should not be divided so sharply. Perhaps all equivocal agents possess the forms they induce in a more eminent way *in some measure*—though what is meant by such "greater eminence" may differ widely, to the point that it would often be less confusing simply to describe this mode of possession as just "different." I will support this view shortly, but in order to do so we must discuss another sort of agent causality that is closely related to equivocal causality, namely, universal causality.

IV. Universal and Equivocal Causality

A) What Is Universal Causality?

Like equivocal causality, with which it is easily confused, universal causality is sorely neglected in Thomistic discussions of causality.[48] This may be partly for the same reasons, as again the sun is St. Thomas's typical non-divine example; likewise, when Aristotle famously but cryptically says that "the sun and a man generate a man,"[49] he seems to have in mind the sun functioning as a universal cause. Saint Thomas introduces this sort of causality even more frequently than he does equivocal causality, and its fecundity in sacred theology is vast and under-appreciated.[50] Indeed, a deeper understanding of it appears to hold the key for resolving several unnecessarily perennial disputes in theology and philosophy.[51] The following is only an initial foray into this subtle and difficult matter.

[48] Some of the few exceptions I have encountered are Ronald P. McArthur, "Universal *in praedicando*, Universal *in causando*," *Laval théologique et philosophique* 18 (1962): 59-95; and Oliva Blanchette, *Philosophy of Being: A Reconstructive Essay in Metaphysics* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 479-84, although this latter deals with it exclusively in terms of divine universal causality. Rarely is universal causality considered precisely as such. For instance, Dodds's excellent treatment of God's transcendent action (*Unlocking Divine Action*) is implicitly about universal causality, but the expression is not used.

[49] *Phys.* 2.2.194b14.

[50] Universal causality turns up in every part of the *Summa*, often at crucial junctions. In the *Prima pars* St. Thomas argues that God, and even God's will, is the universal cause of all that is (*STh* I, q. 19, aa. 6, 7, and 11; q. 45, a. 5; q. 49, a. 3). In the *Tertia pars* he argues that the incarnate Son of God, and specifically his passion, is the universal cause of salvation (*STh* III, q. 4, a. 4, ad 1; q. 7, a. 11; q. 52, a. 1, ad 2). Likewise, in the *Secunda secundae* he explains that just as the general virtue of legal justice is a universal cause of the acts of the other moral virtues, so too the theological virtue of charity is the universal cause of all virtuous acts (*STh* II-II, q. 58, a. 6). In the *Prima secundae* he even speaks of the vice of arrogance as a quasi-universal cause of the other vices (*STh* I-II, q. 162, a. 2).

[51] I have in mind the reconciliation of predestination and free-will, the relation between chance and per se causality, and the proper understanding of the common good, among others.

Because most of the places where St. Thomas speaks of universal causality center on God, who is really only the paradigm and most perfect instance of universal causality, relying upon them exclusively can lead to overstating the basic nature of this causality. Hence, the generality in the second book of Aristotle's *Physics*, in the enumeration of the kinds and modes of causes, is a helpful starting point. Noting an ambiguity in what Aristotle says about prior and posterior modes of causality (*Phys.* 2.3.195a30), St. Thomas presents two ways of understanding Aristotle:

> One should notice, however, that "the universal and the proper" or "the prior and the posterior" cause can be taken either according to a commonness of predication (following the examples posited here of the physician and the artisan), or according to a commonness [*communitatem*] of causality (as when we say the sun is a universal cause of heating, but fire a proper cause).[52]

The first usage of the expressions "proper" or "particular cause" and "universal cause" designates the universality of the predicate describing the cause; apparently this is the sense that Aristotle chiefly has in mind, since his examples are the agent named as "physician" and as "artist," respectively. Nevertheless, St. Thomas takes the opportunity to mention *another* mode of causality that equally deserves these names, where the differences are not just according to our manner of contemplating the causes but in their manner of being a cause.[53] As he continues, St. Thomas explains the difference between causing universally and causing particularly:

> For it is manifest that every power extends to certain things according as they have in common one account of the object [*communicant in una ratione obiecti*]. Also, inasmuch as a power extends to more things, so far is it necessary that that account be more common [*communiorem*], and if a power is proportioned to the object according to the latter's account, it follows that a higher cause acts according to a form more universal and less contracted

[52] II *Phys*., lect. 6 (189); he makes this distinction also in *STh* I-II, q. 45, a. 5.

[53] Hence the two uses of "universal cause" are sometimes distinguished under the names *universale in praedicando* and *universale in causando*. For the sake of simplicity, however, in the rest of this article I will refer to the universal *in causando* simply as a universal cause.

[*magis universalem et minus contractam*]. And one must consider the order of things in this way, because inasmuch as some things are higher among beings, so far do they have less contracted forms, and forms more dominant over matter, which restricts [*coarctat*] the power of a form.[54]

In short, since a cause must be proportioned to its effect, the very same effect can simultaneously have more than one cause just as the effect can be considered in a more or less universal manner. This entails, of course, that a more universal cause brings about a greater number, and even a multitude of kinds, of effects than does a particular cause. Whence, St. Thomas continues the connection with universal predications by adding that since alteration is the genus of heating, and the sun and the heavenly bodies are universal causes of heating, then "if fire is the primary thing that heats things [*primum calefaciens*], then the heavens are not merely the primary thing that heats things, but the primary thing that alters them [*primum alterans*]."[55]

This should not be understood to mean that the universal cause causes only part, or one aspect, of the effect, while the particular cause causes the remainder. This would be to misunderstand how universal predicates themselves name real things, for "man" and "animal" name the same reality (namely, Socrates) but in different ways, according to how determinate our thoughts are about Socrates. Further, this view would destroy the unity of the effect, implying that the effect is an accidental whole, since *as a whole* it would have no per se

[54] II *Phys*., lect. 6 (189). Because of this *communitas*, St. Thomas occasionally uses the name *causa communis* or *communior* (*STh* I, q. 44, a. 2), or even *causa generalis* (*STh* I-II, q. 46, a. 1), to name universal causes. It is noteworthy that, should someone assert that universal causality is unintelligible as a distinct mode of causality, we do still speak this way when we call the leader of an army a "general." Obviously this is a generality not of predication but of power. The same goes for the longstanding convention of calling the political heads of medicine, law, and a religious order the "surgeon general," "attorney general," and "superior general," respectively. There is nothing military intended in calling these figures "generals" but rather something pertaining to scope and leadership over other surgeons, attorneys, and superiors. Likewise, general anesthetic is not anesthetic considered as a genus, but something that anesthetizes generally, i.e., the whole body.

[55] Ibid.

cause.[56] Rather, both causes bring about the entire effect, the particular cause in a more limited way and the universal cause in a more encompassing way, for the particular cause brings about only *this* instance of the effect (this man Socrates) and therefore not the effect in virtue of *what it is* (Socrates as man), which is due to the universal cause.[57] As St. Thomas says,

> In the degree that a cause is higher, to that degree it is more common and more thoroughly an agent [*communior et efficacior*], and in the degree that it is more thoroughly an agent, to that degree it more profoundly enters into the effect [*profundius ingreditur in effectum*], and from a more remote potency this very cause leads the effect into act. . . . Thus, if we consider the individual agents, every particular agent is immediate to its own effect; if, however, we consider the power by which the action comes to be, thus the power of the higher cause will be more immediate to the effect than the power of the lower. For the lower power is not conjoined to the effect except through the power of the higher; whence it is said in the book *de Causis* (prop. 1) that the power of the first cause acts on the thing caused in a prior way [*prius*], and more vigorously [*vehementius*] enters into it.[58]

As in the case of the principal and instrumental cause, a universal cause acts *through* a particular cause, rather than *alongside* of and *competing* with it. Thus, according to ancient cosmology, the sun does not merely heat bodies when there is no fire at hand to do so, as though acting as a backup fire; nor does it simply supply one degree of heat while the fire provides another, until the wood reaches ignition temperature. Rather, as a universal cause, the sun gives the fire itself, and all other agents of alteration, their efficacy as causes, and so it is at work even in the fire. For the fire bears within itself the power of the sun, and so the act of heating is even more fundamentally that

[56] See *ScG* III, c. 70, on the whole being caused by both the particular and the universal cause, not part by each. On all of the aforementioned difficulties, see McArthur, "Universal *in praedicando*, Universal *in causando*."

[57] Saint Thomas sometimes states this principle, perhaps too succinctly, by saying that the particular cause brings about *fieri*, whereas the universal brings about *esse*; for example, *STh* I, q. 104, a. 1.

[58] *De Pot*., q. 3, a. 7. See also *STh* I, q. 79, a. 4.

of the sun than it is of the fire. Nothing about the effect simply escapes the reach of the universal cause.[59]

B) Universal Causality in Comparison to Equivocal Causality

Is universal causality the same thing as equivocal causality? It is tempting to say yes. Besides the fact that St. Thomas calls the sun both kinds of cause, at times he uses the language of universal causality to describe an equivocal cause, for instance, when he says that "equivocal generations are prior to univocal generations in this, that equivocal causes hold their influence over the whole species [*habent influentiam supra totam speciem*], but univocal causes do not, but only over one individual."[60] On one occasion he almost appears to equate them:

> Although in predications it is necessary that equivocals be reduced to univocals, nevertheless in actions the non-univocal agent of necessity precedes the univocal agent. For a non-univocal agent is a universal cause of the whole species, just as the sun is the cause of the generation of all men. But a univocal agent is not a universal agent cause of the whole species (otherwise it would be the cause of its very self, since it is contained under the species); rather, it is a particular cause, relative to this individual, which it establishes in a participation of the species. Therefore a universal cause of the whole species is not a univocal agent. However, the universal cause is prior to the particular cause.[61]

Saint Thomas appears to be saying that every nonunivocal (i.e., equivocal) cause is universal, and every universal cause must be equivocal (for no univocal cause can be a universal cause). Thus, the evidence that, in St. Thomas's mind, equivocal and universal causes (and therefore also univocal and particular causes) are

[59] See *STh* I, q. 46, a. 1, ad 6; q. 103, a. 7.

[60] *In Boet. de Trin.*, q. 1, a. 4, ad 4; see also *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 4, ad 4; and VIII *Phys.*, lect. 10 (1053).

[61] *STh* I, q. 13, a. 5, ad 1. Elsewhere St. Thomas makes a similar argument, especially as regards the divine causality of the very existence of a form; see *STh* I, q. 104, a. 1. There is, however, no mention of equivocal causality in this passage.

the same thing is not thin.[62] In the following, however, I will try to show otherwise, both as to the truth of the matter and as to the mind of St. Thomas.

First, we may consider the obvious fact that the names do not seem to mean the same thing. Not only do the basic adjectives in the names in no way connote the same notions—"equivocal" does not mean the same thing as "universal" any more than "univocal" means the same thing as "particular"—but even in St. Thomas's abovementioned explanation the meanings do not neatly align. An equivocal cause is one that has the form of the effect in a different and/or more eminent mode than the effect, whereas a universal cause is one that intimately causes all the individuals of a certain genus or species. It is clear, then, that even if every equivocal cause were universal, and every universal cause equivocal, the names at least indicate really distinct *rationes*, distinct ways of considering a given cause.

One can make the distinction sharper still, for although all equivocal causes must be agent causes, not all universal causes are agent causes. Saint Thomas explicitly speaks of universal *final* causes as well. For instance, he points out that a common good must not be universal in the way a predicate or a concept is, but precisely as a cause:

> Works are indeed in particulars, but those particulars can be referred to the common good—not, in fact, a good common with the commonness of a genus or a species, but with the commonness of a final cause [*non quidem communitate generis vel speciei, sed communitate causae finalis*], according to which the common good is called the common end.[63]

In fact, a moment's reflection makes it clear that any sound understanding of the common good entails universality precisely as a cause, a final cause, for otherwise a common good is nothing other than the very concept of a particular good, a

[62] Likewise, in the few discussions of equivocal or universal causality I have encountered in the secondary literature, authors consistently seem to use the designations interchangeably.

[63] *STh* I-II, q. 90, a. 2, ad 2; on universal agent vs. universal final causes, see also *STh* I-II, q. 2, a. 5, obj. 3 and ad 3.

universal consideration of many particular goods.[64] The common good, however, is not simply what particular goods all have in common, but a distinct and higher good, which is therefore that for the sake of which these particular and private goods themselves are sought. Whether the common good one has in mind is that of a family, a city, or the kingdom of God, it is also the good of the members and is more fundamental to their desire than the corresponding private goods. Likewise, it is not a stretch to say that prime matter, the ultimate underlying of all coming to be, is a (indeed, *the*) universal material cause. For every other matter—whether elements of a compound substance, or organs of an animal, or any material part of a whole—has its potency to be in some qualified way (*esse tale*) through its underlying matter's potency to be without quailfication (*esse simpliciter*), and this potency is present in all coming to be.[65] Similarly, there seem to be several instances of universal formal causality. An exemplar is an external form that causes all other forms imitating it, its images;[66] again, the form of the universe, which is its order, is a universal cause of all of the forms of its parts, which seems to be what St. Thomas means when he speaks of a particular failing in the universe being unnatural relative to particular natures but natural relative to "universal nature";[67] in addition, even substantial form seems to be a universal formal cause of proper accidents.[68] Universal causality seems broader than equivocal causality.

[64] See Charles De Koninck, "The Primacy of the Common Good," in *The Writings of Charles De Koninck*,, vol. 2, ed. and trans. Ralph McInerny (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 96-97.

[65] One might even say that letters are universal material causes of all speech, even while granting that syllables and words are particular material causes of the same.

[66] This would be especially true of the divine ideas; see *STh* I, q. 6, a. 4; and q. 15, a. 3.

[67] See *STh* I, q. 22, a. 2, ad 2; q. 92, a. 1, ad 1; q. 99, a. 2, ad 1.

[68] A substantial form's emanation of its properties is often described by way of an analogy with agent causality. Nevertheless, since the substance and accident are one in subject, this is only *like* agent causality. There is at least as much likeness between formal causality and the way that the form by which a thing is without qualification originates the form by which a thing is qualifiedly.

Perhaps one might grant this and still propose that *among agent causes* a universal and an equivocal cause are the same reality, though each designation expresses a different aspect of that causality. This still seems to make too strong an association, though, and the difference between their accounts points toward another proposal: the idea of an equivocal cause seems to *say less* than the idea of a universal cause, and this suggests that universal (agent) causality is a mode, determination, and perhaps even a *species* of equivocal causality. That is, every universal agent is an equivocal agent, but the converse is not so. Again, what makes this suggestion most convincing are the examples enumerated above in part II.

Certainly some of these examples can intelligibly be described as universal agent causes as well. For instance, like the sun and God, the architect (or any artist, for that matter), because he acts in virtue of the art, is a cause of an entire genus of houses, unlike an underling who is a particular cause because he works only at the artist's direction, and perhaps only on one house, or even part of one house. The same might be said for an object of knowledge: the object, insofar as it is a real being, seems to be a universal cause of the truth or awareness of it in all who can know it. Analogously, the white of this wall is a universal cause of our knowledge of it through its multiplying its species in the air and eyes by emanating in all directions. Again, an animal seems to be a universal cause of all its seed, for it alone can generate offspring like itself, and it always does so through its seed.

Nevertheless, many of the other examples are clearly particular causes. This hot medicine is a cause only of this man becoming healthy; it is not a panacea, even for this one man, as he could be healed by other means or from other diseases. Likewise, friction does not seem to be the universal cause of all heat, much less of all health.[69] And it is clearest of all that an

[69] This is true even in the contemporary account of heat where not all heat is caused by, or consists of, chaotic motion, as there is also radiant heat attributable to light, as victims of sunburn will attest; St. Thomas himself notes this as well in *In II De Caelo*, lect. 10, n. 393. At any rate, the kinetic theory has a tendency to reduce this example to *univocal* causality since the common interpretation of it is that heat is *nothing more*

animal's seed is not a universal cause, as it causes only one offspring.[70] Thus, these examples fall short of the encompassing causality that a universal agent possesses. Indeed, part of the reason that they cannot be universal causes is that they are also instances of instrumental causality. For the transcendence of a universal cause clearly implies principal causality.

If this account is correct, then, when St. Thomas says (in *STh* I, q. 13, a. 5) that "a nonunivocal agent is a universal cause of the whole species," he should not be interpreted as asserting that *all* nonunivocal agents are universal causes, but only that some (and perhaps the highest ones) are. The procedure of the argument suggests this, for it is replying to the objection that, as with equivocation in speech, all equivocal causes presuppose univocal causes. To undermine this assumption, St. Thomas needs only to show that this is not necessary, but in fact he goes further and shows that all univocal causes in fact presuppose equivocal causes, namely, universal equivocal causes. His point is that equivocal causes are prior to univocal causes precisely because there must be a universal cause of the effect's species prior to the effect as an individual, and such a cause would have to be equivocal (otherwise it would itself have the form of the effect univocally and therefore be the cause of itself). Thus, it is neither necessary nor relevant to St. Thomas's argument that his superficially unqualified claim be taken universally. This reading also fits the fact that it is precisely *instrumental* equivocal causes that seem least of all like universal causes, for instrumental causes least clearly bear the form of the effect in a more eminent mode, which a universal cause must do because of its scope over, and intimacy with, the effect.

Moreover, although not every equivocal cause is univocal, it is indisputable that every universal cause is equivocal, for the

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than chaotic molecular motion, rather than its effect; thus, on the modern theory the rubbing of my hands is nothing more than directed molecular collisions resulting in more molecular collisions, which only *appear* to be the distinct reality called "heat."

[70] Indeed, the *parent* appears to be a better candidate for this universal causality of the (potentially many) offspring. Though of course the parent is a univocal cause of its children, so to call even the parent the universal agent would require some qualifications. But see note 71 below.

argument St. Thomas makes—to cause an entire genus requires not being a member of that genus—is decisive.[71] This means, in turn, that another field of examples of equivocal causality opens up. For example, besides the theological examples mentioned above,[72] St. Thomas speaks of the ruler of a city, the general of an army, and even the intellect of the inner senses as being universal causes.[73] Likewise, the common sense power, by which we sense our act of sensing and discern one sense power from another, he says is "common" in the mode of a universal cause, for it is a cause of sensation as such.[74] Likewise, prudence is a universal cause of each of the moral virtues.[75] At any rate, armed with the notion of universal causality as a kind of equivocal cause, we can now revisit the matter of the "more eminent" way in which the equivocal agent bears the form it gives.

V. Gradations of Eminence

A) Preliminaries to a Survey

To illuminate the idea of the more eminent mode with which the effect pre-exists in the equivocal agent, we will proceed through a sort of *manuductio*, or "leading by the hand,"[76]

[71] The only exception I can see to this might be Adam in relation to the human race. If man generating man is the paradigm example of univocal causality, surely Adam is a univocal but universal cause; St. Thomas discusses this most clearly in considering Adam's sin and its transmission to the race (*STh* I-II, q. 81, a. 1). Yet perhaps there is something of equivocal causality even here, as Adam is not merely a man, but (as his name in Hebrew indicates) Man, and he is not merely a father who happens to be first in the order of generation, but a father who bears all his offspring in his person in a way that no other father after has or can.

[72] See note 50 above.

[73] See *STh* I-II, q. 1, a. 2, ad 3; q. 6, a. 8; and q. 18, a. 7, respectively.

[74] See *STh* I, q. 1, a. 3, ad 2; and q. 57, a. 2; q. 78, a. 4, ad 2.

[75] See *STh* I, q. 55, a. 3, ad 3; see also I-II, q. 60, a. 1. Saint Thomas draws several other examples of universal causality from Pseudo Dionysius in his commentary on the *Divine Names* (c. 4, lect. 4; and c. 5, lect. 1 and 2).

[76] On *manuductio*, see Marie I. George, "Mind Forming and *Manuductio* in Aquinas," *The Thomist* 57 (1993): 201-13.

reviewing some of the examples encountered above, in combination with a series of oppositions and negations, in order to manifest the range of degrees of eminence. We will begin by excluding a possible misunderstanding about what this greater eminence might consist in, namely, a mere greater intensity.

Saint Thomas's paradigm case of the opposite of an equivocal cause is fire heating a piece of wood. They are univocally called "hot": one does not mean different things when one calls a fire and a heated piece of wood "hot." The fire is of course much *hotter* than the wood, but this very use of the comparative indicates that the word is being used univocally: whatever is *hotter* than another is *as hot* as that other, only more so. As straightforward as this difference in degree is, it is not what St. Thomas intends when he says that the equivocal agent has the form of the effect in a different or more eminent mode. When he distinguishes three kinds of likeness between agent and patient, he adds that some things

> are called *like* that share in a form according to the same account, and not according to the same mode, but rather according to more and less (for example, the less white is said to be *like* the more white). And this is an imperfect likeness. . . . [H]owever, some things are called *like* that share in the same form, but not according to the same account, as is evident in non-univocal agents.[77]

Like the duller and the brighter white, the heat of the wood and that of the fire differ only in degree (*modus*), not in account (*ratio*). However, with an equivocal agent, though both agent and patient might be called "hot," there is not even a likeness of account; the sun is not merely much *hotter* than the wood or the fire (as we might say now), but it is called "hot" in a different way altogether. One might say that the sun is so much hotter than the wood that one no longer means the same thing by the word when one calls it "hot."[78]

[77] *STh* I, q. 4, a. 3.

[78] Hence we see better why St. Thomas describes an equivocal cause as possessing the form in a different account *and* mode (see note 9). He goes on in this same passage to say that, although the equivocal agent is never one in species with its effects, often they are one in genus (for both the sun and wood are bodies). Even this, however, is not

With that simple solution ruled out, we can turn now to the more difficult task of articulating how a form can exist more eminently. We first note that the form as possessed by the agent differs from the form as possessed by the patient in a nonrandom way: the difference derives from the natures of the possessors. Saint Thomas often distinguishes agent causes in virtue of this difference:

> The agent cause is twofold: One agent is proportioned to the thing susceptible to its effect—whence it induces in the effect a form of the same species and account, as in all univocal agents. . . . But another agent is not proportioned to the one receiving its effect—whence the effect does not attain the species of the agent, but only a certain likeness of it, as much as it can, as in all equivocal agents.[79]

Thus, the axiom that whatever is received is received according to the mode of the receiver is the reason why not all agents are univocal. In a way, it is the *patient's* "fault" that the agent is equivocal rather than univocal, since the patient receives "as much as it can" (*quantum potest*), but it cannot receive all that is there in the agent.[80] So too, if there is a gradation among the fundamental capacities of patients, there will also be a gradation in the greater eminence in modes in equivocal agents. With this principle in hand we can look again at our examples.

B) Universal Equivocal Causes as Clear Cases of Greater Eminence

Among equivocal causes, universal causes seem to be the ones that would most manifestly possess the form they induce in a more eminent way. Because they generate a thing not merely

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necessary for a cause to be an equivocal cause, for God does not share a genus with anything; he is still, however, one with his creatures "according to a sort of analogy, just as existence itself is common to all things" (*STh* I, q. 4, a. 3). For similar language, see *STh* I, q. 6, a. 2; and *ScG* III, c. 24.

[79] II *Sent*., d. 1, q. 2, a. 2. See also II *Phys*., lect. 11 (242).

[80] Hence, elsewhere St. Thomas defines equivocal causality as happening wherever the patient is "not perfectly assimilated to the agent" because it is not equal in power to it (*De Pot*., q. 7, a. 1, ad 8).

as an individual but as an individual of this species or genus, they must bear a multitude of different particular forms in a way that somehow overcomes their opposition and mutual exclusion. We may consider the sun example again. Heat is not the only effect that once was attributed to the sun: Fire itself, the desiccation of bodies, the allegedly spontaneous generation of vermin in putrefying matter, and even of man himself in human generation are all effects of the sun, according to the medievals. In fact, St. Thomas says that the sun is the cause of all motions, changes, qualities, and substantial forms of generable substances.[81] To possess such a panoply of diverse forms more eminently is somehow to possess them without their mutual diversity; it is to possess them in a more unified way.

Saint Thomas puts this very problem to himself in the aforementioned fourth question of the *Summa*, in the first two objections to the claim that God possesses within himself all the perfections of creatures. The objections read:

> It seems that the perfections of all things are not in God, for God is simple, as was shown [q. 3, a. 7], but the perfections of things are many and diverse. Therefore all the perfections of things are not in God. Further, opposites cannot be in the same thing. But the perfections of things are opposites; for each species is perfected through its own specific difference, but the differences by which a genus is divided and the species are constituted are opposed. Therefore because opposites cannot be simultaneously in the same thing, it seems that not all the perfections of things are in God.[82]

How can manifold distinct, and therefore contradictory and perhaps even contrary, perfections preexist in God, or indeed in any universal equivocal agent? Saint Thomas's reply draws on Pseudo-Dionysius:

[81] For the sun as an equivocal agent cause of fire, see *De Pot*., q. 7, a. 1, ad 8; of dryness, see *ScG* I, c. 31; of "certain animals" in putrefying matter, see *Comp. Theol*. I, c. 43 and *ScG* IV, c. 10; of man, see *Comp. Theol*. I, c. 198; *De Malo*, q. 4, a. 3.; and VIII *Phys*., lect. 10 (1053); and of all motion, generation, life, and substances, including their manifold qualities, see II *Phys*., lect. 4 (175); *STh* I, q. 4, a. 2, ad 1; *ScG* III, c. 24 (passim); and *In Div. Nom*., c. 4, lect. 3 (312).

[82] *STh* I, q. 4, a. 2, obj. 1 and 2.

"God exists not in a certain mode, but simply and without being enclosed thereby [*simpliciter et incircumscripte*] he holds in advance within himself the whole of existence uniformly [*uniformiter*]". . . . To the first, therefore, it should be said that "Just as the sun," as Dionysius says in *Div. Nom.* v, "while remaining one and shining uniformly, possesses in advance within its very self uniformly [*in seipso uniformiter praeaccipit*] the substances of sensible things, and their many and diverse qualities, so much more so is it necessary that within the cause of all things there preexist, according to a natural union, all things." And thus things that are diverse and in themselves opposed to each other preexist in God as one, without injury to his simplicity.[83]

Saint Thomas uses similar language a little later in the *Summa*: In a universal cause, the effect is "unequal to the power of the agent cause," so it "receives the likeness of the agent not according to the same account, but deficiently, such that what is in the effects dividedly and in a manifold way [*divisim et multipliciter*] is in the cause simply and in the same mode [*simpliciter et eodem modo*]."[84] A universal agent in some way—and God, the most universal of universal agents most unqualifiedly—unites and thereby possesses all the forms that it generates, although these forms, in their natural existence within their proper matter, are mutually opposed. In the single form of the universal agent they take on a mode of existence that suppresses their mutual exclusivity, because it supplies for their deficiency, and allows them to coexist in a noncompeting, and therefore simpler, way.

Of course this is all well and good in ancient cosmology. If it no longer appears that the sun is quite as elevated a cause as the ancients and medievals thought, then are there any clear instances of universal causes that bear in a unified way the manifold forms they bring about, other than God himself? Is there any evidence of this unification of opposites in the nonobsolete examples treated above? The answer is difficult, just as it is no longer easy to identify nondivine universal causes.

[83] *STh* I, q. 4, a. 2, corp. and ad 1.

