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OPINING THE *ARTICULI FIDEI*: THOMAS AQUINAS ON THE HERETIC'S ASSENT TO THE ARTICLES OF FAITH

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THOMAS AQUINAS'S ACCOUNT of the infused virtue (*habitus*) of faith presupposes that some intrinsically intelligible truths are beyond the range of the natural cognitive abilities of human beings. The possession of the virtue of faith allows the believer to transcend certain natural epistemic limitations so that he can assent to truths that are necessary for salvation. Consonant with the Catholic theological tradition, Aquinas refers to such truths as the articles of faith (*articuli fidei*), and stock examples include propositions concerning the Trinity and the Incarnation.[1]

In light of the many and well-known texts from the *Corpus Thomisticum* that highlight the disproportion or incommensurability between the articles of faith and the natural cognitive abilities of human beings, it would not be unreasonable for one to assume that faith is required to assent to such articles of faith

[1] E.g., *STh* II-II, q. 1, a. 6, ad 1 (Leonine ed., 8:18). For Latin texts of Aquinas, I have cited *Opera omnia*, 50 vols. (Rome: Ex Typographia Polyglotta / Commissio Leonina, 1882-). For texts not in the Leonine edition, I have cited: *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, ed. P. Mandonnet and M. F. Moos, 4 vols. (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929-47); *In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio*, ed. M.-R. Cathala and R. M. Spiazzi (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1950); *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura*, ed. R. Cai (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1952); *Super epistolas S. Pauli lectura*, ed. R. Cai, 2 vols. (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1953); *Quaestiones disputatae*, ed. P. Bazzi et al., vol. 2 (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1953). Although I have consulted standard English translations, the translations of Aquinas's works are my own.

in this life. Such an interpretive assumption could be expressed as:

A1: *A human being can assent to the articles of faith in this life if and only if the human being is fortified with the infused virtue of faith.*

One might be led to ascribe A1 to Aquinas when one considers that he criticizes the Pelagians precisely for maintaining that the assent to matters of faith is caused by nothing other than free will.[2] Still further, one might think that strong evidence for A1 is Aquinas's claim that "free will does not suffice for believing, since those things that are of faith are above reason."[3]

I argue, however, that A1's identification of the virtue of faith as a necessary condition for the assent to the articles of faith does not adequately reflect Aquinas's position, despite the many texts that may suggest such a view.[4] That Aquinas does not endorse A1 can be made evident by examining his largely overlooked account of the epistemic state of the heretic (*haereticus*). To be sure, most commentators who explore the Thomistic treatment of heresy focus on the psychology of error underlying the heretic's denial of one or more of the articles of faith.[5] In the present paper I take an alternate path, however, focusing on those epistemic acts whereby the heretic gets its

[2] See *STh* II-II, q. 6, a. 1 (Leonine ed., 8:61).

[3] *In Eph.*, c. 1, lect. 3 (Marietti ed., 25, §95): "Non enim sufficit ad credendum liberum arbitrium, eo quod ea quae sunt fidei, sunt supra rationem."

[4] Additionally, one might consider *Quodl.* II, q. 4, a. 1 (Leonine ed., 25.2:220.56-64): "to believe, however, is above the natural ability of a human being; accordingly it comes about from a gift of God. . . . A human being therefore is obliged to believe only insofar as he is helped by God to believe" ("credere autem est super potenciam hominis naturalem, unde ex dono Dei prouenit. . . . Homo igitur tenetur credere secundum hoc quod adiuuatur a Deo ad credendum").

[5] See Denis J. M. Bradley, *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good: Reason and Human Happiness in Aquinas's Moral Science* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1997), 68-78. Not all commentators are approbatory; Edmund F. Byrne asserts that "Thomas's theory of unbelief in general and of heresy in particular is so unrealistic that it is perhaps best understood as one more manifestation of his theotropic bent of mind" (*Probability and Opinion: A Study in the Medieval Presuppositions of Post-Medieval Theories of Probability* [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968], 116. See also 123-24).

right, so to speak, by correctly assenting to some of the articles of faith. Aquinas maintains that the heretic does not possess the infused virtue of faith yet still assents to all the articles of faith except for the one or more articles that he denies. Bereft of faith, the heretic "holds those things that are of faith by another mode than through faith."[6] This seemingly anomalous epistemic condition deserves consideration.[7]

I. Intellects without Faith

The heretic appears to be cognitively privileged, since without faith he assents to the things that are of faith, seemingly overcoming without divine assistance the aforementioned disproportion between the limited range of reason and the articles of faith. Aquinas is aware of the apparent difficulty; in the *Summa theologiae* he defuses the rather unusual objection that heretics appear to have greater cognitive capacities than the faithful, since heretics routinely and unassistedly assent to those higher truths without possessing the virtue of faith.[8] Aquinas concludes that the heretic holds the articles of faith by opinion (*opinio*), not faith.

What makes one a heretic? Frequently Aquinas identifies obstinacy (*pertinacia*, *instantia*) as a necessary condition for heresy.[9] The cause of heresy is at times identified with pride

[6] *STh* II-II, q. 5, a. 3 (Leonine ed., 8:58): "ea quae sunt fidei alio modo tenet quam per fidem."

[7] Apart from Aquinas's detailed treatment of particular heresies, the major theoretical accounts of heresy in general include *STh* II-II, q. 11 (Leonine ed., 8:97-102); and IV *Sent.*, d. 13, q. 2 (Moos ed., 4:563-70). This article seeks to understand Aquinas's account of heresy in its historical context. I do not attempt to extend Aquinas's views on heresy to later historical contexts—such as today, when the designation of persons as heretics is less prevalent. Furthermore, as Aquinas's account of heresy does not appear to have developed significantly throughout the course of his writing career, I draw freely from his texts, written at various times and representing various genres.

[8] *STh* II-II, q. 5, a. 3, obj. 1 and ad 1 (Leonine ed., 8:57-58).

[9] See, for example, *De Malo*, q. 8, a. 1, ad 7 (Leonine ed., 23:196, l. 421); *De Car.*, q. 1, a. 13, ad 6 (Marietti ed., 791); *STh* I, q. 32, a. 2 (Leonine ed., 4:352); *STh* I, q. 32,

(*superbia*).[10] On Aquinas's account, heresy is a species of unbelief (*infidelitas*) and every heretic is a schismatic.[11] But the heretic does get many things right. If one were to deny all of the articles of faith, one would not qualify as a heretic, but would simply be a nonbeliever or an apostate. So, apart from the denial of an article (or a few articles) that specifies heretics as the distinct kind of heretic they happen to be, heretics for the most part succeed in assenting to most—but not all—of the articles of faith.

Although the heretic assents to articles of faith without possessing the infused virtue of faith, he is not unique in meeting this condition. Those humans fortified with supernatural cognitive gifts stronger than faith also assent to the articles of faith without faith.[12] The blessed in heaven, for instance, have no use for faith since they possess a vision (*visio*) regarding the matters of faith.[13] Similarly, a prophet can cognize some of the articles of faith without faith, since the gift of prophecy allows one to grasp those divine things that are far removed from the natural cognitive abilities of a human being. Aquinas does not appear to recognize any intrinsic limitation on the kinds of truths revealable in prophecy, since through the prophetic light it is possible to know all things human and

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a. 4 (Leonine ed., 4:357); *In Gal.* c. 1, lect. 2 (Marietti ed., 570, §28); *STh* II-II, q. 1, a. 9, ad 2 (Leonine ed., 8:23).

[10] See *De Malo*, q. 8, a. 1, ad 7 (Leonine ed., 23:196, l. 421); *De Malo*, q. 8, a. 3, ad 14 (Leonine ed., 23:205, l. 325); *De Malo*, q. 8, a. 4, ad 1 (Leonine ed., 23:207, l. 106); *STh* II-II, q. 11, a. 1, ad 2 and ad 3 (Leonine ed., 8:97-98); *Super Ioan.*, c. 7, lect. 6 (Marietti ed., 197, §1040).

[11] See *STh* II-II, q. 11, a. 1 (Leonine ed., 8:97); and *STh* II-II, q. 39, a. 1, ad 3 (Leonine ed., 8:306-7).

[12] For a discussion of supernatural cognitive gifts stronger than faith, see Carl N. Still, "'Gifted Knowledge': An Exception to Thomistic Epistemology?" *The Thomist* 63 (1999): 173-90; and Pamela J. Reeve, "The Metaphysics of Higher Cognitive States in Thomas Aquinas," in *Essays in Medieval Philosophy and Theology in Memory of Walter H. Principe, CSB: Fortresses and Launching Pads*, ed. James R. Ginther and Carl N. Still (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2005), 105-19.

[13] *De Verit.*, q. 14, a. 9 ad 1 (Leonine ed., 22.2:463, l. 147). See also *In Boet. De Trin.*, q. 2, a. 2 (Leonine ed., 50:95, ll. 54-77); *STh* I, q. 1, a. 2 (Leonine ed., 4:9); *De Verit.*, q. 14, a. 9 ad 1 (Leonine ed., 22.2:463, ll. 140-47).

divine.[14] An additional supernatural epistemic condition is rapture, where one temporarily enjoys a supernatural susceptibility to the highest truth, namely, the divine essence.[15] The blessed, prophets, and those experiencing rapture, however, differ essentially from the heretic because they have benefited from the supernatural expansion of their cognitive abilities by grace, and the heretic is left to rely exclusively on purely natural cognitive powers.

To find an analogy for the cognitive position of the heretic, one might be tempted to turn to Aquinas's account of demons, for Aquinas argues that demons assent to some of the articles of faith without possessing faith. The superior intellects of demons, however, make them an unfitting analogy to the heretic, since demons are compelled to assent to some of the articles of faith because of their greater cognitive abilities to detect signs.[16] The heretic, we must conclude, is epistemically disanalogous to the blessed, prophets, the enraptured, and even demons, insofar as the disproportion remains between the intelligibility of the articles of faith and the cognitive limitations of the heretic's unassisted intellect in the act of assenting to the articles of faith.

II. The Cognitive Stance of the Heretic

A key element of Aquinas's view of the epistemic condition of the heretic is the contention that the obstinate denial of one article of faith causes the heretic to lose the infused virtue of faith, just as one mortal sin causes the sinner to lose the virtue

[14] See *STh* II-II, q. 171, a. 3 (Leonine ed., 10:371). Byrne explains that from the "epistemological point of view, Thomas says that prophecy can be knowledge of anything, but it is especially concerned with things which are remote (*procul*) from the knowledge of man" (*Probability and Opinion*, 90).

[15] See *STh* II-II, q. 175, a. 3, ad 2 (Leonine ed., 10:405); *De Verit*., q. 13, a. 2 (Leonine ed., 22.2:420-21). See Michael M. Waddell, "The Importance of Rapture in the Thought of Aquinas," *Nova et Vetera* (Eng. ed.) 12 (2014): 255-85.

[16] See *STh* II-II, q. 5, a. 2 (Leonine ed., 8:56); *De Verit*., q. 14, a. 9, ad 4 (Leonine ed., 22.2:464, ll. 169-79).

of charity.[17] This position was called into question by the Dominican Durandus of St. Pourçain (1275-1334), who proposed that one could deny an article of faith and still be said to possess the virtue of faith.[18] The texts of Aquinas, however, consistently defend the position that the denial of one article destroys the virtue of faith in the believer. On Aquinas's account, the intellect of the heretic is rendered bereft of supernatural cognitive endowments and is thereby on its own to find truth. This unassisted human intellect, however, can still relate itself to truth in several ways. Partly inspired by an Aristotelian background, Aquinas often catalogues many natural relationships toward truth. Identifying these relationships can be helpful in locating the precise condition of the heretic in regard to those articles of faith that he accepts.

On one extreme is a simple lack of knowledge (*nescientia*), a condition that to some degree is possessed by all intellects save the divine omniscient intellect, since for every created intellect some truths remain unknown.[19] Further, an intellect may possess the condition of ignorance (*ignorantia*), which occurs when it is cognitively deficient concerning "those things that one is constituted to know and ought to know."[20]

These negative or privative states of *nescientia* and *ignorantia* of course do not exhaust the natural states of cognition available to human beings as other cognitive states are more successful with respect to truth. The doubter (*dubitans*) is one

[17] III *Sent.*, d. 23, q. 3, a. 3, sol. 2 (Moos ed., 3:751); *De Verit.*, q. 14, a. 10, ad 10 (Leonine ed., 22.2:468, ll. 298-311); *Quodl.* VI, q. 4, a. 1 (Leonine ed., 25.2:301, ll. 54-58); *STh* II-II, q. 5, a. 3 (Leonine ed., 8:58); *De Car.*, q. 1, a. 13, ad 6 (Marietti ed., 791).

[18] For a discussion, see Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Theological Virtues*, vol. 1, *On Faith: A Commentary on St. Thomas' Theological Summa* I^aII^{ae}*, qq. 62, 65, 68:* II^aII^{ae}*, qq. 1-16*, trans. Thomas à Kempis Reilly (St. Louis: Herder, 1965), 332, 338-41. Texts from Durandus on this issue, with accompanying replies by John Capreolus, may be found in John Capreolus, *On the Virtues*, trans. Kevin White and Romanus Cessario (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 54-81.

[19] III *Sent.*, d. 23, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 1 (Moos ed., 3:725); *De Malo*, q. 8, a. 1, ad 7 (Leonine ed., 23:195, l. 408).

[20] *De Malo*, q. 8, a. 1, ad 7 (Leonine ed., 23:195, ll. 413-14): "eorum scilicet que homo natus est scire et debet."

who wavers between two strict contradictories (i.e., p, $\sim p$), unable to incline to either a proposition or its negation because of an absence of evidence or a perceived equality of reasons for each of the contradictories.[21] In such a case, the doubter lacks a firm assent to the true proposition and fluctuates between it and its false counterpart. The assent of one who suspects (*suspicans*) is more firm than that of the doubter, since the one who suspects inclines to one of the contradictories tentatively but does not incline unreservedly.[22] Aquinas explains that the one who suspects is susceptible to the arguments of the discipline of rhetoric.[23] Further, Aquinas identifies the person who assents to one member of a pair of contradictories out of mere surmise (*existimatio*) to be one who is influenced by an emotive representation of the options. The discipline of poetics generates such a cognitive stance.[24] Still further, the assent of the opiner (*opinans*) is stronger than the aforementioned states of doubt, suspicion, and surmise, for the opiner assents completely (*totaliter*) to one member of a pair of contradictories (p), but still experiences the fear (*formido*) that the other contradictory ($\sim p$) may be correct.[25] The discipline of dialectic can be the source of this state of opinion.[26]

These four cognitive states (doubt, suspicion, surmise, and opinion) all involve the will of the cognizer because the intellect is not sufficiently compelled or determined by the intelligibility of the truth being examined. In other words, Aquinas is careful to distinguish the assent that takes its origin from a volitional act from the assent in which the intellect is compelled in virtue of the intrinsic intelligibility of a truth. The latter kind of assent

[21] See III *Sent.*, d. 23, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 1 (Moos ed., 3:726); *STh* II-II, q. 2, a. 1 (Leonine ed., 8:26-27); *De Verit.*, q. 14, a. 1 (Leonine ed., 22.2:436, ll. 104-5).

[22] See *STh* II-II, q. 2, a. 1 (Leonine ed., 8:26-27). See also III *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 6 (Leonine ed., 47.2:340, ll. 20-24).

[23] See *Post Anal.*, *pr.* (Leonine ed., 1*.2:6-7, ll. 107-11).

[24] See *Post Anal.*, *pr.* (Leonine ed., 1*.2:7, ll. 111-18).

[25] *STh* II-II, q. 2, a. 1, c. (Leonine ed., 8:26-27); *De Verit.*, q. 14, a. 1 (Leonine ed., 22.2:436, ll. 105-13); *De Verit.*, q. 14, a. 9, ad 6 (Leonine ed., 22.2:464, ll. 184-89); III *Sent.*, d. 23, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 1 (Moos ed., 3:725).

[26] See *Post Anal.*, *pr.* (Leonine ed., 1*.2:6, ll. 99-106).

occurs in two further types of cognition. First, the person possessing intellection (*intellectus*, *visio*) recognizes the intrinsic intelligibility of self-evident propositions and necessarily assents to such truths.[27] Second, the person possessing scientific knowledge (*scientia*) is compelled to accept the conclusions that follow from self-evident propositions.[28] In both of these cases, the intellect is necessarily determined when the cognizer recognizes the intelligibility of self-evident or demonstrated truths.[29]

It is now clear that Aquinas provides a detailed range of strictly natural cognitive stances the human intellect can have toward truth. To summarize, his epistemic taxonomy comprises at least eight possibilities, beginning with a simple lack of knowledge and ending with states where the intelligibility of the truth is so manifest to the cognizer that he is compelled to assent.

1. Lack of knowledge (*nescientia*)
2. Ignorance (*ignorantia*)
3. Doubt (*dubitatio*)
4. Suspicion (*suspicio*)
5. Surmise (*existimatio*)
6. Opinion (*opinio*)
7. Intellection (*intellectus*, *visio*)
8. Science (*scientia*)

While Aquinas underscores in many texts that faith is a cognitive stance toward truth, at times designating it as a kind of *cognitio*,[30] it does not fall within this range of *natural* cognitive acts, since it is properly supernatural, being added to nature as an infused virtue. A taxonomy of supernatural epistemic stances would include, in addition to faith, the above-mentioned gifts of prophecy, rapture, and the beatific vision enjoyed by the blessed in heaven.

[27] *De Verit*., q. 14, a. 1 (Leonine ed., 22.2:437, ll. 121-25); III *Sent*., d. 23, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 1 (Moos ed., 3:725).

[28] *De Verit*., q. 14, a. 1 (Leonine ed., 22.2:437, ll. 125-29); *Post Anal*., *pr*. (Leonine ed., 1*.2:5-6, ll. 75-87); III *Sent*., d. 23, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 1 (Moos ed., 3:725).

[29] See *De Malo*, q. 16, a. 7, ad 18 (Leonine ed., 23:318, ll. 489-93).

[30] *STh* I, q. 12, a. 13, ad 3 (Leonine ed., 4:138, l. 3).

II. *OPINIO*

In an often-cited text on faith in the *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas explains that divine causality allows the believer to assent to the articles of faith. The believer

> is elevated above his nature in assenting to those things that are of faith; it is necessary that this is in him from a supernatural principle moving him from within, which is God. And for this reason, faith, as regards the assent which is the principal act of faith, is from God moving the believer inwardly by grace.[31]

With the sudden loss of the virtue of faith, however, the heretic no longer enjoys such a benefit of assenting to the articles of faith with the assistance of divine causality. By choosing to deny certain articles of faith, heretics forfeit the supernatural help of assenting to the other articles of faith. And of course, heretics do not enjoy the benefit of having the intrinsic intelligibility of the articles of faith exercise causality upon their intellects to compel assent, as occurs when the blessed in heaven, prophets, or those enraptured encounter the articles of faith. The natural limitation of the human intellect renders humans unsusceptible to such causality. The cause of assent for heretics, therefore, must be an exercise of their own wills whereby they choose to assent to a subset of the articles of faith.

Aquinas consistently identifies the cognitive state of the heretic who assents to some of the articles of faith as opinion (*opinio*). Without divine help, the heretic is cognitively autonomous, and when faced with a set of contradictories consisting of an article of faith and its negation $\{p, \sim p\}$, the heretic sometimes attaches firmly to the article of faith. On Aquinas's view, the heretic is left to adhere to the article "by his own choice"[32] or "by means of a human judgment."[33] That is,

[31] *STh* II-II, q. 6, a. 1 (Leonine ed., 8:61): "assentiendo his quae sunt fidei, elevetur supra naturam suam, oportet quod hoc insit ei ex supernaturali principio interius movente, quod est Deus. Et ideo fides quantum ad assensum, qui est principalis actus fidei, est a Deo interius movente per gratiam."

[32] *Quodl.* VI, q. 4, a. 1 (Leonine ed., 25.2:301, ll. 55-56): "ex proprio arbitrio."

the heretic "holds the things that are of faith by his own will and judgment"[34] and possesses them "as opinions."[35] The heretic has no faith "but a kind of opinion in accordance with his own will."[36] As a species of opinion, the heretic's attachment to an article of faith (p) is firm, but the heretic still experiences some degree of fear (*formido*) that the contradictory that expresses the denial of that article of faith ($\sim p$) may be correct.

If insulated from both the causality of God and the intelligibility of the articles of faith themselves, why doesn't the heretic, when confronted with the contradictory set of $\{p, \sim p\}$ simply just adopt a lower cognitive stance from the taxonomy identified above? Although Aquinas does not answer this question explicitly, there are reasons to disqualify the other states as belonging properly to the heretic. When presented with the pair of contradictories consisting of an article of faith and its denial, the heretic is no longer eligible for the states of a simple lack of knowledge (*nescientia*) or ignorance (*ignorantia*). One might think, however, that the heretic is a fine candidate for slightly higher epistemic states such as doubt (*dubitatio*) or suspicion (*suspicio*). Yet both of these conditions are marked by a lack of attachment or assent, and are thereby insufficient to specify a cognizer as either a believer or a heretic; at least one might speculate that degrees of doubt or suspicion would not be sufficient to constitute a specifically heretical denial of an article of faith. Still further, the condition of surmise (*existimatio*) may not be adequate, since the subject matter of the articles of faith may be too far removed from poetics, which depends on the elicitation of strong aesthetic feelings. Finally, the higher natural cognitive conditions of intellection (*intellectus*) and science (*scientia*) cannot adequately account for the heretic's assent

[33] III *Sent*., d. 23, q. 3, a. 3, sol. 2 (Moos ed., 3:751): "per aestimationem humanam." See also *De Verit*., q. 14, a. 10, ad 10 (Leonine ed., 22.2:468, ll. 309-10): "ex quadam extimatione humana."

[34] *STh* II-II, q. 5, a. 3, ad 1 (Leonine ed., 8:58): "tenet ea quae sunt fidei propria voluntate et iudicio."

[35] *De Car*., q. 1, a. 13, ad 6 (Marietti ed., 791): "quasi opinata."

[36] *STh* II-II, q. 5, a. 3, c. (Leonine ed., 8:58, l. 5-6): "sed opinionem quandam secundum propriam voluntatem."

since, as noted above, the heretic is not susceptible to the intrinsic intelligibility of the articles of faith, a susceptibility reserved to those who enjoy the use of supernatural cognitive capacities of prophecy, rapture, or the beatific vision. Thus, through a process of elimination, the cognitive state of *opinio* remains as the orientation of the heretic toward the articles of faith.[37]

III. VERBALIZING THE *ARTICULI FIDEI*

Aquinas contends that since the human mode of knowing truth requires affirmative and negative propositions, it is necessary for the articles of faith to be expressed propositionally in order to be known.[38] The propositional character of the articles of faith allows them to be the object of different cognitive states, since the believer who holds an article of faith by faith and the heretic who holds the same article by opinion are both assenting to the same proposition; they produce verbally identical utterances. Aquinas notes, "But according to

[37] Creighton Rosental observes that a public denial of an article of faith is more revelatory about a cognizer's state than a public affirmation of an article of faith: "That the heretic *believes* some matter of faith (that God is triune) does not show that he has the habit of faith, but that someone denies some matter of faith shows that he does not have it" (*Lessons from Aquinas: A Resolution of the Problem of Faith and Reason* [Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2011], 119).

[38] *STh* II-II, q. 1, a. 2 (Leonine ed., 8:11); III *Sent*., d. 24, a. 1, sol. 2 (Moos ed., 3:763-64). The propositional character of the articles of faith has garnered much attention from commentators. Some of Aquinas's texts on the matter can be read as pertaining to the question of the development of doctrine, since there have been increases in the number of articles of faith as the Catholic Church reformulates creeds according to the needs of the faithful. See Christopher Kaczor, "Thomas Aquinas on the Development of Doctrine," *Theological Studies* 62 (2001): 283-302. See also Byrne, *Probability and Opinion*, 118-21. Aquinas routinely credits heretics with providing the occasion for the Church to re-present the articles of faith, as the Church invents new terms (see *STh* I, q. 29, a. 3, ad 1 [Leonine ed., 4:331]) and constructs new propositions (see *STh* II-II, q. 1, aa. 7, 9-10 [Leonine ed., 8:19-20, 22-24]) in response to arising heresies. These new formulations express more explicitly what is implicitly contained in the deposit of faith.

appearance and human opinion, heretics are called 'Christians' because at least verbally they confess the name of Christ."[39]

From an observer's point of view, it would be impossible to distinguish the heretic who opines a particular article of faith from the believer who has the virtue of faith, since they both produce verbally identical propositions in their respective assents when they each confess a portion of the creed. This similarity in external appearance leads Aquinas to note that the heretic's relation to such articles involves "an act of apparent faith, not however of true faith."[40] An identity in verbal constructions does not entail an identity in cognitive states. A precedent for Aquinas's view is a text from Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* that contends that the same proposition can be respectively known and opined by two people. Aristotle explains that both the opiner and the knower can assert the predicate "animal" of "man," but the opiner judges the predicate to be accidental in relation to the subject, whereas the knower judges the predicate to be essential to the subject.[41] The opiner and the knower in this case each express a true judgment, but their epistemic states differ. In commenting on Aristotle, Aquinas remarks that the subject known and opined is the same, but the *ratio* is not.[42]

Is there another way to demarcate further the opining heretic from the faithful believer in regard to their respective assents to the articles they profess in common? Aquinas explains that the believer and the heretic employ different middle terms in forming their respective judgments:

> Faith adheres to all the articles of faith by means of one middle term, namely, by means of the first truth proposed to us in scriptures, as they are correctly

[39] *In Boet. De Trin.*, expositio capituli primi (Leonine ed., 50:103, ll. 34-36): "set secundum apparentiam et hominum opinionem heretici christiani dicuntur, quia saltem uel uoce nomen Christi confitentur."