[84] *STh* I, q. 13, a. 5; see also q. 57, a. 1. In the commentary on the *Divine Names* St. Thomas describes these as "united not through the mode of intermingling [*modum confusionis*], as stones are united within a wall, but through the mode of a certain unification [*modum unitionis cuiusdam*]" (*In Div. Nom.*, c. 5, lect. 1 [646]).

Nevertheless, I propose that we come close to such a clear case in the case of the architect.

The architect generates a house in virtue of the house-form within him. How is this so? The house-form in virtue of which he designs and builds is not merely the image or blueprint in his imagination. Anyone can have an image, even a detailed image, of something he wants to have, but only an artist has something in virtue of which such a house could be actually brought into being. The relevant house-form is not in the architect's imagination but in his practical intellect. Indeed, Aristotle in one place even says that "the form of the house in the intellect *is* the art."[85] But the intellect is formed not by particulars but by universals, and the practical intellect by universals as realizable in action or artifice. Thus, the architect creates the house in virtue of the universal house as present in his art. By the very universality of this understanding he can see what is the best form for the given matter and given plot of land, the skills of his underlings, and even the spending limit of the homeowner. This, then, is also why the art allows him to make not just *this* house, or even only *identical* houses, but perhaps a myriad of houses and buildings of different shapes and sizes, all depending on the possibilities contained within the scope of his art and the conditions under which it is to be employed.

The architect's equivocal causality is a sort of universal causality, where we can see that the art itself is, or contains in a unified and simple way, the multitude of different possible houses he might build. A given architect, then, although he is not a universal cause of "house" as such, is a universal cause of the houses *he* might build. Thus, while it is true that we do not usually name this cause by the effect (except denominatively, by calling him a house-*builder*), we do often name the effect by its cause: We often name the edifice after its architect, calling it a "Frank Lloyd Wright," or a photograph an "Ansel Adams," or a painting a "Caravaggio."[86] The artist's name itself comes to

[85] *Metaphys*. 7.9.1034a25.

[86] We could add that Stradivarius names a violin and a Rodin names a sculpture. Notice this way of speaking seems particularly true when the art in question is fine art,

name a quasi-species. Likewise, then, the artist continues to create a multitude of different houses because each by itself manifests his virtue in only a circumscribed and incomplete way, whereas he possesses the perfections of these otherwise mutually exclusive creations in a unified, and therefore more eminent, way.[87]

A somewhat different, but perhaps even more straightforward, way of detecting a more eminent way of possession can be gathered from the instance of the white wall, which is, in a different way, also a quasi-universal cause. It is undeniable that the medium and the eye bear the sensible species in an immaterial mode, and therefore in a mode higher than the mode in which the wall bears it. Nevertheless, it is also obvious that the wall is white in a more complete way than is the medium or the eye. Saint Thomas states this simply by saying that "the form existing perfectly in the matter makes it be such in act (namely, fire or colored), but if it does not make something be such, then it is imperfectly in it (such as the form of the color in the air as in a thing carrying it)."[88] One might say that the wall is white according to its proper account, while the medium and the eye are white only according to a derivative account of what white is, even though the mode of existence of the white in the medium is generically higher than that in the wall. The impressed species of white is essentially a participation in the white of the wall, just as the individual white of

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or has some share in fine art. Thus, for instance, we do not speak of the nourishing actions of a physician, a therapist, or a spiritual director as pertaining to arts where the agent is conforming the patient to himself in this way, such that each patient is a particular product or manifestation of the possibilities of the artist's art. We certainly do not name the healed patient by the physician. This is probably both because the patients in question are human beings, not artifacts, and because the action of these artists is not a making so much as a helping the patient to help himself.

[87] It is perhaps helpful to recall that, as a knower, the artist possesses *immaterially* the forms he generates; this allows the same intellect to possess several otherwise opposed forms, and in a unified way. As Aristotle frequently says, the knowledge of opposites is one (*Topics* 1.10.104a15; *De Anima* 3.6.430b20-25). Thus, the very nature of knowing must involve an overcoming of opposition, especially insofar as the opposites are deprived in some way.

[88] *ScG* II, c. 50.

the wall is a sort of universal cause of its own emanation in all directions, such that it can be received by many sets of eyes, and perhaps even in different ways. Thus it is not unintelligible to say the white of the wall is white in a higher way.

C) Instrumental Agents as Bearing an Element of Greater Eminence

In spite of the inferiority of instrumental equivocal agents, even they might contain a trace of greater eminence. In the case of medicine, its role in conducting, rather than holding on to, the health it brings about suggests both imperfection *and* perfection when compared to the form as it exists in the successfully healed patient: imperfection insofar as the health is not in the medicine in any lasting or proportionate way, but perfection insofar as the health in some way in the medicine is apt to be communicated to the patient, whereas the health as received by the patient is not. That is, medicine as such has the power to mediate health, whereas a healthy animal does not.[89] Something similar is true, at least on Aristotle's account, of the animal's seed. It has no animal soul of its own, yet precisely because it can bring such a soul into act in the appropriate matter, it must possess in a vestigial and transient way the power of an adult animal soul. The seed is fecund whereas the embryo, at least while it is an embryo, is sterile.[90] This point seems in fact to be valid for all instrumental agents. We may consider again the carpenter's use of a saw, or the teacher's use

[89] A sign of which is that we do not cure the sick by simply surrounding them with the healthy, since health, unfortunately, is not contagious. Interestingly, illness seems not to require a medicine-like instrument (except perhaps the air). It is more like a univocal cause in this way: illness begets illness.

[90] Of course, one must speak with some reservation about Aristotle's seed example, since it now looks like the sperm is not the only agent cause of conception. Embryology has shown that the sperm swims to the ovum, but the ovum seems to grab the sperm that comes in contact with it, in virtue of an adhesive coating on its surface. The sperm does not so much *penetrate* the ovum as it moves from side to side so that the ovum's "stickiness" can better attach it to the ovum, so as to allow for conception. Now, however, we seem to have *two* equivocal instrumental agents to consider, each of which acts upon the other. See note 22 above.

of the spoken word. Freshly cut wood is itself useless for cutting more wood, and even students who have learned well are not necessarily ready to teach and certainly not without themselves using more words as *their own* instruments.

This in no way modifies our earlier claim that only equivocal causes that are, or in some way participate in the character of, universal causes most manifestly possess the forms they educe in a higher way. It is only to suggest that the gradations and modes of "greater eminence" might be manifold, since the very fact that an instrument is lifted up into the principal agent's causality is a reason to say that, in some modest sense, even here the instrumental agent possesses the form it mediates in a higher way.

VI. Equivocal Causality in Modern Science

In this final section, I will tentatively speculate on how this distinction between univocal and equivocal causes might be helpful in interpreting both the data and the theories offered by the natural science of our day. Unfortunately, because these examples will be wide ranging, my explanation of each will be brief. My purpose is to provoke, not to prove. Many disciples of St. Thomas have prematurely abandoned ship in relinquishing natural philosophy to mathematical physics, apparently thinking the philosophy was going down with the cosmology. The recognition that some causes operate equivocally can be an important step both toward a Thomist's return to the natural sciences and toward his making sense of, and perhaps even offering an alternative account of, what the science is itself looking at. I will begin with some fairly particular examples and then build to some of the more central theories of contemporary science.

A) Latent Heat

In a modification of Aristotle's example of heat causing health, one might point out that heat also causes a body to change its state. Since the eighteenth century, it has been

noticed that as one heats up a body, the body continually increases in temperature, and at a determinate rate peculiar to a given substance, called the substance's "specific heat capacity." This constant rate of temperature increase per heat input, however, breaks down at two particular temperatures; suddenly, although heat is still "going into" the substance, the temperature stops rising. After a few minutes, however, the substance visibly starts to change its state: either the solid melts or the liquid boils. The undetected but significant quantity of heat that brings about this state change without a temperature change is called that substance's "latent heat." Thus, while heat first and ordinarily causes a substance to get hotter, in certain circumstances, depending on the particular nature of the substance, heat causes it to take on a different form.[91] As long as one grants that temperature change and state change are really different realities, regardless of whatever underlying realities they might share, one must grant that the heat source is an equivocal cause of state-change.

B) White Light

Since Isaac Newton's work in optics it has been clear that the color white, whether considered as the surface property of an opaque body or as a property of light, is composed of all the other colors. If an opaque body is white and illuminated, and an orange ball is held near it (but is not itself directly illuminated), the ball appears the color it is, orange. If, on the other hand, only the ball is directly illuminated, and the white body held near it (but not itself illuminated), the white body will appear not white, but orange. Something similar happens whatever the ball's color. Thus, a white body appears to have the power to reveal or activate all the other colors in bodies that we ordinarily see they have when they themselves are directly

[91] Whether this is a substantial or an accidental change is irrelevant to my point. Aristotle's view is not as simple as one sometimes hears. He seems to have considered the vaporization of water as a substantial change (the water becoming air), though he thinks of freezing as an accidental change. See *Meteor.* 1.3.340a34; 1.11.347b15; 4.3.380b30-32.

illuminated.[92] The white body, then, is like the sun itself: it makes orange things appear orange, blue things blue, white things white, etc. The other colors, however, can reveal only their own color in other bodies, and then only to the extent that that color is there to be revealed in the first place; the illuminated orange body does relatively little to illuminate a blue body.

One way of expressing the contemporary account of this phenomenon is to say that white light (or the white of the body) is really nothing more than all possible colors superimposed on each other, so this is in fact an instance of univocal agency: it is the orange actually present in the white object that makes the orange ball appear orange. This way of interpreting the phenomenon, however, is encumbered with having to assert, finally, that white does not really exist; it *looks* like it exists, but it does not (except perhaps in our sensorium). Only the other colors are there in reality.[93] If it is clear that this would be to deny the obvious—that white is a real color, perhaps even the purest of colors—then we cannot take this reductionist approach, and we have a case of equivocal causality: white has it in its nature to illuminate the orange as orange, that is, to make the ball actually able to shine forth the color orange.

This example is particularly striking because one can detect in it something of the effect's more eminent existence in the cause. A multitude of distinct and even opposed colors can be illuminated by the white, even at the same time in different objects. Thus, the white surface must bear these otherwise opposed colors, but in a higher mode—which mode is, or is a property of, *what it is to be white*. Whiteness, then, is the synthesis and harmonizing of all colors, the perfection of color

[92] Whether the color is actually in the orange body when it is not being illuminated (by direct light or by reflection) is irrelevant to my basic point, although one would have to make further distinctions on each view. For a fuller discussion, see Christopher A. Decaen, "The Viability of Aristotelian-Thomistic Color Realism," *The Thomist* 65 (2001): 179-222.

[93] Ironically, one finds in many articulations of the nature of color and light, from Newton to the present, that conceding this inch, that white is not real, leads inexorably to granting the mile that *no* color or sensible quality is real.

as such; conversely, each color is a finite participation in what it is to be white, received according to the mode of the receiving surface.[94]

This modality is reflected in the color of light when in transit as well. In the medium a color is present as a light wave which has its own proper wavelength.[95] When several waves are passing through the same part of the medium they overlap in noneliminative, but algebraically additive ways; they together compose a single, albeit complicated, wave form. This composite wave is what is actually in the medium, not two partial and mutually exclusive wavelengths. In the case of white light, this is true most of all. Although it does not have its own wavelength or even a unique wave shape, the white light exists in the medium as a harmony or blend of waves that reach the orange body, at which it is absorbed and then its residue (namely, orange light) is reflected away to illuminate another body.

C) Electricity and Magnetism

As the study of electricity began to take off in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it was discovered that if a compass were placed underneath a wire pointing north-south carrying an electric current, the needle would turn out of its own north-south alignment to a determined angle deviation inversely related to the distance between the wire and the compass. Were the compass held over the wire, the deviation would be in the opposite direction, and if placed alongside it, no deviation at all would occur. Although up to that time only other magnets (or induced magnets, like iron) had ever been found to affect magnets, the current appeared to be radiating

[94] Aristotle and, even more clearly, St. Thomas seem to have had this insight when they recognized that the color white is the "measure of all colors, since each color is so much the nobler to the degree that it approaches more toward whiteness" (*In Div. Nom.*, c. 4, lect. 3 [310]). Saint Thomas even speaks of light as a universal cause of all colors; see *STh* I, q. 14, a. 6; q. 115, a. 1.

[95] Here we in fact see modern science's version of the "flowing intention" St. Thomas describes in terms of instrumental causality. See above, note 44.

magnetic action in a rotating circle perpendicular to the wire. The very air around the current seemed magnetic. In addition, it was soon discovered that if a piece of iron was placed near a current (or, to magnify the effect, if the current-carrying wire was wrapped around the iron) it became magnetic. In short, it seems that an electric current is an equivocal cause of magnetism in the region around it.

About the same time, scientists discovered that when a conducting wire is brought near to a magnet, a small current is produced in that wire; likewise, when they are separated, another current is produced, but in the opposite direction. Thus, moving magnets act like equivocal causes of current. Further, one can combine these phenomena in electrical induction. If the current-carrying wire is wrapped around the iron block and is brought near a second conductive wire, a stronger current is produced than if the iron were not there. The first current seems to cause magnetism, which in turn causes a transitory current in the second wire—a series of alternating equivocal causes.

These phenomena and the theory that interprets them are collectively known as "electromagnetism." The presently accepted theory that offers a mathematically complete account of them was offered in the late nineteenth century by James Clerk Maxwell. It proposes that a single irreducible field of energy is, in one way, the cause of the current, in another way, the cause of the magnetism, and in another way mediates both of them. Although superficially this suggests that the causality is univocal—the phenomena are all manifestations of one electromagnetic field—a more coherent account would be to say that the field itself is an equivocal cause of both phenomena, and that the magnet, for example, is an equivocal cause of the state of the field. Albert Einstein's interpretation of the phenomenon lends itself to this approach:

> [W]e cannot be content . . . [to say] that the magnet acts directly on the iron through the intermediate space, but we are constrained to say . . . that the magnet *calls into being* something physically real in the space around it, that something being what we call a "magnetic field." In its turn *this magnetic field* operates on the piece of iron, so that the latter strives to move toward the

magnet. . . . [W]ith [this account's] aid electromagnetic phenomena can be theoretically represented much more satisfactorily than without it.[96]

As long as we grant the sensibly apparent fact that electric current is not simply the same thing as magnetism, and that neither simply is the electromagnetic field, we still have a single field causing two things that are not the field but conditions in it (and distinct ones at that). As in the account of white light above, so long as one does not explain the current and the magnetism to the point of explaining them away, the electromagnetic field's causality of electricity and magnetism is not univocal.[97]

D) The Gravitational Field of General Relativity

In the general theory of relativity, we have another instance of mutual equivocal causality. Here massive bodies by their very nature are said to "curve" the space (and time) around them, thereby influencing the otherwise inertial motions of nearby bodies in what we identify as gravity, or gravitational orbits. Thus, a body falls toward the earth because the space-time field around the earth is more "warped" than that on the opposite side of the body, in such a way that the distance between the body and the earth shrinks and bends; this is called "falling." A massive body seems to act upon the massless space-time around it, curving it, and the curved space-time then acts upon another massive body, bringing them together. Again, this looks like another case of dual equivocal causality, where one agent is the instrument of the other.[98] Thus Einstein says,

[96] Albert Einstein, *Relativity: The Special and General Theory*, 15th edition (New York: Bonanza, 1961), 63 (emphasis added).

[97] Because it is now clear that light is itself an electromagnetic phenomenon—the only one sensible to the eye—it seems that the equivocal causality suggested above in an interesting way presupposes this one; it is not clear to me, however, that it reduces entirely to this one.

[98] According to Newton's third law about equal and opposite reactions, each massive body acts on the other, causing mutual gravitation. This does not alter our description, though it does duplicate it. Interestingly, it does not appear that the third law applies to a mass's agency on the gravitational field when it curves it.

> The action of the earth on the stone takes place indirectly. The earth produces in its surroundings a gravitational field, which acts on the stone and produces its motion of fall. . . . The body (e.g., the earth) produces a field in its immediate neighborhood directly.[99]

Like the animal generating a seed through which he generates another like himself, the instrumental equivocal agent appears to mediate a univocal cause and its effect (namely, two bodies being "weighty" toward each other).

But unlike in the seed example, it is difficult to determine which is more the instrument of which. In the case of the seed, although it is true that the parent animal is itself the effect of a prior seed, it is clear that the parent is the principal agent and the seed is instrumental, even if the alternation of animal-seed-animal-seed continues into infinity.[100] However, it seems on the face of it reasonable to say that the massive bodies are prior to the field between them—the "space" between them seems to be a medium of their mutual action. Yet the nature of general relativity seems to give primacy to the field. In fact, in some presentations of the theory, massive bodies are treated as merely concentrated parts of the field. But even if this is hyperbole—again, it is contrary to the whole endeavor of natural science to explain away matter—it is clear that the theory assigns a kind of priority to the gravitational field.

It is no small irony, then, that this example brings us back to the heavenly bodies, or at least what they were said to be made from: the celestial substance, sometimes called "aether." On both electromagnetic and general relativistic theories, space is not empty. Space is, or is filled with, a field (or fields) of agency. And this quasi-substance seems to be in more than one way an equivocal cause of much of what is going on in "ordinary" matter.[101]

[99] Einstein, *Relativity,* 64.

[100] To say otherwise would be to propose a sort of Dawkins-esque "selfish seed" that uses the animal to perpetuate itself, which is implausible to anyone attending to the natures of things.

[101] On relativity and electromagnetism in connection with the notion of the aether, see Christopher A. Decaen, "Aristotle's Aether and Contemporary Science," *The Thomist* 68 (2004), 398-420.

E) Evolutionary Mutations and Spontaneous Generations

Those who take the time to think about what is implied in the theory of evolution—and especially Aristotelians and Thomists—often run up against the fact that it postulates new species being generated from old.[102] No matter how gradualistic the particular version of Darwinism one considers, as long as one grants that the parent and the offspring really are of different species—and, admittedly, some interpretations of evolution deny this—one must say that at one point a dinosaur, for example, gave birth to what was essentially a bird. Thus, unless we consider the bird as just a monster, a deformed dinosaur and not really a new species, we are asserting the existence of equivocal generation.

We must then also look for an equivocal agent. It is difficult to offer this title to the parent dinosaur in any adequate way, if for no other reason than that this sort of generation seems to happen by chance, and the parent archaeopteryx by its nature desires to produce another archaeopteryx, so from its perspective the bird would be a monster. Therefore we must trace it back to a higher cause. The contemporary understanding for this agency is that it is immediately, or at least fundamentally, a result of genetic mutation, which mutation (again, ironically) often traces back to the sun. That is, high energy solar rays continuously bombarding organisms lead to genetic mutations which, when circumstances are right, manifest themselves at the conception and birth of a new species. Whether this account is sufficient is debatable, for both physicists and philosophers, but resolving immediately to the divine creative agency is even more so; it seems possible that within the order of creation there could be one or more

[102] See, for example, Mortimer J. Adler, *The Problem of Species* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1940); and idem, "Solution to the Problem of Species," *The Thomist* 3 (1941): 279-379; see also Etienne Gilson, *From Aristotle to Darwin and Back Again: A Journey in Final Causality, Species, and Evolution* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2009; originally published in 1971); and W. Norris Clarke, S.J., *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 194-96, 245-60.

equivocal agents whose per se operation brings about new species from the potency of matter.[103] Yet whether one speaks of a material agent or an immaterial one, as long as the agent cause of the first bird cannot itself be a bird, we are talking about an equivocal cause.

A similar case derives from the borderlands of evolution, at the origin of life itself. Again we have a sort of irony in that, after the biologists chided Aristotle for positing an occasional spontaneous generation in decaying matter (which in the nineteenth century was shown to be due to a passing fly depositing its eggs), the beginning of evolution appears to require just this sort of thing. Somehow somewhere life "emerged" from the nonliving. Precisely how the proverbial primordial soup gave birth to the first single-celled organism is one of the grails of modern biology, but give birth it did, according to the theory. And again, as long as one does not make the preposterous claim that *not only* is there no essential difference between a blue whale and a beetle, but further that there is no essential difference between the living and the nonliving, there is no way around positing one or more equivocal agents to explain what is going on here.

F) Sensation Itself?

No doubt I am neglecting many other possible candidates within contemporary science, from the different forms of energy conversion in thermodynamics, to the various versions of emergentism in biology, to the observation-triggered collapse

[103] For an extended presentation of this Thomistic interpretation of evolution, see Charles De Koninck's "The Cosmos," "The Problem of Indeterminism," and "Reflections on the Problem of Indeterminism," in *The Writings of Charles De Koninck*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. Ralph McInerny (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 235-442, but especially 274, 285-87. See also Lawrence Dewan, O.P., *Form and Being: Studies in Thomistic Metaphysics* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 120-27, 129-30. While he appears to have reservations about parts of De Koninck's approach (as do I), Fr. Dewan ends his essay by saying that he has never encountered "any public discussion of this doctrine of De Koninck's," and he is certainly correct when he says "it merits discussion" (127).

of a probability wave in quantum theory. However, I will briefly conclude dialectically with only one more, one that I think would be incontrovertible to the modern scientist. The common interpretation of sensation of what Aristotle and St. Thomas call "proper sensibles" (colors, smells, temperature, sounds, and flavors) is that they exist only in our perception, in our mind; what exists "out there" in bodies are purely quantitative attributes of bodies, whether shapes, frequencies, densities, or velocities, which somehow act upon similar attributes of our eyes, ears, hands, etc., and somehow yield the experiences of color, sound, warmth, etc. It is that "somehow" to which I want to call attention. If what is not colored acts upon my eye and/or brain and causes me to experience color, how is this not equivocal causality?[104]

CONCLUSION

Readers who are unfamiliar with, and those who are overly familiar with, the science of the examples I have proposed may have doubts about whether it is correct to call them equivocal causes, and I do not wish to overstate the (admittedly cursory) case I have offered. Perhaps some of them will not bear closer scrutiny. Nevertheless, I suggest that those who look into these matters with fresh eyes will become more convinced at least of the plausibility of the proposals. Some of those more immersed in contemporary science may be skeptical about this novel approach to the modern theories in part because of their habituation to the reductionist approach in the sciences, where what I am calling equivocal causality is often treated as just hidden univocal causality. If an *x* seems to cause a *y*, the explanation is often that this is only because *x* is secretly just another *y*, or both are really just *z*'s. The problem with this approach is that absolute reductionism, although it begins in wonder, often ends in surrealism: the phenomenon to be explained ends up being an illusion, leaving one with only the

[104] On this point, see Erwin Schrödinger, *What is Life?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 167-68.

explanation and nothing to explain.[105] However, no sober approach to natural science will sacrifice the sensible object one wishes to understand on the altar of an enticingly elegant theory, both because such a sacrifice is logically incoherent and because we are more sure that the sensible object exists than that the theoretical entities that replace it do, and science must always rely upon what is more known to us. Thus, I contend that any theory in natural science which takes the reality of the effect as given will, in positing a cause, often find itself dealing with equivocal causes.

The number and variety of these examples of equivocal causality—both those St. Thomas explicitly mentions and those I suggest based on science unavailable to the Angelic Doctor—show that the notion of equivocal causality in general is not narrow in its applicability. Indeed, the more one tries to find examples, the more they seem to be ubiquitous; one almost concludes that finding *univocal* causes is more of a challenge. Although it seems to come in a wide range of forms, and the equivocity in question seems to admit of manifold degrees, some of them quite obscure, St. Thomas's teaching on equivocal causality is intelligible in itself, and examples of it appear to be at work at all levels of reality—even without Aristotle's sun.[106]

[105] This problem seems to be one of the driving forces behind recent ideas of "emergence" in contemporary science and philosophy of science. For an early presentation of the idea of emergence and tempered reductionism in the context of interpreting quantum theory, see David Bohm, *Causality and Chance in Modern Physics* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), especially 50-67.

[106] This essay is an expanded version of a lecture I gave at the West Coast meeting of the Society for Aristotelian-Thomistic Studies, June 19-20, 2014 at Thomas Aquinas College. I would like to thank those who attended the talk for their probing questions, and the insights they offered. I would particularly like to thank Fr. Sebastian Walshe and Marie I. George for their invaluable comments on the initial talk and the draft of this essay, respectively.

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"NATURAL," "FAMILY," "PLANNING," AND THOMAS AQUINAS'S TELEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF MARRIAGE

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AT FIRST GLANCE, the modern Magisterium's teaching in favor of "responsible parenthood" and the use of periodic abstinence seems a challenge to traditional ways of talking about marriage.

The 1917 Code of Canon Law opened its discussion of marriage by stating, "The primary end of matrimony is the procreation and upbringing of the child; the secondary [end] is mutual help and the healing of concupiscence."[1] Gratian, summarizing canon law up till the twelfth century, and the central authority on the topic thereafter, said, "God joined male and female by nuptial chastity for the purpose of propagating the race," and distinguished "the use of the marital act for the procreation of children" from "the use of promiscuous women, in the way of dogs."[2] And Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes* states,

[1] *Codex Iuris Canonici* (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1917), canon 1013. Translation my own.

[2] Gratian, *Concordantia Discordantium Canonum*, part 2, causa 31, q. 1, can. 12; causa 27, q. 1, can. 41. Invoking the same principle, he says, "though they come together to procreate, they may not separate in order to procreate. The bond of marriage remains even if children, on account of whom it is entered into, do not follow because of manifest infertility" (ibid., causa 32, q. 7, can. 27), and "The Apostle concedes their coming together for reasons apart from procreation: even though it is their depraved habits that impel them to share the bed, nevertheless, they protect their nuptials from adultery or fornication. But this is not acknowledged on account of their marriage, but rather ignored for its sake" (ibid., causa 32, q. 2, can. 3). See Edward

"By their very nature, the institution of matrimony itself and conjugal love are ordained for the procreation and upbringing of children."[3]

But just three years later, Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae* failed to mention any such primacy for procreation, or indeed the very word "end," instead speaking of "the two meanings" (*significationes*) not only of marriage but "of the conjugal act: the unitive meaning and the procreative meaning."[4] It proclaimed, "Conjugal love requires in husband and wife an awareness of their mission of 'responsible parenthood',"[5] according to which sometimes "the married couple are concordant in the positive will of avoiding children for plausible reasons, seeking the certainty that offspring will not arrive. . . . They are able to renounce the use of marriage in the fecund periods when, for just motives, procreation is not desirable, while making use of it during infecund periods to manifest their affection and to safeguard their mutual fidelity."[6] The 1983 Code of Canon Law completely eliminated the 1917 Code's reference to primary and secondary ends—indeed, it eliminated any reference at all to the "ends" of marriage. And Pope John Paul II was well known for his abundant embrace of the concept "responsible parenthood."[7]

Peters, "How to Use Pio-Benedictine Footnotes and Gasparri's *Fontes Codicis Iuris Canonici*" (www.canonlaw.info/canonlaw_17fontes.htm).

[3] Second Vatican Council, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," *Gaudium et Spes* 48. Translation from the Vatican website (www.vatican.va).

[4] *Humanae Vitae* 12. Translation from the Vatican website (www.vatican.va).

[5] Ibid. 10.

[6] Ibid. 16.

[7] E.g., *Familiaris Consortio* 35, 66, 74; *Evangelium Vitae* 13, 88, cf. 90. The key magisterial teachings on the use of infertile periods are the sections on "Birth Control" and "The Heroism of Continence" in Pius XII, "Allocution to Midwives" (Oct. 29, 1951); Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes* 50-51; Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae* 16; John Paul II, "Theology of the Body," audiences 120-32 (in the numbering adopted in Michael Waldstein, ed., *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body* [Boston: Pauline, 2006]); *Familiaris Consortio* 32; *Evangelium Vitae* 13, 88; *Veritatis Splendor* 47-49. See also, Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education within the Family* (Dec. 8, 1995). The issue does not seem to be treated at all in the primary statements on sexuality from the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: "Declaration on Certain Questions

The ultimate authority cited by the 1917 Code is St. Thomas Aquinas. "The good of the child is the principal end of marriage," Thomas writes in the *Scriptum* on the *Sentences*.[8]

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regarding Sexual Ethics *Persona Humana*" (Dec. 29, 1975); "Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation *Donum Vitae*" (Feb. 22, 1988). Scholarly treatments of natural family planning include G. E. M. Anscombe, "Contraception and Chastity," reprinted in *Why Humanae Vitae was Right: A Reader*, ed. Janet E. Smith (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 119-46; Alexander R. Pruss, "Christian Sexual Ethics and Teleological Organicity," *The Thomist* 64 (2000): 71-100; Ernest Fortin, "*Humanae Vitae*'s Silver Jubilee: Twenty-Five Years Later," in Ernest L. Fortin, *Collected Essays*, vol. 4, *Ever Ancient, Ever New: Ruminations on the City, the Soul, and the Church*, ed. Michael P. Foley (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007); Mary Shivanandan, "Feminism, Nature and Humanae Vitae: What's Love Got to Do with It?" *Nova et Vetera* (English ed.) 6 (2008): 901-26; Joseph W. Koterski, S.J., "Theological Reflections on Natural Family Planning," *Nova et Vetera* (English ed.) 6 (2008): 765-78; and in general, Janet Smith, ed., *Why Humanae Vitae Was Right: A Reader* and *Humanae Vitae a Generation Later* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991); and all of *Nova et Vetera* (English ed.) 6, no. 4 (2008).

[8] As is standard, the 1917 Code first cites Gratian, then pontifical statements—none of which contain the language of "primary" and "secondary"—followed by citations from Roman Congregations. The first of these is from an instruction of the Holy Office ("S.C.S. Off., instr. [ad Ep. S. Alberti], 9 dec. 1874"). That decree gives the wording cited here from St. Thomas, though it mistakenly cites it as IV *Sent*., d. 23, q. 1, a. 1, ad 7, a particular place that does not exist, in a discussion about the anointing of the sick. Thomas does repeatedly say, however, including in IV *Sent*., d. 33, that children are the "finis principalis" of marriage: see IV *Sent*., d. 30, q. 1, pro.; d. 31, q. 1, a. 2, ad 1; d. 31, q. 1, a. 3 (although the sacrament is the "principal good," the child is the "principal end"); d. 32, q. 1, a. 2, qcla. 2; d. 33, q. 1, a. 1, arg. 3, corp. and ad 6-8; d. 33, q. 1, a. 2; d. 33, q. 1, a. 3, qcla. 1; d. 33, q. 1, a. 3, qcla. 3; d. 33, q. 2, a. 1, arg. 1 and 4 and ad 4; d. 33, q. 2, a. 2, qcla. 1. See also d. 30, q. 1, a. 3, ad 1 (where Thomas says there can only be one principal end, but many secondary ones), and d. 27, q. 1, a. 1, qcla. 2, ad 1 (where he says "woman was principally made to be a help for man in children," *in adjutorium prolis*).

In the first of these passages, Thomas attributes the distinction to the *Sentences* itself. In d. 30, c. 3, "De finali causa coniugali," Peter Lombard states, "the principal final cause of contracting matrimony is the procreation of children. For this reason God established wedlock between the first parents, to whom he said, 'Be fruitful and multiply, etc.' The second is, after the sin of Adam, the avoidance of fornication; hence the Apostle says, 'on account of fornication each one has a wife, and each woman has her husband.' There are also other honest causes, such as the reconciliation of enemies and the reestablishment of peace. And there are also less honest causes" (*Sententiae in IV*

Calling upon the etymology that says *matrimonium* comes from *matris munium*, "the duties, or office, of motherhood,"[9] he writes, "since things are for the most part named from their end, as being their best part, the coming together which is matrimony gets its name from the good of the child, which is what is principally sought through matrimony, while the name 'concubine' expresses that conjunction in which only the shared bed [con-cubile] is sought for its own sake."[10]

Has the modern Magisterium abandoned the doctrine that children are the principal end of marriage? Does "natural family planning" turn marriage into concubinage? The solution can be found through a more robust examination of ends. Thomas himself gives a richly teleological account of marriage[11] that allows us to see why the avoidance of childbirth, by appropriate means, can at times be advisable precisely in view of children as the "primary end" of marriage.[12]

In the first part of this article, I will establish Thomas's teleological understanding of marriage, first in the straight-

Libris Distinctae, v. 2 [Grottaferrata: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1981], 441).

[9] See IV *Sent*., d. 27, q. 1, a. 1, qcla. 2.

[10] IV *Sent*., d. 33, q. 1, a. 3, qcla. 1.

[11] Indeed, he introduces marriage in *ScG* III, c. 122, precisely as his primary concrete example of how the teleology of God's providence and man's participation in it relates to actual life in the world.

[12] This will also help us to understand why the Magisterium has long been remarkably weak in its adherence to Lombard's distinction of "primary" and "secondary" ends. The papal authorities cited by the 1917 Code in fact do not use the language they are cited to support. Eugenius IV (in the constitution *Exultate Deo* [Nov. 22, 1439]) refers to the "triplex bonum Matrimonii"; Benedict XIV (in the constitution *Dei Miseratione* [Nov. 3, 1741]) says he is concerned "for the care of the education of the child, and to preserve the other goods of matrimony"; and Leo XIII, in his 1880 encyclical on marriage, *Arcanum*, which the Code cites in its entirety, uses the word "end" only one time, when he says, "If, then, we consider the end of the divine institution of marriage, we shall see very clearly that God intended it to be a most fruitful source of individual benefit and of public welfare. Not only, in strict truth, was marriage instituted for the propagation of the human race, but also that the lives of husbands and wives might be made better and happier" (*Arcanum* 26). Even the paragraph cited from the decree of the Holy Office begins, "No one is unaware that the child is *another* end of matrimony." The legal language of "primary" and "secondary" does not require any diminishment of the "secondary ends."

forward presentation of the *Summa contra gentiles*, then in the richer, more complicated presentation of the *Summa theologiae*.[13] In the second part, I will show how Thomas's use of this teleological understanding can inform our understanding of nonprocreative sex. In the third part, I will briefly consider "lactational amenorrhea" as an illustration of the natural ordering of human biology to the greater goods sought through natural family planning. In the end, we shall see how the phrase "natural family planning" illumines, almost as does a definition, a full Thomistic understanding of marriage. We shall see, too, how this view of nature and teleology reveals a profound hylemorphic unity between biology and morality in Thomas's understanding of marriage.

I

A) The Unnaturalness of Fornication

We find Thomas's most straightforward account of marital and sexual ethics in the *Summa contra gentiles*, book 3, chapters 122-26.[14] He begins with a surprisingly modern statement of

[13] On Thomas's theology of marriage, see Paul Gondreau, "The 'Inseparable Connection' between Procreation and Unitive Love (Humanae Vitae, §12) and Thomistic Hylemorphic Anthropology," *Nova et Vetera* (English ed.) 6 (2008): 731-64; idem, "The Natural Law Ordering of Human Sexuality to (Heterosexual) Marriage: Towards a Thomistic Philosophy of the Body," *Nova et Vetera* (English ed.) 8 (2010): 553-92; idem, "The Redemption and Divinization of Human Sexuality through the Sacrament of Marriage: A Thomistic Approach," *Nova et Vetera* (English ed.) 10 (2012): 383-413; idem. "The Natural Ordering to Marriage as Foundation and Norm for Sacramental Marriage," *The Thomist* 77 (2013): 41-69; Steven A. Long, "An Argument for the Embryonic Intactness of Marriage," *The Thomist* 70 (2006): 267-88; and Angela McKay, "Aquinas on the End of Marriage," in *Human Fertility: Where Faith and Science Meet*, ed. Richard J. Fehring and Theresa Notare (Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette University Press, 2008), 53-70.

[14] Thomas stopped writing on Dec. 6, 1273, before reaching the section on marriage in the *Tertia pars*. The questions in the *Supplement* to the *Summa theologiae* were compiled after his death by Reginald of Rome, from Thomas's extensive treatment of marriage in the *Scriptum super Sententias*. This material comes from the very beginning of his career, however, and there is clear evidence of development in his thinking on the

the question: if an unmarried man and woman (*sub nullius potestate*) freely choose (*ea volente*) to engage in sexual intercourse, whom are they hurting (*ScG* III, c. 122, n. 1)?[15] He quickly dismisses the idea that they are hurting God or scandalizing their neighbors unless there is some human good under assault (ibid., nn. 2-3).

To solve the problem, he introduces teleology, recalling that it is the central theme of book 3, on God's Providence.[16]

> God cares for each thing according to what is its good. Now, it is the good of each thing that it reach its end; its evil is that it be diverted from its due end. This is true of parts as it is of wholes: so that each part of a man, and each act of those parts, might obtain the end that belongs to it [*finem debitum*]. (Ibid., n. 4)

Unlike urine, sweat, and other excretions, the good of semen is not only to be secreted: for the individual it is a superfluity, but it plays a necessary role in the propagation of the species. It has an end beyond just being secreted. It should, therefore, be used in the context of that end, and not that of sexual perversity.[17] So far so good.

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matter; moreover, as Thomas describes in the prologue to the *Summa theologiae*, the presentation of the *Sentences* leaves much to be desired. In 1268-72, Thomas commented on the Gospel of Matthew, where Jesus discusses marriage in 5:27-32 and 19:3-12; a sixteenth-century editor, however, replaced Thomas's commentary on 5:23-6:8 with that of Peter of Scala (see the entry by Gilles Emery, O.P., in Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, v. 1, *The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996], 339-40). The commentary on the latter section holds very closely to the particular challenges of the text. If a fuller account of marriage was given, it must have been in the lost commentary on 5:27-32. There is also an important discussion in Thomas's commentary on First Corinthians 7 (likely written in 1272-73), which we will examine below. The commentary on Ephesians 5:22-33 focuses more on the marriage of Christ and his Church (the larger theme of Ephesians) than on human marriage.

[15] References to the *Summa contra gentiles* include paragraph numbers taken from the online edition at www.corpusthomisticum.org.

[16] See *ScG* III, c. 1.

[17] *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (1986) defines "perversion" as "an aberrant sexual practice esp. when habitual and preferred to normal coitus." I shall use this word where the tradition Thomas receives uses *contra naturam*, because the latter phrase is ambiguous, as will be explained below. If one prefers a more vivid translation,

Thomas uses his opening consideration on the proper end of semen to point us to a more fundamental sexual teleology. Semen, he adds,

> is emitted for the use of generation, to which coitus is ordered. But human generation would be futile unless it was followed by the nutrition that is due to it, for what was generated would not survive, if the appropriate nutrition were withdrawn. Thus the emission of semen ought to be ordered so that both a fitting [*conveniens*] procreation can follow, and also the rearing of what is procreated. (Ibid.)

These brief sentences set out in teleological terms an entire trajectory of sexual ethics.

Thomas argues that the female plays a twofold role in childbearing: both contributing to the conception of the child and giving nutrition to what is conceived.[18] Thus by introducing nutrition in this context, he makes clear that depositing seed in the womb is not the "end" of sexual activity. The end of the seed is not just conception but a healthy pregnancy—and after that a healthy upbringing. Thomas quickly sketches out, in fact, that the ultimate end of sexual intercourse is not conception but a healthy adult—and thus we see that he makes an important move when, in discussing the "principal end" for the first time in the *Sentences*, he says, "by 'the child' is understood not only the procreation of the child, but also his upbringing, to which as to an end is ordered the entire sharing of works between man and wife."[19]

Romanus Cessario, O.P., quotes Mary Ann Glendon's translation of *contra naturam* as "the filthy five": "masturbation, bestiality, sodomy, contraception, and fetishes" (Romanus Cessario, "*Humanae Vitae* 17: *Vaticinium ex eventu?*" *Nova et Vetera* [English ed.] 6 [2008]: 728).

[18] For Thomas's fullest account of the process of conception, including the woman's active role, see *De Pot*., q. 3, a. 9, ad 9. See also *STh* III, q. 32, a. 4, on Mary's "activity" in the conception of Christ. See also Eric M. Johnston, "The Biology of Woman in Thomas Aquinas," *The Thomist* 77 (2013): 577-616.

[19] IV *Sent*., d. 31, q. 1, a. 2, ad 1. The text of Lombard (cited above) says only "the procreation of children," but the 1917 Code and *Gaudium et Spes* follow Thomas's exact language: "procreatio et educatio."

Thus the sense in which sexual perversity is unnatural (because it does not allow the semen to bring about a conception) and abortion is unnatural (because it does not allow a pregnancy to end in a healthy birth)[20] also shows how fornication is unnatural (because it does not give the child that is born the familial context in which he may grow to be a healthy adult). In this movement, Thomas clearly melds the "natural" ordering of biology with the "natural" ordering of human actions.

He applies the principles, in a human-animal syllogism central to every treatment of marriage he offers:

> Now, for whatever animals there be in which the female does not suffice for the raising of the offspring, male and female remain together after coitus as long as is necessary for the raising and instruction of the offspring. . . . But it is manifest that in the human species the female alone is least of all sufficient for the rearing of the offspring. (*ScG* III, c. 122, n. 6)

B) "End," "Due," "Nature"

It is worth paying attention to the richness of Thomas's use of the words "end," "due," and "nature." Although we often think of "ends" in terms of subjective intentions or "purposes," Thomas here seems to draw more on the physical idea that natural processes have a typical "endpoint."[21]

Thomas explains this teleological understanding of nature at length in his commentary on book 2 of Aristotle's *Physics*. There Aristotle defines nature as "a principle of motion and rest" (adding the precisions "in the thing the nature is in, first

[20] Note that in this context, the tradition calls abortion "murderous" even when, according to a traditional embryology, it is not technically murder: whether or not the fetus is a human person, the intention of the act is to destroy a life in the process of becoming. See Lombard, IV *Sent.*, d. 31, and the comments in note 39 below.

[21] For a classic treatment of Aristotle's analogical use of the word *end*, see Robert Sokolowski, "What is Natural Law? Human Purposes and Natural Ends," *The Thomist* 68 (2004): 507-29.

and *per se* and not *secundum accidens*").[22] The end is the place where the motion comes to rest: "He says 'of motion and rest' because those things that are naturally moved to a place similarly, or rather *naturally*, rest in that place."[23] Although motion is defined by the four causes, it is appropriate to insist particularly on the end, both because it is less obvious (since it only arrives at the temporal end of the process)[24] and because the end is "aliarum causarum causa," the cause that makes the agent, the material, and the form to be what they are.[25]

Aristotle's five demonstrations that nature is "among those things that act for an end" illustrate how the idea of an ordered motion toward an end is at the center of his understanding of "nature." First, natural things act predictibly, because all their actions are aimed at an end. Second, they are orderly, as a plant puts down roots, then grows a stalk, and then puts out leaves: "the beginning and what follows are done in order to reach the end," "unless something impedes them from reaching it." Third (a further explanation of the second point), just as the art of medicine chooses its acts in order to reach the natural good of health, so too nature itself acts as if prudently to achieve its ends. Fourth, nature is most clear in animals, who act in such purposeful ways that one is tempted to think they are intelligent. Fifth, the form of a thing is itself the conclusion of the process by which it comes to be.[26] All of these explanations manifest an understanding of nature as an orderly sequence of actions toward an end.

[22] I will present Aristotle's doctrine through Thomas's commentary. The words "principium motus" are first proposed at II *Phys*., lect. 1, n. 3; the full definition is presented in ibid., n. 5.

[23] II *Phys*., lect. 1.

[24] Ibid., lect. 5.

[25] "This species of cause is most powerful among the other causes, for the final cause is cause of the other causes. For it is clear that the agent acts on account of the end; and similarly it was shown above with artifacts, that forms are ordered to their use as to an end, and materials are to their forms as to an end. For this great reason, the end is called cause of causes" (ibid.).

[26] II *Phys*., lect. 13.

Thus Aristotle says that "end" can also be said of intermediaries, steps on the way to the ultimate end: "lest someone believe that only that which comes last is a cause 'on account of which'."[27] Health is the end for which we prefer leanness; leanness the reason we undertake a cleansing; cleansing the purpose of a medication; and the medication the reason for acquiring certain materials. To refer to this understanding that nature is defined by motion toward an end, I shall use the word *process*.

Thomas's opening presentation of marriage in book 3, chapter 122 of the *Summa contra gentiles* ties human intention to this conception of natural "process." Here "end" is primarily coordinated with the verb *sequor* (to follow): that word in fact appears more frequently in the chapter (nine times) than does *finis* (four times), though it always denotes the same idea.[28] What normally "follows" upon ejaculation is the entrance of sperm into the womb; "then" conception, then pregnancy, then birth, then growth to maturity, supported by both proper feeding (which Thomas introduces through a surprisingly long tangent on mammalian milk and the way birds replace it [*ScG* III, c. 122, n. 6]) and human instruction. "End" primarily denotes, not a human purpose, but a chain of events.

"Due," *debitum*, unites a moral assertion with a purely natural process. "Evil," *malum*, is for a thing to be "diverted" from its due end; parts as well as wholes should reach this due end (ibid., n. 4). Thus far the use of the word seems to apply to the moral realm. But then Thomas says it would be futile, *frustra*, if the "due" nutrition did not "follow" on generation,

[27] Ibid., lect. 5.

[28] "The good of each thing is that it *follow through* [*consequatur*] to its end"; "the generation of a man would be futile if the due nutrition did not *follow*"; "the emission of seed should be ordered such that an appropriate [*conveniens*] generation, and the education of what is generated, can *follow*"; "the emission of seed in such a mode that generation cannot *follow*"; "a mode by which generation cannot *follow secundum se*"; "but if *per accidens* generation cannot *follow* the emission of seed"; "if semen is emitted such that generation can *follow*, but appropriate [*conveniens*] rearing is impeded"; "natural rectitude in human actions is not according to things which happens *per accidens* in one individual, but according to those things which follow [*consequuntur*] for the whole species"; "the emission of seed such that offspring cannot *follow*."

because what is generated would not endure if that due nutrition is taken away. Thus the emission of semen "ought" (*debet*) to be "orderly," such that the fitting generation and education can "follow." Even the word for fitting, *conveniens*, also principally denotes a process: what "comes along." Here what makes something "due" is precisely the possibility of it following its natural course to its natural end (an ought from an is).

Thus it is no small sin, he says, if one emits semen apart from the "due end" of generation and education. He contrasts this with walking on one's hands, which is not what hands are "ordered" to do according to nature (ibid., n. 9). He uses the distinction to bring out the idea of natural process. The problem is not an isolated atypical use of hands or semen. The problem, rather, is that by un-orderly emission of semen, the good of man is impeded, inasmuch as the natural process of preserving and passing on the species is thwarted. The difference is a matter of process: walking on hands does not impede a natural process and thus thwart the reaching of an end, the way that sexual impropriety does. The justice implied in *debitum* has to do, not just with an isolated purpose, but with a longer process.

Finally, the six central paragraphs of this chapter use the word "natura" fourteen times. On the most basic level, nature describes automatic, biological realities: mammalian mothers have milk "prepared by nature"; nature makes up for the lack of milk in birds by giving most species of bird fathers a natural instinct to stay with the mother and feed her offspring.[29] In

[29] "For since the bird does not nourish its offspring with milk, which is at hand, as it were prepared by nature, as happens with quadrupeds, but must seek for food for its offspring elsewhere; and since it must, further, keep them warm by sitting on them; the female alone does not suffice to do this. Thus by divine providence it is naturally innate to the male in such animals, that he remain with the female to raise the little ones" (*ScG* III, c. 122, n. 6).

Aristotle notes that marsh birds and many other heavy species, which live closer to their sources of food, do not need the presence of the father and thus mate indiscriminately. These observations, however, appear to be inductive, not deductive; he notes that the mating behaviors of crows are slightly different from other tree-dwelling birds, and does not try to explain away the difference. On normal birds, see *Historia*

general, animals "have by nature their own kind of prudence," by which they provide for themselves; Thomas contrasts this with man, who uses reason instead.[30] In the passage about walking on one's hands, he speaks of what is "ordered according to nature," easily sliding between "according to nature," "good," and "the good of nature." In the same passage, he also speaks of nature as that which is procreated (ibid., n. 9). In all of these passages, nature seems to refer to a "naturally occurring" process, by which a thing grows into what it is and acts like what it is.

Man's relation to nature is similar. Just as it is natural for many birds to stay with their mates and offspring, so too with man (ibid., n. 6). Thus marriage is "natural" to man, both as what his natural inclinations incline him toward and as the way in which nature provides for human children; to act contrary to marriage, as by fornication, is "against the good of man" (ibid., n. 8)—"good" again being identified with the "end" of the "natural" process. Among sexual acts, the kind that *per se* tends to create babies is a "natural conjunction of male and female," whereas those which do not are called sins "against nature" (ibid., n. 5).[31]

Finally, Thomas speaks of "natural rectitude" in human actions. This rectitude is defined, not by the outcome of the specific act, but by the way it relates to the longer natural process. Thus Thomas dismisses the case of a self-sufficient woman, who would not need the material help of her children's father, by saying "natural rectitude in human action is not according to what occurs *per accidens* in one individual, but according to what follows [*consequuntur*] for the species as a

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animalium 6.8.564a7-10 and 9.7.612b18-34. For exceptions see *HA* 6.8.564a12-18 (on marsh birds), *HA* 9.8.613b6-8, 25-30 (on heavy birds), and *HA* 6.9.564b2-6 (on peacocks). In *HA* 6.18.572a5-8 he notes that many domesticated animals (such as Thomas's favorite examples, dogs and chickens) lose their instinct to care for their own offspring.

[30] "Other animals naturally have their prudences [*suas prudentias*], by which they can provide for themselves [*sibi providere*], but man lives by reason, which must arrive at prudence [*ad prudentiam*] by the experiences of a long time" (ibid., n. 8).

[31] The description of such acts as *contra naturam*, and perhaps a stimulus to think of sexual activity in terms of nature, comes from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 1:26-27.

whole" (ibid., n. 7). In isolation, the act may have acceptable consequences, but it is judged in relation to the normal "natural" process. (We shall consider this text further below.)

In discussing sexual acts, Thomas is quick to draw a radical distinction between perverse acts, which are of their nature unable to conceive a child, and those that are only unable *per accidens* (ibid., n. 5). His example, a woman who is "sterile," is interesting: sterility is a permanent condition, which Thomas explicitly distinguishes from temporary infertility;[32] sterility seems to be the most extreme case. An action is "natural" or not according to the whole normal process that follows on the nature of the species, not just the immediate consequences. Nature denotes a process towards an end.

In the question on lust in *De malo* (written in preparation for the *Secunda pars*), Thomas sums up the argument:

> The act of lust can be called *contra naturam* in two ways. First, absolutely, as it is contrary to the nature of every animal; and thus every act of lust apart from the intercourse of male and female is called *contra naturam*, inasmuch as it is not proportionate to generation, which in all kinds of animals comes from the intercourse of the two sexes; this is how the Gloss speaks [on Romans 1]. In another way, an act is called *contra naturam* because it is against the proper nature of man, to which it belongs to order the act of generation to its proper [*debitam*] upbringing; in this way, all fornication is *contra naturam*.[33]

Thomas's easy movement between biological and moral "nature" is perhaps surprising. But his classic presentation of natural law, in question 91, article 2 of the *Prima secundae*, similarly defines nature in terms of an interior principle of motion toward an end. God's eternal law is present in creation as the ruling and measuring is present in the ruled and measured: "from his impression they have their inclination to their proper acts and ends," their nature. Man too has this

[32] See IV *Sent*., d. 32, q. 1, a. 2, qcla. 2, arg. 3 and ad 3; d. 34, q. 1, a. 5. In the *Summa theologiae*, Thomas uses the word to describe mules (*STh* I-II, q. 77, a. 2, obj. 4), Abraham's wife Sarah (*STh* I-II, q. 102, a. 5, ad 1), and St. Elizabeth (*STh* III, q. 30, a. 4, ad 3).

[33] *De malo*, q. 15, a. 1, ad 7.

"natural inclination to his due act and end." When the Psalm says "the light of your face is signed upon us, O Lord," it means "all our reasoning is derived from naturally known principles, and all our appetites for things that are *ad finem* are derived from our natural appetite for the ultimate end" (*STh* I-II, q. 91, a. 2, ad 2), as the measurer is in the measured. Like all of creation, man has his nature from the Creator; his nature constitutes a principle of motion toward his proper end; and insofar as man is diverted from that end, his nature is thwarted. And as with all natures, this inclination toward the end includes inclinations toward subordinate, "secondary" ends.[34]

C) Personalism and Teleology in the "Secunda secundae"

The treatment of lust in the *Summa theologiae* seems to follow a different order, considered in relation to personal injury rather than to nature. This difference is partly a matter of context: the *Summa contra gentiles* introduces marriage as a paradigmatic concrete example of how the divine law fits within divine providence,[35] whereas the *Secunda secundae* is examining the virtues, ordered by charity and justice; the *Summa contra gentiles* is considering marriage, the *Secunda secundae* lust; the *Summa contra gentiles* focuses on divine order, the *Secunda secundae* on the human good. But nature and teleology undergird even Thomas's more "personalist" treatments of sexuality.

The *Summa contra gentiles* surprises us by dismissing the argument that fornication does personal injury. The chapter on fornication concludes, "after the sin of homicide, by which an already existing human nature is destroyed, this kind of sin, by which the procreation of human nature is impeded, seems to

[34] See *STh* I-II q. 94, a. 2, where Thomas gives his classic and much controverted presentation of man's inclination toward "the conservation of his being, according to his nature . . .; man's inclination . . . according to the nature he shares with the other animals, toward the conjoining of male and female, and the rearing of children, and the like . . .; man's inclination toward the good according to the nature of reason . . .; the natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society."

[35] See *ScG* III, c. 121.

hold second place." In light of his arguments, it is strange that Thomas does not point out that fornication[36] does do harm to the child who might be born. Instead, both in his Latin and in the logic of his argument, the final word is nature.[37]

By contrast, when he treats fornication in question 154 of the *Secunda secundae*, on the kinds of lust, his principle is that "every sin committed directly against the life of man is a mortal sin."[38] The arguments are the same: some animals need the presence of the father for the rearing of the offspring, therefore males of these species "naturally" care for their young, and exceptions to the rule (as a father who provides at a distance) are accidental, and thus incidental to moral judgments.

But here the charge is not so much that fornication is unnatural or irrational as that it hurts the children who may result. It is ranked in wickedness according to its offense against human life: fornication is worse than stealing "and the like," which attack only exterior goods, but not as bad as murder, because murder is against one "already born," whereas fornication is against the one who is to be born in the future.[39]

[36] Always recognizing that by "fornication" he means properly procreative acts, only analogically similar to properly nonprocreative, perverse sexual acts.