[40] *Quodl.* VI, q. 4, a. 1, ad 2 (Leonine ed., 25.2:301, l. 93): "actus fidei apparentis, non autem fidei uere."

[41] See Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* 1.33.89a33-38. See also *Topics* 5.3.132a2-4.

[42] I *Post Anal.*, lect. 1, c. 44 (Leonine ed., 1*.2:170, l. 260).

understood according to the teaching of the church. Hence whoever abandons this middle term is altogether lacking in faith.[43]

The appeal to a middle term as the key issue surfaces in the later Thomistic tradition. In his monumental *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, the Dominican John Capreolus (1380-1444) explains that the heretic who loses faith "does not believe any article of faith in the same way in which he did before, and that he does not believe it through the same middle term, but a different one."[44] If the middle term of the believer who assents to the articles of faith is divine truth as expressed through the Church, what is the middle term of the correctly opining heretic? Since heretics are left to their natural powers, the middle term must be found in a heretic's own judgment. Aquinas contends that the heretic "prefers his own sense to divinely revealed truth"[45] and chooses "those things which his mind suggests to him."[46] In another text Aquinas contends that heretics "have strayed to their own beliefs" away from the Church.[47] An article of faith assented to by both the believer and the heretic is a conclusion at which they both respectively arrive, but the means of their arrival differs significantly.[48] It can

[43] *STh* II-II, q. 5, a. 3, ad 2 (Leonine ed., 8:58): "omnibus articulis fidei inhaeret fides propter unum medium, scilicet propter veritatem primam propositam nobis in Scripturis secundum doctrinam Ecclesiae intellectis sane. Et ideo qui ab hoc medio decidit totaliter fide caret."

[44] Capreolus, *Defensiones* III, d. 24, §3 (Johannes Capreolus, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, ed. Ceslaus Paban and Thomas Pègues, 7 vols. [Turin: Alfred Cattier, 1900-1908], 5:319): "non credit quemcumque articulum fidei illo modo quo prius, nec per idem medium, sed per aliud."

[45] *De Malo*, q. 8, a. 1, ad 7 (Leonine ed., 23:196, ll. 422-23): "sensum suum preferat ueritati diuinitus reuelate."

[46] *STh* II-II, q. 11, a. 1 (Leonine ed., 8:97): "ea quae sibi propria mens suggerit."

[47] *In Boet. De Trin.*, q. 3, a. 3 (Leonine ed., 50:113, ll. 64-65): "in proprias quasdam sententias declinarunt." See also *STh* II-II, q. 11, a. 1, ad 2 (Leonine ed., 8:97, ll. 38-39): "the proximate end of heresy is attachment to one's own false opinion" ("finis proximus haeresis est adhaerere falsae sententiae propriae").

[48] Daniel Schwartz Porzecanski explains, "In Aquinas's mind the right representation of the heretic is this: we have a teacher (the Church) who teaches those things giving assent to which would yield actual assent to Christ . . . [The heretic] follows his own will in the choice of beliefs intended as means of giving assent to Christ" ("Aquinas on

be said that materially the believer and the heretic hold the same proposition insofar as they assent to a given article of faith, but formally they differ insofar as the middle terms they use in their judgments and the cognitive states they each possess are distinct.[49] This substitution of middle terms involves replacing a divine middle term with a human one, since the heretic no longer submits to God as the ultimate authority in matters about God. One commentator describes the situation of the heretic by noting that "such a person might be thought of as detaching his believing about God [*credere Deum*] from his believing God [*credere Deo*]."[50] The heretic's change of middle terms is discussed by Aquinas elsewhere when he characterizes a heretic as one who "wills to regulate faith according to the teachings of secular wisdom."[51] Still elsewhere Aquinas proposes an analogy between a heretic who assents to an article of faith by purely natural means and an individual who holds a scientific conclusion while not knowing the middle term of the demonstration. In this analogy, both the heretic and the individual each posses "merely opinion."[52]

IV. Faith as Cognitive Protection from Heresy

Aquinas frequently assigns a twofold role to the virtue of faith. The first we have noted above: the virtue causes the believer to assent to the articles of faith. The second role has

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Concord: 'Concord is a Union of Wills, Not of Opinions'," *The Review of Metaphysics* 57 [2003]: 25-42, at 40). See also idem, *Aquinas on Friendship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 39.

[49] In commenting on Aquinas's treatment of the heretic's assent to the articles of faith in *STh* II-II, q. 5, a. 3, Garrigou-Lagrange explains that "The heretic we are envisioning seizes upon the supernatural mysteries of his personal option, in a material sense only," and the heretic "touches the material formulas of supernatural mysteries, the letter without the spirit" (*The Theological Virtues*, 336, 337).

[50] Carl N. Still, "Thomas Aquinas on the Assent of Faith," in Ginther and Still, eds., *Fortresses and Launching Pads*, 121-34, at 123. See *STh* II-II, q. 2, a. 2 (Leonine ed., 8:27).

[51] *Contra Impugnantes*, c. 12, ad 5 and 6 (Leonine ed., 41A:137, ll. 230-31): "velit regulare fidem secundum documenta sapientiae saecularis."

[52] *STh* II-II, q. 5, a. 3 (Leonine ed., 8:58): "opinionem solum."

not been discussed: Aquinas contends that the virtue of faith protects the believer from assenting to what is contrary to faith. Indeed, with varying degrees of emphasis, Aquinas confirms this dual function of faith in several works. In the early commentary on the *Sententiae* of Peter Lombard, he remarks that "the virtue of infused faith assists us in two ways, namely, so that we believe what should be believed, and so that we in no way assent to those things that are not to be believed."[53] Similar accounts can be found in Aquinas's later works.[54]

This security afforded by faith is especially important for those who lack explicit faith in all of the articles of faith. While those of the Christian community who possess teaching offices (such as bishops or those engaged in pastoral instruction) are obligated to believe explicitly all of the articles of faith, the majority of believers are obligated to believe explicitly only some of them.[55] For members of the community who fall under the lesser requirement, Aquinas maintains, the special protection from error afforded by the virtue of faith is necessary.[56] That the believer with faith "inclines with discretion to one thing and not to another is from the infused virtue of faith alone."[57] It would appear, however, that this protection is not absolute, since otherwise it would follow that heresy in itself would be impossible; the heretic is one who withdraws assent from an article of faith and assents to its contradictory.

[53] III *Sent.*, d. 23, q. 3, a. 3, sol. 2 (Moos ed., 3:751): "fidei habitus infusus in duobus nos adjuvat, scilicet ut credamus quae credenda sunt, et ut eis quae non sunt credenda nullo modo assentiamus."

[54] See *STh* II-II, q. 2, a. 3, ad 2 (Leonine ed., 8:29).

[55] See *STh* II-II, q. 2, a. 6 (Leonine ed., 8:33); *De Verit*., q. 14, a. 11 (Leonine ed., 22.2:470, ll. 139-42).

[56] See *De Verit*., q. 14, a. 11, ad 2 (Leonine ed., 22.2:472, ll. 254-61); See also *De Verit*., q. 14, a. 10, ad 10 (Leonine ed., 22.2:468, ll. 301-4).

[57] III *Sent.*, d. 23, q. 3, a. 3, sol. 2 (Moos ed., 3:751): "discrete in haec et non in illa inclinetur, est ex habitu infuso tantum."

V. Does the Heretic's Prior Possession of the Virtue of Faith Offer a Subsequent Epistemic Advantage?

One might contend that even though the heretic assents to the articles of faith by natural ability alone, his previous possession of the virtue of faith uniquely prepares him for the subsequent opining of the articles of faith. In other words, one might object that the only reason that a heretic can still hold to an article of faith after losing faith is his previous possession of the virtue, the aftereffects of which still dispose him to assent to what is beyond the grasp of reason. It follows that an individual who never possessed faith would not be able to assent to an article of faith. If this objection holds, the heretic would not strictly be evidence for the falsity of A1 above.

Is the prior possession of a virtue of faith required for subsequently opining an article of faith? One way of countering this objection would be to find an example of an individual who, without ever possessing the virtue of faith, nevertheless assents to one or more of the articles of faith. Aquinas does grant the existence of such a person in a few texts. There are others, beyond the heretic, who can opine some of the articles of faith in virtue of natural ability alone without the assistance of supernatural gifts such as faith, prophecy, rapture, or the beatific vision. Aquinas contends:

> That a heretic believes some things that are above natural cognition is not from any infused virtue . . . but from a certain judgment, just as pagans believe some things surpassing nature concerning God.[58]

Aquinas's account of the pagan who arrives at truths *supra natura* is significant. Presumably the reference is to pagan philosophers who have speculated beyond the bounds of their philosophy about the divine essence. Such pagan opiners would not be able to produce demonstrations of what they held, but

[58] *De Verit*., q. 14, a. 10, ad 10 (Leonine ed., 22.2:468, ll. 305-11): "Quod autem haereticus aliqua credat quae sunt supra naturalem cognitionem, non est ex aliquo habitu infuso . . . sed est ex quadam extimatione humana, sicut etiam pagani aliqua supra naturam credunt de Deo."

nonetheless they are analogues to the heretic insofar as they assent to truths about God that exceed the natural powers of the intellect. Therefore, the heretic is not alone in assenting without assistance to the *articuli fidei*.[59]

There is more, however. Aquinas also invokes a longstanding tradition concerning ancient anticipations of the Christian doctrines. He observes, "It is likely that the mystery of our redemption was divinely revealed to many Gentiles prior to the coming of Christ, as is clear from the Sibylline prophecies."[60] Again Aquinas considers the view that ancient pagans transcended the natural limitations of the intellect in approaching the mystery of redemption and divine attributes. His acknowledgment of the Sibylline prophecies repeats a patristic view that held that select pagan writers and poets anticipated truths concerning the Incarnation.[61] The view's *loci classici* occur in the writings of Augustine[62] and Lactantius.[63] Isidore of

[59] Not all commentators read the above-cited passage to affirm that both heretic and pagans are epistemologically *successful* with regard to some claims about God. Pierre Rousselot contends, "Aquinas ventures to compare this human 'estimation' that makes the heretic adhere to his perverted Christianity to the estimation that makes pagans adhere to their fables" ("Remarks on the History of the Notion of Natural Faith" in *Essays on Love and Knowledge*, ed. and trans. Andrew Tallon, Pol Vandevelde, and Alan Vincelette [Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette University Press, 2008], 183-224, at 206).

[60] *De Verit*., q. 14, a. 11, ad 5 (Leonine ed., 22.2:471, ll. 226-30): "probabile tamen est multis etiam gentilibus ante Christi adventum mysterium redemptionis nostrae fuisse divinitus revelatum, sicut patet ex sibillinis vaticiniis." Aquinas states elsewhere that the sibyl "prophesied clearly concerning Christ [expresse de Christo prophetavit]" (III *Sent*., d. 25, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 2 [Moos ed., 3:806]). See also *STh* II-II, q. 2, a. 7, ad 3 (Leonine ed., 8:35): "The sibyl likewise predicted certain things concerning Christ, as Augustine says [Sibylla etiam praenuntiavit quaedam de Christo, ut Augustinus dicit]"; and *STh* II-II, q. 172, a. 6, ad 1 (Leonine ed., 10:384, ll. 8-9): "the sibyls foretold many truths about Christ [Sibyllae multa vera praedixerunt de Christo]."

[61] See H. W. Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy in Classical Antiquity*, ed. B. C. McGing (New York: Routledge, 1992), 152-73.

[62] Augustine, *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* 13.15 (*De utilitate credendi. De duabus animabus. Contra Fortunatum. Contra Adimantum. Contra epistulam fundamenti. Contra Faustum*, ed. Josephus Zycha. CSEL 25.1 [Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1891], 394-95); *De civ. Dei* 18.23 (*De civitate Dei Libri XI-XXII*, ed. Bernardus Dombart and Alphonsus Kalb. CCSL 48 [Turnholt, Brepols, 1955], 613-15).

[63] Lactantius, *Institutiones divinae* 4.18 (ed. Pierre Monat, Sources Chrétiennes 377 [Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1992], 160-74).

Seville also gave his endorsement, writing in his *Etymologies* that "songs by all of them [the sibyls] are published in which they are attested to have written many things most clearly even for the pagans about God and Christ."[64]

In commenting on Aquinas's account of faith, Capreolus underscores Aquinas's point that assent to the articles of faith may be brought about through natural ability alone, and he supplies some further examples of such individuals. He notes that "a disciple or apostle might be able to assent to the sayings of Christ" without the virtue of faith, but the assent of such an individual would lack discernment.[65] Similarly, someone without faith might assent to propositions expressing the articles of faith "by merely natural powers," as can an unbaptized child brought up in a Christian community, and in these individuals the assent is "not with discretion, ready, easy, and firm."[66] The assent to the articles of faith, therefore, need not be supernatural. There is assent without the virtue of faith, but the aforementioned protection from error in spiritual matters that is afforded by the virtue of faith will be lacking.[67]

VI. Aristotelian Assumptions of Aquinas's Account

In the present article I have presented evidence that A1 is not Aquinas's position: the virtue of faith is not a necessary condition for assent to the articles of faith. Although the articles

[64] Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies*, trans. Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, Oliver Berghof, and Muriel Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 181; *Etymologiae sive origines*, ed. W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911); *De Sibyllis* l. 8, c. 8: "Quarum omnium carmina efferuntur, in quibus de Deo et de Christo et gentibus multa scripsisse manifestissime conprobantur." In discussing the issue, Garrigou-Lagrange notes texts from Virgil's fourth *Eclogue* and Plato's *Republic* that have been interpreted to predict the Incarnation. See Garrigou-Lagrange, *Theological Virtues*, 219.

[65] Capreolus, *Defensiones* III, d. 24, §2 (Paban and Pegues, eds., 5:316): "discipulus vel apostolus posset assentire dictis Christi."

[66] Capreolus, *Defensiones* III, d. 24, §2 (Paban and Pegues, eds., 5:318): "ex puris naturalibus"; "non tamen discretum, promptum, facilem, firmum." A similar text can be found in at *Defensiones* III, d. 24, §2 (Paban and Pegues, eds., 5:316).

[67] See III *Sent.*, d. 23, q. 3, a. 3, sol. 2 (Moos ed., 3:751).

of faith are not naturally knowable, they are still naturally opinable. Aquinas identifies classes of individuals capable of assenting to the articles of faith while remaining within the ambit of natural powers; such individuals manage to overcome the disproportion between the natural limitations of the human intellect and the intrinsic intelligibility of the articles of faith. The heretic is the paradigmatic case of this kind of epistemological anomaly; as the denial of one article of faith by the heretic removes the virtue of faith, in principle a heretic could assent to all of the articles save the one that makes him guilty of heresy. In such a case, the heretic stands out as largely successful in regard to the truth, at least in contrast to the other classes of cognizers recognized by Aquinas, such as unbelievers, apostates, and the ignorant, as well as the aforementioned doubters and surmisers, among others. The heretic is an unusual case in Thomistic epistemology.

There is nothing in Aquinas's account that would rule out a scenario in which an individual assents to all of the articles of faith, not because they are proposed for belief by the Church, but for some other reason, and in such a case the individual would not have faith but would happen to opine correctly what is true. In such a case, this opiner would be more successful than the heretic insofar as the heretic denies at least one article of faith. Aquinas does not discuss such a scenario, however.

Aquinas's account of the cognitive success of the heretic exhibits two significant Aristotelian commitments. First, consonant with Aristotle, Aquinas identifies *opinio* as the epistemic state that admits of both truth and falsity.[68] The heretic's cognitive state possesses both truth values, since the heretic succeeds with some articles and fails with others. In a text that is excerpted by Capreolus, Aquinas explicitly notes that opinion admits of both truth values, and that certitude of adherence can be found in both true and false opinion, as well as in true and false faith: "Certitude of adherence . . . belongs not only to true faith, but also to false faith: for just as there are true and false

[68] I *Post Anal.*, c. 44 (Leonine ed., 1*.2:167-68, ll. 74-88); VI *Nic. Ethic.*, c. 3 (Leonine ed., 47.2:340, ll. 23-27).

opinion, so it is with faith, and one may adhere to falsity no less than to truth, as the Philosopher says."[69]

Aquinas's position underscores the Aristotelian position that the cognitive state of opinion is unrestricted, insofar as opiners can be found who assent without sufficient justification to a wide range of true and false positions. For example, Aquinas contends that that the force of custom (*consuetudo*) leads some to accept as self-evident what merely has been habitually accepted as true.[70] Additionally, in his commentaries on Aristotelian texts, Aquinas often identifies as the key error of many pre-Socratic philosophers that they assumed as self-evident what is either false or in need of demonstration.[71]

A second Aristotelian commitment of Aquinas's account of the heretic is his view that it is possible to opine truths of a higher science without possessing that higher science. Aristotle observes that a student may repeat the propositions stated by a teacher without understanding them,[72] and a dialectician may unconsciously produce a science after happening upon first principles by accident.[73] In both of these cases, the student and

[69] Capreolus, *Defensiones* III, d. 24, §2 (Paban and Pegues, eds., 5:316); *Quodl.* VI, q. 4, a. 1 (Leonine ed., 25.2:301, ll. 46-53): "Certitudo autem adhesionis . . . conuenit non solum fidei uere, set etiam fidei false; sicut enim est opinio uera et falsa, ita et fides, nec minus firmiter inheret aliquis falsitati quam ueritati, ut Philosophus dicit."

[70] See *ScG* I, c. 11 (Leonine ed., 13:24).

[71] See *STh* I, q. 45, a. 2, obj. 1 and ad 1 (Leonine ed., 4:465, 466); I *De Anima*., c. 6 (Leonine ed., 45.1:28, ll. 69-71); III *Phys*., lect. 11 (Leonine ed., 2:136); I *Metaphys.*, lect. 6 (Marietti ed., n. 109). In other texts, Aquinas contends that the Platonists erred with respect to the identification of *per se nota* principles. See I *Metaphys.*, lect. 16 (Marietti ed., n. 247). See also II *Sent*., d. 2, q. 1, a. 2, sol. (Mand. ed., 2:67); *De Pot*., q. 3, a. 1, obj. 1 and ad 1 (Marietti ed., 37, 39).

[72] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 7.3.1147a20. Aquinas points out that those who are intoxicated can express geometrical demonstrations. See VII *Nic. Ethic.*, c. 3 (Leonine ed., 47.2:392, ll. 201-4). See also Aristotle, *Physics* 1.4.188a5-6; and *Metaphysics* 12.1.1069a26.

[73] Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.2.1358a23-5: "The happier a man is in his choice of propositions, the more he will unconsciously produce a science quite different from dialectic and rhetoric. For if once he hits upon first principles, it will no longer be dialectic or rhetoric, but that science whose principles he has arrived at." See also *Rhetoric* 1.2.1358a7-10; 1.4.1359b12-17. This translation is taken from Aristotle, *The*

the dialectician end up expressing truths that transcend the limitations of their respective cognitive states. They opine truly, but lack a firm grasp of what they hold, and such is the situation of the heretic who opines correctly some of the articles of faith. To push the point further, one could say that the heretic who successfully opines some of the articles of faith approaches imperfectly the *scientia* of *sacra doctrina*, a *scientia* possessed in ascending degrees of perfection by the faithful, the blessed, and the divine intellect.[74]

Art of Rhetoric, trans. J. H. Freese (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1926), 31.

[74] My thanks go to three reviewers at *The Thomist* for astute comments and suggestions. I am also grateful to Thomas Osborne, Jr., Carl N. Still, Gregory LaNave, Robert Barry, Edward Macierowski, Lawrence Masek, Ed Houser, and Michelle Dougherty for discussion of earlier versions this paper.

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REDISCOVERING THE IMPRECATORY PSALMS: A THOMISTIC APPROACH

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WHILE DEBATING the structure of the new *Liturgy of the Hours*, some members of the Consilium for the Implementation of the Constitution on the Liturgy (*Consilium ad exsequendam Constitutionem de Sacra Liturgia*) drew attention to certain so-called imprecatory psalms[1] that contained material they deemed problematic for the modern person of prayer, describing the passages as "offensive to modern sensibilities"[2] and arguing that the "spiritual discomfort caused by expressions of anger and revenge . . . is felt especially by the younger people and by those who say the Office in the vernacular."[3] After a great deal of debate about whether these concerns justified the removal of certain psalms from the *Liturgy of the Hours*,[4] Pope Paul VI decreed that "a selection be made of psalms better suited to Christian prayer and that the imprecatory and historical psalms be omitted," without further

[1] "Imprecatory psalm" is a loaded term; Daniel Michael Nehrbass is right to say that "there are technically no imprecatory psalms; there are only praise psalms. Some of these praise psalms approach God with laments and imprecation" (*Praying Curses: The Therapeutic and Preaching Value of the Imprecatory Psalms* [Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick Publications, 2013], 4). Nonetheless, for clarity's sake we will continue to speak of "imprecatory psalms" and "imprecation," as a way of indicating those psalm verses where various forms of maledictions are pronounced upon specific enemies.

[2] Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy (1948-1975)*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 503.

[3] Ibid., 508.

[4] For Bugnini's discussion of the debate that led to the omissions, see ibid., 491-511.

specification.[5] To this end, 120 verses were omitted from the *Liturgy of the Hours* text,[6] comprising three whole psalms and additional verses from nineteen others.[7] In explaining the decision, the *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours* makes the following statement:

> Three psalms (58[57], 83[82], and 109[108]) have been omitted from the Psalter cycle because of their curses; in the same way, some verses have been omitted from certain psalms, as noted at the head of each. The reason for the omission is a certain psychological difficulty, even though the psalms of imprecation are in fact used as prayer in the New Testament, for example, Rv 6:10, and in no sense to encourage the use of curses.[8]

The concern about the suitability of certain strident verses from the Psalter for contemporary prayer noted in this passage

[5] Ibid., 509. Bugnini's report of the complete statement is as follows: "The Pope expressed his mind in a handwritten note to the secretary of the Consilium on January 3, 1968: 'In my view it is preferable that a selection be made of psalms better suited to Christian prayer and that the imprecatory and historical psalms be omitted (though these last may be suitably used in certain circumstances).' "

[6] The following is a complete list of the omitted verses: Pss 5:11, 21(20):9-13, 28(27):4-5, 31(30):18-19, 35(34):3a-b, 4-8, 20, 21, 24-26, 40(39):15-16, 54(53):7, 55(54):16, 56(55):7c-8, 58(57):2-12, 59(58):6-9, 12-16, 63(62):10-12, 69(68):23-29, 79(78):6-7, 12, 83(82):2-19, 109(108):2-31, 110(109):6, 137(136):7-9, 139(138):19-22, 140(139):10-12, 141(140):10, 143(142):12. For clarity's sake, both the Hebrew and the Vulgate numbering is given for each psalm citation throughout the article, with the Hebrew number appearing first. For the purposes of calculation, the psalm inscriptions have not been listed with the omitted verses, although the practice of systematically neglecting these texts is itself subject to criticism. For a fascinating exposition of how the psalm titles of Pss 56(57)-59(58) elucidate those psalms' imprecatory content, see Gary Anderson, "King David and the Psalms of Imprecation," *Pro Ecclesia* 15 (2006): 267-80.

[7] In addition, six Old Testament canticles have been edited for imprecatory content (omitting Ex 15:5-7, 14-16; Tob 13:12; Sir 36:8-12; Isa 26:5, 6, 10, 11; Isa 38:15, 16; Hab 3:5-12, 13b, 14), and one New Testament canticle (omitting Rev 11:18b). Two additional verses are omitted in the American edition of the *Liturgy of the Hours* that are not omitted in the 1971-72 *editio typica* or the 1985-87/2000 *editio typica altera* versions of the Latin *editio typica* of the *Liturgia Horarum*: Tb 13:16, and Jdt 16:2 (although 2b is omitted in the *editio typica*).