[37] "Unde post peccatum homicidii, quo natura *humana iam in actu* existens destruitur, huiusmodi genus peccati videtur secundum locum tenere, quo impeditur *generatio humanae naturae*" (*ScG* III, c. 122, emphasis added).

[38] *STh* II-II, q. 154, a. 2.

[39] *STh* II-II, q. 154, a. 3. Those concerned with the modern abortion debate will note that Thomas appears to be imprecise in locating the key point as birth: rather than *iam natus* and *nasciturus*, perhaps it should be *iam existens* and *futurus*. In fact, the point was already clear in Lombard's *Sentences*, drawing on Augustine's *De bono coniugali*, *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*, *Super Exodum*, and *De quaestionibus novi et veteri testamenti*, and Jerome's *Ad Algasiam*. In distinction 31, Thomas explains, Lombard considers Augustine's three goods of marriage; then he considers those who oppose marriage's orientation to children. First he treats those who simply do not intend children; then those who actively impede children through . . . birth-control drugs (*venena sterilitatis*). Seeing the connection between lust and an attack on human life, Augustine calls this "libidinosa crudelitas vel libido crudelis": they "wish to kill the child before it lives—or, if it is alive in utero, to kill it before it is born." If they agree to this, they are not properly married at all. If one does it against the other's will, he is an adulterer with respect to his wife, or she a prostitute with respect to her husband. This

In contrast to the order in the *Summa contra gentiles*, perversity (*contra naturam*) is treated last, not first.[40] This sets up a ranking of the different kinds of lustful sins.[41] As in the *Summa contra gentiles*, perversity is worst, being contrary to what is determined by nature. But rather than setting the tone for other sins, *contra naturam* is then dismissed, and replaced by relationships. Coitus with close relations[42] offends against the people we most ought to respect; stealing a girl from her husband is worse than stealing her from her father, because the husband has a greater claim; stealing her away does more injury to her father or husband than merely having coitus with her; taking her virginity does more injury to her than if she had already lost it; and all of these are worse than simple fornication, insofar as they all hurt the child to be born, but the other kinds hurt other people as well. The emphasis seems to be not on nature but on personal injury.

When we look closer, though, we find that even these arguments are rooted in teleology. To take a girl's virginity hurts her precisely because it prevents her from entering into a normal marriage. If she is still under her father's power, it hurts him because it interferes with the paternal care to which

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leads, Thomas says, to a secondary question, "When is abortion murder?" This is a *locus classicus* for the tradition's denial of immediate infusion of the rational soul. For our purposes, it is worth noting Thomas's and Lombard's insistence on a sort of continuum of murderous intent, from the killing of a fully formed child to the prevention of conception by the use of sexual poisons. In this perspective, the personhood of the unborn child is not the most important point: even contraception intends the death of one's own child.

[40] *ScG* II-II, q. 154, a. 11.

[41] *ScG* II-II, q. 154, a. 12.

[42] The Latin is *incestus*, but the article on the topic (a. 9) specifically includes *affines* as well as *consanguinei*. The *Sentences* defines affinity as in-laws: "quae ad virum ex parte uxoris, seu quae ex parte viri ad uxorem pertinet" (IV *Sent*., d. 31). It is interesting, however, that Thomas's four arguments here, and all his arguments in *ScG* (considered below) apply equally to the girl next door: we owe a certain honor to those who are close to us and pertain to our parents' house; we live so closely among them that sexual congress is too easy to come by; it constrains the "multiplication of friends" by which we leave our father's house and become part of a broader circle; there is too much natural love already built in to those we grew up with. In the last case, most people probably love the girl next door more than they love their wife's cousin.

fatherhood is ordered.[43] If she is in her majority, it still hurts her fatherland (the idea of injury stretched to its limits) because the "virginitatis signum" exists precisely as an impediment to fornication.[44]

A woman can be taken away from her home against her father's will, her betrothed's will, or her own will; she can then be engaged in sexual activity either with or against her will.[45] This abduction, properly an act of violence, is subsumed under lust because it is ordered to lust.[46] It is an injury to her fiancé because it interrupts a process that is meant to end in marriage. It is an injury to her parents because their authority is ordered to helping their daughter prepare for marriage. And sexual violence is an injury to the woman, not only because her body in general belongs to her, but because, as we have seen above and will see more richly below, her sexuality in particular is ordered toward the raising of children, which requires the loving cooperation of the parents.[47] Sexual violence is unnatural, because potential parents ought to be friends.

Adultery injures the children it might conceive, just as fornication does. But it also injures the children the adulterous woman conceives with her husband, insofar as it undermines his sense that they are his; he can no longer be sure of the order from his own marital acts to the raising of his children.[48] It undermines the trust (*fides*) that is required between the spouses, precisely contrary to the good order of the children they have come together to parent.[49] Thus even a disordered

[43] *STh* II-II, q. 154, a. 6.

[44] Ibid., ad 1.

[45] In a modern context, one cannot but regret Thomas's failure more fully to discuss the specific violence of rape; the tradition he receives gives the common name *raptus* to all these kinds of violence. The only thing that can be said in Thomas's defense is that he has a much richer sense of relationality, especially within the family, than we do—and it is no diminution of the woman's dignity to say that an outrage against her is also an outrage against her family.

[46] *STh* II-II, q. 154, a. 7, obj. 2 and ad 2.

[47] *STh* II-II, q. 154, a. 7.

[48] *STh* II-II, q. 154, a. 8.

[49] Ibid., ad 2 and 3.

lust toward one's wife can be called adultery, insofar as it undermines a man's ability to participate in the broader relationship of marriage.[50]

Coitus with close relations causes three problems.[51] First, we owe our parents honor as proceeding forth from them. The lust that attends fallen sexuality, however, is something honor makes us want to cover up. Thus a twofold teleology sees first, in our relatives, a kind of continuation of our parents or grandparents, and second, in lust, a kind of disorder in our persons; we avoid incest because we see the connections. A second problem is that living close together tends to promote affection; the girl next door provides so many opportunities that we might lose sight of other parts of life. And third, the life of social man is ordered to an ever broader web of relationships: Augustine says, in *City of God* 15, "there is an ideal reason for charity when men, among whom there is a useful and noble harmony, are bound together by the bonds of numerous vagaries, not joined one-to-one in every regard, but each individual sprinkled out among many."[52] One of the ends of marriage is not just that we cling to our wives, but that we leave our parents' home and go out into the world.

Thus the question on lust ends with the principle: "the order of nature is from God himself. So in sins in which the very order of nature is violated, there is injury to God himself, the orderer of nature."[53] Indeed, the order of charity, by requiring

[50] *STh* II-II, q. 154, a. 8, obj. 2 and ad 2. See Matthew 5:28 and John Paul II, "Theology of the Body," audience 43 (in Waldstein, ed., *Man and Woman He Created Them*, 297-99), where the pope, following Thomas and his sources (Jerome quoting Sixtus the Pythagorean), makes one of his most controversial statements in this regard.

[51] *STh* II-II, q. 154, a. 9.

[52] Quoted in ibid.

[53] *STh* II-II, q. 154, a. 12. Cf. the objection in *ScG* III, c. 122, n. 2: "But it does not seem to be a sufficient response if someone says that it does injury to God. For God is not offended by us except inasmuch as we act against our good, as has been said. But it is not apparent that this is against the good of man. Thus it does not seem that injury is done to God in this way." The argument of the chapter reverses the minor premise, and thus comes to the same conclusion as the *Summa Theologiae*, but it does seem to focus more on nature itself.

that we especially love those to whom we are intimately joined, demands above all that we love human nature itself.[54]

D) The "Summa theologiae" on the Teleology of Sexual Pleasure

Other questions in the *Summa theologiae* provide even more riches of sexual teleology. Within the question on the kinds of lust, Thomas considers "touching and kissing" (*tactibus et osculis*) or "kissing and embracing" (*osculis et amplexibus*).[55] He distinguishes, obviously, between a kiss of greeting and a kiss of foreplay. But then he argues that sexual kissing where coitus would be illicit is itself a mortal sin: even if one does not consent to the actual act of fornication, the pleasure of "kissing and touching" comes precisely from its order to coitus. The teleology we saw in the *Summa contra gentiles* is again the central point: the "end" of kissing—not the subjective intention of the person, but the place where this process naturally ends up—is coitus.[56] So connected are they that Thomas, and the tradition before him (which he emphasizes with a double *sed contra*), thinks the kissing takes part in the sin to which it would naturally lead, even if the persons do not let it go that far.

In the previous question, Thomas considers the morality of marital coitus itself. He says, "The order of reason is that each thing be fittingly ordered to its end. Thus there is no sin if someone uses things for the end to which they are directed [*ad finem ad quem sunt*], in a fitting way and order, as long as that end is truly good." He cites Augustine (supposedly the master of anti-sexuality) saying that "as food is for the health of man, so

[54] *STh* II-II, q. 154, a. 12, obj. 3 and ad 3.

[55] *STh* II-II, q. 154, a. 4.

[56] Cajetan perceptively notes that kissing is pleasant for precisely the same reason sex is pleasant, namely, to lead individuals to procreate: "Natura directe hos actus ordinavit ad concubitum, et ideo posuit in eis delectationem" (in Thomas Aquinas, *Opera Omnia*, v. 10 [Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1899], 226, III).

sexual activity is for the health of the species." Sexual activity that tends toward its proper end is without sin.[57]

The pleasure that attends sexual activity, which Thomas believes attains a "superfluity" that "so absorbs reason as to make it impossible to understand anything,"[58] is no hindrance to the goodness of the activity. What matters is where the acts are ordered and whether the soul is attached to the right ends of the acts or merely to the pleasure itself, which can also be found in disordered acts. Though in one sense reason may be swallowed up by the vehemence of the pleasure, what matters is that the act itself is according to reason: that is, ordered to its proper end.[59]

Thomas adds two quotations from Augustine's *City of God* 13 to say that the disorderliness of sexual pleasure is a result of original sin, but that this detracts nothing from the goodness of the act.[60] Earlier in the *Summa*, when he treats of Adam and Eve, he rejects the opinion of Gregory of Nyssa, who thought coitus was too evil to be found before the Fall, siding instead with Augustine: animality is part of what we are, and like all the animals, we procreate sexually.[61]

Although Augustine says the soul and body would remain "tranquil" during prelapsarian coitus, Thomas rejects the idea that in the state of innocence the sensual pleasure (*delectatio secundum sensum*) would have been any less, because where "nature is more pure, the body is more sensitive."[62] The

[57] *STh* II-II, q. 153, a. 2. We will further consider accidentally nonprocreative sex below.

[58] Ibid., obj. 2. Thomas takes Aristotle's word for it. See *Nic. Ethic.* 7.11: "The reasons given for the view that pleasure is not a good at all [include the idea that] . . . the pleasures are a hindrance to thought, and the more so the more one delights in them, e.g. in sexual pleasure; for no one could think of anything while absorbed in this." Both Aristotle and Thomas deny the conclusion, but not the premise.

[59] *STh* II-II, q. 153, a. 2, ad 2.

[60] Ibid., and ad 3. Here and throughout this paper, Augustine is treated only as quoted within the referenced texts of Thomas.

[61] *STh* I, q. 98, a. 2.

[62] Note that "nature," in this case, refers to the ordering of affections towards their proper ends. On the naturalness of the passions in the moral life, see Servais Pinckaers, O.P., "Les passions et la morale," *Revue de sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 74

pleasure would have been "moderate" only in the sense that it would be precisely as it should be.

But, Thomas argues, since procreation is an essentially biological, animal act, it is natural that those engaged in it should briefly be like the animals: unable to reason.[63] This is not unreasonable, he says, but natural: part of the process, as it should be. In fact, to underline his point, he concludes that in the state of innocence there would have been no praise in refraining from coitus (he uses the word *continentia*, which applies to married continence as well as virginity), because such animality is perfectly reasonable.[64] To be reasonable is not to be pondering things at the moment but to live an orderly life: in itself the animal pleasure of sexuality detracts nothing from that life but is part of its overall reasonability.

There is an important difference between the various forms of human perversion, on the one hand, and the naturalness of animals. Precisely because animals do not deviate from their natures, animal coitus is more reasonable than is human coitus[65]—even the counterexamples of lecherous species of

(1990): 381-86; idem, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, trans. Mary Thomas Noble, O.P. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995), especially chap. 17, "Natural Inclinations at the Source of Freedom and Morality," 400-456; Paul Gondreau, *The Passions of Christ's Soul in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2002); idem., "The Passions and the Moral Life: Appreciating the Originality of Aquinas," *The Thomist* 71 (2007): 419-50; and Josef Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), passim.

[63] *STh* II-II, q. 153, a. 2, ad 2: "Nor does the fact that reason cannot have a free act of reason for considering spiritual things simultaneously with this pleasure show that this act is contrary to virtue. For it is not contrary to virtue if the act of reason is sometimes paused by something that is done according to reason. Otherwise, when someone went to sleep, it would be contrary to virtue. Nevertheless, the fact that concupiscence and venereal pleasure do not submit to the command and moderation of reason, comes from the punishment of the first parent . . . as is clear from Augustine, in *De Civ. Dei* XIII."

[64] *STh* I, q. 98, a. 2, ad 3.

[65] Consider Aristotle's observations in *Historia Animalium*: "In a general way in the lives of animals many resemblances to human life may be observed. Acute intelligence will be seen more in small creatures than in large ones, as is exemplified in the case of birds by the nest-building of the swallow. In the same way as men do, the bird mixes

animals behave in ways that are appropriate to the needs of their offspring in ways that humans engaged in sexual sin do not. Thomas's and Cajetan's remarks, noted above, about the natural pleasantness of kissing are remarkable for allowing nature itself to keep human sexual activity face-to-face and human.

Lust is a sin, Thomas concludes, not because sexual activity is bad, but because it is ordered to what is most important: "the more something is necessary, the more the order of reason must be maintained around it." Sexual activity is most necessary (*valde necessarius*) for the common good, because it produces human citizens.[66] Thomas's focus is not on the act in isolation, not for example on how reason is swallowed up or how man is distracted, but on the part acts play in the broader conception of a human life. Acts are irrational and unnatural, or rational and natural, insofar as they are ordered or not to the larger processes of which they are parts. The pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Responsibility in Garrison Keillor's tales of Lake Wobegon preaches once a year on contraception: "If you don't want to go to Minneapolis, what are you doing on the train?"

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mud and chaff together; if it runs short of mud, it souses its body in water and rolls about in the dust with wet feathers; furthermore, just as man does, it makes a bed of straw, putting hard material below for a foundation, and adapting all to suit its own size. Both parents co-operate in the rearing of the young; each of the parents will detect, with practiced eye, the young one that has had a helping, and will take care it is not helped twice over; at first the parents will rid the nest of excrement, but, when the young are grown, they will teach their young to shift their position and let their excrement fall over the side of the nest. Pigeons exhibit other phenomena of a similar kind. In pairing the same male and the same female keep together; and the union is only broken by the death of one of the two parties. . . . As a general rule these birds show this conjugal fidelity, but occasionally a female will cohabit with other than her mate" (*HA* 9.7.612b18-34, 13a6-8 [trans. D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, The Internet Classics Archive, http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/history_anim.9.ix.html (accessed June 24, 2015)]).

[66] *STh* II-II, q. 153, a. 3.

E) Following Nature

Thomists argue over the precise role teleology plays in judging the rightness of human acts. To cite only the most intramural debates, philosophers Steven Long and Steven Jensen dispute how the intention of the actor can modify the object of an action—but their argument hovers precisely over the natural teleology of actions and their relation to human purposes.[67] Meanwhile, theologian Servais Pinckaers emphasized the overarching orientation of human life toward God, man's natural and supernatural end.[68]

It is beyond the scope of this article to distinguish or judge between these accounts. Here we only illustrate Thomas's application of his thinking in the questions surrounding marriage and sexuality. We can say at this point, however, that our examination heartily confirms the following words from Fr. Pinckaers:

> The Fathers of the Church . . . saw in nature the direct work of God, the creator of Genesis, and the work of the Word of John's Gospel. To their minds, the following of nature harmonized with the scriptural following of God and of Christ; in this new light it became more personal. Thus we can understand St. Thomas's method, so foreign to us, his marked preference for examples taken from the physical order, even when explaining realities of the spiritual order. For him, God's action was manifested in a particularly luminous way in the movements of beings completely subject to nature, that is, to the divine rule, untroubled as they were by the intervention of an often-

[67] Steven A. Long, "A Brief Disquisition regarding the Nature of the Object of the Moral Act according to St. Thomas Aquinas," *The Thomist* 67 (2003): 45-71; Steven Jensen, "A Long Discussion regarding Steven A. Long's Interpretation of the Moral Species," *The Thomist* 67 (2003): 623-43; Steven A Long, "Response to Jensen on the Moral Object," *Nova et Vetera* (English ed.) 3 (2005): 101-8; Steven J. Jensen, "When Evil Actions Become Good," *Nova et Vetera* (English ed.) 5 (2007): 747-64; Steven A. Long, *The Teleological Grammar of the Moral Act*, Introductions to Catholic Doctrine (Naples, Fla.: Sapientia Press, 2007); Steven Jensen, *Good and Evil Actions: A Journey through Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011).

[68] See especially his "Notes Explicatives" in *S. Thomas d'Aquin: Les actes humains (Somme théologique, Ia-IIae, qq. 6-17)*, v. 1, Editions de La Revue des jeunes (Paris: Cerf, 1961), 289-404.

deficient freedom. We can therefore find in them our models for human action, providing always that we realize the role played by analogy.[69]

In what we have seen above, Thomas's thinking on sexual morality exemplifies this "following of nature." To be rational, and in line with the wisdom of God, we must line up with the natural processes of which sex is a part.

Why, then, does Thomas begin his more radically nature-oriented text in the *Summa contra gentiles* by insisting on the difference between sexual activity that is truly *contra naturam* and merely sterile acts? "But if procreation cannot follow from the emission of the seed *per accidens*, this is neither *contra naturam*, nor sin, as happens in the case of a sterile woman."[70] The distinction does not seem to turn on knowledge: both the Bible and experience provide plenty of examples of couples who can be morally certain that their sexual acts will not conceive a child. As *Humanae Vitae* 11 says, "The fact is, as experience shows, that new life is not the result of each and every act of sexual intercourse." Instead, the point seems to be, as *Humanae Vitae* 11 insists, that the acts themselves are *ad vitam humanam procreandam per se destinatus*: regardless of the known outcome, the acts themselves are part of the natural process.

Humanae Vitae 16 goes on to say, "the Church . . . considers it lawful for married people to take advantage of the infertile period but condemns as always unlawful the use of means which directly prevent conception. . . . When the infertile period [*tempora conceptibus non apta*] recurs, they use their married intimacy to express their mutual love and to safeguard their fidelity toward one another."

Thomas's teleological approach to marriage provides two possible arguments for the "naturalness" of the use of infertile periods, roughly corresponding to *Humanae Vitae*'s "to express their mutual love" and "to safeguard their fidelity." To understand these arguments, we will next examine Thomas's

[69] Pinckaers, *Sources of Christian Ethics*, 334.
[70] *ScG* III, c. 122.

account of marital love, then his account of marital coitus as a remedy for lust.

II

The progress of Thomas's argument in the *Summa contra gentiles* is instructive for our understanding of "married love." Thomas shows that it is precisely the biological ordering of marriage to children that entails a much wider understanding of what marriage is. This account takes us deeper into the continuity of biology and morality, the intelligibility of avoiding children precisely in light of children as the end of marriage, and the richness of the phrase "natural family planning." We will consider Thomas's presentation of this wider understanding under two heads: first, the way his understanding is rooted in biology; second, the teleological ordering of this biological relationship beyond biological concerns.

A) Married Love, Beyond Procreation, Part One: The Biological Substrate

Chapter 122, on fornication, is emphatically biological. As we have described, its emphasis is on the parallel between fornication and sexual perversity: just as perversity prevents semen from reaching its proximate end, conception, so too does fornication prevent the conception from reaching its final end, a healthy adult. The normally terse Thomas spends a surprising number of words discussing bodily fluids, as if to get our minds firmly rooted in pure biology.

When he turns from perversity to fornication, he again insists on the biological. Fornication, he says, thwarts the rearing, or *educatio*, of the young. But his first, fairly long paragraph on *educatio* describes it entirely in terms of nutrition. Again, his examples almost forcefully focus our attention on biology: mammals feed their young with milk, but birds must seek out other food. His concluding minor premise fits man in as a kind of animal: "In the human species the female is least

sufficient to rear the offspring alone, since the necessity of human life requires many things which cannot be provided by one alone."[71] He will go on to discuss specifically rational aspects of this, but first he phrases it as if what is specific to man is his animal helplessness.

The opening of the next chapter seems to stress the unity of argument: "If one considers rightly, the preceding argument [singular] seems to lead one to the conclusion that the society of male and female in human nature, which we call marriage, is not only long-term, but life-long." All that follows is rooted in the biology of chapter 122.

These next three chapters (123-25) ascend into considerations of justice, friendship, good morals, and the broader community—but the final chapter (126) returns to biology. The first paragraph of this last chapter summarizes what has gone before: sexual activity that does not go along (*non convenit*) with the procreation and rearing of children is irrational; sexual activity that does (*secundum quod congruit*) is rational. Since the divine law is only against irrationality, some sexual acts are allowable. Three subsequent arguments follow the same rigorously biological logic.

The three middle chapters begin with almost coarsely biological arguments, as if to emphasize the animality of marriage. As they move upward into less specifically biological arguments, they remain nonetheless rooted in animality.

In chapter 123, for example, the first reason Thomas gives that marriage should be life-long is the need to preserve possessions: so that the son may carry on in the things that belong to the father. He says that even birds do this. The next two arguments oppose biological differences to a rational concern for equity: if the man is more inclined to leave, because of the woman's passing beauty and fertility (123, n. 3), or if the woman is more inclined to stay, because of her physical and

[71] "One"' (*unum*) is in the masculine; it seems that not only a single woman, but also a single man would be insufficient. The problem is not gender but number. See *ScG* III, c. 122, n. 6.

perhaps mental or emotional frailty (ibid., n. 4), it is only fair to demand the same standard of indissolubility for both.

Next, two arguments treat the even higher concerns of human relationship. The first is about a father's relationship with his children. The child needs his father's governance—even, the argument for life-long marriage suggests, into adulthood (ibid., n. 5). This is a richly human argument about marriage and family. But Thomas spends most of the paragraph discussing the "natural instinct" to be "certain about offspring": the governance of children demands life-long marriage because otherwise the father risks governing children who are not biologically his own, "when a woman known by one man, is then known by another."

The focus on certainty about offspring is doubly strange. First, it is not obvious why paternal governance must be rooted in biology; can a man not also guide his step-children? How is the relationship hurt if they are not his own? But second, if he must know which children are biologically his, canon law has always recognized that "certainty about offspring" can be guaranteed by a mere waiting period. Four months between marriages is sufficient to know which children he is biologically obliged to govern; certainty does not require an entire lifetime. The argument about guiding children would seem stronger without the reference to biological certitude—yet Thomas's insistent focus on that certitude underlines his concern to root the human relationships of family in biology.

The next argument for life-long marriage is today his most popular: "Friendship is greater insofar as it is firmer and more lasting; but between man and wife there seems to be the greatest friendship." This is nice and romantic; Thomas glosses it with the line from Genesis about leaving one's father and mother (123, n. 6), but he roots it in biology. First, "the act of carnal copulation makes a sweet society even among the beasts": this friendship is rooted, in part, in hormones.[72] Second, human

[72] For a review of the literature on oxytocin, see Heon-Ji Lee, et al., "Oxytocin: The Great Facilitator of Life," in *Progress in Neurobiology* 88 (2009): 127-51.

marriage unites the couple in *totius domesticae conversationis consortium*, "a partnership of overall household fellowship."[73] In other words, the friendship of man and wife is rooted not so much in being soulmates as in being housemates—even, as Aristotle says, "messmates" (*connutritione*).[74] They build the friendship by living life together.

The final arguments go beyond the family, into society. Marriage is a social matter, a matter of law, Thomas says, because it is ordered to the greatest biological necessity of society: more people (ibid., n. 7). His gloss on this is as coarsely biological as can be: "eating, and the emission of other superfluities, pertains to the individual, but procreation to the conservation of the species." Marriage engages our social nature precisely because of its biological order. Laws against divorce

[73] Gondreau, citing conversations with Russell Hittinger, argues that *consortium* is a legal term. See "Inseparable Connection," 657-58. In light of the biological emphasis I establish here, I prefer the more mundane reading that "consortium" refers, literally, to sharing a common lot, or drawing the same straw (*sors*).

[74] Aristotle cites *connutritum* as one of the causes of love among brothers: "Two things that contribute greatly to friendship are a common upbringing [*connutritum*; Gr. *syntrophon*] and similarity of age; for 'two of an age take to each other', and people brought up together [*unius mori*; Gr. *synétheis*] tend to be comrades; whence the friendshp of brothers is akin to that of comrades [*etayricae*; Gr. *hetairoi*]. . . . The friendship of brothers has the characteristics found in that of comrades (and especially when these are good), and in general between people who are like each other, inasmuch as they belong more to each other [*proximiores*; Gr. *oikeioteroi*] and start with a love for each other from their very birth, and inasmuch as those born of the same parents and brought up together [*connutriti et disciplinati similiter*; Gr. *syntrophoi kai paideuthentes homoiós*]" (*Nic. Eth.* 8.12.1161b33-1162a1, 1162a9-14; Latin from Thomas Aquinas, *Opera Omnia*, v. 47.2 (Rome: Leonine Edition, 1969), 484-85). Thomas here distinguishes the love of *connutritum* from the love that arises from sexual activity—"in these, the love which comes from communion of origin and the common table is joined to the love of concupiscence" (*ScG* III, c. 125. n. 5)—but it nonetheless is a nice description of the substratum of the marital relationship. Thomas also utilizes table fellowship in his Eucharistic hymns in the office "Sacerdos" for the Feast of Corpus Christ: the concluding strophe of the hymn for Lauds, "Verbum supernum prodiens," says, "Being born, he gave himself as a companion [*socium*]/ eating with them [*convescens*], [he gave himself] as a friend"; and the concluding strophe of the sequence for the Mass, "Lauda Sion Salvatorem," says, "You who know and can do all things,/ who pasture us mortals here,/ you who there sat at table with us [*nos ibi commensales*],/ make us co-heirs and comrades [*sodales*],/ of the heavenly citizens." *Connutriti*, *convescentes*, *commensales*: nice images for *totius domesticae conversationis consortium*.

strengthen marriage by demanding that we love one another faithfully, be committed to the long-term care of our households, and not break up the wider friendships that marriage promotes, as divorce sets ex-in-laws at odds (ibid., n. 8).

Finally, society needs not only people but good people. So law promotes marriage because the problem-solving marriage requires makes us better people (ibid.). Polygamy is outlawed because it causes strife (124, n. 6). And ideally the law protects us from some occasions for lust (125, n. 5). The goodness of society itself is built on the biological substratum of family and procreation.

B) Married Love, Beyond Procreation, Part Two: Specifically Human Ends

Looking at the same arguments from the opposite perspective, we can see that upon this biological substratum are built truly human institutions. At this point it gets confusing to say which ends are "primary" and which "secondary." Marriage is for children, but children are for society, and precisely because marriage is ordered toward the rearing of children, it builds up the friendships between spouses, in-laws, and generations that are the ultimate purpose of children and the foundation of society. God made Eve so that Adam would not be alone; Thomas might point out that she is both a "help" to create more friends, and the first among many.

Thomas begins his inquiry into the specifically human nature of marriage in chapter 122, on fornication. Having established that humans, like many other species of animals, need a partnership of father and mother to care for their helpless children, he raises the question of a wealthy woman (*ScG* III, c. 122, n. 7). One can easily imagine a situation in which the woman, unlike a bird, does not need the father's help to feed her children.

His response in the following paragraph takes us deep into his definition of marriage (ibid., n. 8). "In the human species, the offspring needs not only nutrition for the body, as in other

animals, but also instruction for the soul"—in the later commentary on 1 Corinthians 7, he will refine this statement: "which involves not only feeding the body, but also feeding the soul."[75] This is, on the one hand, instruction in prudence, which requires long experience, and on the other hand, moral correction (*repressione*), to overcome the impulses of the passions, which corrupt prudence.

> It is necessary therefore in the human species to work on the improvement of the offspring not for a short time, as among birds, but through the great space of a life. Whence, since it is necessary among all animals that the male stay with the female as long as the work of the male is necessary for the offspring, it is natural for man that the male enter into no passing society with a given female, but one that lasts for a long time. And this is the society we call marriage. Thus marriage is natural to man, and fornication, which is outside marriage, is against the good of man. (Ibid.)

This is his initial definition of marriage.

But there is some ambiguity to be worked out. In this first, defining paragraph, the mother and the marital relationship sound almost superfluous. "This requires the work of the male, in whom, for instruction, the reason is more established, and for chastisement, the strength is greater." Marriage, in the text we have quoted, is determined by how long "the work of the male is necessary." Earlier in the same chapter, however, he has said, "the necessity of human life requires many things which cannot be provided by one [masculine] alone." The rest of the chapters argue that children need not just the presence of their father, but that of their mother—or, to be more precise, they need a family.

It is instructive to begin with the end. At the end of chapter 123, Thomas says, "the conjunction of man and woman is ordered in the laws not only insofar as it pertains to the generation of children, as among the other animals, but also insofar as it aids good morals, which right reason disposes both in regard to man himself, and insofar as he is part of a domestic family and of civil society." Indissoluble marriage serves all

[75] *Super I Cor.*, c. 7, lect. 1.

three ends: it builds up "civil society" by creating a firm love among in-laws, drawing a man beyond his own household; it makes him care for his "domestic family," since he is stuck with it; and "in regard to man himself," it makes him live a more faithful love, avoiding adultery (123, n. 8). Each of these arguments roots morality in biological relationships.

None of these goods speak directly of child-rearing, but all are essential to it. How can a child learn to have "good morals . . . in regard to himself, and insofar as he is part of a domestic family and of civil society" except from parents who themselves live them? Again, the question of "primary" and "secondary" ends is confusing. Are the good morals of the parents "ordered to" the good of the child? Yes and no. In fact, the parents' ordering to the children is part of their good ordering in themselves and their right relationship to society.

Parallel arguments could be made throughout the *Summa contra gentiles*' rich chapters on marriage. These chapters on marriage conclude with the common good: "'the good of the many,' he says, 'is always more divine than the good of the one'" (125, n. 10). On the one hand, the parent learns to prefer the common good to his private good precisely through giving himself over to the good of his family. On the other hand, the child learns through watching the parent. Finally, both learn by going out into society.

Similarly, within the home, a child learns equity and friendship, both put forth as central goods, precisely through the way his parents live those goods. But is the parent just "for" the child? Yes and no. And is the parental friendship "for" the children? Yes and no. Children need the friendship of husband and wife. But it is a true friendship, truly ordered to the common good: indeed, it cannot serve its purpose if it is not.

Perhaps, then, the most important argument comes in the *Tertia pars*, when Thomas asks whether the virginal marriage between Joseph and Mary was a true marriage. He recalls that the "first perfection" of a thing is its form, the "second

perfection" is the operation by which it attains its end.[76] The form of marriage he calls a "union of souls." The end is to procreate and educate children. Now Mary and Joseph did not perform the operation by which one procreates—but they did perform the operations of education, "other works, by which they yield [*obsequuntur*] to one another to nourish the children."[77]

This statement marks an advance over the early Thomas, who said in his commentary on the *Sentences*: "Marriage has a double perfection. One in its being, which is made by the consent of words, and this perfection their marriage had. The other perfection is in the operation, and thus they were not perfect, because the proper act of marriage is the carnal embrace."[78] In the *Summa theologiae*, he sees that the other proper "marital act" (*actum matrimonii*)—indeed, the more perfecting act—is the many "other works" by which marriage serves the children. This brings his attention to the fact that though marriage "is made" by the words of consent, the true form brought into being by those words is a "union of souls." In the later text, he says this is "the marriage bond" (*copulam*

[76] See Marie Leblanc, "Amour et procréation dans la théologie de saint Thomas," *Revue Thomiste* 92 (1992): 433-59. Gondreau takes issue with Leblanc's insistence on procreation as the only end of marriage, but I think what we say here responds to his concerns. See Gondreau, "Inseparable Connection," 745.

[77] *STh* III, q. 29, a. 2. Thomas suggests that the multitudinous acts of making a home and raising a family are analogous to the "marital act" in its reduced meaning as only coitus: "But the *second perfection* consists in the *operation* of a thing, through which the thing somehow attains its end. . . . Now the end of matrimony is generating *and rearing* children, the first of which is attained by the conjugal bed [*concubitum coniugalem*], the second *by other works* of the man and wife, by which they yield to one another in order to nourish the children. . . . With regard to the second perfection, through the 'marital *act*,' if this is taken as the carnal bed [*carnalem concubitum*], through which children are generated, this [marriage of Mary and Joseph] would not be a consummated marriage. . . . Nevertheless that marriage also has the *second perfection* with regard to the rearing of the child" (ibid., emphasis added). Coitus is not the only act specific to married people. Indeed, non-married people have coitus; only married people properly raise children.

[78] IV *Sent*., d. 30, q. 2, a. 2.

coniugalem) and explicitly distinguishes it from "the carnal bond" (*copulam carnale*) that typically accompanies it.[79]

Thomas's deeper appreciation of what marriage is—brought about by a deeper appreciation of how education completes procreation—contributes not only to his understanding of Mary and Joseph's virginal marriage but also to our understanding of marriage more generally.

Just as man is animal and rational, so marriage is rooted in biology (in procreation) yet reaches far beyond (in education). Marriage is a complete relationship, a relationship of equity, friendship, love, and the common good, a relationship that reaches beyond merely material provision into the most social concerns of human life.

A first way of thinking about the use of infertile periods, corresponding to *Humanae Vitae*'s "to express their mutual love," could take precisely this approach. To be what it is, and to serve its fullest biological purpose (the education of children), marriage needs to be an abundant relationship. That relationship is built on a biological substrate. Parents cannot parent without the *totius domesticae conversationis consortium*. But so too, perhaps, they cannot parent without the "sweet society," the hormonal affection that arises from their biological relationship.

The use of infertile periods can thus in a sense be ordered to procreation, in that it can be ordered to the good of the children, by building up the marital relationship. To do so, of course, requires both the intention of the parents (who must keep their focus beyond immediate pleasure and on the good of their marital relationship and their family) and the rightness of the act. *Contra naturam* sexuality cannot build up the biological relationship of the parents precisely because it is a contradiction: an effort simultaneously to order to the good of the children an act precisely defined by its opposition to children. Infertile coitus, on the other hand, by a husband and wife who recognize the inherent ordering of coitus towards children, but

[79] *STh* III, q. 29, a. 2.

use it for the intermediate good of marital union, is not *contra naturam*, but part of the bigger process.

C) "Remedium concupiscentiae"? "To Safeguard Their Fidelity"

But is infertile coitus necessary to maintain the "sweet society" of marriage? From the Aristotelian perspective, it is worth noting that, though coitus contributes to the "sweet society" by which many animals pair for life, animals that pair for life do not engage in sexual activity during infertile periods: the only time for embracing is spring. Exceptions to the rule, such as dogs and primates, do not practice monogamy. Thus even among the animals, it seems that domestic partnership contributes more to long-term fidelity than does infertile coitus. Better to make love in the kitchen, or by feathering the nest, than in the bedroom.

In 1 Corinthians 7:1-2, St. Paul says, "Regarding those things about which you wrote to me, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. But on account of fornication each one has his wife, and each woman has her husband." This passage is the *locus classicus* for the view that marital nonprocreative coitus can only be prompted by sinful lust: "fornication."[80] Thomas's treatment of the text gives us a richer way of understanding both Paul's words and the relationship between morality and biology. In this penultimate section of this article, we shall follow Thomas through this text, with commentary from the *Summa*, to find his thinking on nonprocreative coitus as a *remedium*. We shall find it a helpful commentary on Pope Paul's second reason for using infertile periods, "to safeguard their fidelity."

[80] The interpretation of this passage is much controverted. It is not clear, for example, whether "it is better" refers to Paul's opinion, or to the opinion that the Corinthians wrote to him. For an excellent reading of the second option, see Ronald A. Knox, "The Corinthians' Letter to St. Paul," in *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion, with Special Reference to the XVII and XVIII Centuries* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame Press, 1994), 9-24. Here, however, our goal is to understand Thomas's reading; he clearly thinks the opinion belongs to Paul.

Thomas begins by reading the biological underpinnings of the text. In itself, coitus does not serve the good of the individual, as eating does, but only the good of the species. Coitus is good because it makes babies—Thomas notes, just in passing, that there would be no reason for women (either absolutely, or in marriage) except for procreation.[81] For the individual, he says, coitus is "not good" in three ways. Its pleasure drags down the soul; the necessities of marriage, which for reasons explained above, must surround coitus, make the man like a slave to his wife; and feeding a family is expensive.

Next, following St. Paul's language, Thomas discusses the "necessity of touching a woman." The first necessity is for procreation, as it says in Genesis: "male and female he created them, and God blessed them, and said, increase and multiply, and fill the earth."[82] If the Apostle says, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman," he must think there is no more absolute need for Christians to procreate.[83]

But when Paul goes on to say, "on account of fornication," Thomas proposes a "second necessity [of touching a woman], insofar as [marriage] is instituted *in remedium culpae*."[84] For

[81] *Super I Cor.*, c 7, lect. 1: "*Bonum est homini mulierem non tangere*. Circa quod notandum quod mulier data est viro ad adiutorium generationis." Perhaps we can better understand his statement by rephrasing it: the biological reason for the biological diversity of gender is procreation. Unless otherwise noted, all references in this section are to this *lectio*.

[82] Thomas does not treat sexuality under the heading of the second creation account, "It is not good for man to be alone" (Gen 2:18). Or rather, he sees woman's role in this account under the heading, "there was not found a help [*adiutor*] like to him," and sees the man's relationship with the woman as part of building a family and a *polis*, not as the conclusion of man's search for friendship.

[83] Thus *Super I Cor.*, c. 7, lect. 1: "the human race already multiplied, and the people of God now augmented, not by the propagation of the flesh, but by the generation which is from water and the Holy Spirit."

[84] The more common phrase, which Thomas will use later in this *lectio*, is *remedium concupiscentiae*; since we do not have a critical edition of this commentary, it is possible this is a scribal error. However, he does speak of *remedium contra culpam* in his commentary on the previous chapter of this letter: *Super I Cor*, c. 6, lect. 1, on verses 4-5. We will use *remedium concupscentiae* because of its significant place in the tradition (see Cormac Burke, "A Postscript to the '*Remedium Concupiscentiae*'," *The*

fallen man, even after baptism, "carnal concupiscence still remains. Although it does not dominate, still it incites, especially to venereal acts, because of the vehemence of the pleasure."

Thomas takes a moderate position on this "carnal concupiscence." Augustine says, "the infection of original guilt most appears in the motion of the genitals."[85] Thomas redirects the focus to the word "infection": original sin is an "infection" insofar as it passes from one person to the other; the procreative process is particularly "infected" only in that it is the means by which original sin is passed on. But for Thomas, this is no specific indictment of sexuality. He says sexual pleasure is more unruly than other kinds, not because of a particular disorder, but only because it is rooted in the foundational sense of touch and is of central importance for the preservation of the species.[86] Whereas we can feel the pain of hunger, because it pertains to our individual bodily needs, we cannot feel the pain of the species; therefore, nature endows sexuality with an especially strong drive.

The deeper problem of original sin is not specific to sex, says Thomas, but is in general the loss of original justice as a "fetter" (*vinculo*) on our sensitive powers. Formally, original sin is the loss of the order of original justice, above all the will failing to be subject to God. The consequence of this, however, and thus the material of original sin, is the disordered affection of the

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Thomist 70 [2006]: 481-536; and the CIC 1917, c. 1013), because it more directly explains what is being remedied, and because it will more directly allow us to respond to Cormac Burke's article.

[85] *De civ. Dei*, 14, quoted in *STh* I-II, q. 84, a. 4, sc.

[86] *STh* I-II, q. 83, a. 4, ad 3. For Augustine's position on this question, see *De civitate Dei*, 14.15-20. Similarly, Augustine says, "sexual libido transmits original sin to the offspring" (*STh* I-II, q. 83, a. 4, obj. 3) but Thomas explains this as not "actual" libido, but "habitual" libido (ibid., ad 3). "Even if it was granted by the divine power that someone experienced no disorderded libido in the procreative act, he would still transmit original sin to the offspring." The lust of the parents is not the cause of original sin in the children, just a sign of the fallenness of human nature.

appetites for mutable goods.[87] Unruly appetite is part of the fallen condition.

All of this is the context in which Thomas says Paul's words "on account of fornication" refer to "the necessity of touching a woman" *in remedium culpae*. Fallen man's sexual powers do not stay within the limits of the larger good, but tend to their own motion. Quoting Jesus's teaching on celibacy in Matthew 19, "not all can hold this teaching," Thomas says, "to conquer this concupiscene [of lust] belongs to a greater power than can belong [*convenire*] to men." Instead, "it is necessary that one give in to this concupiscence in one sense [*in parte*], and conquer it in another."

Thomas's teaching on what this giving in and conquering means is his great contribution to the question of the *remedium concupiscentiae*. The goal, he says, is to order the procreative act by reason; thus man is not overcome by concupiscence, but rather subjects concupiscence to reason. He follows this statement with his standard argument: "in some species of animals, the female alone does not suffice for the rearing of the offspring," etc. Concupiscence is subjected to reason when it is subjected to the procreative logic of marriage: the procreative act must be in the context of a relationship that can bring it to its happy end, a healthy adult human being. This, says Thomas, is what Paul means when he opens by saying, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, on account of fornication . . .". He means, "namely, to avoid fornication," by subordinating the unruly sex drive to marriage.

[87] See *STh* I-II, q. 82, a. 3 and a. 4, ad 1. See also Council of Trent, session five, "Decree concerning Original Sin," n. 5: "The holy council confesses and perceives that in the baptised, concupiscence or a tendency to sin remains; since this is left as a form of testing, it cannot harm those who do not given consent but, by the grace of Christ, offer strong resistance; indeed, *that person will be crowned who competes according to the rules*. This concupiscence the Apostle sometimes calls sin, but the holy council declares that the catholic church has never understood it to be called sin in the sense of being truly and properly such in those who have been regenerated, but in the sense that it is a result of sin and inclines to sin" (*Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Norman P. Tanner [London: Sheed and Ward, 1990], 667*).

Paul goes on, and Thomas's commentary takes us deeper into the meaning of *remedium concupiscentiae*. Three times in the nine verses Thomas comments on in this *lectio*, Paul uses words that seem too harsh. In verse 2, he says, "each one has his wife on account of fornication." In verse 6, after saying the couple should come back together after times of fasting and prayer, he says, "But I say this by way of indulgence." And in verse 9, he says "it is better to marry than to burn." Thomas says, "the Apostle seems to speak inappropriately [*inconvenienter*], for indulgence is only for sin. . . . He seems to be saying that marriage is sin." Later he says, "it should be carefully noted [*hic attendendum*] that the Apostle uses an improper comparison, for marrying is good (though less good), but burning is evil."

To explain Paul's "indulgence," Thomas names four motives for engaging in marital intercourse. First, marital coitus can be

> ordered to the good of procreating a child and bringing it up to worship God; the conjugal act is then an act of the virtue of religion. Or it can be done for the purpose of 'rendering the debt' [more on this in a moment], then it is an act of justice. Every such act of virtue is meritorious, if done with charity.

These two kinds of act are "without any sin, mortal or venial."

A third motive for marital coitus is "with venial sin: namely when someone is urged on to the marital act by concupiscence, but a concupiscence which remains within the limits of marriage, so that the man is content with only his wife." This is distinguished from a fourth kind: "but sometimes the guilt is mortal, namely when one is carried by concupiscence outside the limits of marriage: namely, when he engages with his wife, but would equally or even more freely engage with someone else." The meritorious acts need no indulgence; the mortal sin cannot be indulged. Paul then, says Thomas, is only "indulging" the kind with venial sin.

This categorization reveals much about Thomas's thinking on nonprocreative marital coitus. His distinction between mortal and venial sin inhabits precisely the realm of fallen man, where, as we saw above, "carnal concupiscence still remains. Although it does not dominate, still it incites, especially to

venereal acts." The spouse moved by lust who would not let lust take him outside of marriage subordinates unruly passion to the reasonable project of marriage. In Thomas's mind, this is fundamentally different from a marital act moved by lust without such subordination to reason, even though both are physically engaged in with the same spouse, and both are moved by the same motive of lust: the desire for pleasure rather than for the real goods of marriage.

The second category, "done for the purpose of 'rendering the debt' . . . an act of justice," without sin and meritorious, seems to correlate with the category of venial sin. The language of debt is Paul's: "let the husband render the debt to his wife, and similarly the wife to her husband" (v. 3). Thomas interprets it in light of the next verse, "The woman has not power over her own body, but the man; similarly the man too has not power over his own body but the woman," along with Paul's repeated concern about impurity, as in the following verse: "do not defraud each other . . . lest Satan tempt you on account of your incontinence."

The key to the argument comes from Augustine: though it is better "not to touch a woman," "God does not want a prize of that value to be balanced by such a loss, that when one of the spouses abstains, the other one unwilling, the latter might fall into damnable seductions."[88] When a husband, for example, is in the category of venial sin, being motivated by lust but wanting to stay within marriage, the wife owes it to him to let him find marital expression for this passion.[89] The spouse who gives performs a meritorious act of justice; the spouse who asks

[88] Thomas does not cite a source, only "sicut dicit Augustinus."

[89] The early Thomas expresses a view, apparently common, that one can also ask "tacitly": "there are two ways of 'requesting the debt.' In one way, expressly, as when they use words with one another. In another way, the request is interpreted, namely when the man perceives by some signs that the wife would like the debt to be rendered to her, but is silent because of modesty. And so, even if she does not expressly request the debt with words, nevertheless the man is bound to render it, when his wife's will of having the debt rendered appears expressly through signs" (IV *Sent*., d. 32, q. 1, a. 2, qcla. 1).

engages in an act that "has sin attached, but nonetheless venial on account of the goods of marriage, without which it would be mortal sin."

A full appraisal of this claim would require an examination of the meaning of venial sin, which is beyond the scope of this article.[90] But Thomas gives us some sense of the lightness of the sin here in his commentary. Paul says, "do not defraud one another, except perhaps with consent, for a time, that you may have time to pray; and then return to one another." Thomas says, "he teaches that three things are to be observed in such an interruption" of marital relations. It must be "by common consent," and he quotes Ecclesiastes, "three things are well pleasing to my soul, which are approved before God and men: the concord of brothers, the love of neighbors, and a man and woman consenting well with one another." It must be "only for a time"—Thomas appears to consider a will for permanent abstinence contrary to Scripture. And it must be "for the proper end, namely for spiritual acts, for which continence renders them better prepared."

To this Thomas adds two citations from Scripture. The prophet Joel speaks of "sacrifice and drink offering to our God" and adds "let the bridegroom go forth from his chamber, and the bride from her marriage bed" (2:14, 16). In 1 Kings, "it says that when the solemnities of dedication had been celebrated, they went back to their tents rejoicing"—a sexual reading of a not obviously sexual text (8:66).

Thomas's gloss seems to overwhelm the apparent negativity of Paul. Though Paul emphasizes the presence of sin, Thomas underlines joy, and even God's pleasure at consent between man and wife. Thus he concludes the *lectio* by glossing Paul's phrase, "it is better to marry than to burn," by saying that marriage prevents "burning with lust," and that Paul's phrases, though they are meant to encourage to a higher vocation, are nonetheless "inappropriate" insofar as they appear to denigrate the good of marriage.

[90] See *STh* I-II, q. 72, a. 5; and qq. 88-89.

Cormac Burke has written that "the practical effect" of the language "remedy of concupiscence" "has been to create a certain idea that marriage 'legitimizes' concupiscence, an idea which, if further analyzed amounts to saying that 'marriage legitimizes *disordered* sexuality."[91] To the contrary, Thomas's account of the *remedium concupiscentiae* argues first that marital lust must be brought within the confines of marriage, not only externally, but internally, so that the person who does not have entire control of his or her sexual impulses nevertheless would not express them in any but marital ways. Thomas argues, second, that the act by which a spouse helps his or her partner find the appropriate expression for sexual impulses is without sin and meritorious.

Burke asserts,

> It was not that to marry stopped the "burning" of lust or concupiscence, but that once married one could yield unconcernedly to this "burning," whose satisfaction is legitimized by marrying. In this view, conjugal relations, justified by being oriented to procreation, were exempt from any further moral or ascetical issue of control or purification.[92]

Although this may well be true of some people's understanding of *remedium concupiscentiae*, and although Burke tries to save Thomas by asserting that he himself did not hold to any form of *remedium concupiscentiae*,[93] Thomas in fact provides a much

[91] Burke, "Postscript to the 'Remedium concupiscentiae'," 535.

[92] Ibid., 501.

[93] E.g., "Despite the long presence it has enjoyed in much of ecclesial writing and its acceptance over fifty years in the 1917 Code, the concept of the *remedium concupiscentiae* (a) lacks theological and anthropological substance (and, contrary to generalized opinion, has little if any backing in the thought of St. Augustine or St. Thomas)" (ibid., 487); "The attribution to Augustine and Thomas Aquinas of the teaching that marriage is directed to the 'remedy of concupiscence' therefore lacks solid grounds" (ibid., 497). Where we have argued that Thomas views venial sin as being on the path to healing, Burke interprets it as pure condemnation: "Is a spouse not meant to be the object of a different and nobler sort of desire than simple self-satisfaction? Should we be surprised then at St. Thomas's opinion that 'consentiens concupiscentiae in uxorem' is guilty not of a mortal sin, but indeed of one that is venial?" (ibid., 519). Burke relocates the *remedium* from the use of nonprocreative intercourse considered

richer account of that teaching, firmly rooted in the words of St. Paul.

For Thomas, it is not that externally appropriate acts legitimate internal disorder. Rather, the person learns to embrace that external order. This happens above all when the person embraces the good of children, personally intending not only procreation but the healthy rearing of children for the glory of God. But it happens, too, in what Thomas calls the good of faithfulness, when the couple learns to bring their still fallen sexual desires firmly within the bounds of marriage, above all by "being content with their own wife" or husband, and thus binding lust "within the limits of matrimony," as well as by working with one's spouse in their efforts to thus civilize their unruly passions. This is a work of healing, though admittedly the work of a lifetime.

In his discussions both of celibacy and of chastity, Thomas recalls these words from Augustine: "I think nothing brings the male soul down from the heights more than the charms of woman and that contact of bodies without which one cannot have a wife."[94] If this gives a motive for celibacy, it also explains the enduring importance, and indeed dignity, of the *remedium concupiscentiae*. The deeper dignity of the *totius domesticae conversationis consortium* both awakens one's fallen sexual desires and becomes the context for the healing of those desires.[95]

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here to the grace of the sacrament: "Taking up again the objection that marriage, precisely because it tends to increase concupiscence, cannot be a vehicle of grace, [Thomas] turns the objection around and says that grace is in fact conferred in marriage precisely to be a remedy against concupiscence, so as to curb it at its root" (ibid., 497). Burke also tries to do away with the primacy of child rearing: "The hitherto prevalent evaluation of conjugal intercourse—centered almost exclusively on its procreative function and finality—is both dated and deficient" (ibid., 513). See also Cormac Burke, "Marriage: A Personalist or an Institutional Understanding?" *Communio*, 19 (1992): 278-304.

[94] *STh* II-II, q. 186, a. 4; and q. 151, a. 3, ad 2.

[95] Cf. John Cassian, *Conferences* 19.16: "Even when we are living in solitude, though the incentive to irritation and matter for it cannot arise from men, yet we ought of set purpose to meditate on incitements to it, that as we are fighting against it with a continual struggle in our thoughts, a speedier cure for it may be found for us. But

Insofar as "the institution of matrimony itself and conjugal love are ordained for the procreation and education of children, and find in them their ultimate crown," Thomas's account of the *remedium concupiscentiae* nicely illuminates a theory of marriage ordered to procreation and further illumines marriage's hylemorphic unity of biology and morality.

III. Lactational Amenorrhea: Concluding Thoughts on "Natural," "Family," and "Planning"

To conclude this article on the biological ordering of marriage, let us examine how human biology is itself ordered to the good of the human person. In recent decades it has been scientifically established that the human body naturally suppresses ovulation for an average of perhaps fifteen months[96] following childbirth—and thus naturally spaces children at least two years apart—if the mother practices what has been called

against the spirit of fornication the system is different, and the method an altered one. For as we must deprive the body of opportunities of lust, and contact with flesh, so we must deprive the mind of the recollection of it. For it is sufficiently dangerous for bosoms that are still weak and infirm even to tolerate the slightest recollection of this passion, in such a way that sometimes at the remembrance of holy women, or in reading a story in Holy Scripture, a stimulus of dangerous excitement is aroused. For which reason our Elders used deliberately to omit passages of this kind when any of the juniors were present. However for those who are perfect and established in the feelings of chastity there can be no lack of proofs by which they may examine themselves, and establish their perfect uprightness of heart by the uncorrupted judgment of their own conscience. There will then be for the man who is thoroughly established a similar test even in regard to this passion, so that one who is sure that he has altogether exterminated the roots of this evil may for the sake of ascertaining his chastity, call up some picture as with a lascivious mind. But it is by no means proper for such a test to be attempted by those who are still weak, for to them it will be dangerous rather than useful." See also ibid., 19.12.

[96] La Leche League International, *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*, 7th rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 2004), 380. Cf. P. Lewis et al., "The Resumption of Ovulation and Menstruation in a Well-Nourished Population of Women Breastfeeding for an Extended Period of Time," *Fertility and Sterility* 55, no. 3 (1991): 529-36; and M. Labbok, "The Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM) among Working Women," *Contraception* 62 (2000): 217-19.

"ecological breastfeeding."[97] This effect is called "lactational amenorrhea."

"Ecological breastfeeding" is distinguished, by greater mother-child closeness, from some cultural practices that may be called "exclusive breastfeeding." "Nursing provides all your baby's nourishment, liquids, and pacification for the first six to eight months. . . . Once your baby starts solids, you continue to nurse your baby frequently—day and night, and you continue to take him with you wherever you go."[98] The woman's biology naturally suppresses ovulation under these circumstances, but not under others.