[8] *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*, §131. A brief commentary and analysis of the characteristics of the omitted verses can be found in William L. Holladay, *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years: Prayerbook of a Cloud of Witnesses* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1996), 304-15.

is not limited to texts for Roman Catholic worship; the current editions of the *United Methodist Hymnal*, the *Revised Common Lectionary*, and the *Episcopal Sunday Lectionary* have also omitted certain of the imprecatory psalms and edited out a number of verses in others.[9] A question naturally emerges from this common concern about imprecation in public prayer: Does the "psychological difficulty" raised by certain passages of the Psalter mean that Christians cannot or may not any longer pray the psalms of imprecation publically?

This question, pressing as it may be for compilers of liturgical books and those who recite the Psalter as part of their daily lives of prayer, has been surprisingly neglected in the scholarly realm. A handful of articles throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has addressed different aspects of imprecation in the Scriptures,[10] and three short monographs have attempted to provide a theological interpretation of the imprecatory psalms, with an eye to their use in preaching.[11] Moreover, in response to Pope Benedict's discussion of the

[9] Nehrbass, *Praying Curses*, 121-22.

[10] See especially Howard Osgood, "Dashing the Little Ones against the Rock," *Princeton Theological Review* 1 (1903): 23-37; Chalmers Martin, "The Imprecations in the Psalter," *Princeton Theological Review* 1 (1903): 537-53; Johannes G. Vos, "Ethical Problems of the Imprecatory Psalms," *Westminster Theological Journal* 4 (1942): 123-38; C. S. Lewis, "The Cursings," in *Reflections on the Psalms* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, Inc., 1958), 20-33; Thomas Smith, "Cursing Psalms: Can We Still Pray Them?" *African Ecclesial Review* 8 (1966): 324-28; Carl J. Laney, "A Fresh Look at the Imprecatory Psalms," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 138 (1981): 35-45; John Shepherd, "The Place of the Imprecatory Psalms in the Canon of Scripture," *Churchman* 111 (1997): 27-47, 110-26; Alex Luc, "Interpreting the Curses in the Psalms," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 42 (1999): 395-410; John N. Day, "The Imprecatory Psalms and Christian Ethics," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 159 (2002): 166-86; Anderson, "King David," 267-80; Dominick D. Hankle, "The Therapeutic Implications of the Imprecatory Psalms in the Christian Counseling Setting," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 38 (2010): 275-80.

[11] James E. Adams, *War Psalms of the Prince of Peace: Lessons from the Imprecatory Psalms* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1991); Erich Zenger, *A God of Vengeance? Understanding the Psalms of Divine Wrath*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996); Nehrbass, *Praying Curses*.

"dark" passages of the Bible in *Verbum Domini*,[12] another recent book has attempted to provide a hermeneutic for Scripture's most difficult passages, although without particularly focusing on the Psalter or imprecation.[13] Although often limited in its scope, this body of scholarship has provided many fruitful insights into the historical-critical context and contemporary relevance of the psalms; a notable lacuna, however, is a treatment of major figures from the Christian theological tradition who have engaged seriously with the issue of imprecation.

To begin to address this lacuna, this article will examine Thomas Aquinas's use of the imprecatory psalms and verses that have been omitted from the contemporary *Liturgy of the Hours*, as a way to understand the place of imprecation in prayer in the concrete practices of the Church today. I argue that Thomas's multi-layered, literal hermeneutic of imprecation in the Scriptures provides a theological and practical foundation for a much-needed reappropriation of the imprecatory psalms in the public liturgy of the Church. To see why this is so, I will first elaborate the *status quaestionis* in contemporary scholarship, then I will trace Thomas's theology of imprecation through his commentary on relevant psalms, and lastly I will address the relevance of Thomas's theory for the present day.

I. Imprecation in the Modern World

C. S. Lewis offers one of the twentieth century's most famous assessments of the imprecatory psalms in his *Reflections on the Psalms*:

> We must not either try to explain them away or to yield for one moment to the idea that, because it comes in the Bible, all this vindictive hatred must somehow be good and pious. We must face both facts squarely. The hatred is there—festering, gloating, undisguised—and also we should be wicked if we in any way condoned or approved it, or (worse still) used it to justify similar

[12] *Verbum Domini*, §42.

[13] Matthew J. Ramage, *Dark Passages of the Bible: Engaging Scripture with Benedict XVI & Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013).

passions in ourselves. Only after these two admissions have been made can we safely proceed.[14]

Moreover, he argues, the imprecatory psalms are "terrible or (dare we say?) contemptible,"[15] as well as "devilish";[16] they are truly inspired and allow the voice of God to be heard, yet even that divine voice is "hideously distorted by the human instrument."[17] Although Lewis's assessment is not widely shared by those who write on the imprecatory psalms, he does provide a striking witness to the "psychological difficulty" mentioned in the *General Instruction to the Liturgy of the Hours*. When intellectual fashion already links religion and violence so completely,[18] how is the contemporary person to pray verses like "Pour out your anger upon them; let your burning fury overtake them. . . . Charge them with guilt upon guilt; let them have no share in your justice" (Ps 69[68]:25, 28), or "Shame and terror be theirs forever. Let them be disgraced; let them perish!" (Ps 83[82]:18), or, most famously, "O daughter Babylon, destroyer, blessed whoever repays you the payment you paid to us! Blessed whoever grasps and shatters your children on the rock!" (Ps 137[136]:8-9)?[19]

We already err in answering this question, however, if we focus too narrowly on a few sensational and infamous verses. Imprecation is not a jarringly wrong note in the melody of the Psalter; it is part of the very theme itself, undergoing countless variations.[20] Almost a third of the Psalter has some imprecatory element;[21] even in the great psalm of comfort and peace, Psalm 23(22), the Psalmist illustrates his surety that the Lord is his

[14] Lewis, "Cursings," 22.

[15] Ibid., 21.

[16] Ibid., 25.

[17] Ibid., 32.

[18] Cf. the extensive treatment of the question in David Bentley Hart, *Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 75-98.

[19] Except for where they are part of quotations from Thomas's text, English translations of the psalms will come from the Revised Grail Psalms.

[20] Cf. Zenger, *God of Vengeance*, 13.

[21] Nehrbass, *Praying Curses*, 34.

shepherd by giving thanks that his enemies look on hungrily while he eats his fill (Ps 23[22]:5—"You have prepared a table before me in the sight of my foes").[22] To reject the imprecatory psalms as unsuitable for modern Christians is tantamount to rejecting the Psalter itself as a form of Christian worship that can speak to all times. Contemporary critics of Christianity have not failed to draw this connection, arguing that the Psalter's image of God is violent, capricious, dangerous, and cruel, not merely in a few isolated verses, but throughout the entire text.[23] Nor are these concerns baseless: consider, for instance, Psalm 136(135), the great hymn to God's mercy that announces a work of God and proclaims "for his mercy endures forever" in alternation for twenty-six verses. The opening verse surely raises no "psychological difficulty"—"O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever" (136[135]:1)—but later verses conjoin mercy, violence, and praise in a way similar to what occurs in the psalms which are often identified as imprecatory: "The firstborn of the Egyptians he smote, for his mercy endures forever. . . . Nations in their greatness he struck, for his mercy endures forever. Kings in their splendor he slew, for his mercy endures forever" (136[135]:10, 17-18). Yet even with its praise of violence, Pope Francis argues that Ps 136(135) "seems to break through the dimensions of space and time, inserting everything into the eternal mystery of love."[24] If this is the image the Psalter gives of God's merciful love, perhaps the Psalter's vision of love is itself too akin to what a contemporary Christian might call hatred. A consistent application of the criterion of "psychological difficulty," then, would not be able to rest with omitting a mere 120 verses; vast swaths of the Psalter, if not the text in its entirety, would have to remain on the cutting-room floor.

To raise the question of praying the imprecatory psalms is necessarily to raise the question of praying the Psalter at all. The

[22] See the analysis in Zenger, *God of Vengeance*, 10-11.

[23] See the analysis of humanist objections to the Psalter in ibid., 22-24.

[24] Pope Francis, Bull of indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy *Misericordiae Vultus* (April 11, 2015), §4.

radicality of this observation helps us to realize that the problem of biblical imprecation is not solved for contemporary Christians merely by bowdlerizing the texts offered for public, liturgical prayer. Rather, a robust theological hermeneutic of the Psalter's imprecation is needed, to enable Christians not merely to hide from difficult texts, but to understand them more deeply and discover them anew as genuine prayer.

The most thorough analysis to date of interpretive approaches to the imprecatory psalms is from Daniel Michael Nehrbass, who has cataloged thirteen different modes of reading the imprecations: spiritually or allegorically; as noninspired mythological allegories borrowed from Ancient Near Eastern tradition; as inspired historical witnesses to the emotions of the Psalmist, but not the will of God; as noninspired artifacts of a violent people; as culturally determined formulae that had meaning only in their original sociological milieu; as poetic moments of emotional catharsis; as witnesses to an Old Testament ethic that has been obviated in the New; as quotations from the Psalmist's wicked enemies, and not the words of the Psalmist himself; as magical spells transformed into liturgical prayers; as prophetic predictions about what will happen to God's enemies, not prayers that express a positive desire for calamity and damnation; as messianic words intended to be said by Christ himself, but not by other people; as appeals to God to be faithful to his covenant by bringing about the blessings and the curses he has promised; and as statements of total dependence upon God, allowing even the desire for personal vengeance to be subordinated to the divine will.[25] To this we can add an additional proposal from Johannes Vos: that the imprecatory psalms give witness to God's absolute sovereignty and the just sentence of condemnation under which all men fall, such that praying them means praying for God to carry out his inscrutable but holy justice.[26]

[25] Nehrbass, *Praying Curses*, 13-52.

[26] Vos, "Ethical Problems," 130-38. He also identifies and dismisses five of the same interpretive techniques Nehrbass describes: the approaches that see the imprecatory passages as simply dispensational, prophetic, allegorical, noninspired artifacts of a violent people, or the inspired emotions of the psalmist. Cf. ibid., 124-30.

Even from this cursory review of interpretive approaches to the imprecatory psalms, it is evident that a scholar's interpretive conclusions are themselves determined by (largely implicit) higher-order meta-principles of a theological nature. The first and most obvious principle to be dealt with is scriptural inspiration; the extent to which an author is committed to the inerrancy and inspiration of the Bible as a whole and its component parts, and how he understands those realities, will necessarily influence how he analyzes passages of violence and imprecation in the Psalter. Likewise, whether an interpreter accepts the unity of the Testaments and the various scriptural books with their redactional strata as a unified revelation to be mutually interpreted according to the analogy of faith will influence what he is willing to relegate to the past and what, if anything, he believes has enduring relevance. Three additional theological questions that will necessarily be considered, whether explicitly or not, in interpreting the imprecatory psalms are the reality of evil, the reality and justice of God's judgment (in the present and at the end of time), and the relationship of punishment to mercy.

The first two of these higher-order theological principles are included among the criteria that Nehrbass presents as essential for a legitimate interpretative strategy for the imprecatory psalms: "It will be faithful to the original context, realistic about human nature and experience, considerate of the integrity of the canon, mindful of God's inspiration, and have a legitimate contemporary application."[27] The last three have been under-explored in contemporary scholarship on the imprecatory psalms, but are just as relevant as questions of inspiration for determining the meaning of these passages. Taking into account an author's perspective on evil, judgment, and mercy, we are able to see that some thinkers who otherwise seem to have a simplistic or even hostile understanding of the imprecatory psalms actually have a far subtler grasp of the theological issues at stake than they are often credited with. Howard Osgood, for example, who is generally thought to be a simple allegorist, has

[27] Nehrbass, *Praying Curses*, 201.

a nuanced appreciation of how these psalms reveal God's justice being made manifest in the wicked;[28] even Lewis, whose strident criticisms we saw above, appreciates that the imprecatory verses show God's hatred for sin as a way of understanding his love for the sinner, even if he believes that the Psalmist shows evidence of hating both the sin and the sinner.[29] As we move on to consider the interpretive strategy that Thomas employs, then, we will analyze not only his interpretive conclusions, but also the theological principles that undergird them.

II. Thomas Aquinas as Interpreter of the Imprecatory Psalms

The contribution of Thomas to the analysis of the imprecatory psalms has yet to receive significant attention in modern scholarship. Matthew Ramage, for instance, considers the "dark passages" of the Bible according to a Thomistic theology of inspiration, but has little else to say about Thomas's approach to the psalms than to praise him for unifying their literal and spiritual senses with greater success than his theological predecessors.[30] Even Thomas Ryan's study of Thomas's commentary on the psalms, which may be the most thorough in the English language, never raises imprecation as a particular issue.[31]

While Thomas never devotes a particular treatise to the question of imprecation in the Scriptures, he does address the theoretical matter of how to interpret the imprecatory psalms throughout his œuvre, from his earliest writings to his latest.[32]

[28] Osgood, "Dashing the Little Ones," 23-37. For an assessment of Osgood as a representative of allegorical interpretation, see Nehrbass, *Praying Curses*, 14.

[29] Lewis, "Cursings," 32.

[30] Ramage, *Dark Passages of the Bible*, 72 n.46.

[31] Thomas F. Ryan, *Thomas Aquinas as Reader of the Psalms* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000). The topic is mentioned in passing in ibid., 123.

[32] For the purposes of this work, I am using the approximate dates for Thomas's œuvre given in Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1, *The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of

The result of his twenty-some years of meditation on the imprecatory psalms during his academic career is a subtle and multilayered interpretive strategy that is both exegetically and theologically rigorous.

In the course of his writings, Thomas quotes from the imprecatory verses omitted from the contemporary *Liturgy of the Hours* more than one hundred times. While his purpose in engaging with these verses depends on the situation, on three separate occasions he pauses from his analysis to present a general interpretive framework for understanding how imprecation functions in the Psalter. These three passages are certainly not the only places where Thomas presents a general interpretation of biblical imprecation, but they may be the only ones where he explicitly formulates these ideas as principles, rather than as responses to particular concerns.[33] All three were composed within a few years of each other (1271-73), but the first two were roughly simultaneous (1271-72). The two coincident passages are from the *Secunda pars* of the *Summa theologiae* (*STh* II-II, q. 25, a. 6, obj. 3 and ad 3) and *Quaestiones disputate de virtutibus* (*De Virtut.*, q. 2, a. 8, obj. 15 and ad 15). In the *Summa* passage, on the question of whether sinners are to be loved out of charity, Thomas first presents an objection drawn from the Psalter:

> Furthermore, it belongs to friendship that we should want and wish good things for our friends. But the saints desire evil things for sinners out of charity, according to the psalm [9:18], *let sinners be turned into Hell.*[34] Therefore sinners are not to be loved out of charity.[35]

America Press, 2005), 328-29. Thomas's analysis of interpretive strategies for the imprecatory psalms ranges from his *Super Isa.* (1251-53), written while still a student in Cologne or as a young bachelor in Paris, to *In Ps.* (1273), written a few months before his death in March 1274.

[33] *In Ps.* 27, n. 4, and *In Ps.* 34, n. 17, for instance, are quite similar to the passages quoted below, but throughout Thomas's ideas are phrased as specific interpretations of the verses at hand, rather than as general principles.

[34] Unless otherwise noted, italicized portions of Thomas's text indicate a biblical quotation, not emphasis.

[35] *STh* II-II, q. 25, a. 6, obj. 3. All translations from Thomas are my own. Latin source text is from corpusthomisticum.org.

His resolution of the objection allows him to explain the nature of imprecatory speech in the Psalter and how it is to be understood as an expression of the charity to which Christians are called:

Imprecations of this sort that are found in Sacred Scripture can be understood in three ways. In the first mode, they are understood in the mode of a prediction and not in the mode of a wish, so that the sense of *let sinners be turned into Hell* is *they will be*. In another mode, they are understood in the mode of a wish, so that the desire of the wish is not referred to the punishment of men, but to the justice of punishing, according to the psalm [58(57):11] *the just shall rejoice when he sees his vindication*. For in punishing God *does not delight in the perdition of the wicked*, as it is said in Wis 1[:13], but in his justice, because *the Lord is just and loves justice* [Ps 11:7(10:8)]. In the third mode, so that the desire is referred not to the punishment itself, but to the removal of guilt, namely so that sins may be destroyed and men may remain.[36]

In *De virtutibus*, Thomas explores a similar topic: whether the love of enemies is a counsel of perfection. In posing the objection that it is not, he again turns to the Psalmist's imprecatory language:

To imprecate evils, especially eternal damnation, is opposed to love both as a feeling and as an effect. But the prophets imprecated evils on their adversaries; thus it is said in Ps 69(68):29: *let them be blotted out from the book of life, let them not be inscribed with the just*; and again Ps 55(54):16: *let death come upon them, and let them descend living into Hell*. Therefore to love one's enemies is not of the perfection of charity.[37]

In refuting this claim, he again takes the opportunity to present a general set of principles for interpreting biblical imprecation, this time more briefly:

The imprecations that are found in the prophets are to be understood as predictions, as it is said *let them be blotted out*, that is, *they will be blotted*

[36] *STh* II-II, q. 25, a. 6, ad 3. For further elaboration of the idea of God destroying sin (cf. Rom 6:6) to manifest his justice, see *Super Rom.*, c. 3, lect. 3 and *STh* II-II, q. 83, a. 8, ad 1.

[37] *De Virtut.*, q. 2, a. 8, obj. 15.

out. For they make use of such a mode of speaking because they conform their will to the divine justice revealed to them.[38]

Lastly, a parallel text from the *In Psalmos* rounds out Thomas's explicit interpretive analysis of the imprecatory psalms:

It is to be said that all these imprecations that are read in the prophets can be understood in three ways. In the first mode, they are understood in the mode of proclamation, because they are said in the spirit of God and predict the future. In the mode of prayer, as if to say *turn away*, etc., that is, *you will turn away*. In the Hebrew it is in the present: *you turn away*. In another mode, according to the conformity to the divine justice. In the third mode, according to spiritual admonition. When sinners cease to sin, then they die and cease to be sinners. And this is to be prayed for continually.[39]

The first and the third of these passages, from the *Summa theologiae* and *In Psalmos*, respectively, provide two accounts of a threefold method of considering the imprecatory psalms that, despite certain terminological differences, harmonize precisely. In these passages, the three modes in which the Psalmist can be understood to be speaking are the mode of prophecy, the mode of conformity to the divine justice, and the mode of merciful punishment, or punishment considered as a medicine for sin. The second text, from *De virtutibus*, treats the first two modes similarly, but omits the third.

The first thing to be said about Thomas's interpretive model is that the modes he talks about—whether there are two or three of them is for the moment irrelevant—are not to be understood as mutually exclusive alternatives, but as mutually implicated ways of signifying meaning that are at play in the complex phenomenon of biblical imprecation. Depending on the specific situation, one, two, or three of the modes of speech may be engaged at any given moment; the human author and the divine author may intend all three of these modes at the literal level, leaving aside for the moment the possibilities of

[38] *De Virtut.*, q. 2, a. 8, ad 15.
[39] *In Ps.* 53, n.4.

spiritual reading.[40] Moreover, these are precisely modes of *speech* and not modes of *understanding*; the three ways that imprecation can be understood correspond to three modes in which the Psalmist conveys meaning. The distinction is important insofar as it indicates that the Psalmists themselves signify literally in different ways depending on the purposes of an individual text, and it is the interpreter's task to understand the modes of speech that a given Psalmist is employing at a given time. It is not the case that the interpreter must impose his own understanding on a recalcitrant text, and neither is it the case that he must discover out of his own hermeneutical resources and creativity a way of explaining these difficult texts according to his own standards. The interpreter does not have to invent a meaning that saves the phenomena of the imprecatory psalms for Christianity; he must respond to the genuine truths that the Psalmist communicates, which is only possible if the interpreter understands the modes in which the Psalmist is speaking. We can speak of Thomas's principles as an interpretive strategy, but this must be understood as the interpreter's response to realities that originate in the text, not the interpreter's manipulation of the text.

With these clarifications in place, we may examine what precisely Thomas means by the three modes of speech that he identifies in the imprecatory psalms. The first mode that he identifies is the proclamation of prophecy, or prophetic prediction.[41] Although he generally discusses this mode of speech in conjunction with others, he mentions it in isolation in at least three passages.[42] In the first of these, Thomas comments on Isaiah 2:19 ("And men shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the LORD," RSV). He explains that one interpretation of the passage is that "here

[40] On the multiplicity of the literal sense even in the human author's mind, see Mark F. Johnson, "Another Look at the Plurality of the Literal Sense," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 2 (1992): 117-41, at 126.

[41] On Thomas's understanding of the Psalmist as a prophet, see Ryan, *Reader of the Psalms*, 15-16.

[42] *Super Isa.,* c. 2, lect. 3; *In Threnos*, c. 3, lect. 22; *Super Rom.*, c. 11, lect. 1; *In Ps.* 54, n. 13.

it predicts the future, for it has been explained not as imprecating, but as predicting the overthrow of the powerful," an interpretation that he immediately bolsters with a quotation from Psalm 63(62):10-11: "Those who seek to destroy my life shall go down to the depths of the earth. Put to the power of the sword, they shall be left as prey for the jackals."[43] Thomas is so certain that the Psalmist is speaking in the mode of prophecy rather than imprecation that these verses, generally considered imprecatory, are for him evidence of the nonimprecatory interpretation he is proposing for Isaiah's prophecy. Likewise, when commenting on Paul's use in Romans 11:7-12 of the imprecatory verses Psalm 69(68):23-24, he states: "He speaks of this defect as it regards the cognitive power, when he says *let their eyes be blinded that they may not see*, which is said rather in predicting than in desiring. Eph 4:18, *having minds blinded by darkness*."[44] We should not assume that Thomas is naïve in his interpretation here, as if he were afraid to admit that the Psalmist could be praying for the wicked to receive God's punishment. When commenting on the imprecations with which Lamentations 3 ends, he says, "here he asks for vindication against his adversaries: and because of his assurance of his prayer being heard, he says this rather in predicting than in praying. . . . He first predicts just retribution on sinners, *give them their due*, that is, punishment. Ps 28(27): *grant unto them according to their works, return their recompense to them*."[45] Here the ground seems to have shifted; while previously he had emphasized that the Psalmist's words indicated prediction only, rather than positive desire for the consequence prophesied, in this passage Thomas argues that the prophetic element of the Psalmist's speech is in fact merely an effect of his certainty of having his prayer answered. The central question then becomes this: What does Thomas believe the Psalmist's positive desire is when he speaks harshly of his enemies? To answer this question, and to see the coherence and merit in Thomas's

[43] *Super Isa.*, c. 2, lect. 3.
[44] *Super Rom.*, c. 11, lect. 1.
[45] *In Threnos*, c. 3, lect. 22.

understanding of the prophetic mode of imprecatory speech, we must turn to the other two modes he identifies: conformity with the divine justice and merciful punishment.

As with the prophetic mode, Thomas normally speaks of the mode of conformity with the divine justice in conjunction with the others, but he addresses it in isolation in at least two illustrative passages.[46] In the *Summa theologiae*, when wrestling with the apparent contradiction between the command to love one's enemies and the witness of imprecation in both the Old and New Testaments, Thomas again turns to imprecatory language to raise an objection against the obligation to pray for one's enemies:

> To be vindicated over one's enemies results in the misfortune of the wicked. But the saints seek vindication over their enemies, according to Rev 6, *how long will you not vindicate our blood on those who dwell in the world?* And they also rejoice about the vindication over the wicked, according to the psalm, *the just shall rejoice when he sees his vindication* [Ps 58(57):11]. Therefore one is not to pray for his enemies, but rather against them.[47]

To resolve the difficulty raised by the objection, Thomas turns to the divine justice:

> As Augustine says in the same book [*De Serm. Dom. in Monte*], "the vindication of the martyrs is that the reign of sin be overthrown, from which they have endured so much." Or, as he says in the book *Quaest. Vet. et Novi Test.*, "they ask to be vindicated not with their voice, but with reason [ratione], as the blood of Abel cries out from the earth." But they rejoice over their vindication, not on its own account, but because of the divine justice.[48]

The sudden appearance of the divine justice at the end of this passage is essential for understanding how Thomas approaches biblical imprecation. The fact that scriptural authors in both Testaments ascribe imprecatory phrases to holy people is, for Thomas, never a question. His concern is to establish the answer to the question posed above: what does the inspired author positively desire when he speaks of the vindication of the

[46] *Super Iob*, c. 16; *STh* II-II, q. 83, a. 8, obj. 2 and ad 2.
[47] *STh* II-II, q. 83, a. 8, obj.2.
[48] *STh* II-II, q. 83, a. 8, ad 2.

righteous through the ruination of the wicked? One answer is that the just do not desire either their own vindication or the overthrow of the wicked as such, as if they were slavering to see the blood of their enemies darken the ground; rather, their positive desire is for the fulfillment of the divine justice, which means that they desire to see all things achieve the final end towards which they have been ordered in God's providence. The Psalmist who speaks in this mode hands over his own understanding of crime and punishment to God, praying that God will bring about the perfection of justice for which he made the world; this dynamic of inner transformation and receptivity to the will of God is what the one who prays such a verse can become open to.