In determining the "naturalness" of this practice, the medical indications are impressive.[99] Medical studies show that children who are abundantly breastfed grow up to have fewer infec-

[97] Paul VI's "Birth Control Commission" was ignorant of this fact. In their final report, in the section on "biological and medical facts," they wrote, "after a birth, fertility returns more rapidly than it used to. This is so, whether the woman nurses or not" ("Rapport finale des travaux de la Commission Pontificale pour l'étude des problèmes de la famille, de la population et de la natalité," 27 June 1966, signed by Henri de Riedmatten, O.P., Secrétaire Général, p. 25). This report, previously secret, was recently published on Germaine Grisez's web site: http://www.twotlj.org/Final-Report.pdf, accessed on June 28, 2013.) In a prophetic key, Pius XII said, "As for the future . . . who can be sure that the natural rhythm of procreation will be the same in the future as it is now? Is it not possible that some law that will moderate the rhythm of expansion from within may come into play? Providence has reserved the future destiny of the world to itself" ("The Large Family: An Address of Pope Pius XII to the Directors of the Associations for Large Families of Rome and of Italy," January 20, 1958 [in *The Pope Speaks* 4, no. 4 (Spring 1958): 367]).

[98] John F. Kippley and Sheila K. Kippley, *The Art of Natural Family Planning*, 4th ed. (Cincinnati: The Couple to Couple League International, 1996), 333. Continued study has led Sheila Kippley to publish "seven standards of ecological breastfeeding." See Sheila Matgen Kippley, *Breastfeeding and Natural Child Spacing: How Ecological Breastfeeding Spaces Babies*, 4th ed. (Cincinnati: The Couple to Couple League International, 1999), 1-5.

[99] For overall benefits, see: American Academy of Pediatrics Work Group on Breastfeeding. "Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk," *Pediatrics* 100, no. 6 (1997): 1035-37; M. J. Heinig and K.G. Dewey, "Health Advantages of Breastfeeding for Infants: A Critical Review," *Nutritional Research Review* 9 (1996): 89-110; A. S. Cunningham, D. B. Jelliffe, and E. F. P. Jelliffe, "Breastfeeding and Health in the 1980s: A Global Epidemiological Review," *Journal of Pediatrics* 118, no. 5 (1991): 659-66. All references in the next series of notes are taken from La Leche League, *Womanly Art*.

tions,[100] better teeth,[101] fewer allergies,[102] less obesity,[103] and higher intelligence.[104] Mothers who practice such abundant breastfeeding experience better control of weight[105] and stress[106] in the short term, and significantly lesser chances of

[100] A. Goldman, "Immunologic Components in Human Milk during the Second Year of Lactation," *Acta Paediatrica Scandinavica* 72 (1983): 461-62; E. Gulick, "The Effects of Breastfeeding on Toddler Health," *Pediatric Nursing* 12 (1986): 51-54; C. Van den Bogaard, et al., "The Relationship between Breastfeeding and Early Childhood Morbidity in a General Population," *Family Medicine* 23 (1991): 510-15; K. G. Dewey et al., "Differences in Morbidity between Breastfed and Formula-Fed Infants," *Journal of Pediatrics* 126, no. 5 (1995): 696-702; A. S. Goldman, "Modulation of the Gastrointestinal Tract of Infants by Human Milk; Interfaces and Interactions: An Evolutionary Perspective," *Journal of Nutrition* 130 (2000): 426s-31s.

[101] H. M. Labbok and G. E. Hendershot, "Does Breastfeeding Protect against Maloclusion?" *American Journal of Preventative Medicine* 3 (1987): 227-32; J. Sinton et al., "A Systematic Overview of the Relationship between Infant Feeding Caries and Breast-feeding," *Ontario Dentist Journal* 75, no. 9 (1998): 23-27.

[102] A. L. Wright et al., "Relationship of Infant Feeding to Recurrent Wheezing at Age 6 years," *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* 149 (1995): 758-63; U. M. Saarinen et al., "Breastfeeding as Prophylaxis against Atopic Disease: Prospective Follow-up Study until 17 Years Old," *Lancet* 346, no. 8982 (1995): 1065-69; W. H. Oddy et al., "Maternal Asthma, Infant Feeding, and the Risk of Asthma in Childhood," *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology* 110 (2002): 65-67.

[103] M. Kramer, "Do Breastfeeding and Delayed Introduction of Solid Foods Protect against Subsequent Obesity?" *Journal of Pediatrics* 98 (1981): 883-87; M. W. Gillman et al., "Risk of Overweight among Adolescents Who Were Breastfed as Infants," *Journal of the American Medical Academy* 285 (2001): 2461-67.

[104] A. Lucas et al., "Breast Milk and Subsequent Intelligence Quotient in Children Born Preterm," *Lancet* 33 (1992): 261-62; J. W. Anderson et al., "Breastfeeding and Cognitive Development: A Meta-Analysis," *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 70 (1999): 525-35; M. Xiang et al., "Long-Chain Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids in Human Milk and Brain Growth during Early Infancy," *Acta Pediatrica* 89, no. 2 (2000): 142-47; E. L. Mortensen et al., "The Association between Duration of Breastfeeding and Adult Intelligence," *Journal of the American Medical Academy* 28, no. 15 (2002): 2365-71.

[105] K. Dewey et al., "Maternal Weight-Loss Patterns during Prolonged Lactation," *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 58 (1993): 162-68.

[106] M. Altremus et al., "Suppression of Hypothalmic-Pituitary-Adrenal Axis Responses to Stress in Lactating Women," *Journal of Clinical Endoctrinol Metabolism* 80, no. 9 (1995): 2954-59.

osteoperosis[107] and breast cancer[108] in the long term. Female children who are breastfed are 26-31% less likely to get breast cancer as adults.[109] Ovulation is suppressed not because the mother's body is exhausted, but as part of a healthy, natural process ordered to the biological good of mother and child. These medical indications are not only prudential motives in themselves, but point deeper to the harmony of ecological breastfeeding with nature.

Some Catholic authorities assert that there are also social benefits. Maria Montessori, herself a medical doctor, noted the unnaturalness of "all our Western ultramodern ideals. Nowhere else, in fact, do we find children treated in a fashion so opposed to their natural needs. In almost all countries, the baby accompanies his mother wherever she goes. Mother and child are inseparable. . . . Mother and child are one. Except where civilization has broken down this custom, no mother ever entrusts her child to someone else."[110]

Pope Pius XII told a group of Italian women, "Except where it is quite impossible, it is more desirable that the mother should feed her child at her own breast. Who shall say what mysterious

[107] H. J. Kalkwarf et al., "Intestinal Calcium Absorption of Women during Lactation and after Weaning," *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 63, no. 4 (1996): 526-31; L. Sinigaglia et al., "Effect of Lactation on Postmenopausal Bone Mineral Density of Lumbar Spine," *Journal of Reproductive Medicine* 41, no. 6 (1996): 439-43; F. Polatti et al., "Bone Mineral Changes during and after Lactation," *Obstetrics and Gynecology* 94, no. 1 (1999): 52-56; P. Henderson et al., "Bone Mineral Density in Grand Multiparous Women with Extended Lactation," *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* 182, no. 6 (2000): 1371-77.

[108] M. L. Gwinn et al., "Pregnancy, Breastfeeding, and Oral Contraceptives and the Risk of Epithelial Ovarian Cancer," *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology* 43, no. 6 (1990): 559-68; S. M. Enger et al., "Breastfeeding Experience and Breast Cancer Risk among Post-Menopausal Women," *Cancer Epidemiology Biomarkers Preview* 7 (1998): 365-69; Collaborative Group on Hormonal Factors in Breast Cancer, "Breast Cancer and Breastfeeding: Collaborative Reanalysis of Individual Data from 47 Epidemiological Studies in 30 Countries, including 50,302 Women with Breast Cancer and 96,973 Women without the Disease," *Lancet* 360 (2002): 187-95.

[109] J. Freudenheim et al., "Exposure to Breast Milk in Infancy and the Risk of Breast Cancer," *Epidemiology* 5, no. 3 (1994): 324-31.

[110] Kippley and Kippley, *Art of Natural Family Planning*, 340, quoting Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind* (New York: Dell, 1967) 99, 104-5.

influences are exerted upon the growth of that little creature by the mother upon whom it depends entirely for its development."[111]

In fact, as Montessori said, this is the practice in much of the world. Modern researchers note, "Demographic data indicate that in many developing countries, the protection from pregnancy provided by breastfeeding alone is greater than that given by all other reversible means of family planning combined, and that breastfeeding makes a considerable contribution to securing a two-year birth interval."[112]

[111] Kippley and Kippley, *Art of Natural Family Planning*, 341, quoting Pius XII, "Guiding Christ's Little Ones: Address to the Women of Italian Catholic Action, Feast of Christ the King," October 26, 1941 (in *The Major Addresses of Pope Pius XII*, vol. 1, *Selected Addresses*, ed. Vincent A. Yzermans [St. Paul: North Central Publishing, 1961], 44). Modern medical research confirms this insight: M. Lavelli and M. Poli, "Early Mother-Infant Interaction during Breast and Bottle Feeding," *Infant Behavior Development* 21, no. 4 (1998): 667-84. For a book-length argument, see Sheila Matgen Kippley, *Breastfeeding and Catholic Motherhood: God's Plan for You and Your Baby* (Manchester, N.H.: Sophia, 2005). Gorden Neufeld and Gabor Mate, M.D., *Hold On to Your Kids: Why Parents Need to Matter More than Peers* (New York: Ballantine, 2006), a book popular among Catholic parents, argues for the social importance of parent-child "attachment" without reference to breastfeeding.

[112] Kippley and Kippley, *Art of Natural Family Planning*, 339, quoting "The Bellagio Consensus: Conference on Lactational Infertility, Bellagio, Italy, August 1988," in *Contraception* 39 (1989): 447-96. It also seems to have been the practice in medieval Europe. Nicholas Orme, an expert on children in the middle ages, says, "Medieval children were fed at the breast for longer than usually happens today. . . . Weaning from breast-feeding seems to have been done at any time from one to three" (Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001], 66 n. 81). Medieval devotion to Mary "tells of her being weaned by St. Anne at three" (ibid., 66) and Mary was herself often depicted as "the ideal of a mother breast-feeding her child" (ibid., 59, caption). Weaning was treated as "the first milestone after birth, marking a stage towards independence"—more significant than first steps or words (ibid., 66). Mothers did not nurse only if they were sick, dead, or too itinerant, as in the case of queens; in those cases, they used wet nurses (ibid., 58). And "parents and nurses frequently slept with young children," despite nervousness among clerical leaders (ibid., 78). Orme cites contemporary authorities on education: Giles of Rome emphasized that a mother's milk is specifically designed for her own child (ibid., 58, citing Giles of Rome, *De regimine principum*, part 2, book 2, c. 15), and contradicting Aristotle but siding with today's breastfeeding-advocacy group La Leche League, Giles "states that crying should be discouraged" (ibid., 63). Bartholomew Anglicus, a popular thirteenth-century Franciscan

It seems medically warranted to judge that lactational amenorrhea points to something more deeply "natural": a rational use of human biology produces abundant biological, intellectual, and arguably social benefits, for mother and child, and triggers a natural biological response to provide space between children. La Leche League speaks in the language of nature:

> Lactational amenorrhea is a normal, healthy part of the female reproductive cycle. Women who bear only two or three children during their reproductive years come to think of their monthly menstrual cycle as normal and the period of lactational amenorrhea a departure from the norm. However, going for years without having a period is probably what women's bodies were meant to do. Mothers in traditional hunter-gathering cultures nursed each baby for two or three years and enjoyed long periods of lactational amenorrhea. When their periods returned, they would become pregnant again, and it might be another three years before they again had a menstrual period. As a result, these women experienced far fewer menstrual periods in their lifetime. Today, scientists believe that extended periods of lactational amenorrhea may help to explain the lower rates of ovarian, endometrial, and breast cancer found in women who breastfeed. The absence of the repeated hormonal ups and downs of regular menstrual cycles may leave the breasts and reproductive organs less vulnerable to cancer.[113]

Lactational amenorrhea is a naturally occurring infertility attending what appears to be an abundantly healthy process. Monthly infertility could be understood as a defect—the inability of the body always to be ready to carry a child—but lactational amenorrhea seems to indicate that nature itself seeks infertile periods for the good of the child. Even biology is ordered not just to procreation but to rearing healthy adults. "Natural family planning" is often thought of as a peculiar interruption into the normal pattern of fecundity. But defining natural family planning as "the use of marriage in the infecund

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author, "adds a little more about the care of babies in his encyclopedia. . . . When babies cry, they should be offered the breast," held, and sung to (ibid., citing Bartholomew de Glanville [or Anglicus], *De proprietatibus rerum*). His studies of family size suggest that not only infant mortality but suppressed fertility limited average family sizes to two or three per family, or five among the very wealthy, though of course there were exceptions (ibid., 53-55).

[113] La Leche League, *Womanly Art*, 379.

periods only"[114] might give a mistaken impression—an unfortunately narrow way of thinking about "natural," "family," and "planning."

In Thomas Aquinas's presentation of marriage, human reason, or "planning," is exercised, on the one hand, precisely by following nature: discovering natural processes that serve the natural needs of human children, both biological and rational, and living according to them. In fact, the natural process of marriage and sexuality is precisely ordered to "family." To plan wisely (and morally) is to plan naturally and for family.

On the other hand, nature and family demand planning. Procreation may well (and often does) happen without any foresight. But marriage precisely *is* planning naturally for family. It is the rational project of creating a family, wherein procreation can reach its proper natural end, healthy adults. Marriage demands constant planning: what defines its good is precisely its planning to provide both for the physical needs of the children (itself a rational project) and for their needs as rational beings: instruction and moral correction. Both the substrata and the ends of this properly human education are almost defined by the confluence of nature, planning, and family: *totius domesticae conversationis consortium*, the *bonos mores* of the family members, and society itself.

The term "natural family planning," of course, is more typically used to describe the limitation of offspring. Here again we must note three things. First, marriage is for *family*: since the offspring are the end of marriage, and ends are unlimited, a marriage can never have too much child-rearing. Second, marriage requires *planning*: offspring require rearing—that is the very purpose of marriage—and thus it can never be right to procreate without planning family according to the natural requirement of human offspring. That is the principal argument

[114] Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae* 16.

against fornication, but it also demands the fuller project of "responsible parenthood."[115]

Third, marriage follows nature (*sequi naturam*): as we have briefly demonstrated in our presentation of lactational amenorrhea, human biological nature itself contains rhythms ordered precisely toward the natural needs of rearing children. When reason uncovers these rhythms and follows this nature, it naturally limits the growth of family precisely by providing for the physical, emotional, and relational needs of small children, upon which their later growth is based. Thus lactational amenorrhea could be considered the most proper paradigm for the meaning of "natural family planning": a means, discovered by reason, but rooted precisely in human nature, animal and rational.

[115] "Responsible Parenthood" is a key theme in *Humanae Vitae*: see §§1 and 10. See also Janet E. Smith, "Conscious Parenthood," *Nova et Vetera* (English ed.) 6 (2008): 927-50.

BOOK REVIEWS

Interpreting Suárez: Critical Essays. Edited by DANIEL SCHWARTZ. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. 229. $30.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-1-107-65175-3.

In his recent survey, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians*, Fergus Kerr asks what the connection is between the Suárez as read by Hans Urs von Balthasar and the figure studied by recent philosophers. Readers of *Interpreting Suárez* may well conclude "not much." The book's purpose, as its editor states on its first page, is "simply to provide a critical exposition of some of Suárez's answers to philosophical questions of the sort that have traditionally exercised philosophers and theologians" (1). The book delivers on this promise, featuring eight essays. The first four treat metaphysical topics: transcendentals (Jorge J. E. Gracia and Daniel Novotny), substantial forms (Christopher Shields), the ontology of relations (Jorge Secada), and the existence of God (Bernie Cantens). The next two essays take up questions central to ethics: action and freedom (Thomas Pink) and obligation, rightness, and natural law (Terence Irwin). The two closing essays move into territory common to ethics and political theory: distributive justice (Daniel Schwartz) and just war (Gregory Reichberg). The editor takes care to avoid any crude opposition of Suárez's theology to his philosophy. Nonetheless, the selection of authors and topics confirms the sense that the Suárez of this volume is primarily a philosopher, though one whose questions "belong to an overarching theological research programme" (7). The volume strives to engage Suárez as someone who is "equipped with philosophical tools" and uses them (rather than revelation) to address "a considerable number of canonical philosophical problems" (ibid.).

Gracia and Novotny's essay, "Fundamentals in Suárez's Metaphysics: Transcendentals and Categories," sets out Suárez's reasons for (1) understanding the transcendentals as "properties of being"; (2) reducing the list of transcendentals to three; and (3) insisting on the order "one, true, good." What does it mean to say that the transcendentals are "properties of being"? If one emphasizes *of being*, then one has to account for how the transcendentals are nonetheless distinct from being qua being, as they presumably must be in order to be genuine properties. But if one puts the stress on *properties*, then the transcendentals run the risk of becoming separate existents, losing their

connection to being qua being. Gracia and Novotny show how Suárez attempts to handle this tension by conceiving the transcendentals as neither strictly real beings, nor purely unreal beings existing only as mind-dependent fictions. They "have extramental (nonfictitious) status, but they are not real in the sense in which actual beings, such as Socrates and his laugh, are" (26). Suárez understands them as coextensional but not cointensional properties, which are either "negations" (unity) or "extrinsic denominations" (true and good). Why are there only three transcendentals? And why are they necessarily ordered in the sequence "one, true, good"? For Suárez the order is not based on perfection, as Gracia and Novotny make clear (but without saying why). They appear to be sympathetic to the view that the ordering is essentially epistemic, but they leave the reader wondering whether and to what extent Suárez entertains this possibility. As to the exclusion of other possible transcendentals from the privileged list of three, Gracia and Novotny say much to illuminate Suárez's reasoning for this exclusion. They do not, however, say whether he considered the possibility of beauty as a transcendental. This silence may be justified, particularly if Suárez himself did not take this possibility seriously. But contemporary readers who wonder about the status of beauty among the transcendentals will be hungry for more.

Christopher Shields's contribution, "The Reality of Substantial Form," is a clearly thought-out and crisply written study of *Metaphysical Disputations* XV. It seeks to show that since some of Suárez's ostensibly demonstrative arguments for substantial forms do in fact "provide elegant solutions to real problems," they "constitute plausible abductive existence arguments for substantial forms" (41). Suárez and his apparent opposite, the contemporary mereological aggregationalist, agree that "*if* there are privileged compound unities"—that is, beings whose unity is more than arbitrary—"then there must be some internal principle of unity binding them" (42). Both hold that genuine unity requires a binding principle, in contrast to the view of Lockeans and Humeans that "affirms privileged unity while denying substantial form." But Suárez's *modus ponens* is the mereological aggregationalist's *modus tollens*. Which way should be chosen? Much depends on how persuasive we find Suárez's arguments for the existence of substantial form as a binding principle. To help us judge this, Shields first endeavors to clarify just what Suárez thinks substantial form is. Distinguishing Suárez's account from the "standard hylomorphic unity" that Suárez (rightly or wrongly) attributes to Thomists, Shields observes that Suárez denies complete substantiality to form, holding instead that form and matter together constitute the essence of the composite substance. Shields proceeds to a careful reconstruction of three arguments against the existence of substantial forms (they are otiose, they are incoherent, they cannot be generated). After reviewing these arguments and showing that in different ways each "elicits from Suárez some positive characterization of substantial form" (53), he turns to Suárez's positive arguments for the existence of substantial forms. Noting that there may be as many as fourteen

separate arguments, Shields prudently chooses to focus on the two that he finds the most persuasive. Neither argument, he concludes, is decisive, but each has enough power to show that "strident and self-satisfied denunciations" of the existence of substantial forms "ring hollow" (59). Even if Suárez's explanations of phenomena that he takes to be genuine *explananda* ("bare unity, both synchronic and diachronic, property subordination, and life homestasis") are not conclusive, since they are open to challenge by competing explanations, they are sufficiently interesting to ensure that "no moderately dispassionate reader could convict Suárez of speaking drivel when he makes his case" (61).

Jorge Secada's "Suárez on the Ontology of Relations," a technically sophisticated description of "intrinsic and extrinsic relational denominations, real and unreal relations, categorical and transcendental real relations" (88) seems addressed primarily to specialists, and defies summary. At the other end of the spectrum is Bernie Cantens's examination of "Suárez's Cosmological Argument for the Existence of God." This essay begins by explaining in textbook fashion the difference between ontological, teleological, and cosmological arguments. Cantens shows that Suárez's version of the cosmological argument, which attempts to improve on the arguments of Aristotle and Aquinas, is metaphysical rather than physical. After arguing to the existence of at least one uncreated being, Suárez must eliminate the possibility of a plurality of uncreated beings. He does so by appealing to the "beauty, order, structure, and intricate connection of parts of the universe" (101), thereby using "a model of the teleological argument and a model of the ontological argument" (112) to complete his version of the cosmological argument. Since Suárez's argument is metaphysical rather than physical, Cantens claims, it will not be affected directly by later scientific discoveries. How persuasive is Suárez's argument? An "effective critique," Cantens says, "will have to be based on metaphysical principles and arguments" (112). But this does not necessarily insulate the argument from developments in the natural sciences, he admits, since "theories from the natural sciences can influence metaphysical principles, which in turn can affect Suárez's metaphysical cosmological argument" (113). Here the evaluation is too general to be helpful—in contrast to Shields, whose evaluation is specific and focused without being dogmatic.

With Thomas Pink's essay on "Action and Freedom in Suárez's Ethics," the volume turns to moral philosophy. (One wonders why no essay about Suárez's views on mind and cognition is included, particularly since the introduction explicitly mentions texts by Suárez that deal with psychological topics.) Pink emphasizes Suárez's preference for Scotus over Thomas in holding that a genuinely free will must have the power either to follow or to oppose the judgment of practical intellect. Noting that Suárez's voluntarism is uncontroversial enough, though a Thomist might question the claim that

voluntarist freedom corresponds to freedom "as we ordinarily and intuitively understand it" (127), Pink underscores two points of Suárez's conception of law. First, law and freedom are not opposed. As that which rationally governs and directs the free actions of rational beings, law presupposes freedom. Second, law is a mode of reason, but it does not merely set out what is advisable or recommended. Its precepts are not counsels but commands, obliging the will with "a new and distinctive kind of justificatory force . . . the force not of Recommendation but of Demand" (131). Pink calls this "the Force model of obligation." The telos of Pink's essay is to stress Suárez's contrast to Hobbes. If freedom is merely the absence of impediments to action, and law is the presence of such impediments—as they are, on Pink's rendition of Hobbes—then freedom and law are necessarily opposed. On this point, the contrast between Suárez and Hobbes seems clear enough. Is there a similar contrast between the two on the Force model? Or does Hobbes weave the Force model into his own thinking at various points, thereby following and extending Suárez, rather than simply opposing him? More might be said about these questions. What one would say depends significantly on how one reads Hobbes on obligation and its relation to command, a point on which the interpretations of Hobbes are multiple and contested.

Terence Irwin's "Obligation, Rightness, and Natural Law: Suárez and Some Critics" engages in a dialogue with earlier work by Pink on Suárez. But its primary target seems to be John Finnis. According to Finnis, Suárez construes obligation introduced by divine command as "something added" to a prior obligation connected to natural law. But Suárez cannot maintain this coherently, Finnis holds, since his desire to understand obligation in terms of command leaves no room for obligation connected to natural law as such, independent of divine command. The inconsistency arises, according to Finnis, because Suárez departs from Thomas's understanding of obligation as a rational necessity of certain sorts of means for certain sorts of ends. In reply to Finnis, Irwin contends that a reader who closely examines the relevant passages will see that while Suárez does indeed speak of divine will as "adding" an obligation, he never says that one obligation is added to another obligation. The obligation introduced by divine command, and thus constitutive of natural law as law in its proper sense, is for Suárez added to something else. It is added, Irwin argues, to a natural duty (*debitum*), as distinct from an *obligatio*. If we attend to Suárez's distinction between *debitum* and *obligatio*, we will see (according to Irwin) that "Suárez recognizes no natural obligation apart from a divine command. Divine commands add an obligation to do what we ought (*debere*) to do, and they are based on a prior duty (*debitum*)" (154). The natural duty that precedes commands should not be confused with "Suárez's normal account of natural obligation," which he identifies "with the obligation that results from natural law and hence from divine commands" (155). Against Finnis, Irwin judges Suárez's position to be "clear and coherent" (156). Should we persuaded by this judgment? Irwin

anticipates this question, acknowledging that the verbal distinction between *debitum* and *obligatio* may be unable to bear the philosophical weight that Suárez puts on it. But he defends Suárez on the point, holding that "the expression of will introduces a distinct type of moral relation that is not reducible to a simple duty" (159). He further argues that attention to the *debitum*/*obligatio* distinction weakens the alleged contrast between Thomas and Suárez. Irwin's defense of Suárez is textually grounded, as well as ingenious. A Thomist who wants to maintain that Suárez's conception is problematic, whether for reasons given by Finnis or on other grounds, would do well to take Irwin on as an interlocutor.

The volume's turn to political philosophy is marked by Daniel Schwartz's "Suárez on Distributive Justice" and Gregory Reichberg's "Suárez on Just War." As Schwartz suggests, conventional histories of political theory have a tendency to jump from Aquinas to Grotius (or to Hobbes). His essay ably fills the gap by attending to Suárez's discussion of distributive justice, showing how it "illuminates aspects . . . too often overlooked by contemporary theorists" (165). Schwartz gives close readings of Suárez's texts on distributive justice in relation to promise-keeping, property rights, divine omnipotence, and personhood, attending throughout to what distinguishes Suárez's conception from Aristotelian proportional distribution. In the volume's final essay, Gregory Reichberg takes as his primary text Suárez's *Disputatio de bello* (that is, distinction 13 of *De caritate*). He begins by noting an important point of contact between Suárez and Aquinas. Unlike Cajetan and Vitoria, Suárez follows Thomas in elucidating the link of just war with charity, but without neglecting justice. Reichberg holds that Suárez's "coordination of the two virtues, one theological and the other cardinal, within his account of just war, represented a distinctive contribution to scholastic thought in this domain" (185). What is distinctive about Suárez's account? Reichberg emphasizes its reference to a "broader range of political institutions than had originally been envisioned by Aquinas" (192), as well as its sustained attention to the question of who (or what) has jurisdiction in the question of "just cause" between two sovereign commonwealths opposed to one another. If two bodies are each equally sovereign, how does one escape the conclusion that each can legitimately stand as judge over of the other? Reichberg shows how "Suárez exits this dilemma by arguing that the condition of sovereignty is conditional upon the maintenance of right conduct" (197).

Interpreting Suárez is edited to a high standard. It is a welcome addition to ongoing efforts to understand Suárez in terms other than those supplied by strong narratives of the history of philosophy. To those who regard Suárez as a philosophical theologian responding to canonical philosophical problems, this volume will be quite useful. A question does, I think, remain about the relation between the historical Suárez and his own preoccupations, on the one hand, and the "canonical" problems that interest contemporary philosophers

of a certain stripe, on the other. For those whose primary objective is to inquire into the distance between these two things, this volume will not be entirely satisfying. Even for readers of this bent, however, the volume should be of some use, owing to its careful and sympathetic attention to Suárez's texts. Less tentatively, it should be said that philosophers who are interested in canonical problems and inclined to their formulation in contemporary terms will find *Interpreting Suárez: Critical Essays* a helpful and stimulating companion.