But Thomas is alive to the danger here: that one can fall deeply into sin by praying such a prayer as a confirmation of own's own judgment about the state of own's own soul and others', rather than as an act of humble conformation to the will of God. As Thomas says in his commentary on Job, "because just men delight to see sins punished in justice, according to the psalm *the just shall rejoice when he sees his vindication* [Ps 58(57):11], the friends of Job, considering themselves to be just and Job to be a sinner, rejoiced at his punishments as if they were rejoicing with the divine justice."[49] This danger is precisely why, as I shall demonstrate, Thomas emphasizes that speaking an imprecation on the wicked is not *ipso facto* an act pleasing to God; the act becomes an offering of praise when it is a true conformation to the divine justice, which necessarily involves allowing one's own will to be shaped interiorly by the will of God.

The third mode of imprecatory speech that Thomas identifies, merciful punishment, is only named explicitly in two of his three presentations of his interpretive strategy, but it occurs in isolation from the others no fewer than five times throughout his œuvre, suggesting that it is an essential part of his inter-

[49] *Super Iob*, c. 16.

pretation.[50] To contemporary ears, the very notion of merciful punishment may seem like an oxymoron: either God remits punishment in his mercy, or he favors his justice and punishes. But this perspective sets God against himself by dividing his justice and mercy, and also unduly separates human sin from its natural consequences, as if the destructive effects of sin are externally imposed by God, rather than flowing from the nature of the act itself. Thomas considers the matter differently, seeing a "progression of sin" that begins with the sinner's guilt, moves through the punishment that arises from the disorder of sin—here he quotes Psalm 59(58), "scatter them in your strength, and tear them down"—and concluding in God's unmerited mercy, whereby the sinner is reconciled to God.[51] The second step is inseparable from the third; to speak more precisely, the punishment that God allows the sinner to experience is itself already an act of God's mercy, drawing the sinner out of his complacency and allowing him to confront the gravity of his misdeeds. Specifically addressing "those who presumptuously reckon their own justice," he quotes Psalm 63(62):12, "the mouth of all liars shall be silenced," contending that by such punishment they "may submit themselves to God like a sick man to a doctor, recognizing their own guilt."[52] Commenting on Psalm 28(27):5, "they ignore the deeds of the LORD and the work of his hands. May he ruin them and never rebuild them," Thomas argues:

> It must be known that man frequently sins, and from this incurs the sentence of punishment; but because of the many works of the divine justice, man is moved to fear, and through the works of mercy is moved to hope, when he is converted to penitence and is healed; but if out of habit he is hardened in his sin and loses his understanding thereof, he has no hope of salvation.[53]

God's action in punishing sinners is inseparable from his action in drawing them to himself in mercy; the experience of the

[50] *In Threnos*, c. 1, lect. 9; *Super Rom.*, c. 3, lect. 2; *In Ps.* 1, n. 3; *In Ps.* 20, nn. 6, 9; *In Ps.* 27, n. 5.

[51] *In Threnos*, c. 1, lect. 9.

[52] *Super Rom.*, c. 3, lect. 2.

[53] *In Ps.* 27, n. 5.

consequences of sin moves the person to fear greater suffering and so awakens in him the knowledge of his own sins and the desire for a different way of life,[54] which in turn can move into hope in God's forgiveness and the awareness of God's providential ordering of all things to himself. If the sinner refuses to abandon his ways and hardens his heart against God, the punishments he experiences are still the fruit of God's mercy, revealing that even the worst sinner has not escaped from God's providence. In either case, God is merciful. In either case, God is just.

It is clear how deeply interrelated these three modes of speech are. When Thomas contends that the Psalmist utters an imprecation as a prediction rather than a statement of his own will, he is not shying away from the harsh language and strong emotions expressed therein, but is rather making a statement about how scriptural speech works. When explaining why the imprecatory psalms do not violate Jesus' command in the Sermon on the Mount to pray for one's enemies, Thomas clarifies that the imprecations "are not said from the prophet's own will," but, citing 2 Peter 1:21, are from the Holy Spirit. They are thus "spoken according to an understanding of the divine justice, and thus . . . are rather predictions of the future than prayers."[55] Prophecy thus cannot be separated from the prophet's understanding of the divine justice; the prophet knows by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that the wicked against whom he is speaking have merited hell by their evil actions, and speaks accordingly. But it is not surprising that many modern readers find these open invocations of calamity, punishment, and hell difficult to tolerate; Thomas recognizes that the ways of the divine justice are not always transparent to man, and so argues that one of the major purposes of the imprecatory psalms is "to conform one's own will to the divine will,"[56] learning to understand and accept the meaning of the divine justice by allowing one's own notion of justice to be

[54] Cf. *In Ps.* 20, n. 6; and *In Ps.* 1, n. 3.

[55] *In Ps.* 5, n. 7.

[56] *In Ps.* 34, n. 6; cf. *In Ps.* 9, n. 12.

purified by God.[57] The imprecatory psalms further reveal that God's justice is full of mercy, and that the punishments that are assigned to the wicked are first predicted so that the sinner may turn from his way and avert the calamity foretold, and, failing that, they are enacted medicinally, so that what the wicked did not learn through prophecy he may learn through suffering the consequences of his action. The Psalmist who prays, "May death fall suddenly upon them! Let them go down alive to the grave" (Ps 55[54]:16), prays that the wicked may experience the pangs of death on earth—that his life may be like the grave—so that he may avoid the eternal punishments of hell that they foreshadow.[58] The imprecatory psalms are thus best understood in the context of the "failed" prophecy of Jonah, who predicted a disaster that was averted by repentence, and the prophecies of Jeremiah and Isaiah, who were ignored in their predictions of a calamity that, nonetheless, became a medicinal punishment that worked for the salvation of the righteous remnant of Israel.[59] The positive desires of the Psalmist when he speaks an imprecation are thus threefold: the good of prophecy, the divine justice, and the conversion of sinners. Understood in the light of these three goods, it is clear that the imprecatory psalms are not opprobrious aberrations from the scriptural witness to God's mercy and justice, but indispensable revelations of how God's mercy and justice actually work to punish and reconcile sinners.

So how does Thomas's interpretive framework fare regarding the higher-order theological principles described above? It is abundantly evident that Thomas's conception of the imprecatory psalms is determined by his certainty that evil is real, that God judges justly, both during this life and at the end of time, and that God's punishment is an expression of his mercy, rather than a contradiction thereof. His preference for literal rather than allegorical reading of even the most controverted imprecatory passages arises from these theological

[57] *De virtut.*, q. 2, a. 8, ad 15; *In Ps.* 30, n. 14.

[58] *In Ps.* 54, n. 13.

[59] On the example of Jonah, see Nehrbass, *Praying Curses*, 108-9.

convictions; while the imprecations can be allegorized fruitfully, as even Thomas does on occasion,[60] they are most important for what they say literally about evil, judgment, punishment, and conversion.

Considered in the light of Nehrbass's criteria for an interpretive strategy for the imprecatory psalms, it is evident that Thomas holds fast to the integrity of the scriptural canon and God's inspiration thereof, but what about the other three? Is Thomas's interpretation "faithful to the original context, realistic about human nature and experience," and does it have "a legitimate contemporary application"?[61]

Regarding the first of these, the prophetic-predictive interpretation of the imprecatory psalms in general has been criticized as being based on a faulty understanding of what can be concluded from the fact that Hebrew does not have an optative mood. Even without an optative, it is argued, Hebrew still expresses the wish of the speaker, and in the majority of the imprecatory psalms, it is clear that the speaker is not merely predicting a calamity that will befall his enemies, but is praying for it to happen.[62] Since the prophetic model does not have sufficient linguistic evidence on its side, it appears to be little more than an evasion of the difficult language of imprecation.[63] At first it may seem that Thomas falls into this linguistic misunderstanding. He does in fact justify his contention that the Psalmist is speaking in the mode of predictive prophecy at least once with reference to the fact that the Hebrew expresses in the present indicative what the Latin expresses in the imperative.[64] Generally, however, his contention is not based on his sparse knowledge of Hebrew grammar so much as his theological understanding of the realities at hand. Thomas frequently

[60] E.g., Thomas structures much of the *Contra impugnantes* around an allegorical reading of Ps 83[82]:3-5. See especially the prologue and p. 5, c. 6, corp. On occasion he will bolster an allegorical reading of a different passage with a literal reading of one of the imprecatory psalms: e.g., *Super Matt.*, c. 9, lect. 5; *In Ps.* 9, n. 15.

[61] Nehrbass, *Praying Curses*, 201.

[62] Vos, "Ethical Problems," 126; Luc, "Interpreting the Curses," 338-39.

[63] Nehrbass, *Praying Curses*, 37-38, 55.

[64] *In Ps.* 53, n. 4.

acknowledges that the imprecatory psalms are prayers, and believes that the just should rejoice at the downfall of the wicked.[65] The Psalmist speaks predictively, however, because it is always possible for the sinner to convert and so avoid the punishment that he is due. The Psalmist does not desire that his enemy be punished *per se*, but that God's justice be fulfilled and that the sinner be converted, which means that even a straightforward imprecatory prayer always contains at least an implicit qualification that this is what the sinner deserves according to his past and current action, and that he may be spared if he converts.

Thomas's interpretive strategy admirably satisfies Nehrbass's second criterion, that the explanation be realistic about human nature and experience. Thomas does not balk at the strong emotions present in the Psalter, and does not feel the need to explain away the existence of real, physical enemies or the desire for their downfall. Nor is he ignorant of the dangers involved in imprecation, insofar as the one who calls down God's wrath may be presumptuously and erroneously judging himself to be righteous and the other unrighteous.[66] He repeatedly explains during an exposition of an imprecatory verse that sin blinds men from seeing the light of justice, and causes them to fall into worse errors of judgment.[67] This means first that sin leads men into worse sin, and second that men are often blinded by their sin and are thereby unable to see the error of what they are doing. For this reason, "that we might be able to see the divine light, he healed man's eyes, making from his saving flesh a salve, that the Word might cure eyes corrupted by the desires of the flesh with the salve of his own flesh."[68] The path to salvation is the same for all: the healing of the blindness of sin, which means conformity to the divine will through conformity to the saving flesh of Christ. To pray an imprecation

[65] E.g., *Super Isa.*, cc. 14, 30, 66.

[66] *Super Iob*, c. 16.

[67] *In Jeremiam*, c. 10, lect. 9; *Super Ioan*., c. 1, lect. 8; c. 5, lect. 1; c. 8, lect. 7; c. 19, lect. 4; *In Ps.* 6, n. 5; *STh* II-II, q. 15, a. 1; *Super Matt*., c. 11, lect. 1; *Super II Cor.*, c. 4, lect. 2; *Super Eph*., c. 6, lect. 4; *Super Heb.*, c. 11, lect. 7.

[68] *Super Ioan.* c. 1, lect. 8.

against the wicked, then, necessarily requires a desire to be shown one's own sinfulness and to be led to repentance; to pray that another be punished and repent, I must first be willing to be punished and repent myself. The conformity to God's will and his divine justice that comes about through praying the imprecatory psalms with an open heart, then, involves discovering and repenting of one's own sins, as well as learning to accept the justice and mercy of God as he pardons and condemns. Although this ideal is lofty, it bespeaks a deep familiarity with the reality of human nature and experience.

A further note of realistic humanity in Thomas's perspective on the imprecatory psalms can be found in his constant emphasis that the one who prays for the collapse of evil is praying against a sin, and not against a sinner. Every time he comments on Psalm 139(138):22, "I hate them with a perfect hate," he makes a similar point: "one does not hate people with a perfect hate, except insofar as they are enemies of God, for this is insofar as they sin; wherefore one hates nothing in those whom he hates with a perfect hate, except sin."[69] To put a finer point on it, "perfect hate does pertain to charity," in that perfect hate of someone means "to hate the evil of someone and to love his good."[70] Perfect hate "perseveres in detestation of evil all the way to its final reprobation," hating "the wicked insofar as they are sinners."[71] Perhaps Thomas's clearest explanation of what exactly the Psalmist is praying for when he prays imprecations is found in *De decem praeceptis*, commenting on the command to love one's neighbor. Having quoted Psalm 139(138):22 and the injunction in Luke 14:26 to hate father and mother and sister and brother, he says:

> In all things we do, the actions of Christ must be our example. For God loves and hates. In any human being, two things are to be considered: namely, nature and sin. The nature in men certainly must be loved, and the sin hated. Wherefore, if someone were to wish a man to be in hell, he would hate the

[69] III *Sent.*, d. 30, q. 1, a. 1, ad 6. In addition to the passages cited below, he quotes Ps 138:22 in at least *De virtut.*, q. 2, a. 8, ad 8; and *In Ps.* 24, n. 13.

[70] *STh* II-II, q. 25, a. 6, ad 1.

[71] *Super Rom.*, c. 7, lect. 3.

nature; but if someone were to wish him to be good himself, he would hate the sin, which is always to be hated. Ps 5:7: *I have hated all those who work iniquity*. Wis 11:25: *Lord, you love all that is, and you have not hated any of the things you made*. This, therefore, is what God loves and hates: he loves nature and hates sin.[72]

Thomas recognizes the temptation in the human heart to allow anger and pain to spread from a detestation of the deed to the detestation of the human agent, and explains how that false move can be avoided by learning to love as God loves, which includes learning to hate as God hates. This, too, is a profound insight into the reality of human nature, insofar as man's power to love and his power to hate both must be and are capable of being brought into harmony with God's will. Even man's desire for vengeance can be, when duly given to God and received back from God purified as "perfect hate," an act of love to God and neighbor. All that remains to be seen, then, is whether Thomas's interpretive framework for the imprecatory psalms has contemporary relevance.

CONCLUSION: THOMAS AQUINAS, IMPRECATION, AND MODERN MAN

Having examined Thomas's threefold interpretation of the imprecatory verses as speaking in the mode of predictive prophecy, conformation to the divine justice, and merciful punishment, it remains to be seen whether this solution can address the "psychological difficulty" felt by modern man about uttering such words in public prayer.

The contemporary scholars who have argued most persuasively in favor of the liturgical use of the imprecatory psalms have done so by means of one of two related interpretive frameworks: either a covenant-based model that sees the imprecations as appeals to God to fulfill the blessings and curses promised at Sinai,[73] or a dependence model that sees the imprecatory statements as total gifts of one's will to God, in

[72] *De decem praec.*, a. 2.

[73] E.g., Day, "Imprecatory Psalms," 166-86.

whom all justice resides.[74] Both of these frameworks rely more or less implicitly on the second two modes of imprecatory speech that Thomas identifies, in that asking God to fulfill the curses of Sinai or offering to God one's desire for vengeance both reduce to allowing one's will to be conformed to the divine justice; and while the connection with openness for the sinner to convert is not necessary given the nature of these two modern frameworks, their authors suggest that a certain desire for the other's conversion ought to be a part of imprecation.[75]

The importance of these conceptual similarities is that they show how the most important aspects of the contemporary defenses of the imprecatory psalms are already present in the writings of Thomas, only harmonized more fully and contextualized more richly, theologically speaking. Thomas is uniquely able to show the interrelations between the limited, human way of knowing the state of anyone's soul that is proper to predictive prophecy, the need to be conformed internally to the divine will and justice, and the way that punishment in its threat and its actuality is an indispensible part of mercy. The robust threefold approach that Thomas takes to the imprecatory psalms is uniquely well situated to show how God's justice and mercy are noncontradictory aspects of God's providence in the world, and how prayer for the overthrowing of evil and even prayer against the acts of a specific evildoer lead the one who prays to a deeper conversion himself, harmonizes him more fully with the divine will, increases his desire for the conversion of the sinner, and enables him to hate the sin that destroys his brother while holding fast to the love he bears him as a child of God.

Moreover, Thomas's emphasis on the literal interpretation of the psalms, even in their most difficult and imprecatory passages, makes his methodology more approachable and intuitive for contemporary people, for whom the patristic

[74] The clearest representatives of this approach are Zenger, *God of Vengeance*; and Nehrbass, *Praying Curses*.

[75] Day, "Imprecatory Psalms," 186; Nehrbass, *Praying Curses*, 108-9; Zenger, *God of Vengeance*, 85, suggests a certain openness to conversion, but this is a very minor theme in his work.

methods of allegorization can seem somewhat alien. Thomas accepts that the words mean what they appear to mean, and provides easily appropriated principles for how to grow in unity with God through praying the imprecatory psalms.

Following Thomas's interpretive model, I maintain that Erich Zenger is correct to say that "*not a single psalm* may be or need be excluded from the church's official Liturgy of the Hours." [76] The "psychological difficulty" mentioned by the *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours* is, in fact, the precise reason why praying the imprecatory psalms is so important for modern man; if we have so far lost sight of the notion of God's justice and the concept of punishment as an extension of mercy that we find these ideas psychologically trying when we confront them, it is the Church's duty to provide Christians with an opportunity to learn these important aspects of God's providence as they are taught by the Scriptures.[77]

Moreover, the Church's public liturgical worship is precisely the place where the faithful are best able to appropriate these lessons about God's justice and mercy. As *Verbum Domini* has it, a "fundamental criterion of biblical hermeneutics" is that "*the primary setting for scriptural interpretation is the life of the Church*."[78] The *Liturgy of the Hours* is of critical importance for this living engagement with the Word of God, in that the daily office is "a privileged form of hearing the word of God, inasmuch as it brings the faithful into contact with Scripture and the living Tradition of the Church."[79]

The *Liturgy of the Hours* is an ideal location for a prayerful, interpretive encounter with the Scriptures to take place. The antiphons, psalm descriptions, and titles that accompany every psalm provide opportunities to introduce the faithful to the

[76] Zenger, *God of Vengeance*, 91.

[77] Cf. Adams, *War Psalms*, 13: "The very words that many condemn as dishonoring to God are, in fact, promoting His honor. Could it be true that these psalms about which preachers refuse to preach are the ones our people need most to hear?"

[78] Benedict XVI, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini* (September 30, 2010), §29.

[79] Ibid., §62.

interpretive principles that would enable them to engage with the text more prayerfully; additionally, the communal nature of the prayer allows for shared reflection on the Scriptures, fostering a willingness to be challenged by the Word of God and to enter more deeply into it. Omitting the imprecatory aspects of the psalms has the exact opposite effect, allowing these difficult passages to remain obscure, and suggesting a certain fear or suspicion of them on the part of the praying Church.

Change in liturgical prayer should happen only slowly and with great caution. After so many decades of praying the Psalter without its imprecatory passages, any reintroduction must proceed carefully and with much education. Yet if the faithful in the Church are ever to be able to make use of the imprecatory psalms in public worship again, the threefold interpretive framework of Thomas will be an indispensable tool.

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THE HAPPINESS OF "THOSE WHO LACK THE USE OF REASON"

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Human beings would have been created uselessly and in vain were they unable to attain happiness, as would be the case with anything that cannot attain its ultimate end. (*De Malo,* q. 5, a. 1, ad 1)

A STUDY OF "those who lack the use of reason" in the thought and spirit of St. Thomas Aquinas has much to offer the patient reader. We better understand what it means to be a rational animal, the image of triune God, when we investigate why, exactly, "mindless persons" (*amentes*) are not exceptions or even outliers in Aquinas's account of the creaturely dignity and perfectibility of the human being.

Aquinas remarks with some regularity on persons afflicted with the condition *amentia*, which is variously and inconsistently interpreted (in translation) as "imbeciles," "fools," "madmen," "lunatics," "the demented," or "the insane." The *amentes* are persons who lack the use of reason in a profound and debilitating way; and, as I will show, the fact that we are sometimes found in this state informs Aquinas's analysis of human nature and, in particular, Aquinas's teaching on the good wrought by Christ for the members of his body. Our guiding question is this: Thinking with Aquinas, how do we account for the natural and supernatural happiness of those of us who lack the use of reason?

My purpose in this article is to explore what Aquinas has to say about the happiness of persons who are baptized and

confirmed by the Church, and who have what neuropsychologists would describe as a profound cognitive impairment. The question is particularly striking when we recall that, for Aquinas, the distinguishing aptitude of the human being (proper to our intellectual nature and coordinate with our creaturely perfection) is the operation of an incorruptible intellectual capacity—a capacity, however, that is only reduced from potentiality to act when the corruptible "internal sense organ" is disposed to receive, in terms of health and circumstance, a coordinated sense impression of material species. Thus, a further question emerges: According to Aquinas, what is the perfective effect of grace in this life upon the nature of a person who completely lacks the use of reason due to an organic corruption or disorder of the 'internal sense organ'?

The discussion is divided into five parts. I begin (part I) by locating those who "lack the use of reason" within the theological infrastructure of Aquinas's moral psychology and I identify the main problematic. With respect to that problematic, the principal conceptual resources provided by Aquinas are then outlined and two challenges are identified (part II).

The first challenge is methodological, concerning the speculative import of the sacramental life of the Church. Francisco de Vitoria's *Relectio de eo ad quod tenetur homo veniens ad usum rationis* (1534) highlights for us (part III) a constellation of judgments relevant to interpreting Aquinas on these themes, in particular, Aquinas's formulation of prerational intellectual acts vis-à-vis the participation and membership of "mindless persons" in the sacramental life of the Body of Christ.

The second challenge is to show the continuity between Aquinas's account of the human being and his practical remarks on those who lack the use of reason. Specifically, given the various ways that, and degrees to which, the human being can lack the use of reason, I trace (part IV) Aquinas's analysis of the power and operation of intellect, focusing on the intellectual acts which can be impaired and, concurrently, the intellectual acts which cannot be impaired in a living human being. Aquinas's remarks on those latter acts not only reflect the

significance of the doctrine of the image of God in his account of human nature, but, even more, they shed light on the prosthesis of sacramental grace in his understanding of the properly human happiness *capacitated* and *purposed* in all whom God has called in Christ—a call to discipleship and devotion that includes those of us who have a profound, life-long cognitive impairment (Rom 8:28; 9:11; Eph 1:3-14; II Tim 1:8-11).

I conclude (part V) with a description of the path of contemplative happiness that, on Aquinas's terms, remains open for baptized persons who, like the *amentes*, suffer an involuntary alienation from bodily sense and who, thereby, utterly lack the use of reason.

I. "Mindlessness" and Aquinas's Moral Psychology

Although Aquinas's remarks on "those who lack the use of reason" and related themes are limited and often *ad hoc*, what we find is integrated into the whole of his thought. To wit, his theological anthropology and moral vision presumes the ordinary fact that sometimes we human beings are found to have profound and utterly debilitating cognitive impairments.

Aquinas's understanding of this fact is coordinate with a belief he shares with St. Paul: although our bodies are subject to infirmity and death because of original sin, through Christ we are healed—and from the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is given to strengthen wayfarers, helping us in our weakness, interceding for us and through us in wordless groans to the Father (Rom 8:10, 26).[1]

Physically burdened, distressed, and weighed down by decay, God's elect are called, justified, and purposed for glory, because nothing in creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ (Rom 8:21, 35-39). It is important, for Aquinas, that the happiness conferred through the merciful grace of God and perfected in the sanctifying gifts of the Holy Spirit cannot be

[1] *STh* III, q. 68, a. 1; I-II, q. 109, a. 9.

decisively frustrated by the kinds of impairment that cause some of us to "fall short" of the common (or expected) cognitive endowment proportionate to human nature, whereby one lacks sufficient knowledge for the guidance of life (*STh* I, q. 23, a. 7, ad 3).[2]

Aspects of the guiding question of this article have been raised in relation to Aquinas's thought, although the properly human happiness of those who lack the use of reason is not often regarded as a topic that can be investigated in his corpus on exegetical grounds.[3] Despite the limited contemporary engagement, these themes are hardly esoteric to composite beings such as us (Ps 103:13-16), nor are they alien to Aquinas's thought. We are intellectual creatures, an incorruptible rational soul, existing in and through a corruptible body, as the spiritual principle, the form, of that body. We are sensual beings whose incarnate, natural happiness includes the knowledge and love of immaterial truth and goodness, alive in the image of our Creator; beings that can be capacitated by supernatural grace to know and love the triune God, the primal origin of all Truth and Goodness, our ultimate happiness. Yet, we are fragile and vulnerable, rational animals whose creaturely freedom is forged in the dynamic intercourse of our creaturely limitation

[2] Quotations of Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* will be from the English translation by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (1948; repr., Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1981).

[3] For example, Robert Slavin variously discusses brain injury, "degrees of intellectual capacity," "imbeciles," and "mental defectives" in his 1936 dissertation entitled *The Philosophical Basis of Individual Differences: According to Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Ph.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 1936). See also Jean Porter, "The Subversion of Virtue," *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* (1992): 19-41; Michael S. Sherwin, "Saint Thomas, Helen Keller, et la rationalité de l'amour," *Nova et vetera* 77, no. 2 (2002): 21-32; M. J. Iozzio, "The Writing on the Wall . . . Alzheimer's Disease: A Daughter's Look at Mom's Faithful Care of Dad," *Journal of Religion, Disability & Health* 9, no. 2 (2005):49-74; Richard Cross, "Baptism, Faith and Severe Cognitive Impairment in Some Medieval Theologies," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 14 (2012): 420–38; John Berkman, "Are Persons with Profound Intellectual Disabilities Sacramental Icons of Heavenly Life? Aquinas on Impairment," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 26 (2013): 83-96.

(*defectus*); beings called to holiness and virtue, and who remain as yet still burdened by the corporeal wounds of original sin (*infirmus*).[4]

This limitation and weakness is where Christ meets us (Isa 53; Phil 2:5-11), Aquinas reminds us, so that we might be healed and restored in friendship with the Creator, supernaturally strengthened *in this life* for holiness and spiritual progress toward our twofold end: moral virtue and the contemplative, beatific vision of divine glory.[5] Given Aquinas's depiction of the human condition and the utter gratuity of grace that I have just outlined, how are we to understand the holiness and growth of Christians who lack the use of reason?

There is no question for Aquinas that those who lack the use of reason receive spiritual healing and restoration in the sacramental grace of Christian baptism.[6] Moreover, he holds

[4] For a general introduction to these themes in Aquinas, see Miguel J. Romero, "Aquinas on the *corporis infirmitas*: Broken Flesh and the Grammar of Grace," in *Disability in the Christian Tradition: A Reader*, ed. Brian Brock and John Swinton (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2012), 110-111. In that essay I discuss how under the class of infirmities that uniquely impair or constrain the use of reason, Aquinas presumes distinct etiologies for "conditions analogous to what we today might call diseases, disorders, and dysfunctions of a mental, cognitive, or neurological nature." Aquinas's teaching on the moral implications of our corporeal limitations and infirmities is the topic of my forthcoming book, *Destiny of the Wounded Creature: St. Thomas Aquinas on Disability*.

[5] *STh* I, q. 21, aa. 3-4; III, q. 14; qq. 61-63.

[6] *STh* III, q. 68, a. 12. For Aquinas, "those who lack the use of reason" are human beings, formed in the image of God (*STh* I, q. 93, a. 4; q. 93, a. 8, ad 3), which consists in a natural aptitude for knowledge and love of God that is common to all human beings. Short of death, the essential and incorruptible capacity of the rational soul for supernatural grace and "all things pertaining to salvation" cannot be frustrated by the wounds of original sin. Although Aquinas's rationale for maintaining the durability of human nature will be noted and presumed, my primary interest is to describe on Aquinas's terms how even those who lack the use of reason in a profound and utterly debilitating way can have properly human acts of knowledge and will and, thereby, be capacitated by grace for meritorious knowledge and love of God. This is not to say that all persons who lack the use of reason have actual knowledge and actual love of God; rather, for Aquinas, in principle, all human beings are *capable* of actual knowledge and love of God by way of sacramental grace—even when they lack the use of reason in a

that the habits of both the cardinal virtues and theological virtues are divinely infused,[7] in the ordinary way, at the baptism of those who lack the use of reason—although the corresponding acts of virtue are variously impaired by the accidental corporeal limitations and weaknesses particular to each person.[8]

On these terms, there is no inconsistency when Aquinas describes the actual moral virtue that is possible for those who have partial or confused use of reason—that is to say, those who lack the *full* or *complete* use of reason.[9] Specifically, Aquinas maintains that a person who lacks the full use of reason, due to relative immaturity or impairment of the underlying cognitive faculties necessary for moral deliberation, can nevertheless be fully virtuous in the properly Christian sense of moral virtue (a presently imperfect actualization of the divinely infused perfection in natural and supernatural virtue).[10] That potential for virtue in this life is the same possibility for any individual who is capable of rational deliberation, on any level.

As I discuss below, on Aquinas's terms, what distinguishes those who *absolutely* lack the use of reason and, paradigmatically, the *amentes* is that these persons are not, *by definition and in principle*, capable of rational deliberation. At first blush, the moral implications of such a condition are striking when we recall that, according to Aquinas, the happiness called virtue requires the use of reason and the exercise of freewill. This leads Jean Porter to remark that, as with Aristotle,

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profound and utterly debilitating way (and, moreover, even in the worst-case, speculative scenario).

[7] *STh* I-II, q. 63, a. 3; I-II, q. 65, a. 3.

[8] *STh* I-II, q. 113, a. 3, ad 1; II-II, q. 45, a. 5; q. 47, a. 14, ad 3; III, q. 69, a. 6; q. 69, a. 9, ad 1.

[9] *STh* I-II, q. 58, a. 4, ad 2.

[10] Porter, "The Subversion of Virtue," 33-37, esp. 37. On this point, Porter remarks that "Aquinas allows for a possibility that Aristotle could not have admitted, namely, that a particular person might be fully virtuous in the most proper sense of the term (which for Aquinas is of course the Christian sense), even though he lacks the natural capacities to attain full moral maturity."

on Aquinas's account, the acquisition of the [cardinal moral] virtues is a daunting task. Not only do they presuppose a general desire to do good and avoid evil, but they also presuppose the possession of complex mental capacities and skills that not everyone can be expected to have. . . . [Nevertheless, by contrast with Aristotle, Aquinas] shares the widespread Christian conviction that all human beings, except those who are immature or mentally defective, share essentially similar capacities for reason, and therefore for moral judgment.[11]

Porter correctly identifies Aquinas's qualified appropriation of Aristotle's theory of the virtues, with respect to the predicate capacities required for the acquisition of moral virtue and, thereby, the actualization of the specifically human form of natural happiness. Such a qualification is necessary, on Aquinas's part, since Aristotle maintained that only the exceptionally rare, well-born, well-bred, and fortunate adult male is capable of performing the characteristic activities (*ergon*) which constitute the fully realized end (*telos*) proper to the rational form (*eidos*) of the human being.[12] Thus, in at least one sense, the fact that there are persons living with maximally profound, utterly debilitating, lifelong cognitive impairments (on the order of *amentia*) could be considered to present a special problem or challenge for moral theology in the Thomistic tradition.[13] Specifically, it might seem that persons who utterly lack the use of reason are incapable of *actually* realizing any properly human good in this life and, possibly, incapable of attaining the

[11] Ibid., 28.

[12] *De Anima* 412b8-25; *Nicomachean Ethics* 1099b9-1101a22; 1177a12-1177b26; 1178b25-1179a 33.

[13] Recently, a constellation of self-identified nonspecialists in Thomistic studies have put forward interpretations and critiques of Aquinas's moral psychology in the case of persons who have a profound cognitive impairment. For example, see Hans S. Reinders, *Receiving the Gift of Friendship: Profound Disability, Theological Anthropology, and Ethics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008), 88-122, 279-310, 352-54; idem, "Life's Goodness," in *Theology, Disability and the New Eugenics: Why Science Needs the Church* (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 163-81; Amos Yong, *Theology and Down Syndrome: Reimagining Disability in Late Modernity* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2007), 264-66.

beatific vision in the life to come.[14] In fact, however, Aquinas regards it as wholly unreasonable that the happiness of any human being be totally hindered by a natural attribute proper to our first, creaturely perfection (that is, the union of soul and body).[15]

By Aquinas's theological reckoning, Aristotle's understanding of the form and perfection of the human being is incomplete—insofar as the characteristic activity of the rational animal (the use of reason) is not identical, on the Christian view, to the specifying or essential aptitude of the human being *qua* creature. That is to say, for Aquinas, the definitive, specifying aptitude of the human being is our innate capacity for intellectual apprehension of intelligible truth—a capacity that can be supernaturally perfected (in act) to know and love the Creator, toward a mode of intellectual apprehension that

[14] For Aquinas, although the morally relevant "use of reason" is an unambiguous threshold, the capacity itself is not an easily and unambiguously identifiable on/off operation (*STh* I-II, q. 89, a. 6; III, q. 68, a. 10). In the case of unbaptized persons who lack the use of reason (in particular, but not exclusively, children), Aquinas holds forth the blissful state of "the limbo of children," where there is "no pain of sense," as a solution. Nevertheless, our present concern is the moral potential and actual happiness of cognitively impaired Christians *in this life,* as they journey with us today: baptized and confirmed persons who lack the use of reason (as far as we can tell), who seem to have been in that state from birth, and who have no reasonable chance of recovery. Among other things, Aquinas provides us with the conceptual resources to reflect upon our everyday experience of Christians who seem to lack the use of reason and, thereby, helps us to speculate in a disciplined way on the potential for holiness and virtue enjoyed by these members of the body of Christ.

[15] *STh* I, q. 84, a. 3: "unreasonable does this seem if we suppose that it is natural to the soul to be united to the body . . . for it is unreasonable that the natural operation of a thing be totally hindered by that which belongs to it naturally." See also *STh* I, q. 76, a. 5: "Therefore it behooved the intellectual soul to be united to a body fitted to be a convenient organ of sense. . . . For example, the artisan, for the form of the saw, chooses iron adapted for cutting through hard material; but that the teeth of the saw may become blunt and rusted, follows by force of the matter itself. So the intellectual soul requires a body of equable complexion, which, however, is corruptible by force of its matter. If, however, it be said that God could avoid this, we answer that in the formation of natural things we do not consider what God might do; but what is suitable to the nature of things, as Augustine says (Gen. ad lit. ii, 1). God, however, provided in this case by applying a remedy against death in the gift of grace."

exceeds our nature.[16] Strictly speaking, for Aquinas, human nature is not "rational," but "intellectual"[17]—the deliberative use of reason, of course, being only one of the acts of the intellectual soul that distinguishes the human being from other animals.[18]

Aquinas considers this living, specifying capacity for intellectual apprehension to be the essence of our status as the image of triune God—an immaterial and incorruptible aptitude that is borne by the human being as such.[19] As God knows and loves God's self, the human being reflects the image of the Creator when it knows and loves that which we share in common with the Creator: our intellectual nature. For Aquinas, following Augustine, the human being knows and loves its

[16] *STh* I, q. 93, a. 4.

[17] *STh* I, q. 76, a. 1, s.c. and corp.: "Sed differentia constitutiva hominis est rationale; quod dicitur de homine ratione intellectivi principii. Intellectivum ergo principium est forma hominis . . . quod necesse est dicere quod intellectus, qui est intellectualis operationis principium, sit humani corporis forma. Illud enim quo primo aliquid operatur, est forma eius cui operatio attribuitur. . . . Hoc ergo principium quo primo intelligimus, sive dicatur intellectus sive anima intellectiva, est forma corporis" (". . . difference is derived from the form. But the difference which constitutes man is "rational," which is applied to man on account of his intellectual principle. Therefore the intellectual principle is the form of man. . . . We must assert that the intellect which is the principle of intellectual operation is the form of the human body. For that whereby primarily anything acts is a form of the thing to which the act is to be attributed. . . . Therefore this principle by which we primarily understand, whether it be called the intellect or the intellectual soul, is the form of the body"). See also *STh* I, q. 77, a. 1, ad 7; *De Verit*., q. 15, a. 1. Cf. Robert Pasnau's remark: "We can now understand exactly what makes the intellect so special. It is special not because of its rationality, but because of its capacity to have thoughts that are universal in comprehension—to have general, abstract ideas. . . . Our capacity for universal ideas allows us to draw inferences and make predictions on the basis of our classificatory schemes. It is not precisely our rationality, then, that distinguishes us from other animals, but our capacity for having ideas that are universal in comprehension. Rationality is a tactic developed to supplement the limited comprehensiveness of our ideas" (*Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002], 323).

[18] *STh* I, q. 79, a. 8; q. 93, a. 3; q. 58, a. 3.

[19] *STh* I, q. 93, aa. 4 and 7.

creaturely relation to the divine intellect when it knows and loves anything.[20]

To be clear, although the image of the Trinity in the human being is constituted in this living activity of the intellectual soul, this does not mean that the human being is always *actually* understanding and willing. As Aquinas explains, the acts of knowing and loving continue to exist virtually in the living aptitude of the soul for the apprehension of intelligible truth and the staid connatural disposition of the intellect toward knowledge possessed. However, that the human being is not always actually knowing and loving does not mean that there are human beings who never know and love.

Relevant to our present concern, Aquinas builds upon Augustine's teaching in book 14 of *De Trinitate* (on the permanence and perfection of the image of God) and Aquinas affirms that God's grace capacitates those who lack the use of reason for actual, meritorious knowledge and love of God. Specifically, Aquinas (*STh* I, q. 93, a. 8, ad 3 and ad 4) summarizes and amends Augustine's extended comments (*De Trinitate* 14.6-7 and 19-20) on the interim, this-worldly happiness of Christians whose use of reason (the operation of *mens*) is profoundly weakened, due to disease, or extraordinarily confused, due to the wounds of original sin (cf. *STh* I, q. 93, a. 7, ad 4).

Thus, when Aquinas's account of the specifying aptitude of the human being is read in its proper context, we see that Aquinas appropriates as his own Augustine's view that Christians who lack the use of reason have acts of understanding and contemplation that we cannot see (*quasi obumbrata*), which seem "to be almost nothing" (cf. *De Trinitate* 14.6). For although a person's knowledge of temporal things is weak (*inferma*) and confused (*errans*), "there is such potency in this image of God" that even a Christian who has completely lost the light of his eyes (i.e., "awareness, completely rubbed out of consciousness") is capable of blissfully cleaving to

[20] *STh* I, q. 93, a. 7.

the source of the image, partaking in divine truth and happiness, and being sheltered in the safety of God's countenance from the violations and afflictions of this present darkness (cf. *De Trinitate* 14.19-20).

The "exception" that Porter notes in Aquinas's view, pertaining to the deliberative capacities and moral aptitude of children and those who lack the use of reason, is not a formal, specifying exception (these are not essentially defective, subhuman beings, neither for Aquinas nor for Porter); rather, on Aquinas's terms, the exception is an accidental impairment of certain derivative faculties that *manifestly distinguish* the human being from other animals, but that *do not specify* the intellectual nature of the human being (this will be discussed further in section IV). That is to say, the Christian doctrine of creation and, in particular, the specific creaturely dignity correlative to the human being's intellectual capacities provide Aquinas with the means to revise Aristotle's function argument (i.e., on the correlation between *eidos* and observable, manifest *ergon*) and the means to subvert Aristotle's account of the natural capacities that predicate the attainment and growth of properly human happiness.

II. The Conceptual Resources Provided by Aquinas

A) Prerational, Intellectual Acts

The problematic outlined above illustrates the kind of interpretive muddles that often follow from the presumption that Aquinas's teleological conception of human nature and the human good is generally indistinguishable from the moral psychology and moral theory he appropriated from Aristotle. On the contrary, Aquinas's moral psychology, his account of human happiness, and the corporeal preconditions of human happiness all presume a very un-Aristotelian theological judgment (concerning a class of intellectual activity, proper to our essential nature and substantially composite being) which undermines the metaphysically anemic caricatures of profound

cognitive impairment often presumed in contemporary engagements with Aquinas on these themes.[21] Specifically, on Aquinas's view, there are acts of the intellect that do not constitute the use of reason, but that provide the requisite material conditions for a properly human, supernatural happiness *in this life*.

That the human being has prerational, intellectual acts should not be overly controversial when it comes to interpreting Aquinas—for example, with respect to the human fetus and newborns, this exegetical judgment about Aquinas's view[22] coincides very well with contemporary neurological and developmental research from the field of cognitive psychology.[23] This correspondence has provided support to the claim that human beings bear species-normative inclinations coordinate with even the most rudimentary sensual knowledge of

[21] For example, the caricature "Kelly" presumed by Reinders in *Receiving the Gift of Friendship*, 19-24: "Kelly never had, and never will have, a sense of herself as a human being . . . as far as we can tell, Kelly's condition does not allow her any 'interior space,' by which I refer to the inner life, that part of me where I am with myself. . . . Kelly lacks the capacity for mental states such as 'being sad'. . . . if the capacity for purposive action is what makes us human, where does that leave human beings like Kelly?" Similarly, consider Michael Sherwin's interpretation of Helen Keller's preverbal moral status, where language use is taken to be coordinate with moral agency ("Saint Thomas, Helen Keller, et la rationalité de l'amour," *Nova et vetera* [Fribourg] 77, no. 2 [2002]: 21-32).

[22] In *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, Pasnau draws attention to these kind of intellectual acts (actual knowledge and actual will), which are not the use of reason or equal to the capacity for language use: "Aquinas is quite clear that what makes human beings special, among animals, is not rationality but rather our ability for conceptual thought. This is the special capacity of an immaterial mind. It is a capacity that is most clearly displayed in communication, but surely it is present in children before that point. In fact, though Aquinas is never explicit on this point, it is evidently his view that the fetus is already engaged in conceptual thought. . . . once the rational soul is infused, Aquinas believes that this newly human fetus *immediately* begins to use its mind. (Evidently, the fetus receives enough sensory stimulus to set the intellect in motion.) So though a newborn child is, to all appearances, less intellectually developed than a cat or a pig, Aquinas would insist that appearances are misleading. That child has been using its mind ever since it first was created" (118-19).

[23] Birgit Mampe et al., "Newborns' Cry Melody Is Shaped by Their Native Language," *Current Biology*, vol. 19, n. 23 (2009): 1994-97; Alison Gopnik, *The Philosophical Baby* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2009).

the world, actual knowledge and desire that is antecedent to rational deliberation.[24] In the case of adults who lack the use of reason, these various kinds of prerational, intellectual acts are the natural precursor for a grace-capacitated happiness that is not contingent upon the intact capacity for rational deliberation and choice.[25]

B) With Respect to Happiness: Distinguishing "Intellectual Acts" and "Use of Reason"

For Aquinas the moral significance of the use of reason (including the accidental privation of the corporeal faculties requisite for the use of reason) follows from the standard Christian affirmation that there is a relationship between our account of the human being, our understanding of human well-being with respect to particular ends, and our understanding of the redemption and perfection of the human being as the image of God. However, it is a mistake to collapse the various acts of the intellect that predicate properly human happiness under the particular intellectual act that we commonly refer to as the "use of reason." This much is evident from the way Aquinas parts with Aristotle on the ontological import and teleological

[24] See the overview provided by Nicanor Pier Giorgio Austriaco, O.P., "The Soul and Its Inclinations: Recovering a Metaphysical Biology with the Systems Perspective," in *The Human Animal: Procreation, Education and the Foundations of Society*, Pontificia Academia Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, Proceedings of the 10th Plenary Session (2010): 49-63.

[25] See Eleonore Stump's remark (speaking specifically of madness, mental retardation, and dementia) that some readers of Aquinas are unwilling to accept Aquinas's view that severe bodily affliction does not necessarily frustrate the imperfect flourishing that is possible for human beings in this life (to say nothing the of the perfect flourishing of the life to come). Stump's assessment is that this unwillingness is "based on the unreflective assumption that those suffering from these afflictions have lost all the mental faculties needed for moral and spiritual development" (Stump, *Aquinas*, 578 n. 59).

implications of a condition that impairs the ordinary operation of a person's cognitive faculties.[26]

Although moral virtue (and the requisite cognitive faculties) belong to the ordinary path toward properly human happiness—"virtue is the road to happiness" (*ScG* III, c. 58)—Aquinas does not appropriate Aristotle's presumption that the fullness of human happiness *just is* the use of reason or that our proper happiness is simply *correlative to* excellence in the use of reason. The complexity of Aquinas's formulation of the relationship between intellectual acts, the use of reason, and the perfection of human happiness is plainly stated in his remarks on the effect of the sacrament of confirmation, where he writes (presuming the grace of baptism):

> the intention of nature is that everyone born corporally, should come to perfect age [i.e., capable of performing "complete acts," characterized by the freedom of deliberative self-movement]: yet this is sometimes hindered by reason of the corruptibility of the body, which is forestalled by death. But much more is it God's intention to bring all things to perfection, since nature shares in this intention inasmuch as it reflects Him. . . . Now the soul, to which spiritual birth and perfect spiritual age belong, is immortal; and just as it can in old age attain to spiritual birth, so can it attain to perfect spiritual age

[26] For example, there is Aquinas's subversive interpretation of Aristotle's remarks on the *phusei doulon* ("those who participate in reason so as to apprehend it, but not to possess it" [*Pol*. 1.1254b16-25]). This is the so-called "slave by nature" described throughout book 1 of Aristotle's *Politics* (see 1252a24-1252b9; 1253b15-1255a2; 1259b22-1260b6). Briefly stated, in his commentary on *Politics* 1252b9-10, Aquinas interprets the "strange" (*extraneum*) condition of Aristotle's "slave by nature" as only intelligible if the description is referring to a person who lacks the use of reason due to an accidental physical impairment (*Sententia libri Politicorum* I, lect. 1, n. 15). Thus, commenting upon the line from Euripides given in 1252b9-10, against Aristotle, Aquinas uses a play on Aristotle's earlier use of the word "barbarian" in *Nicomachean Ethics* 1149a9-10 to speculate on why the *phusei doulon* might seem different or "strange." This is one point where Aquinas rejects the anthropological judgments behind Aristotle's construal of human defect (i.e., the allegedly natural defects that nature intends for women, bestial men, and the slave by nature) and, thereby, Aquinas undermines the allegedly natural correlate that Aristotle presupposes in his rationale for the justice of civil slavery.

in youth or childhood; because the various ages of the body do not affect the soul. Therefore this sacrament should be given to all.[27]

In other words, for Aquinas, although the human intellect is functionally debilitated or hindered in its act—for example, by brain lesion or physical immaturity[28]—the intellectual soul is not essentially impaired or corrupted when the body is impaired or corrupted.[29] Rather, any functional debility of the soul's powers, coinciding with particular corporeal limitations (*defectum*) or weaknesses (*infirmum*) of the body, is an accidental *constraint* of immaterial operations.[30]

These immaterial operations of the soul, constrained as they are, can be elevated by the sacramental grace of baptism and confirmation to partake and grow in a contemplative happiness that exceeds our nature, in this life. As I will discuss below, although these constrained operations can be healed and perfected by grace, they nonetheless remain functionally limited and proportionally weak. Nevertheless, for Aquinas, the intellectual powers of the human being are not in themselves weakened when the body becomes weak, because the soul,

[27] *STh* III, q. 72, a. 8.

[28] *STh* I, q. 84, a. 7; q. 84, a. 8, ad 2; q. 101, a. 2; *De Virtut.*, q. 5, a. 2, ad 3.

[29] *STh* I, q. 54, a. 5; q. 76, a. 1, ad 2; q. 76, a. 3, ad 1.

[30] See *De Verit.*, q. 18, a. 8, ad 2: "quod quamvis intellectus non utatur organo, tamen accipit a potentiis quae organo utuntur; et ideo propter impedimentum vel defectum corporalium organorum eius actus impeditur" ("Although the understanding does not use an organ, nevertheless, it receives something from faculties which use an organ. Therefore, its act can be restricted because of an impediment or defect of the bodily organs"); *Q. D. De Anima*, a. 14, ad 18: "dicendum quod anima non debilitatur debilitato corpore, nec etiam sensitiva; ut patet per id quod philosophus dicit in I de anima, quod si senex accipiat oculum iuvenis, videbit utique sicut et iuvenis. Ex quo manifestum est quod debilitas actionis non accidit propter debilitatem animae, sed organi" ["The soul does not grow feeble when the body grows feeble, not even the sentient soul. For, as the Philosopher observes in the *De anima* [I, 4, 408b 20], if an old man acquired the eye of a youth, he would see as well as the youth does. From this it is clear that functional debility does not result from a debility of the soul but from that of a bodily organ") (translation by John Patrick Rowan [St. Louis and London: B. Herder Book Co., 1949]).

which is the living principle of these powers, is unchangeable (*STh* I, q. 77, a. 8, ad 3).