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Anselm of Canterbury and the Desire for the Word. By EILEEN C. SWEENEY. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2012. Pp. 416. $75.00 (cloth). ISBN: 978-0-8132-1958-5.

Eileen Sweeney's *Anselm of Canterbury and the Desire for the Word* provides an account of Anselm's writings as a whole that is both daring and welcome. It puts at the forefront the notion of Anselm as a systematic thinker which is often lost when the whole corpus is not in view. Not many thinkers begin with a systematic and coherent conception of their thought and then spend the rest of their intellectual lives producing works to exemplify that system. Most discover their systems somewhere along the way, perhaps in mid-career, and then endeavor to get their later thought to express what their earlier thought had not achieved. Some work in an occasional manner and can be described as having a systematic strategy only in retrospect. How should Anselm's corpus be classified in this regard?

Sweeney finds Anselm's works to be shaped by a basic structure of question and answer often founded on extreme polarities and near-impossible assertions and conditions. All of this serves one basic aim, she maintains: "Anselm's corpus, from his earliest prayer to the last treatise, is a single project in which knowledge of self and God are inextricably linked. . . . What links the parts of Anselm's corpus is the union they strive for with such intense desire, the union of soul with God. The construction of the problems and solutions that describe the distance and effect the reunion are carried over into all of Anselm's speculative work, not just the ones engaged with the nature of God, but also logical writings, the dialogues on truth and free choice, and the letters" (7-8).

Sweeney begins her book with an introductory chapter entitled "The Problem with Anselm: The Coincidence of Opposites." The opposites are, first, Anselm's confidence in arguments and the rationality of his beliefs, and second, his affective piety and spirituality. Her outline of the subsequent chapters captures the scope of her achievement.

Chapter 1, "The Prayers: Persuasion and the Narrative of Longing" (13-37), focuses on the narrative structure of Anselm's prayers. She argues that "the prayers uniformly begin in the depths of sin, but they work toward the point at which the sins that separate Anselm from an infinitely unreachable God are forgiven by a God whose very transcendence transforms the sinner, who is absolutely other than God, into an intimate" (10).

The second chapter, "The Letters: Physical Separation and Spiritual Union" (38-73), takes up Anselm's letters, "which like the prayers, begin in anguish over separation, this time of beloved friends from each other, expressing intensely passionate, unsatisfiable longings" (10). Sweeney describes the specific character of the letters as follows: "While the grace and goodness of God overcomes the gap between Anselm and the satisfaction of his desire in his prayers, in the letters Anselm achieves union by foregoing physical closeness for spiritual communion. Anselm redescribes the intimate physical presence he desires and is entreated to provide as spiritual communion with and through God. Thus, the letters move from the fallen language of sorrow at physical separation and anguish at human conflict to the redeemed language of perfect union in the spiritual community of those dedicated to God and to each other united in God" (ibid.).

In chapter 3, "Grammar and Logic: Linguistic Analysis, Method, and Pedagogy" (74-109), Sweeney offers an assessment of Anselm's logical, grammatical writings: *De grammatico* and the *Lambeth Fragments*. She maintains that "the painstaking analysis of language serves an analogous pedagogy: to achieve union, in this case, of words with things," noting, however that "one must begin with the reality of separation" (10). As regards Anselm's logical grammatical writings, she makes this comparison: "Just as in the prayers the first movement is the realization of one's separation from God, in the logical writings, learning how words only imperfectly map onto things is the first step toward creating the chain of terms that can carry the mind from the world to God" (ibid.). She then claims that the famous arguments of the *Proslogion* and *Monologion* "are forms of argument in which one equivalent term is substituted for another in order to make inferential progress," but where "one must learn which substitution can be made legitimately and not be misled by apparently common verbal forms" (ibid.).

Chapter 4, "The *Monologion* and *Proslogion*: Language Straining toward God" (110-74), presents Anselm's arguments for God's existence and divine attributes. Sweeney argues that "in these works examination of the divine results in contradiction and paradox (intraversable distance) and are resolved

into necessary conclusions (perfect union)" (10-11). She elaborates thus: "In the *Monologion*, Anselm argues for claims worthy of the highest being, but further reflections on those claims show that there are (apparent) absurdities that follow from them. These absurdities are resolved by explication of God, which in turn result in more (apparent) absurdity." Sweeney asserts that this pattern repeats itself in the *Proslogion* as Anselm "moves from the apparent necessary absence to the necessary presence of God as existing, powerful, just, and compassionate" (11).

The fifth chapter, "The Trilogy of Dialogues: Exploring Division and Unity" (175-244), treats "the relationship between Anselm's method of linguistic analysis and the problems of truth and the will in the three dialogues: *De veritate*, *De libertati arbitrii*, and *De casu diaboli*" (10). These works, Sweeney explains, carry forward from the earlier writings "the search for linguistic integrity, for certain, clear formulations of necessary truths coming out of equally impenetrable paradoxes" (ibid.). She contends that the difficulty Anselm tries to resolve in these dialogues is "not the transcendent God beyond partial and fragmented reason" but "the fragmented character of finite and fallen being." "Anselm thinks so deeply about key passages from scripture," she continues, that "he not only transforms them into probing questions, but the notions discussed in these passages become seeds of a philosophical and theological anthropology – on the nature of truth and freedom, of giving and receiving, on created vs. creative natures" (11). Fundamentally for Sweeney, "the question of *De veritate* is that posed by Parmenides, how finite things can be said to be" and so she claims that *De veritate* is "concerned with maintaining the being and truth of creatures alongside a Creator, who is Being and Truth" (ibid.). This in turn shapes her understanding and discussion of *De libertate arbitrii* and *De casu diaboli* as well.

In chapter 6, "Uniting God with Human Being and Human Being with God" (245-327), Sweeney examines a trilogy of works on the Incarnation: *Cur Deus homo*, *De incarnatione Verbi*, and *De conceptu virginali*. "These works," she maintains, "are linked to the three dialogues discussed in chapter 5 in the sense that they take up the next point in the Christian narrative." That is, "after creation and the fall comes salvation through the Incarnation." Sweeney adds that "in these works, the methods of linguistic analysis and the search for necessary reasons continue to be employed, as in the earlier works, in the service of conclusions that are portrayed first as paradoxical and then as necessary." She concludes that "these works mark an important development in Anselm's work from an intensely intimate setting and audience in the monastery to a more public engagement with the language, debates, and polemics of the outside world" (11-12).

Chapter 7, "The Later Works: From *Meditatio* to *Disputatio*" (328-68), deals with *De processione* and *De concordia*. Sweeney argues that "the more intimate, existential tone almost disappears in these pieces and what

predominates is the public voice engaged with the larger world" (12). She aims to demonstrate that "these works immerse the reader in careful linguistic analysis but contain only distant echoes of the magnificent speculative leaps and spiritual introspection of the earlier works." "Missing from the later works," she observes, "is some of the grandiosity of the intellectual gesture of Anselm's best-known work." For Sweeney, Anselm sees *De concordia* and *De processione* "as speaking where scripture is silent, addressing problems that are internal to and implied by the creedal principles of Christianity" (12). Her conclusion to the book, "Reason, Desire, and Prayer" (369-78), completes her enterprise.

There may be nothing especially problematic about construing Anselm's project as an essentially Augustinian one, and seeing in Augustine's affirmation in the *Soliloquia* that he wants to know God and the soul as the framework for Anselm's own project (7-8). It is intriguing, however, that Anselm does not cite Augustine's *Soliloquia* as his instigation and that Sweeney sometimes uses Augustine's *Confessions* as a key to interpreting the moods of Anselm's prayers. There may be more to Anselm's "project," and not all of it may be as Sweeney claims.

Take, for example, the assertion that "in the letters, Anselm seeks the total union of souls with his beloved fellow monks such that there can be neither conflicting wills nor the real absence of one from the other" (8). In what sense can this be deemed a realizable objective and not something fictional or idealized? It is an overstatement bordering on contradiction to posit a "total union of souls" where the natural conflict of human wills is eliminated and the inevitable absence of finite persons is ruled out.

Right from the beginning, then, there are fundamental questions about language, rhetoric, idealizations, romanticism, and so on that are left unaddressed in any conceptual sense and yet are central to the very idea of an Anselmian distinction that Sweeney claims is present in all his writings. It is not a matter of whether Anselm is as "rationalistic" in his prayers and meditations as he is in his treatises, or whether his treatises are as devotional as his prayers and meditations. That is a different question.

Sweeney's claim of Anselm's "single project" has the appearance of a reduction that forces certain interpretations that seem questionable. One may consider, for example, the case of a work like *De grammatico*. At the end of *De grammatico* Anselm describes the work as an exercise in the art of disputation. And in *De veritate* he describes *De grammatico* as an introduction to logic. So at what point does a work described by its author as an introduction to logic and an exercise in the art of disputation turn into a project about God and the self/soul? This raises the question whether some of the constructions that Sweeney proposes are really Anselm's. That they may be Sweeney's do not prima facie make them untenable, but her claims of having unearthed a primal logic (my term) exemplified in each one of Anselm's works

must be justified by some kind of agreement with Anselm's own descriptions about the goals and objectives of each respective work. This is a structural and compositional issue that may or may not affect the interpretation of Anselm's arguments. If it does, then it rises to the level of a methodological precondition.

This methodological concern pales in comparison with what seems to me the most important aspect of the book: Sweeney's portrayal of Anselm as a "paradoxical thinker." The portrait is clearly motivated by and dependent on G. R. Evans's 1975 article, "The Secure Technician: Varieties of Paradox in the Writings of St. Anselm (*Vivarium* 13/1). There are at least fifty instances of the use of the word "paradox" in Sweeney's monograph, and at least another twenty-five uses of the word "paradoxical."

The contexts in which Sweeney deploys these terms suggest at least three things. First, there is more than one conception of "paradox" at work here, and it would have been helpful to have this distinction noted. Second, paradox is often juxtaposed with complexity, necessity, or contradiction (e.g., 37, 101, 173, 211, 267, 317, 367); this point too should be developed in such a treatment of Anselm. And third, it is not always clear that Anselm would see a paradox where Sweeney does and vice-versa. In addition, Sweeney employs locutions like "apparent paradox," "aporetic paradox," and "definitional, tautological necessity" (243), which underscore the inextricable link between paradox and necessity (173). She tends to describe a good many of the important argumentative moves that Anselm makes in "paradoxical terms" even when they might in fact be fallacies in Anselm's reasoning.

The basic problem is this: if every contradiction is classified as a paradox, then there is no way to identify contradictions simply as contradictions. If we then begin with the understanding that the essential nature of a body of work is paradoxical, how do we avoid crying paradox to preclude criticism, or worse yet, to establish any number of contradictions as true? An important piece of the puzzle that I did not find addressed in the book is the formulation of a coherent view of Anselm's notion of paradox or his theory of contradiction, and a consideration of how such a theory bears on the paradoxical affirmations. Another point that would be important to investigate is the connection between Anselm's use of paradox and his assertions about the truth of propositions and of things in *De veritate*. It would be interesting to consider, for example, whether Anselm ever thought he had committed any fallacies in his argumentation.

Sweeney's close treatment of paradox and contradiction exposes a potential weakness in Anselm's theological project. She explains that "Anselm's point seems to be to get us over the sense that there is something 'strange (*mirum*)' about the same thing occurring both freely and necessarily, the same thing having radically different attributes in time and in eternity. It is as if we have to have this repeated in as many different ways as possible to begin to process the shift in perspective required to see how the same thing is, in different

ways, free and necessary, and in time and eternity" (349). If she is right, then at what point should the paradox's "making strange" be granted the status of truth when its persuasive force depends more on repetition than on argumentation?

Sweeney's commentary on Anselm's defense of his method in the *Monologion*, which bears the subtitle "The Pursuit of Linguistic Integrity," does not lessen my concerns. She concludes that Anselm's investigations end in a riddle "because theological language is the language of riddles (*aenigmata*)" (169), and she offers this quotation from Anselm as evidence: "we express and do not express, see and yet do not see, one and the same object" (ibid.). Fair enough, but she overextends her argument in averring that "Anselm's *Proslogion* and *Monologion* do not just claim that language and experience allow the conclusion that God exists; they claim that neither language nor experience make sense without God" (170). In fact, the latter claim is not one that Anselm makes. If he did, his celebrated argument in the *Proslogion* would not work. Anselm's wager is that the specific definition, "that than which nothing greater can be thought," is language about God that the "unbelieving" fool understands. So as long as he can have a conception of "that than which nothing greater can be thought," the fool is potentially a believer in spite of himself. That is not the same thing as saying that language does not make sense without God. As a system of signs it is sufficient unto itself by convention, traditions, and social life, if sometimes imprecise, ambiguous, or inelegant.

Notwithstanding the methodological shortcomings in Sweeney's project that I have highlighted, this is a work that I would make required reading for anyone engaged in advanced Christian theological studies. For one thing, it is the only work to have ventured a reading of Anselm's entire corpus from a unitary viewpoint, and for another, it provides a kind of commentary on Anselm's credo, "faith seeking understanding," which so many Christian theologians repeat as the very essence of Christian theological self-understanding.

Sweeney's account raises an interesting question about Anselm's credo. What kind of "understanding" does faith seek and discover, if in fact what faith finds is mostly paradoxical? And to reprise G. R. Evans, but in an interrogative key: how secure are Anselm's techniques after Sweeney?

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Happiness and Wisdom: Augustine's Early Theology of Education. By RYAN TOPPING. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2102. Pp. 272. $65.00 (cloth). ISBN: 978-0-8132-1973-8.

The subtitle of Ryan Topping's book is intriguing. One would expect something like "Augustine's Early Theory of Education," or "Augustine's Early Theology," but not "Augustine's Early Theology of Education." The book offers the promise of something more than a mere review of the ancient educational curriculum of liberal arts (which was actually never uniform [3 n. 6]) in Augustine's early writings up to A.D. 391. Topping does not disappoint. He provides an insightful analysis of how Augustine transformed the traditional curriculum "for the purposes of Christian instruction" (1). The author's thesis is precisely that "Augustine's early outline of liberal education is an aspect of his moral theology" (8; cf. 15, 65-66, 229). After all, synthesizing "the classical curricula within the structure of moral theology" is arguably Augustine's original achievement (11).

Attention to a patristic educational theory is, in itself, noteworthy in light of the modern, near-universal neglect of the history of educational thought (6-7). It is hard not to agree with Topping that contemporary educational theorists have been on the John Dewey diet for too long, and consequently ancient wisdom is often deemed irrelevant or even backward and unenlightened. However, Augustine draws attention to exactly the things of which contemporary educators and educational theorists should take notice, such as the importance of prayer, community, and authority in the process of learning. Saying this loudly and clearly is arguably one of the most important contributions of Topping's book.

Chapter 1 looks at educational theory and practice prior to Augustine's time, especially the way various Christian authors appropriated the classical tradition of education. A place of honor is accorded to Basil's *Ad adulescentes*, the most important Christian assessment of this tradition before Augustine.

Chapter 2 begins and chapter 3 continues a study of Augustine's ever-developing theory of education as it initially ripened in a two-fold, anti-skeptical and anti-Manichean, context. Topping is very deliberate in studying his topic(s) contextually. This is certainly laudable and meets in every way the current expectations of *wissenschaftlich* research. However, I would raise two issues. First, contexts are never objectively given, fixed, and ready to be used for everyone who would like to work on them. Contexts, whether historical, theoretical, literary, or personal, are always interpretative *re*constructs. As such, they are already and inevitably contaminated with the presuppositions, biases, and interests of the one who reconstructs them for his own particular purposes. This amounts to saying that describing the larger context for Augustine's early theology of education, as well as setting up the sought continuities and contrasts, may generate a false albeit convenient sense of objectivity and clarity. No doubt, Topping is aware of all this, yet a more

deliberate acknowledgement of the provisional character of various recreated contexts would have improved the discussion. Second, a contextual study does not have to dedicate many pages to the details of the context(s) themselves. The work of contextual study has to be done—no doubt—but the question remains whether all the results of such work need to be published as well. In this particular case, we have a 230-page study of which the first 100 or so pages are "surveys" of contexts (in the author's own words, 65 and 91). The "surveys" are helpful and edifying, especially for nonspecialists, but they are not nuanced and meticulous enough to provide much more than a background for Augustine's positions.

Learning as a theological activity certainly benefits from prayer. Topping explains that "Prayer both redirects the intelligence away from material goods as objects of aspiration and aids in the reintegration of the soul by a unifying act of the will" (102). Although he does not elaborate much on prayer, the very fact that he brings it up is significant. Learning as a quest for happiness in God is a "graced" activity that includes both cultivation of virtue (i.e., having a "pure heart") and divine illumination. Thus, "tuning in" to the divine resources through prayer is what the fathers recommended to anyone who wanted to learn anything. Indeed, in *De doctrina christiana* 3.37.56, Augustine reminds his readers that it is "absolutely vital to pray for understanding." By highlighting the importance of prayer, Topping has reminded contemporary (religious) educators of what they often miss and forget.

Chapter 4 illuminates the final purpose of education—happiness—and how this actually structured Augustine's proposed curriculum. The author's pedagogical approach to Augustine's Cassiciacum dialogues "as a series of school exercises" (129) is intriguing and fresh.

Chapter 5 focuses on what *ratio* needs to be supplemented by in its pursuit of the final goal of education (i.e., happiness). Particular emphasis is given to the educational function of *auctoritas* as one moves from faith to understanding. Topping, calling authority "the door of understanding" (172), now takes up one of the main themes of his book already anticipated in chapter 2: "Against both the despair of skeptics and the overoptimism of the Manichees Augustine's teaching on religious pedagogy explores in great detail what authority is, what its visible sources are, and how these sources enable us to move toward God" (93).

It is further explained by Topping that the issue does not concern faith and reason, but rather authority and reason (150; cf. 177). However, while assessing the issue of authority and reason, giving priority to both human and divine *auctoritates* (167-72, 226), and taking on Robert J. O'Connell (*St. Augustine's Early Theory of Man*, 1968), Topping creates a more coherent and uniform position out of Augustine's context-specific, ambiguous statements than the evidence perhaps allows (152-57, 168-69)—for example, Augustine's preference for reason over authority in a debate of 392 (*contra*

Fortunatum 19). Topping also raises the question of grace in the process of learning, examining it in Augustine's early works. He proposes a royal middle way between the positions of Peter Brown (*Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, 2000, 2d ed.) and Carol Harrison (*Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology: An Argument for Continuity*, 2006), contending that although Augustine always affirmed the necessity of divine grace, he later gave up his optimism about the possibility of achieving perfection in the present life.

The investigation of *auctoritas* continues in chapter 6, which discusses the problem of how learning relates to the authority of Christ as the *disciplina* of God. Especially illuminating is the discussion of how both the external and internal authorities (i.e., human teachers, the Church, conscience, and eternal law) relate to the pedagogical ideal of unconstrained discovery, which is unfortunately often confused with autonomous, authority-free searching.

The final chapter, chapter 7, revisits the topic of education's immediate, proximate, and final purposes.

On a relatively trivial matter, yet something that should be considered for future publications, the footnotes frequently refer to sources that very few readers would have on their shelves. It would have been more helpful briefly to summarize important arguments.

For those who see day after day how learning takes place (or how it doesn't), Topping's book is not only tremendously helpful, but actually could be considered required reading. Pedagogical theorists, especially in religious institutions such as seminaries and theology departments, should take careful note of what Topping has highlighted in Augustine's early theology of education—especially where insights contradict or challenge the established consensuses and approaches. Is it not the case that what ultimately matters is the students' moral formation and their becoming decent human beings rather than their accumulation of expensive credit-hours in the most prestigious institution possible?

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Changing Churches: An Orthodox, Catholic, and Lutheran Theological Conversation. By MICKEY L. MATTOX AND A. G. ROEBER. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2012. Pp. 336. $36.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-0-8028-6694-3.

Mattox and Roeber's book examines a phenomenon that has so far received inadequate theological attention, namely, the "conversion" of a large number of prominent theologians from "mainline" Protestant denominations to Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox churches in the last quarter century or so. Each author here tells a bit of his own story in describing his respective path to Rome or Byzantium. A concluding critical postlude from the still-very-much Lutheran theologian Paul Hinlicky takes issue with some of their conclusions and argues for the importance of Luther's theological approach in every communion. The gracious inclusion of Hinlicky's riposte makes this a model of scholarship—more like a seminar than a manifesto—and hopefully signals a way forward for a similarly serious theological appraisal in this review.

Ecumenical theologians have long known that if bridges are built between communions, some will cross over—in both directions. We are in a new situation after an ecumenical century in which many have in fact crossed over in both directions: traditionalists away from mainline Protestant denominations toward Catholic or Orthodox churches; progressives away from the latter to more "inclusive" communions. The authors of this book return the conversation to theological topics more fruitful than these. Mattox offers in-depth readings of the strengths of Luther's theology that he still embraces as a Roman Catholic; Roeber offers nuanced appreciations of Orthodox theology without the knee-jerk rejections of Augustine that some authorities of that persuasion offer. This review will adduce criticisms from a similar vantage as Hinlicky's: that of a traditionalist theologian who has stayed in the liberal communion that raised him. These critiques should be understood within a broader and deeper appreciation of the ecumenical heart and rigorous reading eye of these authors.

The book's introduction hints at some of the problems that will follow. An opening lament bemoans the fact that religious identity is "no longer so much a matter of inheritance as it is one of personal choice" (1). This strikes me as odd since each of these authors has made a personal choice away from his family's religious upbringing. It is odder still in that even the most committed paedobaptist churches have to agree that Christians are made, not born—we are disciples, not just those who were thrown into the water at some point. And even odder to this evangelical's ears is the idea that the world's quickly growing evangelicals and Pentecostals would insist that conversion requires a personal choice, and not just a one-time choice. Still, we can grant the point that many change churches out of consumerism rather than conviction. This is

a book "not for *drifters*," but "for choosers." A shortcoming of the book is that it tends to reduce a central complex question to antitheses where either Lutheran-Orthodox differences are incommensurate, or their convergences are so frequent that "if both sides really understood each other, then no 'church-dividing differences' would remain" (5). There are, of course, other options. Communions could understand one another full well and still disagree—a result that I suggest is far more common than the stated antitheses. This dichotomy appears also in comparisons such as that Orthodox soteriology emphasizes "life" while Lutherans emphasize "sin and grace." The unspecified author of the introduction admits this is a generalization before insisting on its validity. But as Hinlicky rightly objects, in the context of choosing one atonement theory at the expense of another, all that have biblical substance deserve to be *integrated* into ecumenical theology, not played off one another (298). Along the same lines, celebrating the idea that Orthodox thought manages to connect graced creation with restored human nature (14) leaves one to wonder whether there are no other churches trying to do the same thing—sometimes failing, sometimes succeeding, not so unlike the Orthodox.

Chapter 1, written by Mattox, shows Luther in his full glory, and proposes him as a "common doctor," from whom every Christian church stands to learn. Mattox presents Heiko Obermann's and David Steinmetz's medieval Luther, who was trained as an Augustinian friar, and steeped in a certain kind of nominalism that would have sounded strange to Thomas Aquinas's ears. For Luther, over against our constant human desire to achieve, Christ gives himself constantly to us as a gift (34). That self-gift of God is altogether complete. So sanctification follows on justification, but these must never be confused. Luther's understanding of salvation is that those who are told they are justified in Christ through no work of their own are asked, "What are you going to do, now that you don't have to do anything at all?" (42). Mattox mentions another of the book's recurring themes: the crossover between Luther's soteriology and that of Eastern Orthodoxy, first proposed by Finnish Lutherans a generation ago. Mattox praises Luther's work for its constant gift of "a salutary humility": the most holy persons always see themselves as the most sinful (46). He quotes Therese of Lisieux to show that Catholic saints at their best have suggested the same. Then this heavily justification-focused chapter makes the odd assertion that the 1999 Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification claims to have resolved Lutheran-Catholic differences on that keystone doctrine so that Lutherans can now "swim the Tiber" with no fear that they are jettisoning anything central to their Lutheran heritage. That, however, would not seem to be the intention of that document. Rather than enabling individual conversions (which, of course, do happen from time to time, in both directions), it was meant to reconcile church bodies. Mattox regains the high ground with a personal story of an experience he had after his conversion, when he heard a priest's homily suggest ways in which one might

"merit more grace." His previously Lutheran ears pricked up, until his theologian's mind reminded him why this was acceptable language.

Roeber is the author of the next chapter, on Orthodox theosis as opposed to Lutheran justification. The chapter appropriately praises this soteriological vision for its holism, its ancient and biblical roots, and its world-embracing character instead of the frequent gloominess of original sin. Roeber cannily suggests that the sixteenth-century Reformation did not reform matters far enough, as it left both Catholic and Reformation churches locked in an Augustinian rhetoric over sin and grace that is not nearly large enough for salvation. And he admits, against some Orthodox, that Augustine did not invent original sin, he just put a particular stamp on it (72). Yet I find myself wondering whether the Orthodox Church is actually as ideal as its apologists claim (Roeber elsewhere admits it is not). I also wonder about the theme of theosis in Augustine himself, prominent as it is, and whether its omission here suggests that the author is relying on derivative sources rather than attending to that older common doctor himself.

Chapter 3, Mattox's reflection on Lutheran "community" as opposed to Catholic "church," discloses his and others' qualms with the ELCA: it does not act like it believes in the real presence, regardless of what Luther said. Leftover sacrament is just thrown out. And the urgent situation of the sixteenth century, in which Catholic bishops were actively persecuting the gospel (115), left Lutheranism in an odd dilemma: how do you have the church based on the word alone? Do not pity the Lutherans, he counsels; of course they get it wrong (149)—look at the history. And note, he adds, that Catholics do seem to have "tendencies" to clericalism (136). He wonders aloud how, without the bishop's office, a church can find its way, but I find myself more compelled by Joseph Ratzinger's approving reference to a bishop's response to Napoleon's threat to destroy the Catholic Church: "But sire, not even we could do that!" Mattox is surely right to suggest that Lutheran notions of the "hiddeness" of the true church can be problematic for visible unity and coherent ecclesiology. The Protestant rejoinder, I suppose, would be that the Catholic hierarchy has not obviously or always succeeded in making its church any less chaotic, hidden, or wayward than have Protestants without those resources. Here I suspect Mattox and Roeber would have to simply disagree with me. In any case, there *are* more options than incommensurability or shocking unity.

Roeber's chapter 4 compares Lutheran "marks" of the church to Orthodox "mystery," suggesting so highly elevated an ecclesiology that it is hard to tell why anyone would pray "Come Lord Jesus." For the Orthodox, church life just *is* salvation (155). But I simply cannot agree: not even St. Cyprian's *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* means the church *is* salvation. Roeber charges that Lutherans left behind ancient and communal rituals. True, but they gained new ones, some of which were recovered from ancient times. Luther, he

claims, abandoned any real hope of continuity with the ancient church (162). But this is hard to accept in light of the fact that the Reformers argued that the Catholic Church of their day was the real innovator. A laundry list of complaints against Luther follows: the resurrection is unimportant in its soteriology (169), predestination renders the visible church meaningless (164), and Augustine is unable to conceive of how finite human vision can conceive the divine (184). But none of these claims are convincing to me. The last one reveals that the bishop of Hippo may be real target of this chapter. Augustine, Luther, or anyone could be wrong, of course. But they have to be shown to be so in light of their best resources, when they present their thought at its strength.