C) The Possibility of Contemplative Happiness

Invoking the authority of Gregory on the contemplative life and the physical lesion incurred by Jacob (Gen 32:30-32), Aquinas notes that our spiritual delight in the contemplation of truth can grow even when the body is hindered, since "anyone who has a maimed foot will lean on that foot which is sound" (*STh* II-II, q. 180, a. 7, ad 4). He discusses, in particular, a class of contemplation wherein "one is dead to this life . . . by withdrawal from bodily sense," associated with the awesome disruption of spiritual rapture. A person is found in this state when he contemplates intelligible truth without the use of bodily sense or the deliberative use of reason (*STh* II-II, q. 180, a. 5, corp. and ad 2).

To be sure, in the present state of life intellectual contemplation is impossible without the sense impression of the phantasm (and the underlying corporeal faculties related to the various operations of the "internal sense organ"). Nevertheless, for Aquinas, there is a particular withdrawal from bodily sense and uplifting to divine things made connatural to the human being by supernatural grace. Of course, in a living human being, no withdrawal from bodily sense can amount to the absolute privation of sense. In other words, a kind of contemplative happiness remains possible for those who suffer *involuntary alienation* from their sense due to bodily weakness and who, concurrently, have been disposed by grace to know and desire those things that are proper to contemplative rest in the beauty of God's goodness and truth.[31]

[31] *STh* II-II, q. 175, a. 1. Speaking of the rapture where a person is uplifted to divine things by the Spirit of God, Aquinas identifies a state of "withdrawal" due to "a bodily cause, as happens to those who suffer abstraction from the senses through weakness." On its own, such withdrawal from the senses is not the rapture of being uplifted to a vision of divine things by the Spirit of God. Nevertheless, here and in the surrounding

The possibility of rest in the beauty of God's goodness and truth, in the case of baptized and confirmed persons who lack the use of reason, can be investigated and further described on Aquinas's terms. Specifically, Aquinas's way of thinking can help us understand the halting and constrained, but essentially unimpaired, contemplative happiness in knowledge and love of God that is possible for Christians who lack the use of reason—while maintaining that everything the human being understands is by way of the sense phantasm and that we cannot desire anything without the intellectual apprehension that comes by way of the senses.[32]

D) Aquinas on "amentia": A Speculative Description of a Practical Reality

By Aquinas's description, a condition like *amentia* will certainly impact the acquisition of moral virtue, insofar as the immaterial powers of the soul are configured to cooperate with the internal sense organ in the coordinated production and illumination of the phantasm.[33] What Aquinas provides us is a way to think about the natural and supernatural perfection of the baptized *amens*, even those who are said to "absolutely never have had the use of reason and who have remained so

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discussion, Aquinas provides speculative terms for a description of "the simple act of gazing upon the truth" that is *possible* for Christians who lack the use of reason in a profound and utterly debilitating way. That is to say, Aquinas's account of rapture establishes a framework for considering the contemplative potential of persons who experience an involuntary withdrawal from the senses and who, through baptism, have been infused with supernatural knowledge and a supernatural principle of self-movement (cf. *STh* II-II, q. 180, a. 3, ad 1).

[32] Hence the standard Scholastic axioms "nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu" and "nihil appetitur nisi quod apprehenditur."

[33] See *STh* I, q. 84, a. 7; II-II, q. 15, a. 1; I, q. 75, a. 3. Viewed in terms of the ordinary operation of human cognition, as Aquinas presents it, the *amens* suffers an infirmity in which the internal corporeal sense powers necessary for the operation of reason are unable fully to cooperate with the possible intellect in the exercise of its proper act in relation to the intelligible truth presented by the active intellect. The faculty of deliberation is, thereby, impaired.

from birth" (*STh* III, q. 80, a. 9). It is important to note that Aquinas's way of thinking does not hinge on a special, question-begging presumption concerning the holiness of people who are debilitated by such a severe condition.[34]

The condition called *amentia* is central to Aquinas's remarks on how those who "lack the use of reason" participate in the sacramental life of the Church and how those who "lack the use of reason" are, in this life, perfected into the likeness of Christ. In the various places Aquinas uses the term *amentia*, the condition is characterized as a profound impairment of the corporeal faculties necessary for "understanding," or "reasoning," or the "use of reason"; and the etiology of the condition is variously attributed to congenital dysfunction, direct physical injury, or a general deterioration of brain function (either progressive or sudden).[35] This is analogous to what contemporary neuropsychologists describe as a profound cognitive impairment. For example, when considering whether "blindness of mind" mitigates moral culpability, Aquinas writes:

> Even as physical blindness is a privation affecting the organ of sight so is blindness of mind a privation affecting the principle of mental sight or intelligence. This is threefold. One is the light of natural reason, and of this, as being of its very nature, a rational soul is never deprived, though sometimes the exercise of its proper act may be impeded, as in imbeciles and the mad [*amentibus et furiosis*], through an impediment of the sensory powers which the human intellect needs for actual understanding. . . .

[34] Aquinas accounts for the experience of living in the condition of *amentia* by way of a broad spectrum of analogous conditions and processes, for example, ordinary child development, sleep, temporary bouts of insanity, inebriation, and mental incontinence. He takes these associations from Aristotle and, like Aristotle, he is careful to distinguish one from the other. As noted above, he undermines the anthropological and moral conclusions of Aristotle when it comes to the damaged human body. Nevertheless, insofar as *amentia*, temporary bouts of insanity, coma, and inebriation, etc., appear similar in bodily expression, Aquinas infers that the experience of such conditions may also be analogous. However, he regards this as nothing more than inference, and he is profoundly modest and agnostic about what we can reasonably speculate. Simply put, we have no way of knowing from this side of the eschaton how and what precisely God communicates with a human being whose use of reason is profoundly impaired.

[35] Cf. *STh* II-II, q. 8, a. 6, ad 1; II-II, q. 45, a. 5; II-II, q, 46, aa. 1 and 2.

The blindness excusing from sin is that which arises from a natural [corporeal] defect of one unable to see.[36]

For Aquinas, the operation of the internal sense powers is principally ordered toward the production of phantasms, which are necessary for common sense, imagination, and the estimative and memorative faculties. He recognizes that these internal sense faculties are subject to deterioration, damage, and decay:

In the present state of life in which the soul is united to a passible body, it is impossible for our intellect to understand anything actually, except by turning to the phantasms. First of all because the intellect, being a power that does not make use of a corporeal organ, would in no way be hindered in its act through the lesion of a corporeal organ, if for its act there were not required the act of some power that does make use of a corporeal organ. Now sense, imagination and the other powers belonging to the sensitive part, make use of a corporeal organ. Wherefore it is clear that for the intellect to understand actually, not only when it acquires fresh knowledge, but also when it applies knowledge already acquired, there is need for the act of the imagination and of the other powers. For when the act of the imagination is hindered by a lesion of the corporeal organ, for instance in a case of frenzy [*phreneticis*]; or when the act of the memory is hindered, as in the case of lethargy [*lethargicis*], we see that a man is hindered from actually understanding things of which he had a previous knowledge.[37]

I have provided this lengthy selection from Aquinas for two reasons. First, he is clear that the immaterial intellect understands by turning to the phantasm. Second, he is clear that the operation of the intellect called knowledge or understanding can be hindered in various ways, corresponding to the particular way that the sensitive powers of the rational soul are hindered in their use of the corporeal and, thereby, corruptible, internal sense faculties. Thus, if a person lacks a particular organic sense faculty, that person cannot have any knowledge of the intelligible particulars corresponding to that sense. It is important to note, however, that this does not contradict Aquinas's

[36] *STh* II-II, q. 15, a. 1, corp. and ad 1.

[37] *STh* I, q. 84, a. 7; cf, q. 84, a. 8, ad 2.

earlier claim that the human intellect has a particular operation in which the human body does not share.[38]

How, then are we to understand the condition of *amentia*? Aquinas models for us two ways of understanding it.[39] On the one hand, there is the speculative caricature of the *amens*. Specifically, Aquinas accepts, in principle, that a human being can grow to adulthood in a state of absolute mindlessness. This is the speculative instance of an individual who is said absolutely never (*nunquam*) to have had the use of reason from birth. On the other hand, there are particular individuals who have an *amentia*-like condition. Specifically, Aquinas notes that there are persons who *seem* to lack the use of reason and who *seem* to have been in that state from birth.

This distinction between "those who are said" and "those who seem"—an operative distinction—is important because on Aquinas's terms we cannot know if, in fact, we are faced with an absolute *amens*.[40] Furthermore, there are sufficient grounds to question whether the predicate conditions for the speculative, worst-case scenario of absolute *amentia* can ever be satisfied. In any case, for Aquinas, even in the speculative case of the absolute *amens*, the natural aptitude for knowledge and love of God can be perfected by grace.[41] That is to say, the consummation of grace at work in the sacraments of baptism and confirmation perfect whatever capacities persist.[42] So, in the speculative case of absolute *amentia*, on Aquinas's terms, what capacities persist in a living human being? That question is approached below via a consideration of the intellectual powers, the image of God, the modes of human happiness, and the realization of human happiness.

[38] *STh* I, q. 75, a. 2: "the intellectual principle which we call the mind or the intellect has an operation *per se* apart from the body." Aquinas expands on this argument in III *De Anima*, lect. 7 (671-99).

[39] See Romero, "Aquinas on the *corporis infirmitas*," 116-17.

[40] See *STh*, II-II, q. 8, a. 2.

[41] *STh* III, q. 68, a. 12; q. 69, aa. 4 and 7; q. 93, a. 8, ad 3.

[42] *STh* I-II, q. 110, a. 4.

Fortunately, Aquinas's account of the happiness of "those who lack the use of reason" does not require an imaginative, inferential exercise concerning what Aquinas *might* have thought: as I have already shown, he addresses these themes and regularly remarks on the relevant anthropological, moral, and metaphysical considerations. The contemporary challenge is that the most pertinent texts are often overlooked and that key doctrinal nuances are easily buried in the shorthand of contemporary intra-Thomistic discourse.[43]

E) Two Challenges

There are at least two immediate challenges that warrant further discussion. The first is methodological, concerning the speculative import of ordinary practice. The second is exegetical and interpretive.

Because of his practical experience of those who lack the use of reason in the sacramental life of the Church, Aquinas understood that the specific creaturely dignity and perfectibility of such persons excludes various speculative considerations—for example, any question of their humanity.[44] For that reason, it is important to distinguish the interpretive concern of this essay from contemporary debates about the absolute beginning and the absolute end of human life. Specifically, our guiding question on human happiness presumes, with Aquinas, that any question about those who lack the use of reason is a question about a human life *in via*.

That presumption is shared by Francisco de Vitoria, to whom we will turn in the next section. If the goal is to

[43] For example, see D. Juvenal Merriell's essay "Trinitarian Anthropology," in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Rix Van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press; 2005), 123-42. In making an argument concerning the perfection of the image of God, Merriell conflates Aquinas's account of the threefold perfection of the human being in *STh* I, a. 93, a. 4 with Aquinas's discussion of the three ways that the first perfection of the human being might seem to be absent in *STh* I, q. 93, a. 8, ad 3.

[44] *STh* I, q. 75, a. 6; q. 93, a. 3; III, q. 68, a. 12, ad 2.

understand the speculative possibilities opened for us by Aquinas on the happiness possible for those who lack the use of reason, then there is value in looking at past interpretations of Aquinas on related themes. In the efforts of readers of a different era to navigate the questions of their time, we are able to recognize and draw upon the remnants of an interpretive tradition that may be worth recovering.

III. Prerational, Intellectual Acts: Aquinas, by way of Vitoria

Francisco de Vitoria, in the first part of his *Relectio de eo ad quod tenetur homo veniens ad usum rationis*, discusses what it means to have the use of reason and what it is to arrive at the use of reason.[45] On the whole, the principal concern of Vitoria's *Relectio* is to outline the theological anthropology relevant to his treatises *De Indis* and *De temperantia*, and thereby he provides a key part of the theological infrastructure animating his question on the justice of the Spanish colonial presence in the Americas.[46] Vitoria's overall argument in the three parts of

[45] Francisco de Vitoria, "Relectio: de eo, ad quod tenetur homo veniens ad usum rationis" [alt. "Relectio de eo, ad quod tenetur homo cum primum venit ad usum rationis"](written1534, first published 1557), in *Relecciones teologicas del maestro Fray Francisco de Vitoria*: *Edicion critica y version castellano*, ed. Luis G. Alonso Getino (Madrid: Imprenta la Rafa, 1935), 80-99 (photographic reproduction of the 1557, first edition codex) and 311-52 (Spanish translation by Getino). References to this work will cite Getino's Spanish translation (part number and section number, followed by page number and line number in parenthesis), then the corresponding section of the Latin codex in brackets (critical edition page number and codex page number). For example, *De eo ad quod tenetur,* I, §14 (322:20-32) [86:342].

[46] See Francisco Castilla Urban, "Vitoria: Sobre los Indios," in *El pensamiento de Francisco de Vitoria: Filosofía política e Indio Americano* (Barcelona: Anthropos, Editorial del Hombre; Iztapalapa, México: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 1992) 275-81. In the course of rejecting the dubious claim that the Amerindian peoples on the whole lacked the cognitive aptitude for self-governance, Vitoria discusses the condition *amentia* and the moral obligation of Christians in response to persons who suffer *amentia*. See *De Indis et De ivre belli relectiones*, ed. Ernest Nys, John Pawley Bate, Johann Georg Simon, and Herbert F. Wright (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1917) II, §3, a. 18; cf. I, §1, a. 24.

De eo ad quod tenetur is to show that our first moral obligation, upon arriving at the use of reason, is to deliberate about whatever is known and to direct ourselves freely toward the truth and goodness apprehended (to whatever extent we are able).[47]

As a prolegomena to that discussion, Vitoria begins the first part of *De eo ad quod tenetur* with a review of some of Aquinas's key remarks on the intellectual capacities and moral status of those who lack the use of reason—specifically, the cognitively impaired (*amentes*), the mentally insane (*furiosus*), children, those who are intoxicated, and those who are asleep (in the ordinary way). Vitoria notes, for example, that although "mindless persons [*amentes*] do not have free will, nevertheless, they have intellectual acts and voluntary acts."[48] Similarly, in that same section, Vitoria comments that persons who lack the use of reason, such as "mindless persons [*amentes*], children, and those who are asleep, at various times perform sensible acts, sufficient in their alertness and health to be intellectual acts and volitional acts."[49]

Vitoria presents these preliminary remarks as commonsense observations and as proof of a distinction he rightly attributes to

[47] *De eo ad quod tenetur* III, §4 (350:8-12) [98:392]. Cf. Aquinas, *STh* I-II, q. 89, a. 6: "before a man comes to the age of discretion, the lack of years hinders the use of reason and excuses him from mortal sin. . . . But when he begins to have the use of reason, he is not entirely excused from the guilt of venial or mortal sin. Now the first thing that occurs to a man to think about then, is to deliberate about himself. And if he then direct himself to the due end, he will, by means of grace, receive the remission of original sin: whereas if he does not then direct himself to the due end, and as far as he is capable of discretion at that particular age, he will sin mortally, for through not doing that which is in his power to do." For discussion, see Dominic Farrell, *The Ends of the Moral Virtues and the First Principles of Practical Reason in Thomas Aquinas* (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press; 2012), 254-56.

[48] "Non est idem habere liberum arbitrium aut usum rationis, quod habere actus intellectus, et voluntatis. Patet, qui ebri, et amentes non habent liberum arbitrium, et tamen habent actus intellectus, et voluntatis: ergo non est idem" (*De eo ad quod tenetur* I §4 (315:7-8) [82:326]).

[49] "Et confirmatur etiam ratione, quia omnes amentes, pueri, et somniantes habent aliquando actus sensuum sufficientes invigilantibus et sanis ad actum intellectus et voluntatis" (*De eo ad quod tenetur* I, §4 (315:31-33) [82:328]).

Aquinas, namely, the view that there is a spectrum of intellectual and voluntary acts, proper and distinctive to the human being *qua* intellectual creature, which do not constitute the use of reason (nor can they constitute, thereby, the deliberative exercise of freewill).[50] Vitoria underscores that the first act of deliberation is the first moral act and, as such, is the first occasion for the individual to direct himself toward his due end.[51] And it is precisely this first moral act that those who lack the use of reason are incapable, in principle, of performing on Aquinas's terms.[52]

As he works through each of these points in the first part of *De eo ad quod tenetur*, Vitoria acknowledges that there is no certain theological means to identify when, exactly, an individual arrives at the use of reason or how these individual differences in capacity come about.[53] He commends the former question to philosophers, insofar as it is not a properly theological question—since we must distinguish between, on the one hand, the theological work of unpacking the implications of the stipulative theological judgment that our creaturely nature is intellectual (i.e., the image of God) and, on the other hand, the philosophical work of describing or specifying the composite beings about whom an intellectual nature is stipulated. The latter question, concerning the cause of these individual differences, Vitoria commends to medical doctors—since the differences are corporeal and accidental (i.e., not essential and formal).[54]

In outlining Aquinas's position, Vitoria reiterates the standard Thomistic view that the condition of the *amentes* is caused by a defect or privation of the organic sensory faculties required for specifically human cognition (and is not caused by some immaterial corruption or impairment of the essential

[50] *De eo ad quod tenetur* I, §4 (315:18-41) [82:327-28]. Vitoria cites *STh* I, q. 84, a. 8, ad 2; II-II, q. 172, a. 1, ad 2; q. 154, a. 5; IV *Sent.*, d. 9, q. 1, a. 4, ad 3 and 4.

[51] *De eo ad quod tenetur* I, §27 (327:4-30) [88:351].

[52] *STh* II-II, q. 15, a. 1.

[53] *De eo ad quod tenetur* I, §15 (323:1-19) [86:343].

[54] *De eo ad quod tenetur* I, §11 (321:1-5) [85:339].

powers or operations of the rational soul). It is for this reason that we often see "mindless persons [*amentes*] perform many acts that brute animals cannot produce."[55] Because these kinds of *indeliberate* acts of the rational animal cannot be attributed only to the senses, Vitoria follows Aquinas in the judgment that actual understanding and actual will are operative in those who lack the use of reason and free will.[56] Vitoria provides an example of intellectual and voluntary activity, attributable to the *amentes*, which falls short of the use of reason and yet is absolutely different from the exclusively sensual knowledge of particulars proper to brute animals:

> The mindless [*amentes*] . . . have acts concerning spiritual things that do not fall under sensation, as well as desire for spiritual things, as experience shows us from what they do and from what they say. For in point of fact they speak to God, as well as to angels, and wrestle with their choice of words.[57]

In other words, according to Vitoria, most of us know persons who lack the use of reason and who, nevertheless, display actual knowledge and actual desire concerning properly human goods. For example, when an infant searches the face of his father, perceiving and interpreting something profoundly interesting (although it is unclear *what*, in particular, that could be); or when a preverbal toddler claims a particular blanket as *her* blanket; or when a man with a profound and utterly debilitating cognitive impairment sits with uncharacteristic stillness (or moves with uncharacteristic excitement) during the Mass.[58]

[55] *De eo ad quod tenetur* I, §4 (315:38-41) [82:328]: "sed amentes habent multos actus, quos bruta habere non pussunt."

[56] *De eo ad quod tenetur* I, §4 (315:31-34) [82:328].

[57] "quia habent actus circa res spirituales, que non cadunt subsensu, ut desiderium etiam rerum spiritualium, ut experientia patet ex his, quae tum faciunt, tum dicunt. Loquutur enim Deo, et angelis, disputant de dialecticis" (*De eo ad quod tenetur* I, §4 (315:9-13) [82:327]).

[58] Oliver Sacks describes his doubts about the humanity of a young man named "Jimmie," who suffers from Korsakoff's syndrome (characterized by severe memory loss and the inability to form and retain new memories) in *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and Other Clinical Tales* (New York: Touchstone, 1984): "was it possible that

There are surely alternative explanations for these behaviors—socialization, imitation, reward-response, and so on. For Vitoria and Aquinas, at any rate, the better explanations are those coordinate with our creaturely nature and our actual experience of particular human beings.

Aquinas describes the confused knowledge and unruly desire that we recognize in the Eucharistic devotion of some of those who lack the use of reason—*confused* and *unruly* devotion, yes; nevertheless, it is unambiguously and unquestionably human devotion that Aquinas is describing.[59] He writes that persons are said to "lack the use of reason" in various ways, for example,

> when they are feeble-minded [*quia habent debilem usum rationis*], as a man who sees dimly is said not to see: and since such persons can conceive some devotion towards this sacrament, it is not to be denied them.[60]

Coordinate with Aquinas's recommendation in the above passage are the recommendations that Christians who have absolutely never had the use of reason from birth *not* be

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he had really been 'de-souled' by a disease? 'Do you think he has a soul?' I once asked the Sisters [i.e., the Little Sisters of the Poor]. They were outraged by my question, but could see why I asked it. 'Watch Jimmie in chapel,' they said, 'and judge for yourself.' I did, and I was moved. . . . I watched him kneel and take the Sacrament on his tongue, and could not doubt the fullness and totality of Communion, the perfect alignment of his spirit with the spirit of the Mass. Fully, intensely, quietly, in the quietude of absolute concentration and attention, he entered and partook of the Holy Communion. He was wholly held . . . absorbed in an act, an act of his whole being, which carried feeling and meaning in an organic continuity and unity, a continuity and unity so seamless it could not permit any break."

[59] *STh* III, q. 80, a. 9, ad 1. Although Aquinas recommends reserving the sacrament in the speculative case of adults who have absolutely lacked the use of reason from birth, his reasoning for those particular cases is governed by a worry that the sacrament would be given to someone who does not desire to receive it (and who, as a consequence, might spit it out when it is placed in the mouth). That Aquinas's principal concern is not the individual's occurant devotion is clear when he recommends giving the sacrament to those who have demonstrated devotion to it in the past, but who are no longer capable of expressing the same devotion due to injury. See Romero, "Aquinas on the corporis infirmitas," 116-18. Cf. *STh* I, q. 84, a. 8; q. 86, a. 2, ad 1.

[60] *STh* III, q. 80, a. 9.

administered the Eucharist and that Christians who had lost the use of reason later in life *ought* to be given the sacrament, based on past devotion.

Vitoria picks up on these kinds of nuances. In *De eo ad quod tenetur*, he highlights a constellation of interpretive judgments relevant to the properly human happiness that is possible for those who have lacked the use of reason from birth. Like Aquinas, Vitoria acknowledges that a person can lack the use of reason in various ways and to various degrees. And he presumes that there is not a clear one-to-one correlation between adults who lack the use of reason (due to any number and combination of external and internal sensory impairments) and the particular way that very young children are said to lack the use of reason (due to general immaturity).[61]

Among the most important aspects of *De eo ad quod tenetur*, however, is the fact that the "ontological question" about those who lack the use of reason is completely off the table (as well as the demonic entailments of that question): in other words, when it comes to those who lack the use of reason, neither Vitoria nor Aquinas is asking about the beginning and end of properly "human life." Rather, both presume, unambiguously and without qualification, that those who lack the use of reason are human beings: rational animals, intellectual creatures, formed in the image and toward the likeness of the triune God.[62]

Having assumed this much, Vitoria goes on to underscore Aquinas's understanding that the creaturely dignity of every human being, including those who lack the use of reason, is rooted in a natural, immaterial aptitude for *actual knowing* and *actual willing* (i.e., human dignity is not rooted in a "virtual,"

[61] See *De eo ad quod tenetur* I, §5 (318:2-16) [83:333].

[62] Pasnau comments, for example, "Aquinas includes within the scope of human beings even those who have not yet achieved full rationality (infants) or who may never do so (the severely retarded), just so long as they have the bare potential in hand to make the opening moves . . . even the least developed and most defective of us does something that no other animal can do" (*Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 120).

corporeal potency for discursive reason and freewill).[63] Although this is a not the principal concern of *De eo ad quod tenetur*, Vitoria alerts us to Aquinas's own effort to formulate a holistic account of human happiness, one which takes as granted that sometimes we human beings lack the use of reason—and that this ordinary fact is neither surprising nor morally problematic.

With an eye for the exegetical considerations explored in the next section, there are three ways Vitoria assumes Aquinas ought to be read worth highlighting from *De eo ad quod tenetur*. First, the intellectual nature of the human being is not identical to having the use of reason. Second, the intellectual acts of the human being, proper to our created nature, are not reducible to the use of reason (i.e., the living human being has prerational, nondeliberative intellectual acts). Third, those prerational, intellectual acts can be perfected by grace, engendering a properly human contemplative and devotional happiness in the lives of Christians who lack the use of reason—specifically, the unfolding perfection of our intellectual nature in Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

IV. Exegetical Considerations: Intellect, Knowledge, and the Use of Reason

In order fully to appreciate the speculative possibilities opened for us by Aquinas regarding the happiness of utterly "mindless persons," it is important to show how his practical recognitions and sacramental recommendations are consistent with his formal account of the human being—in particular, with his analysis of our intellectual nature, our intellectual acts, and the unfolding perfection of human nature in and through Christ, by the work of the Holy Spirit (i.e., the growth of God's elect in the happiness called holiness and virtue).

[63] *STh* I, q. 93, a. 4; see the general thrust of Merriell's argument in "Trinitarian Anthropology."

As we see in Vitoria's *De eo ad quod tenetur*, there is an interpretive tradition associated with Aquinas's teaching on these themes. Among the ways we can assess the utility of that tradition is through its capacity to display the coherence of seemingly incongruent aspects of his thought, namely, the broadly Aristotelian contours of his moral psychology and his remarks on the participation of those who lack the use of reason in the sacramental life of the Body of Christ.

Leaving Vitoria behind, but further interrogating the plausibility of his assumptions regarding Aquinas's views on those who lack the use of reason, it is worthwhile to review certain fundamentals of Aquinas's teaching on the specific, creaturely dignity and perfectibility of the human being. The review of these fundamentals may seem remedial; however, my hope is that a re-reading of Aquinas on these themes and in light of "those who lack the use of reason" will help us recover a teaching that is overlooked and underappreciated in our time.

A) Intellectual Nature and Those Who Lack the Use of Reason

The human being is a composite creature, a unity of immaterial and material parts, an intellectual soul acting as the principle and actualizing form of a corruptible body. Aquinas maintains that the innate dignity and perfectibility of the human being is founded in his capacity to participate in the supreme intellect of the Creator, which is an act of the intellectual soul (*STh* I, q. 79, a. 4). Now, for Aquinas, the soul of the human being is called "intellectual" because the ability to understand intelligible truth and to desire universal goods manifests the distinctiveness of the human being as a particular kind of animal; nevertheless, these acts do not themselves specify our essential nature (*STh* I, q. 77, a. 1). This last point is worth investigating further.

Aquinas explains that the intellectual soul is the principal, specifying act of the whole human being, subsisting as the unifying and integrating form of the various substantial and accidental qualities of a particular living person. In other words,

every living human being possesses a composite infrastructure of intellectual being, existing as a substance in and through the substantial form of a particular kind of body. The powers and operations of the intellectual soul follow from the first act of the soul, and it is those further acts of the soul which manifestly distinguish the human being from other kinds of animals (i.e., brute animals)—for example, the observable acts of rational deliberation or language use (*STh* I, q. 84, a. 2).

The manifestation of those further acts, however, is not what specifies the human being. If it were, one might suppose that the absence of such acts in a human-shaped or genetically human body would indicate an essential defect of human nature. On the contrary, for Aquinas, observable intellectual activity does not specify the human being because the intellectual soul (which is always in act in the living human being) is not the immediate principle of the vital operations that variously express the essential, intellectual nature of the whole human being (*STh* I, q. 77, a. 1). In order for those acts to specify, the intellectual soul would need to be the immediate principle of those acts. However, Aquinas reasons, if one were to take the soul to be the immediate principle of those distinguishing operations (just as the soul is always in act in the living unity of a particular person), one would rightly expect the distinguishing operations of the human being to always be in act (e.g., ceaselessly deliberating or always using language), which is obviously not the case.

Among the various concerns navigated in the first three questions of his treatise on the human being in the *Summa*, Aquinas is keen to affirm two judgments: first, that what distinguishes human beings among the various forms of terrestrial life is our common intellectual capacity to apprehend intelligible truth and to desire universal goods; and, second, that manifest individual differences in the operation of that immaterial capacity do not indicate an essentially defective nature and do not foreclose the possibility of the perfection of that essential nature.

On that basis, Aquinas maintains that the principal act of the intellectual soul entails a living (i.e., not static) potentiality for further acts, in particular intellectual and sensual acts—and, even further, for derivative acts like the use of reason and the exercise of freewill. Nevertheless, although these further acts are not essential or specifying, Aquinas notes that we commonly refer to substantial forms by way of their observable accidents, as he himself often does.[64]

In any case, as noted above, Aquinas does not regard our essential nature to be *rational*, except by transference of the name; rather, our nature is *intellectual*, while the distinct intellectual acts of understanding and reasoning are expressions of the soul's vital (i.e., living) intellectual potency.[65] By definition, things that are accidental to the essence of a particular human being (such as a degree of cognitional potency) cannot bear the creaturely dignity of the human being.[66] This does not mean that the innate, vital powers of the soul (intellect and will) are transient accidental qualities or derivative faculties (as with eye color, health, the use of reason, or free will); rather, Aquinas describes these powers as "substantial" or "proper" accidents, insofar as they are natural properties that follow from the first act of the soul.[67] In other words, the human being does not cease to be an intellectual creature when he is not actively reasoning.

The distinction outlined above is the way Aquinas revises Aristotle's function argument (noted above) and the more problematic implications of Aristotle's rationalistic moral psychology. Specifically, Aquinas reconfigures Aristotle's supposition that manifest function (*ergon*) is indicative of essential form (*eidos*) and the correlative perfection (*telos*) of any animate being, human or otherwise.[68] Aquinas does this because of a theological judgment concerning the durability of God's love

[64] *STh* I, q. 77, a. 1, ad 7.
[65] *STh* I, q. 77, a. 1; q. 79, a. 8. See also *De Verit.*, q. 15, a. 1.
[66] *STh* I, q. 77, a. 3.
[67] *STh* I, q. 77, a. 1, ad 5.
[68] *STh* I, q. 76, a. 1. See also *STh* I, q. 76, a. 5, corp and ad 1; q. 84, a. 3.

for the image of God borne by every human being and the merciful goodness of God revealed in the ongoing act of creation.[69]

Read against the backdrop of Aristotle's function argument, Aquinas's construal of the principal, specifying act of the intellectual soul indicates why it is a mistake to regard the use of reason as wholly constitutive of human nature (and not merely indicative of said nature). However, neither does this mean that the innate, creaturely dignity of the human being is correctly understood as a static immaterial potency for actualized existence (comparable to the potency of prime matter to actualizing form). In other words, the analogy of essence to potentiality and existence to act is just that, an analogy.[70]

As previously indicated, Aquinas locates the dignity of the human being in the living aptitude of the intellect to receive intelligible forms and its coordinate capacity for graced participation in the supreme intellect of the Creator. When it comes to those who lack the use of reason, it is critical to understand how the vital potentialities proper to the actual existence of a living human being differ from both the prime material potencies that are moved in the first act of the rational soul and the *quidditas* signified in the definition "mortal rational animal."[71]

As Aquinas explains, every living human being possesses powers by way of her or his constituting form and, for Aquinas, these powers are creaturely endowments given by the Creator at the beginning and from the beginning of every particular human

[69] *STh* I, qq. 20-21, 43-46.

[70] *STh* I, q. 54, a. 3.

[71] I am interpreting *STh* I, q. 77, a. 1; and q. 93, a. 1 in light of the distinction provided by Aquinas in VII *Metaphys.*, lect. 5 (1378-79) (trans. John Rowan [Chicago, 1961]): "all accidents of man are excluded from the meaning of humanity. Now it is the particular thing itself, namely, a man, which contains the essential principles and is that in which accidents can inhere. Hence although a man's accidents are not contained in his intelligible expression, still man does not signify something apart from his accidents. Therefore man signifies as a whole and humanity as a part."

being.[72] Most of those powers operate by way of the substantial unity of the human being as a composite creature, and of those some powers are actual from the very beginning of the human being (e.g., the power for biological growth)[73] and others are possessed in potency (e.g., the powers for sensation and cognition).[74]

In addition to the powers coordinate with our existence as composite creatures, the human being also possesses powers that do not operate by way of the substantial unity of the soul subsisting as the form of the body.[75] Although these immaterial powers are possessed by the whole human being and are ordered towards the good of the whole human being, they subsist and are actualized independently.[76] Of these immaterial powers, some are actualized from the very beginning (e.g., the soul's power to unify matter, as formal principle,[77] and the power of the soul called "intellect")[78] and others are possessed in derivative potential (e.g., imagination and memory)[79], insofar as the latter depend on sensual operations of the composite being.

Given our composite nature, human cognition is an operation involving both immaterial intellectual powers and corporeal sensual powers. Aquinas maintains a version of the peripatetic axiom that "nothing is in the intellect that is not first in the sense" (*nihil est in intellectu quod non sit prius in sensu*). It is worth noting, however, that Aquinas's own formulation of the Scholastic axiom (*et ideo oportet ut quod est in intellectu nostro, prius in sensu fuerit*, see *De Verit*., q. 2, a. 3, ad 19) eliminates the implied possibility found in the more familiar formulation of the axiom: specifically, the implication that there

[72] *STh* I, q. 90, a. 3; q. 90, a. 4; q. 91, a. 3.
[73] *STh* I, q. 90, a. 4.
[74] *STh* I, q. 84, a. 3.
[75] *STh* I, q. 77, a. 4; q. 75, aa. 2 and 3; q. 76, a. 1, ad 1.
[76] *STh* I, q. 77, a. 8.
[77] *STh* I, q. 76, a. 1; q. 90, a. 4.
[78] *STh* I, q. 75, a. 2.
[79] *STh* I, q. 78, a. 4.

can be a human intellect that lacks knowledge.[80] Thus, as with other animals, our sensual receptivity to material conditions coalesces in impressions called phantasms. Among other things, what distinguishes the human being as a particular kind of animal is that our sensory experience of the phantasm always coincides with intellectual apprehension, insofar as every human sensation is subject to the immaterial operation of the active intellect.

Highlighting these details of Aquinas's moral psychology helps us avoid semi-dualist formulations of human cognition that posit an intellectual soul interacting with the sense faculties of an animal body, through the power of reason.[81] In other words, it is a mistake to read Aquinas as if the power for intellectual apprehension is superadded onto our sensual animality. Rather, because the intellectual soul is the form of the body, all our lower animate potentialities are specified by the higher intellectual form—an essential nature with proper intellectual and sensual capacities that usually, *though not always*, manifest in acts of rational deliberation and the exercise of free will.

B) Intellectual Acts and Those Who Lack the Use of Reason

The analysis provided in the preceding subsection resolves the question of nature: according to Aquinas, the constituting

[80] Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 2, a. 3, arg. 19. See also *STh* I, q. 88, a. 1, where Aquinas writes, "both intellects, according to the present state of life, extend to material things only, which are made actually intelligible by the active intellect, and are received in the passive intellect."

[81] See John O'Callaghan, "Imago Dei: A Test Case for Aquinas's Augustinianism," in *Aquinas the Augustinian*, ed. Michael Dauphinais, Barry David, and Matthew Levering (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 100-144. Deliberately referring to the essential, intellectual nature of the human being as "rational," O'Callaghan writes: "Rational is the form of the animal acts that we engage in. Our acts of eating, reproduction, and so on are not primarily *preceded* by acts of reason. Reason is their form. Therefore, reason is not a power or second essence or substance within us that separates or distinguishes us *from* animals. It distinguishes us *as* animals" (124).

form and essential nature of a human being who utterly lacks the use of reason is, despite superficial appearances, unambiguously specified as intellectual. In this subsection, I address the question of intellectual acts: that is to say, I discuss how Aquinas understands the intellectual powers proper to human nature to operate (and/or to be operationally impaired) in the case of a particular person who completely lacks the use of reason.[82]

My primary interest is to show how the distinction between the intellectual nature of the human being and the innate powers (and operations) proper to the dignity of our constituting form provides Aquinas with the means to describe the various nondeliberative acts of the human being as properly human intellectual acts. Amid the horizon of contemporary Thomistic moral theology, there is a noteworthy speculative interest focused on Aquinas's repeated appeal to "prerational" or "pre-cognitive" human nature and, indirectly, the corresponding acts.[83]

When it comes to the happiness that is possible for Christians who lack the use of reason, my present concern is first to show why Aquinas's distinction between deliberate "human acts" (*actus humanus*) and in-deliberate "acts of a human being" (*actus hominis*)[84] does not amount to the interpretive shorthand that often follows (usually implicitly, although sometimes explicitly). Aquinas would reject the interpretative conclusion that there is no meaningful difference between an "in-deliberate act" performed by a human being

[82] In section 5, I will treat the question of human happiness and perfection, that is to say, how Aquinas understands the happiness and perfectibility, in this life, of those who lack the use of reason.

[83] For example, consider the intra-Thomistic debate between Fr. Martin Rhonheimer and Jean Porter (consisting of both interpretive and speculative differences) on the moral significance of prerational human nature (i.e., the biological inclinations, operative patterns, and apparent ends that human beings share with nonrational, brute animals), with respect to practical reason and distinctively human goods. It is beyond the scope of our guiding question to reflect on the significance of prerational human acts for interpreting the natural law or accounting for the moral order.

[84] *STh* I-II, q. 1, a. 1; q. 18, a. 9.

who utterly lacks the use of reason (a man unconsciously scratching his beard) and the more-or-less identical act performed by a nonrational, brute animal (a dog scratching its coat).

With respect to the example given, it is true that for Aquinas neither the act of the man nor the act of the dog amounts to a moral act, because neither act proceeds from rational deliberation.[85] However, on Aquinas's terms, the in-deliberate act of a man who utterly lacks the use of reason is, without qualification, an intellectual act—an act that cannot but involve actual knowledge of intelligible truth, insofar as it is an act of a human being. To show why this is the case, it is once again worthwhile to review certain fundamentals of Aquinas's moral psychology, in particular, his analysis of the operations of the agent intellect (*intellectus agens*) and the possible intellect (*intellectus possibilis*).

In his treatment of the acts of the intellect, Aquinas distinguishes the entirely passive operation of bodily sense from the immaterial operation of the intellect, which has both active and passive operations.[86] On the one hand, the agent intellect abstracts the species (or universal form) from particular material conditions received through bodily sense, making those conditions intelligible and suitable for intellectual apprehension.[87] Derived as it is from the human being's creaturely participation in the supreme intellect of the Creator, the active power of the agent intellect is the innate and incorruptible aptitude of the human being to isolate and extract intelligible

[85] *ScG* III, c. 85.

[86] *STh* I, q. 79, a. 3, ad 1. "Sensible things are found in act outside the soul; and hence there is no need for an active sense. Wherefore it is clear that in the nutritive part all the powers are active, whereas in the sensitive part all are passive: but in the intellectual part, there is something active and something passive [in parte vero intellectiva est aliquid activum, et aliquid passivum]."

[87] *STh* I, q. 79, a. 3: "We must therefore assign on the part of the intellect some power to make things actually intelligible, by abstraction of the species from material conditions. And such is the necessity for an active intellect."

truth from whatever is sensed.[88] On the other hand, coordinate with that active power, the immaterial power of the possible intellect is the capacity of the human being to receive the abstracted species or form communicated via the phantasm.[89] The operative power of the possible intellect is reduced from potentiality to act when intelligible truth is received.[90]

Although the operation of the possible intellect is not an act of the body or of a corporeal organ, this act of the soul is dependent upon the organic integrity and good order of the body's passive sensitive powers.[91] For that reason, certain predicate corporeal conditions are necessary for the apprehension of intelligible truth. Foremost among those conditions is the availability of the agent-intellect-illuminated-form communicated by the phantasm.[92] In other words, the vital capacity of the human being to know is a living inclination to absorb and grasp whatever is illuminated as intelligible in and through the bare sensory experience of material conditions.

Aquinas explains that the agent intellect "lights upon" and extracts abstract species or form from the material conditions received by the senses, rendering the material conditions intelligible—whereby the possible intellect is moved by the form of the thing perceived.[93] Because the possible intellect is an

[88] *STh* I, q. 79, a. 4.

[89] Ibid., ad 4: "phantasms are actual images of certain species, but are immaterial in potentiality. Wherefore nothing prevents one and the same soul, inasmuch as it is actually immaterial, having one power by which it makes things actually immaterial, by abstraction from the conditions of individual matter: which power is called the 'active intellect'; and another power, receptive of such species, which is called the 'passive intellect' [*intellectus possibilis*], by reason of its being in potentiality to such species."

[90] *STh* I, q. 79, a. 4: "it has an imperfect understanding; both because it does not understand everything, and because, in those things which it does understand, it passes from potentiality to act."

[91] *STh* I, q. 79, a. 2, ad 2; q. 79, a. 5, ad 2.

[92] *STh* I, q. 79, a. 4, ad 3: "But now the active intellect is not an object, rather is it that whereby the objects are made to be in act: for which, besides the presence of the active intellect, we require the presence of phantasms, the good disposition of the sensitive powers, and practice in this sort of operation."

[93] *STh* I, q. 79, a. 4: "the active intellect, which by lighting up the phantasms as it were, makes them to be actually intelligible."

immaterial power of the human being, no corporeal condition can directly corrupt its potential for actualization. Rather, as noted above, for Aquinas an impediment or defect of a bodily organ can only constrain the actualization of the soul's capacity to know and love.[94]

What this means is that whenever the body passively receives a coordinated sense impression of a material species, the agent intellect abstracts the intelligible form communicated by the phantasm (i.e., that which, if anything, is intelligible of the phantasm) and presents that truth to the possible intellect, by which the human being understands what is perceived.[95] Because the rational soul is created with an innate aptitude for knowledge of the first principles of speculative truth, and because the human being is created with an innate desire for knowledge of goodness and truth, any human sensory experience of the material world amounts to actual knowledge—and, thereby, upon sensing the person possesses a knowledge that is subject to the further, derivative operations of the agent intellect.

Without exception, for Aquinas, all human beings enjoy both the power of the agent intellect and the activity of understanding—it is human nature to understand the truth of whatever is perceived.[96] Interpreting Augustine on the creaturely distinctiveness of the human being *qua* animal, Aquinas

[94] *De Verit.*, q. 18, a. 8, ad 2; *Q. D. De Anima*, a. 14, ad 18.

[95] *STh* I, q. 79, a. 4, ad 5: "Since the essence of the soul is immaterial, created by the supreme intellect, nothing prevents that power which it derives from the supreme intellect, and whereby it abstracts from matter, flowing from the essence of the soul, in the same way as its other powers."

[96] *STh* I, q. 79, a. 5, ad 3: "All things which are of one species enjoy in common the action which accompanies the nature of the species, and consequently the power which is the principle of such action; but not so as that power be identical in all. Now to know the first intelligible principles is the action belonging to the human species. Wherefore all men enjoy in common the power which is the principle of this action: and this power is the active intellect. But there is no need for it to be identical in all. Yet it must be derived by all from one principle. And thus the possession by all men in common of the first principles proves the unity of the separate intellect, which Plato compares to the sun; but not the unity of the active intellect, which Aristotle compares to light."

maintains that "intellect," "reason," and "mind" are different aspects of one power.[97] He explains that although all living human beings actually understand the first intelligible principles (things simply understood), it does not follow that the further activity of the intellect called "reasoning" should be identical across the human species.

Aquinas further develops the distinction between intellect and reason, identifying them as different activities derived from the same power. He writes, "For to understand [*intelligere*] is simply to apprehend intelligible truth [*veritatem intelligibilem apprehendere*]; and to reason [*ratiocinari*] is to advance from one thing understood to another, so as to know an intelligible truth [*veritatem intelligibilem cognoscendam*]."[98] Both the apprehensive knowledge of intelligible truth and the inductive knowledge of intelligible truth derive from the same power of participation in the intellectual light of God. Presuming the judgment that neither of these intellectual activities is reducible

[97] *STh* I, q. 79, a. 8, s.c.: "Augustine says (Gen. ad lit. iii, 20) that 'that in which man excels irrational animals is reason, or mind, or intelligence or whatever appropriate name we like to give it.' Therefore, reason, intellect and mind are one power." Aquinas's formulation of Augustine's *mens* as deriving from the same power as intellect and reason should not be overlooked. The excellence Augustine is describing in the provided note (whatever name we like to give it) is not identical to the excellence Aquinas appropriates from Augustine as constitutive of the ultimate difference between human being and nonrational, brute animals. Cf. *STh* I, q. 93, a. 3. See also Augustine, *De Trinitate* 14.19, where Augustine writes, "A mind without physical eyes is still human; physical eyes without mind are merely brutish. Who would not rather be a man, even physically blind, than a brute and able to see?"

[98] *STh* I, q. 79, a. 8: "Reasoning, therefore, is compared to understanding, as movement is to rest, or acquisition to possession; of which one belongs to the perfect, the other to the imperfect. And since movement always proceeds from something immovable, and ends in something at rest; hence it is that human reasoning, by way of inquiry and discovery, advances from certain things simply understood—namely, the first principles; and, again, by way of judgment returns by analysis to first principles, in the light of which it examines what it has found. Now it is clear that rest and movement are not to be referred to different powers, but to one and the same, even in natural things: since by the same nature a thing is moved towards a certain place. Much more, therefore, by the same power do we understand and reason: and so it is clear that in man reason and intellect are the same power."

to a static potency in a living human being, Aquinas provides a set of analogies: understanding is to reasoning, as rest is to movement, as possession is to acquisition, as imperfect is to perfect.[99]

On Aquinas's view, every living human being apprehends intelligible truth and bears a subjective intent toward the truth that is understood. However, the intent of the knower toward the thing understood is not limited to practical ends. Aquinas explains that it belongs to the speculative intellect to direct what it apprehends to the consideration of ultimate truth and goodness. By comparison, it belongs to the practical intellect to direct what it apprehends to operation. In either case, the intentionality of the knower toward a particular end (based on what he or she apprehends) is an intellectual act (though not necessarily deliberative) and a specifically human operation, regardless of the grandeur or magnificence of the intellectual act (be it a speculative or practical act of the intellect).[100]

V. The Happiness of Those Who Lack the Use of Reason and the *Amentes*

A) Knowledge without the Use of Reason

Aquinas affirms that bodily impairment has no *per se* diminishing effect on the proper created subsistence and operation of the rational soul, which is the spiritual principle of the body. It follows that the rational soul of a human being who has a damaged brain retains in full her or his essential capacities and powers. Nevertheless, the body's capacity to be moved by material conditions via the external sense faculties can be impaired; likewise, the operative capacity of the internal sense organ to combine what is sensed into a unified impression can be corrupted in such a way that there is *almost* no intelligible

[99] Ibid.
[100] *STh* I, q. 79, a. 11.

truth to abstract.[101] In the instance of a profound injury or dysfunction of the brain there would be, of course, an impairment of the many other operations of the rational soul in relationship to the body. However, because the rational soul is immaterial and incorruptible, its activity in its essential operation (the aptitude for knowledge and love of God) can only be constrained, not impaired.

In general, the bodies of the *amentes* seem to be incapable of providing, by way of operation, the requisite preconditions for derivative intellectual acts like deliberation, imagination, and memory. Nevertheless, as an embodied intellectual creature, in principle, according to Aquinas, a living human being who lacks the use of reason cannot but obtain some apprehension of intelligible truth. What this means is that while the biological aspect of a person's capacity to reason discursively can be profoundly hindered in its operation, short of death, the intellect cannot be absolutely impaired—incarnate human life is intellectual life for beings created in the image and toward the likeness of God.

In other words, for Aquinas, the very structure of our constitution as composite creatures entails that our capacity to perceive, understand, and act requires the corruptible and contingent corporeal faculties of the body. This is how we realize our natural good. Likewise, for Aquinas, it belongs to the very structure of our constitution as composite creatures that the natural aptitude of a living human being to be elevated and moved by grace is not contingent upon the well-being of the body. Our supernatural ability to perceive, understand, and participate in the imperfect happiness of this life, by way of our baptismal incorporation into Christ, cannot be ultimately obliterated by original sin or the corporeal wounds of original sin (i.e., *malum poenae*).

[101] *STh* I, q. 84, aa. 7-8. See also q. 93, a. 8, ad 3, where Aquinas writes "the mind, in order to understand God, can make use of reason, in which sense we have already said that the image of God abides ever in the soul—'whether this image of God be so obsolete,' as it were clouded, 'as almost to amount to nothing,' as in those who have not the use of reason."

B) Happiness: Active and Contemplative

Aquinas explains that the life of a being consists in the movement or operation that is proper to its essential nature. The form of life proper to the human being, in particular, consists in understanding and acting according to reason.[102] As the constituting form of the whole human being, the intellectual soul has an operation that exceeds the body. This innate capacity for knowledge, an immaterial aptitude common to all human beings, can be perfected by divine grace to accord with reason in those who lack the use of reason.