Roeber is also the author of the fifth chapter, on "conversation stoppers," and there are plenty. Most significantly in this chapter, he avers that Lutheran innovations in the west mean that the Orthodox cannot even talk to them anymore. Metropolitan Jonah of the Orthodox Church in America says he can see no way forward for significant dialogue with the Episcopal Church (USA). I am no advocate of the ECUSA's anti-ecumenical attitudes or of its disdain for its own worldwide communion. But to say that no *conversation* is possible suggests that the real dogma at stake here may be traditionalist visions of sexuality. The Trinity, the Incarnation, and the sacraments seem to take second place, or else conversation should still be possible. Roeber suggested in the previous chapter that Lutherans would not understand the Orthodox's age of discretion at seven years old (192). Here he suggests that Lutherans, coming from contractually obsessed and litigious cultures in the west, cannot understand Orthodox visions of marriage (199). He even says that Lutherans had a shot at being traditionalist on marriage until they came to the United States and ran into other, lesser Protestants among whom "the clarity of Luther's original teaching . . . on marriage had not taken root" (197). I find this to be oversimplified, if not overstated. If I understand gay marriage advocates correctly, they want all the benefits of which Roeber speaks in marriage. Roeber does mention Orthodoxy's willingness to let divorcees remarry twice in recognition of our weakness after the fall (199). Presumably if homosexual attraction is a result of the fall, a similar concession could be argued for without its advocates being evil or stupid. They may just be wrong.

Mattox concludes the apologists' chapters with attention to the tensions in conversion and to ongoing areas in need of exploration. First, he rightly argues that all-too-cheap "eucharistic hospitality" ignores real church-dividing issues. He suggests that the agent that teaches the gospel infallibly is really the whole church, not its pope alone. He insists that the church must hold a place for Mary lest it lose the incarnation. He suggests that the Catholic practice of ordaining only males is "a practice in search of a theory," one that will need a great deal more argumentation. Those claims may be true or contain some truth. He also defends notions of papal infallibility, petrine authority, private masses, and the purchase of mass cards but with a bit more assertion than

argument. "We have a primary duty to name the disorder within," the Lutheran in Mattox opines, yet that nobly humble sentiment could shine forth more brightly on certain pages of this book (277).

What would a better book look like? Apologias have a long history in the church, back at least to Augustine. They suffer when they come off as a string of noble achievements that others should envy. They soar when they offer the self as a sinner and so refract the glory of a God who could save someone so depraved as that one. A Protestant sentiment? Perhaps, though neither author would suggest that that means it is a false one. Would he?

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Collects of the Roman Missals: A Comparative Study of the Sundays in Proper Seasons before and after the Second Vatican Council. By LAUREN PRISTAS. New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013. Pp. 272. $50.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-0-567-03384-0.

Well into the second decade of the twenty-first century, the sweeping changes in the Roman Catholic liturgy mandated by the Second Vatican Council have not ceased to provoke reaction. The strong response to the initial overhauling of the liturgy and subsequent revisions has not been restricted to liturgical experts, theologians, and the religious elite. A colleague who is also an avid fan of modern crime novels recently alerted me to a few lines from a 2013 novel by New York Times bestselling author James Patterson. In observing his suspicious neighbor at Sunday Mass, the detective hero notes that "he knelt when he was supposed to and knew all the prayers. He even knew all the annoying changes in the prayers that the church had just dropped on everyone out of the blue" (J. Patterson and Michael Ledwidge, *Gone* [Little, Brown & Company, 2013]). Lots of ordinary Catholics in the pews have definite opinions in matters liturgical.

Whether or not the move to a completely vernacular liturgy was the express intention of the council fathers, clearly there was little awareness among them of the possible seismic shock to the Catholic culture of the time consequent upon a complete revision of the Roman Rite. But as Michael Gauvreau observes, "Changes to the liturgy and sacramental obligations following 1965, designed to make the church more welcoming and inclusive, had disoriented and troubled many faithful" ("Without Making a Noise," in

The Sixties and Beyond, ed. Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau [University of Toronto, 2013]). While perhaps uninformed about the nuances of the conciliar *ressourcement/aggiornamento* dialectic, historians and social scientists have not unreasonably suggested that, whatever the theological premises, such a massive revision of forms of worship was culturally naïve.

For these experts, the impact of a structural overhaul and of the move away from a liturgical language to the vernacular was predictable. The experience of the Mass, auricular confession, and a variety of sacramental rituals and devotions was the bedrock of personal faith and corporate identity for Catholics of North America. The radical reform of Vatican II challenged both faith and identity for many faithful Catholics at a time when a fascination with technology and shifting mores dominated the wider culture.

Once the vernacular liturgy was in place, the evaluation of the Vatican II liturgy most often focused on the quality of the English translation. How faithful was the text to the Latin *editio typica?* The complexities of producing an English text conveying the full theological meaning and nuance of the Latin original were widely acknowledged, but until 2001, with the publication of *Liturgiam Authenticam,* no comprehensive body of principles and practical guidelines was provided for the translator or editor.

The issue of translation, however, was but one aspect of the broader question, namely, the quality and integrity of the *editio typica* itself. A critique of the collection of Latin prayers in the Missal of Vatican II was notably missing from the ongoing conversation about liturgical texts in the period immediately following the council. The evolution of liturgical texts from the Missal of 1962 to that of 1970 remained largely unexplored. It is precisely here that Professor Lauren Pristas begins to breach the gap, conducting a sound investigation into the process of development and initiating the work of theological reflection on the consequences of that development. Pristas has provided an important beginning for any evaluation of current liturgical praxis as well as future revisions. Her recent book, *The Collects of the Roman Missals,* compares the opening collects of the proper seasons as they appear in the 1962 Roman Missal with those of 1970, produced in the wake of Vatican II, including its fifth edition of 2002. While such a comparison is limited in scope, Pristas's book illustrates nonetheless that it is a complex project. Pristas describes her work as "nothing more than a good start" (214) on a task she has set in motion in her remarkable volume.

In his recent work, *Advent to Pentecost: Comparing the Seasons in the Ordinary and Extraordinary Forms of the Roman Rite,* (Pueblo, 2012), Patrick Reagan argues admirably for the superiority "of the reformed liturgy over the previous one" (xx). Pristas, by contrast, is not concerned with an evaluation of the whole missal, but rather with a close analysis of one piece of the liturgy, the opening collects of the Mass.

Pristas approaches her subject primarily as a theologian, and this renders her work pertinent for the life of the Church today. Wisely relying on earlier

scholarship regarding the development of the liturgical year and the tracing of manuscript traditions, she focuses on the linguistic differences between the collects of the two Missals and studies the theological implications of these differences.

Prior to the consideration of the collects themselves, however, chapters 1 and 2 trace the work of the postconciliar Consilium, with particular attention to its principles and methodology. Archival research reveals both the strengths and weaknesses of the commission's work of editing while uncovering a number of unanswered questions. The documentation of the intriguing shift from the original policies established in 1966 to the new approach of Antoine Dumas in 1968 bears careful consideration. This seminal research lays the foundation for future students of the liturgy and those who will carry on the work of comparison and theological analysis so ably begun by Pristas.

Chapters 3 through 7 compare the collects of the two Missals appointed for the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Septuagesima, Lent, and Paschaltide. The graphics employed by Pristas successfully expose the differences and variations found in the two Missals. Complemented by her narrative and evaluation, these chapters achieve well the principal purpose of the book. In chapter 3, for example, the careful analysis of the post-Tridentine collect texts in comparison to those of the Vatican II Missal reveals that the modern revisers set aside the long tradition of Advent collects to create a new set of prayers drawn from various parts of the liturgical corpus. Pristas points out some of the theological implications that impinge on the long-range formation of the Christian people: "The new set of Advent collects does not approach God in the same way, seek the same things from him, exhibit the same preoccupations, or depict the same relationship between God and human beings as the earlier set" (62).

Chapter 8 is a wrap-up in which Pristas reiterates her theological evaluation of the two sets of prayers found in the Missal of Pius V and that of Vatican II, and highlights several important issues. First, her brief resume of "centonization" is of particular importance. As understood by the members of the Consilium, the creation of a prayer text by bringing together phrases of already existing compositions, called centonization, differed from its use in antiquity and in the composition of what is referred to as the Tridentine Missal. The latitude the Consilium permitted itself helps to explain the character of the Roman Missal. Second, the one-page summary of the "Character of the Collect" (212-13) offers insight into the liturgical and theological dispositions of the author. Drawing together a comprehensive theological vision and a developed sense of grammar, literary forms, and linguistic nuance, Pristas appreciates the classical form of the collects of the Roman Rite and attempts to break open the full meaning of these texts, both ancient and more recent. Third, Pristas clearly sees the liturgical text as the servant of the efficacy of the liturgy, that is, the drawing of God's people to

himself through the saving mystery of Jesus Christ in his passion, death, and resurrection. Pristas designates as a "paradox" (228) the coming together of the liturgical celebration and the mystical encounter with God in which men and women are changed, transformed, and divinized.

Pristas's respect for the sacred texts of the liturgy is notable throughout her study, and her reverence for the actual prayer of the Church in which these texts play a central role is unmistakable. Consequently, her criticisms bear no sharp edge and steer clear of the cynicism to which an academic analyst or scholarly reviewer might be prone. It is this evenness of tone that engenders a reader-friendly spirit throughout the text. Her comparison of the Missal of 1962 with that of 1970 probes serious theological issues: "That there are significant changes in the theological and/or spiritual emphases of the collects of given seasons is clear" (227). What is not clear, of course, is how consistent or widespread these emphases are, and this will only be determined by further research and study. Pristas has commenced the project well and will hopefully continue to study the rest of the prayers of the Roman Missals.

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Le Père Marie-Joseph Lagrange: Sa vie et son oeuvre. By LOUIS HUGUES VINCENT. Paris: Parole et Silence Editions, 2013. Pp. 670 $50.00 (paper) ISBN: 978-2-88918-148-3.

Father Marie-Joseph Lagrange (1885-1938) is the pioneer hero of modern Catholic biblical studies. His story is important for the life of the Church. This explains why there are at least ten biographical works on him already available, several in English. The present work is nevertheless not superfluous. It is by L. H. Vincent (1872-1960), his lifelong collaborator at the biblical school in Jerusalem that Lagrange founded in 1890. Vincent distinguished himself with a series of magnificent archaeological studies of some of the principal sites of the Holy Land, notably Jerusalem and Bethlehem. His gift for exact and elegant draftsmanship, demonstrated from an early age, has remained a permanent resource for biblical studies.

In this work Vincent has compiled a thorough and irreplaceable presentation of Lagrange's successes, trials, unmerited suffering, and undaunted courage. Another special feature of this book is its reporting on Lagrange's tireless literary production; this includes summaries not only of his major books, but also of his 250 scholarly articles and of his book reviews (over a

thousand). The present work is written from firsthand acquaintance with Lagrange, by someone who knew him for almost fifty years. It is the work of an eyewitness and a friend, who had access to over a thousand letters to and from Lagrange.

The book was written in 1951. It has had a curious fate. The then master general of the Dominicans gave his approval for publication, on condition that proper names be deleted. Given the work's historical nature, Father Vincent refused this condition. His manuscript remained therefore unpublished until this fine edition, 63 years after it was written. The book comes with a preamble by the vice-postulator of the cause of Lagrange's beatification, and with an introduction by the master of research on Lagrange (especially his letters), Bernard Montagnes. This introduction includes a long quotation from Congar's impressions during the crisis of 1951.

The body of the work is divided into eight chapters of uneven length, which follow the life of Lagrange from birth to death. This review will report on these chapters, selecting the less well-known episodes and filling in some background. The first chapter runs from Lagrange's birth (1885) in Bourg-en-Bresse, near Lyon, to 1890, the beginning of his life in Jerusalem. He came from a notarial family, politically liberal in the sense of favoring Orleanist constitutional monarchy as opposed to Bourbon restoration absolute monarchy, wherein there would be no constitution and no sovereignty of parliament. This political background explains Lagrange's choice of the Toulouse Dominican province (Lacordairean and Orleanist in spirit) and his avoiding the nearby Lyons province (Bourbon). He received a good classical education at Autun and learned modern languages as well. He completed a law doctorate in Dijon and Paris. He did his military service, from which he retained a soldierly model of obedience, tempered by his lawyerly awareness of how institutions change. He entered the Paris diocesan seminary at Issy as a sort of trial year before entering the Dominican novitiate. At Issy he formed a friendship with two other students, Pierre Batiffol and Henri Hyvernat. This trio swore an oath to give their lives to redeem the honor of French biblical and patristic scholarship after it had been humiliated by the Prussian universities. They pooled their money and bought Tischendorff's *Octava critica major* edition of the Greek New Testament as a concrete expression of their resolve. Once a Dominican, Lagrange was sent to study at Salamanca, because of the anticlerical persecution of the orders in France. There he learned the *Summa* of St. Thomas well and made valuable contacts that stood him in good stead in the times of trial. He also acquired a devotion to St. Teresa of Avila. After ordination and a few years of teaching, he was assigned to study Semitics at Vienna as a preparation for starting a school of biblical studies in Jerusalem. There he improved his Hebrew, learned Assyrian and Arabic, and formed a good relationship with the future cardinal

Fruehwirth (who would later protect him in Rome) and with the historian Denifle.

1890-1898. This was Lagrange's golden pioneer period. He moved to Jerusalem and opened the Ecole Biblique on November 15, 1890, in the presence of religious and French consular authorities. The building was a former slaughter house. The rings to which the animals were tied were still in the walls (a symbol of humble beginnings) and the neighbors were overjoyed to get rid of the stench. The school quickly took off because the French government's persecution of the orders meant that there was suddenly a group of student brothers; other orders started to send their students too. It is important to understand that Lagrange's was the first foreign permanent residential school of higher biblical and archaeological studies in the city. His idea was a simple one, based on the wordplay "document and monument," that is, Bible and archaeology. It was an idea whose time had come and it caught on. Soon there were American, British, and German schools. The Swedes, Italians, and others, in addition to the Hebrew University, followed after the Great War.

Lagrange could be described as one of Pope Leo XIII's favorites. The scholarly pope wrote him a friendly and encouraging letter. Once the imperial church of St. Stephan (A.D. 451) had been uncovered by the student brothers and reconstructed (the original mosaic flooring was partly recovered), the pope named it a basilica. Once the *Revue biblique*, a scholarly quarterly, had been launched, the pope put out the first encyclical on biblical studies and explicitly praised this project in Jerusalem (1893). The Ecole did not have money for real field excavations, but the fathers could ride out into the countryside, find inscriptions in the fields, make paper-mâché squeezes, and publish them in the *Revue*. The French Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres (really history) loved this fresh comparative material. The scholarly Jewish banker Salomon Reinach was so pleased that he offered Lagrange money which the school desperately needed. Lagrange had to refuse because anti-Semitism was so rife in certain French Catholic circles that the school would have been doomed if it became known that the founder had taken Jewish money. In those early days, the *Revue* had no competition in France and so members of other orders wrote for the journal, including many Jesuits and Assumptionists—even the dangerous Loisy. Lagrange's future archenemy, Leopold Fonck, S.J., was all enthusiasm on his first visit.

Lagrange did exhibit a certain naivete. He wanted to trace the original route of the Exodus, so he simply organized a caravan of the students and they rode out to the Sinai, Bibles in hand, to study the ground. This study began to open Lagrange's eyes. It was not going to be so simple. The route of the Exodus is still debated. A professor of dogmatic theology struck his head with a Greek grammar and exclaimed that he was still a beginner (98).

1898-1904. This is the period when the first storm clouds begin to appear. The Franciscans, the custodians of the Latin-Rite holy places, were annoyed

that Lagrange judged that tours should go not to Mount Zion but to a different site. The friars complained to the patriarch. More importantly, Lagrange was invited to give a major address on the sources of the Pentateuch at the meeting of Catholic scholars to be held at Fribourg, in 1898. He reasoned like a saint. This is where his heroic virtue showed itself most clearly. He had been warned that if he openly espoused the four-source theory proposed by Wellhausen, he could expect trouble. In his prayer, he said that it would be easy to serve the Church by always playing it safe and giving the old answers; but the Church deserves our very best answers, even if it means damaging our careers. He moderately defended the four sources, and trouble began immediately. The Holy Office opened a file on him. But then Cardinal Mazzella died (174) and the storm passed. Pope Leo proposed to bring Lagrange to Rome, to make him a member of the new biblical commission to foster the new approaches, to make him a professor, and to make the *Revue* the official organ of the commission. Then Leo died and a new era began. Lagrange's honeymoon was over.

1904-1911. In the new era, Leopold Fonck repeatedly swore that he would break Lagrange (*casser les reins*) (333, 337, 376). He intended to do this by setting up a rival school, first in Rome, and then in Jerusalem itself. He organized a virtual monopoly on the pontifical degree programs. (The war prevented the opening of the Jerusalem campus, and after the war the French Academy made the Ecole the French archaeology school in Jerusalem so that it could not fold altogether.) Worst of all, Lagrange's major Genesis commentary was not allowed to be published. (It remains in manuscript to this day!) It had been intended to show the new methods concretely and to make it plain that there was nothing to fear. Lagrange was left to murmur a line from St. Columban: "if you take away freedom, you take away dignity" (206). There is still no major critical Catholic commentary on Genesis. Rightly or wrongly, Lagrange decided to switch Testaments and published a substantial commentary on Mark in 1911.

1912-1913. These were the hardest years for Lagrange. His name was found on a list of books that seminarians should not read, signed by Cardinal di Lai. But none of his works were mentioned by name, and none were later named when he inquired about this strange state of affairs. This was the first and only formal sign of papal disapproval. It was not as bad as being put on the Index or being excommunicated, but for someone who was trying so hard to obey, while still advancing biblical studies, it was a hurtful blow. He went into exile in Paris, and avoided writing on the Bible but still produced furiously on related subjects, notably Stoicism, and preached in parishes. His royalist enemies circulated horrid lies about him and he was not allowed to answer (355). After half a year, the pope asked the General, Cormier, how Lagrange was doing. When Cormier answered that he was being obedient, the pope said that he should return to Jerusalem and continue his biblical work.

This time could be seen as a sort of sabbatical, in the spirit of Isaiah 30:15 (361).

1913-1919. Once Ottoman Turkey joined the Central Powers in the war, the French had to leave. Lagrange was on a death march to Edessa, when the Americans rescued him and sent him to Rome. The new pope, Benedict XV, one of his admirers, immediately convoked him to court and had a friendly, supportive talk with him. Lagrange spent the rest of the war in France, finishing his great commentary on Luke and the commentaries on Romans and Galatians. Once hostilities had ended and the British were running the Mandate in Palestine, the learned governor general, Sir Ronald Storrs, asked Lagrange to reopen the school as soon as possible. Now there was a mad rush by archaeologists to dig in the Holy Land. Some were crackpots. The Mandatory authorities needed a board of certification. This was formed by the heads of the British, French, and American schools. The director of the German school, resolutely hostile, was left out. But just before the war had broken out, Prussia's largest state faculty of Catholic theology, Breslau, had awarded Lagrange an honorary doctorate (330-332).

1919-1935. This was a long period, of full harvest. The French Academy of Inscriptions provided funds for the library, for the excavations, and for a few scholarships. This meant that the Ecole received Protestant students, a fact of ecumenical significance, before there was official ecumenism. Lagrange's scholarly productivity was never so abundant; besides the big commentaries on Matthew and John, he also wrote a synthesis called *The Gospel of Jesus Christ,* which has been translated into many languages. This work is a bit dry, because he insisted on walking a tightrope: never lie, never shock or offend; say as much of the critical truth as possible under the circumstances. During this period, Jewish Zionist settlements increased dramatically, as Hitler rose to power. Lagrange was a guest of honor at the founding of Hebrew University. Vincent is silent about certain troubles: the departure of Lagrange's ablest colleague, Edouard Dhorme; the tough negotiations with Cardinals Van Rossum and Sbaretti in Rome; the initial humiliation of his gifted student Joseph Bonsirven, and his later success. He does mention the Lambeth meeting (452).

1935-1938. On doctor's orders, Lagrange left Jerusalem for France, where he kept up a quick pace of work, linking up with the next generation of scholars, including the Jesuit Lyonnet. (The ban on Jesuit collaboration with Lagrange terminated with the end of the war.) Lagrange also wrote for journals of systematic theology during this period. He died on 10 March 1938, with "Jerusalem" on his lips. (He was reburied there in 1961.)

The book concludes with five documents and a eulogy of Vincent by Georges Chantraine at the Academy of Inscriptions, a prayer for Lagrange's beatification, a bibliography, and an index of names.

The book leaves no doubt that Lagrange was a person of heroic virtue, worthy of beatification. If the modern reader becomes irritated with him at

times, it will likely be because Lagrange got himself tangled in knots due to his very high ideals of honor, obedience, truthfulness, and the duty of apologetics (for example, resisting the pseudepigraphic character of 2 Peter, Ephesians, and the Pastoral Epistles). One might also tire of Vincent's mention of Lagrange's devotion to the Blessed Mother on every fifth page. For historians the work is a godsend. For others it is a survey of biblical studies covering over a century.

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The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity. Edited by GILLES EMERY and MATTHEW LEVERING. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. 648. $128.00 (cloth). ISBN: 978-0-19-955781-3.

Since the series was begun some years ago, *Oxford Handbooks* have been providing students and theologians with outstanding resources. In one single volume, they offer panoramic views of important theological topics. They give readers not only a wide-ranging sense of a topic, but also a good grasp of the state of contemporary scholarship. This volume is no exception. In fact, its quality is particularly outstanding. This is due, of course, to the individual contributors, but much credit must also be given to the editors, well known to anyone working in the field of Trinitarian theology. Neither of them contributed any of the chapters (beyond the introduction and postscript, each well worth reading), but the topics they chose, and the contributors they gathered, manifest judicious discernment and, implicitly, a compelling vision of Trinitarian theology.

Oxford Handbooks generally solicit articles from a very wide range of scholars—this one includes 43 separate chapters and runs 648 pages—and their sheer length ensures a certain range and breadth. They also tend to attract contributions from leaders in the field. These considerable natural advantages would ensure some amount of success for any editor. Emery and Levering, however, did not rely on them alone. They structured their handbook in a way that maximizes the range and coherence of the contributions. As they explain, "We have sought to offer readers essays that do justice to this diversification of points of view [present in contemporary Trinitarian theology], while also offering, in so far as possible, a coherent ensemble. The present Handbook is not a theologically neutral encyclopaedia,

but rather presents contributions from scholars who differ on many points but who generally agree in working out their Trinitarian theology in relation to the Nicene faith" (4-5).

Perhaps the editors' most striking decision was to emphasize Scripture and the history of Trinitarian theology. Of the 43 chapters, 24 concern Scripture or historical studies. This emphasis reflects developments among Scripture scholars and the growth in historical studies within the larger discipline of theology; it also manifests the editors' evident conviction that contemporary Trinitarian theology requires deep engagement with the history of Trinitarian thought. The editors divide the contributions into seven sections: (1) *The Trinity in Scripture* (6 chapters), (2) *Patristic Witnesses to the Trinitarian Faith* (4 chapters), (3) *Medieval Appropriations of the Trinitarian Faith* (5 chapters), (4) *The Reformation to the Twentieth Century* (9 chapters), (5) *Trinitarian Dogmatics* (8 chapters), (6) *The Trinity and Christian Life* (7 chapters), and (7) *Dialogues* (4 chapters). Each chapter runs around 5-15 pages and includes a bibliography and a list of suggested reading. All of the contributors are well qualified, some are acknowledged experts on the topics they write about, and together they span a range of religious confessions. Between the topics selected and the contributors themselves, this handbook can claim to cover the full spectrum of Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Trinitarian theology. It assembles the largest and most complete survey of Trinitarian theology currently available in English.

The quality is generally excellent throughout. Two sorts of chapters are especially notable, namely, those that survey neglected historical periods and those that offer contemporary syntheses of central doctrinal themes. In the first category, we find titles like: "Trinitarian Theology from Alcuin to Anselm" (Lauge Nielsen), "Medieval Trinitarian Theology from the late Thirteenth to the Fifteenth Centuries" (Russell Friedman), "The Development of the Trinity Doctrine in Byzantium (Ninth to Fifteenth Centuries)" (Karl Christian Felmy), "The Trinity in the Early Modern Era (c.1550-1770)" (Ulrich Lehner), "Catholic Theology of the Trinity in the Nineteenth Century" (Aidan Nichols). Surveys of patristic or high medieval Trinitarian theology are easy to find in any theological library, but other than this handbook, when it comes to finding surveys of more obscure periods of Trinitarian theology (which, to tell the truth, encompass the greater part of Christian history), even knowing where to begin is difficult. Yet these neglected periods are indivisibly part of the whole swath of ecclesial reflection on the Trinity, and even if they do not constitute a golden age, or even a silver age, they are not void of original theological insight. These chapters therefore provide a valuable contribution not only to historical understanding but also to theological reflection.

The chapters in the fifth section, *Trinitarian Dogmatics*, are also especially notable. In bite-sized portions, they offer contemporary syntheses of central doctrinal themes. They go beyond surveys. In conversation with contemporary

scholarship and theologians from throughout Christian history, they propose integrated analyses and thus helpful starting points for advancing contemporary conversations about the Trinity. The chapters of this section include: "The Trinity as Christian Teaching" (Kathryn Tanner); "The Divine Person(s): Trinity, Person, and Analogous Naming" (Rudi te Velde); "Theology of God the Father" (Emmanuel Durand); "Trinitarian Christology: The Eternal Son" (Thomas Weinandy); "The Deep Things of God: Trinitarian Pneumatology" (Bruce Marshall); "The Trinity, Creation, and Christian Anthropology" (Risto Saarinen); "The Trinity, the Church, and the Sacraments" (Charles Morerod); "Trinity and Salvation: Christian Life as an Existence in the Trinity" (Daniel Keating). The list would have been enhanced by a contribution from an Orthodox theologian, but this section constitutes a significant resource as it stands.

The weaknesses of this book are those inherent to any such handbook. First, due to its short length, each individual chapter inevitably fails to give anything more than a taste of a particular topic or theologian—just enough to paint a picture with a very broad brush. Second, the narrative provided by the historical chapters is not as continuous and coherent as it would be if it were written by a single author, or even by a single team of authors. For a historical narrative that is concise and unified, readers will have to look elsewhere (a good place to start would be *An Introduction to the Trinity*, by Declan Marmion and Rik van Nieuwenhove, published in 2011 by Cambridge University Press). Yet these weaknesses are compensated by the obvious advantages: a finished product that encompasses a wide range of topics and a wide range of historical perspectives.

After looking at a book like this, or even just skimming the table of contents, one's mind could easily drift to the future. When a revised version of this handbook is published in fifty years, which authors and historical periods will be present that are missing now? Which ones will be dropped? Which topics will emerge in the doctrinal section, and which ones will recede? Whatever happens, this handbook will continue to serve as an important scholarly milestone, a kind of time capsule of what Trinitarian theologians were thinking and writing in the early twenty-first century.

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