In his discussion of the sacrament of confirmation, Aquinas offers an analogy comparing the life of the body and the life of the soul (birth : baptism :: "use of reason" : confirmation).[103] Birth (life of the body) precedes the perfect age of the human being *qua* rational animal (i.e., the "age of reason," the deliberative capacity to perform volitional acts pertaining to moral virtue, our natural end). Analogously, baptism (grace-infused life of the Holy Spirit) precedes the perfect maturity of the human being *qua* image of God (i.e., via confirmation, the Spirit-conferred capacity to perform spiritual acts conducive to spiritual perfection). With both baptism and confirmation, the human being is given spiritual life, the means of spiritual growth, and the perfection of spiritual life.[104] According to Aquinas, it is in this way that a properly human happiness is capacitated and purposed in all whom God has called in Christ—a call to discipleship and devotion that includes those who have a profound, life-long cognitive impairment.[105]

[102] *STh* II-II, q. 179, a. 1.

[103] *STh* III, q. 72, a. 1: "where there is a special effect of grace, there we find a special sacrament ordained for the purpose. But since sensible and material things bear a likeness to things spiritual and intelligible, from what occurs in the life of the body, we can perceive that which is special to the spiritual life."

[104] *STh* III, q. 73, a. 1.

[105] *STh* I-II, q. 3, a. 5: "the last and perfect happiness, which we await in the life to come, consists entirely in contemplation. But imperfect happiness, such as can be had

When it comes to the happiness of the human being, Aquinas identifies two aspects: the "active life" and the "contemplative life."[106] When the soul's knowledge is directed towards intelligible truth it is called "contemplative" and when the soul's knowledge is directed towards practical performance it is called "active."[107] However, human life is not *per se* divided into active and contemplative—rather, Aquinas describes the form of life proper to the human being as consisting in both contemplative self-movement and active self-movement toward the twofold end of the human being.[108] Thus, the life proper to the human being is composed of both activities, but as with every mean that comprises the combined whole of two extremes (as with hot and cold), the mean life of any particular human being always tends toward one or other—and sometimes due to circumstance or disposition, one intellectual activity abounds above the other.[109] So, how might we understand these aspects of human happiness to obtain in a person afflicted with an *amentia*-like condition, as one incapable of rational deliberation and the exercise of freewill (and, therefore, incapable of performing acts of moral virtue)?

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here, consists first and principally in contemplation, but secondarily, in an operation of the practical intellect directing human actions and passions"

[106] *STh* II-II, q. 179, a. 1: "since certain men are especially intent on the contemplation of truth, while others are especially intent on external actions, it follows that man's life is fittingly divided into active and contemplative."

[107] *STh* II-II, q. 179, a. 2: "this division applies to the human life as derived from the intellect. Now the intellect is divided into active and contemplative, since the end of intellective knowledge is either the knowledge itself of truth, which pertains to the contemplative intellect, or some external action, which pertains to the practical or active intellect. Therefore life too is adequately divided into active and contemplative."

[108] *STh* II-II, q. 179, a. 1, ad 2: "Life in general is not divided into active and contemplative, but the life of man, who derives his species from having an intellect, wherefore the same division applies to intellect and human life."

[109] *STh* II-II, q. 179, a. 2, ad 2: "A mean is a combination of extremes, wherefore it is virtually contained in them, as tepid in hot and cold, and pale in white and black. On like manner active and contemplative comprise that which is composed of both. Nevertheless as in every mixture one of the simples predominates, so too in the mean state of life sometimes the contemplative, sometimes the active element, abounds."

Aquinas maintains that the moral virtues do not pertain to the contemplative life essentially.[110] Rather, moral virtue pertains directly (essentially) to active happiness and only indirectly to contemplative happiness, insofar as the activity of moral virtue belongs to the contemplative life dispositively.[111] What this means is that, ordinarily, moral virtue disposes an individual toward the contemplative life (or, in the case of viciousness, away from the contemplative life). This does not mean, however, that magnificence in the practical happiness called virtue is a precondition for magnificence in the contemplative happiness which consists in knowledge and love of God's goodness and truth. Specifically, the habit of virtue (itself an activity of the rational soul), even when circumstance impairs the act of virtue, is sufficient to dispose one to immaterial operations of contemplative happiness. The contemplative life therefore does not consist in, nor does it require, deliberated and freely chosen external movements; rather, it is an active operation and movement of the intellectual soul, conditioned by the simple apprehension of intelligible truth.[112]

[110] *STh* II-II, q. 180, a. 2, s.c. "The moral virtues are directed to external actions. Now Gregory says that it belongs to the contemplative life 'to rest from external action.' Therefore the moral virtues do not pertain to the contemplative life."

[111] *STh* II-II, q. 180, a. 2: "A thing may belong to the contemplative life in two ways, essentially or dispositively. The moral virtues do not belong to the contemplative life essentially, because the end of the contemplative life is the consideration of truth: and as the Philosopher states (Ethic. ii, 4), 'knowledge,' which pertains to the consideration of truth, 'has little influence on the moral virtues': wherefore he declares (Ethic. x, 8) that the moral virtues pertain to active but not to contemplative happiness. On the other hand, the moral virtues belong to the contemplative life dispositively. For the act of contemplation, wherein the contemplative life essentially consists, is hindered both by the impetuosity of the passions which withdraw the soul's intention from intelligible to sensible things, and by outward disturbances. Now the moral virtues curb the impetuosity of the passions, and quell the disturbance of outward occupations. Hence moral virtues belong dispositively to the contemplative life."

[112] *STh* II-II, q. 179, a. 1, ad 3: "contemplation enjoys rest from external movements. Nevertheless to contemplate is itself a movement of the intellect, in so far as every operation is described as a movement."

Nevertheless, contemplation of divine truth does not happen except by way of the knowledge of intelligible truth apprehended through the body's sense faculties. Aquinas writes:

> In the present state of life human contemplation is impossible without phantasms, because it is connatural to man to see the intelligible species in the phantasms, as the Philosopher states. Yet intellectual knowledge does not consist in the phantasms themselves, but in our contemplating in them the purity of the intelligible truth: and this not only in natural knowledge, but also in that which we obtain by revelation.[113]

Our capacity for contemplation of divine truth in this life is limited by both our creaturely nature (composite beings, whose knowledge is apprehended via an immaterial operation upon a material sense impression) and by the infirmities we variously and inconsistently bear because of original sin (our susceptibility to corporeal damage, dysfunction, and decay). Aquinas explains, however, that the intellectual knowledge received and possessed by the soul does not consist in the phantasms themselves, but in the activity of the intellect extracting intelligible truth and then beholding the truth as it has been received. One implication of this is that although the intellectual activity proper to human beings depends upon (and is conditioned by) actualized sensorial potencies of the body, the derivative intellectual act of contemplation is not limited by sensory impairment in the same way that the deliberative operation of the practical intellect is limited by sensory impairment. That is, unlike in the latter case, the act of contemplation is made possible insofar as the human being is capable of receiving supernatural knowledge via divine revelation.

Thus, while affirming the role of the body in the ordinary mode of contemplation, Aquinas, following Augustine, maintains that there is an extraordinary class of contemplative intellectual activity proper to the human being (qua composite creature) that is independent of the body and characterized by a withdrawal from bodily sense. On the one hand, he identifies

[113] *STh* II-II, q. 180, a. 5, ad 2.

the rapturous transcendence of bodily sense experienced by the apostle Paul; on the other hand, he identifies the radical inward withdrawal from bodily sense (to apprehend and behold the principle of divine truth), which Gregory attributes to certain contemplatives in his *Moralia in Job*, book 6, chapter 37.[114] For Aquinas, there are two modes of contemplation, one that makes use of the bodily sense and another that withdraws from the bodily sense.

What unites these two modes of contemplative movement is that the "uplifting to knowledge of divine things" that takes place in both cases is an unmerited gift of divine grace, connaturally suffered by the human being.[115] The delight of the human being in the contemplation of divine truth is happiness.[116] It is on this basis that Aquinas speaks of the defects and infirmities of the body in relationship to the delight human beings experience in the contemplation of truth.[117]

Although the contemplative life that is possible for all of those who await the resurrection is imperfect, Aquinas proposes that weakness in body could, in fact, engender uncommon strength of soul. He uses the limp of Jacob as an example.[118] In any case, the works of the contemplative life are not works of the body, for contemplative activity belongs to the immaterial intellectual potency and operation of the soul. For that reason, the contemplative life of the Christian wayfarer, even one who lacks the use of reason, is continuous with the life anticipated in the beatific vision.[119]

[114] *STh* II-II, q. 180, a. 5.

[115] *STh* II-II, q. 175, a. 1.

[116] *STh* II-II, q. 180, a. 7.

[117] Ibid., ad 2

[118] *STh* II-II, q. 180, a. 7, ad 3 and ad 4.

[119] *STh* II-II, q. 180, a. 8: "in our regard contemplative life is continuous [the life of the wayfarer and the resurrection life of the blessed]—both because it is competent to us in respect of the incorruptible part of the soul, namely the intellect, wherefore it can endure after this life—and because in the works of the contemplative life we work not with our bodies."

CONCLUDING REMARK

Any account of those who lack the use of reason according to Aquinas must be consistent with his analysis of cognition in the *Prima pars*, especially question 84. However, it is a mistake to presume that a discussion of cognitive capacities, their preconditions, and their proper exercise covers all (or even most) of the relevant considerations. The emphasis upon cognition as a delimiting term derives from the contemporary casuistic preoccupation with identifying the absolute beginning and the absolute end of human life. While engagement with Aquinas's account of cognition is important and certainly relevant, his remarks on those who lack the use of reason are grounded squarely on the presumption that the subject of *amentia* is the human being, an unambiguously human life *in via*.

Limited by nature and afflicted by circumstance, every human being, including those who lack the use of reason, is able to receive the healing and reconciling grace of baptism. Through baptism, our natural aptitude for knowledge and love of God is conformed to the likeness of God, according to virtue (as God understands and loves God's self). And, for Aquinas, every human being, including those who lack the use of reason, is able to be capacitated by grace for actual knowledge and love of God. Through the sacrament of confirmation, the supernatural disposition infused at baptism is moved toward perfection in act, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The *delighted awareness* of goodness, truth, and beauty, which we sometimes recognize in children and those who lack the use of reason, is the operation of *actual knowledge and actual willing*.[120] Although these acts do not amount to

[120] That is to say, a circumstance where the precepts of the natural law are known and pursued by an intellectual creature, for whom the natural inclinations of the body occasion a sensual perception of material conditions, from which intelligible truth is apprehended by way of the immaterial operation and receptivity of the soul (albeit confused and incomplete knowledge of universal truth and goodness). Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 2. See also *STh* I, q. 85, a. 3, where Aquinas writes "our intellect proceeds from

deliberation and the exercise of freewill, this delighted awareness of particulars is the sufficient condition for "those who lack the use of reason" to be capacitated by sacramental grace for a properly human, contemplative happiness—a happiness comparable to the spiritual rapture that Aquinas identifies in the experience of some Christian wayfarers.[121]

a state of potentiality to a state of actuality; and every power thus proceeding from potentiality to actuality comes first to an incomplete act, which is the medium between potentiality and actuality, before accomplishing the perfect act. The perfect act of the intellect is complete knowledge, when the object is distinctly and determinately known; whereas the incomplete act is imperfect knowledge, when the object is known indistinctly, and as it were confusedly. A thing thus imperfectly known, is known partly in act and partly in potentiality . . . for a child can distinguish man from not man before he distinguishes this man from that. . . . Thus it is evident that indistinct knowledge is midway between potentiality and act."

[121] This essay develops and extends material prepared for the Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Studies, September 2012; the Mellon-ISLA Lecture Series and Workshop on Interdisciplinary Approaches to Disability, January 2013; and an academic paper presented at the European Society for the Study of Theology and Disability, June 2013. I received generous feedback after each presentation. I am grateful for the comments I received on this article, at various stages, from Reinhard Hütter, John O'Callaghan, Joseph Wawrykow, Jean Porter, Therese Cory, Luis Vera, Medi Ann Volpe, and Hans S. Reinders. I am particularly indebted to Vicente Romero for his kindness and support.

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LOVE OF GOD ABOVE SELF

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IS THERE ANY LOVE that is not ultimately a form of self-love? Anders Nygren famously maintained that for Thomas Aquinas there is not. Nygren was led to this conclusion in large part by Aquinas's claims that love is an act of the will and that the ultimate end of the will is happiness: if every act of love is on account of happiness as an ultimate end, it seems to follow that all love of others is motivated by, and reducible to, love of self.[1] Others have drawn this conclusion for similar reasons. Scott MacDonald, for example, interprets Aquinas as proposing "egoistic rationalism"; he believes that this ethical position follows from Aquinas's claim that human beings, like all creatures, seek their perfection.[2]

Texts, however, can be produced to show that Aquinas himself believes that nonegoistic love is possible.[3] If he is an

[1] Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, trans. Philip S. Watson (London: SPCK, 1953), 642.

[2] Scott MacDonald, "Egoistic Rationalism: Aquinas's Basis for Christian Morality," in *Christian Theism and the Problems of Philosophy*, ed. Michael D. Beaty, Library of Religious Philosophy 5 (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 327-54: "What I'm going to call Aquinas's metaethical egoism—his claim that human beings seek their own perfection—is merely a particular instance of his general metaphysical view" (331).

[3] Thomas Aquinas, *In quatuor libros Sententiarum* III, d. 29, q. 1, a. 3, ad 2 (*Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia*, vols. 6-7 [Parma: Fiaccadori, 1852-73; New York: Musurgia Publishers, 1948], 318): "amicitia non retorqueat ad seipsum bonum quod ad alterum optat: diligimus enim amicos, etaim si nihil nobis debeat inde fieri" ("friendship does not turn the good that we wish for another back towards the self, for we love our friends even if nothing might accrue to us from them"). Similar statements may be

egoist, he is not so intentionally; he can only be so in the sense that his principles, despite his wishes, necessitate such a position. While Nygren interpreted Aquinas as an unwilling egoist of this sort,[4] most modern scholars of Aquinas's thought on love have held that his principles do not necessitate egoism, and they have endeavored to explain how nonegoistic love is possible on Thomistic grounds. Modern attempts to solve the "problem of love in Thomas Aquinas" normally look back to Pierre Rousselot's 1908 work *Pour l'histoire du problème de l'amour au moyen âge*.[5] Rousselot identified the "problem of love" as whether a love that is not egoistic is possible and, if it is, what the relation might be between this love and the love of self which appears to be the foundation of natural tendencies.[6] Rousselot believed that in the Middle Ages this problem was primarily dealt with through the consideration of the more particular problem of whether it is possible to love God above self apart from grace. This approach, he thought, offered significant advantages: it was simultaneously concrete and profound, and the object of love was both the last end and the author of all natural appetites.[7] If genuine love for another is possible, that possibility would be discoverable in this case and through analysis of love of God above self it would seem that one could

found in II *Sent*., d. 3. q. 4, a. 1, corp. and ad 3; IV *Sent.*, q. 49, q. 1, a. 2, qcla. 1, ad 3; *STh* II-II, q. 44, a. 7 (*Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII P. M.*, vol. 4 [Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1882-]); and *De perf.*, c. 13 (*Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia*, vol. 15 [Parma: Fiaccadori, 1852-73; New York: Musurgia Publishers, 1950]). There are also texts in which Aquinas argues for a love of friendship for God that is greater than the love of friendship for oneself; these texts will be examined in detail below.

[4] Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 644-45: "It did not escape Thomas, however, that his basic view of love accords badly with Christian love, which 'seeketh not its own' . . . he tried to find a solution with the help of the idea of 'amor amicitiae.' It need hardly be said that this attempt was doomed to failure."

[5] Pierre Rousselot, *Pour l'histoire du problème de l'amour au moyen âge,* Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, Bd. 6, Hft. 6 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1908).

[6] Ibid., 1: "Ce qu'on appelle ici le 'problème de l'amour' pourrait, en termes abstraits, se formuler ainsi: Un amour qui ne soit pas égoïste est-il possible? Et, s'il est possible, quel est le rapport de ce pur amour d'autrui à l'amour de soi, qui semble être le fond de toutes les tendances naturelles?"

[7] Ibid.

arrive at the principles needed to make sense of other nonegoistic loves.[8] Accordingly, when Rousselot presented Aquinas's solution to the problem of love, he did so exclusively through an explanation of Aquinas's teaching on love of God above self.[9] The most notable feature of this account was its appeal to the part-whole relation: Rousselot proposed that for Aquinas our love for God above self is due to the fact that we relate to God as a part to a whole.

Rousselot's work inspired a scholarly discussion that has persisted now for over a century. This discussion may be roughly divided into three stages: the early twentieth century, the mid-twentieth century, and the late-twentieth century to the present. General agreement with Rousselot characterizes early twentieth-century scholarship. Scholars of this period, such as Charles-Vincent Héris, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, and H.-D. Simonin, may claim that Rousselot neglects or overemphasizes something, but they do not assert that he is substantially wrong.[10] By contrast, rejection or neglect of the "part-whole" approach to love of God above self characterizes the scholarship of the mid-twentieth century. Étienne Gilson, in his 1932 work *L'esprit de la philosophie médiévale*, vigorously objects to Rousselot's account, arguing that the part-whole relationship, as it functions in Aquinas's arguments for love of God above self, should not be understood in "a distressingly literal way," but simply as "a metaphor, the first moment in a *manuductio*."[11]

[8] Ibid.

[9] See esp. ibid., 7-14.

[10] Charles-Vincent Héris, "L'amour naturel de Dieu d'après saint Thomas," in *Mélanges Thomistes* (Kain: Le Saulchoir, 1923). Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, "Le problème de l'amour pur et la solution de saint Thomas," *Angelicum* (1929): 83-124. This article also appears in an expanded form as the second chapter of *L'amour de Dieu et la croix de Jésus* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1929). H.-D. Simonin, "Autour de la solution thomiste du problème de l'amour," *Archieves d'histoire doctrinale et litteraire du moyen âge* 6 (1931): 174-275. Other works include M.-D. Roland-Gosselin, "Le désir et l'existence de Dieu," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et theologiques* 13 (1924): 162-72; and Paul Philippe, *Le rôle de l'amitié dans la vie spirituelle* (Rome: Angelicum, 1938).

[11] Étienne Gilson, *L'esprit de la philosophie médiévale* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1932), 2:80: "Ce qui fait que l'on a pu s'y tromper, c'est l'abus, aujourd'hui assez commun, de ce qui

Louis-Bertrand Geiger also emphatically rejects Rousselot's account, arguing that the real explanation of disinterested love is to be found in the will's special, "objective" inclination to the "good in itself" as opposed to the "good for me"; we love God because he is good, not because we are related to him, whether as part to whole or otherwise.[12] Other writers of this period, such as Jean-Hervé Nicolas and Avital Wohlman, while recognizing that Aquinas appeals to the part-whole relationship in his arguments for love of God above self, pursue lines of explanation in which this relationship plays no part.[13] The part-

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n'était d'abord qu'une métaphore, le premier moment d'une *manuductio*, et que l'on a trop souvent interprété avec un littéralité désolante."

[12] Louis-Bertrand Geiger, *Le problème de l'amour chez saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Conférence Albert-le-Grand, 1952 (Montreal: Institute d'études médiévales, 1952). Geiger treats love at the rational level (56-67), and then disinterested love (67-92); the most significant passages, however, appear in the third and final section (93-128) in which he responds to Rousselot. We find perhaps the most succinct expression of his position on page 101: "La volonté est donc un appétit naturel en un sens spécial, propre au monde de l'esprit. Son objet est le bien comme tel. Son acte est notre bien, notre perfection ou notre béatitude justement parce que par lui nous sommes conjoints directement au bien par un amour du bien lui-même, non point par une convoitise qui ne pourrait atteindre son objet que par la raison formelle de *mon bien*." To preserve his interpretation of the object of the will, Geiger needs to equate our good and perfection with the very act of the willing the good disinterestedly; this equation, however, leads to problematic claims about beatitude (see esp. pp. 103-4). For an assessment of Geiger's position similar to my own, see David Gallagher, "Thomas Aquinas on Self-Love as the Basis for Love of Others," *Acta Philosophica* 8 (1999): 38 n. 52.

[13] Jean-Hervé Nicolas, "Amour de soi, amour de Dieu, amour des autres," *Revue Thomiste* 56 (1956): 5-42. Avital Wohlman, "Amour du bien propre et amour de soi dans la doctrine thomiste de l'amour," *Revue Thomiste* 81 (1981): 203-34. Other works of this period include Gregory Stevens, "The Disinterested Love of God according to St. Thomas and Some of His Modern Interpreters," *The Thomist* 16 (1953): 307-33, 497-541; and M.-R. Gagnebet, "L'amour naturel de Dieu chez saint Thomas et ses contemporains," *Revue Thomiste* 48 (1948): 394-446; 49 (1949): 31-102. Gagnebet does appeal to the part-whole relationship; Stevens gives significant attention to it but, agreeing with Geiger, maintains that it does not "offer anything formally to the discussion of love" (529). While there are exceptions, there was enough neglect of the part-whole relationship in this period to prompt Thomas Osborne to say of the secondary literature as a whole that it has tended "to make a concessionary remark about the use of the part-whole relationship, and then to cull an argument for the natural love of God from Thomas' other texts" (Thomas M. Osborne, *The Natural Love*

whole relationship, however, returns to prominence in the late twentieth century. David Gallagher makes this relationship central to his account of love in his 1999 article "Thomas Aquinas on Self-Love as the Basis for Love of Others."[14] Attention to the part-whole relationship has continued in the notable works of Thomas Osborne and Ezra Sullivan.[15]

While the significance of the part-whole relation in the explanation of love of God divides the scholarly discussion that Rousselot initiated, concern about love of God above self unites it. If a scholar addresses other forms of love at all, he or she usually does so after considering the love of God, and more briefly. This neglect is notable because the "problem of love" as formulated by Rousselot clearly has as its object love of others in general. The neglect, however, is not unreasonable; in love of God we find the crux of the problem, for here "interested" and "disinterested" love meet in their purest forms inasmuch as God is simultaneously the true object of our happiness and the one whom we ought to love more than self with love of friendship. Further, if love is of the good and God is the Good, it seems that an explanation of love of God might be necessary for a full and proper explanation of love of particular goods. For these and other reasons, it seems unlikely that future scholarship will leave aside the question of love of God and focus on other loves until love of God has been adequately dealt with and a consensus on its explanation has been reached.

In what follows I will offer my own attempt to explain Aquinas's understanding of love of God above self. My explanation will be divided into four parts. First, I will present

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of God Over Self: The Role of Self-Interest in Thirteenth-century Ethics [Ph.D. diss, Duke University, 2001], 155-56).

[14] Gallagher, "Thomas Aquinas on Self-Love as the Basis for Love of Others," 23-44. Gallagher also gives some attention to the part-whole relationship in "Desire for Beatitude and Love of Friendship in Thomas Aquinas," *Mediaeval Studies* 58 (1996): 1-47.

[15] Thomas M. Osborne, *Love of Self and Love of God in Thirteenth-century Ethics* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, c2005). Ezra Sullivan, "Natural Self-Transcending Love according to Thomas Aquinas," *Nova et Vetera,* Eng. ed., 12 (2014): 913-46.

the major texts in which Aquinas argues for love of God above self. Because scholarly discussion is most significantly divided on the question of the importance of the part-whole relationship, I will use this presentation of the texts to show that this relationship is fundamental to the argument and not, as Gilson contends, a mere metaphor. Second, I will investigate the part-whole relation in detail and will attempt to determine why the part loves the good of the whole more than its own good. Third, I will consider how Aquinas uses the part-whole relationship to argue for love of God above self.[16] Lastly, having offered my explanation of Aquinas's argument, I will consider whether the part-whole relationship is essential not only to the line of argument that Aquinas uses, but also to his understanding of love of God above self.

I. Aquinas's Arguments: The Role of the Part-Whole Relationship

Aquinas treats love of God above self on a variety of occasions throughout his career. We find him addressing the issue in the *Commentary on the Divine Names*, the *Disputed Questions on Hope,* the short treatise *On Perfection*, and, somewhat indirectly, the third book of the *Summa contra Gentiles*.[17] The fullest and most direct treatments, however,

[16] The argument that I am properly concerned with in this article is that for a natural love of God above self. This love is central to Aquinas's explanations of love of God, even those that aim at concluding that God is to be loved above self by charity. In these contexts Aquinas uses "natural" in opposition to "supernatural," rather than to reason; so understood, a "natural" love may be either rational, sensitive, or even noncognitive, as in the case of a rock. In his later works Aquinas understands himself to be showing that *all* things naturally love God above self, although each in the way proper to its ontological status. I, however, will be directing my attention primarily to human natural love, which, Aquinas maintains, is not possible after the Fall unless nature be first healed by grace.

[17] The relevant passages may be found in Thomas Aquinas, *Commentaria in librum beati Dionysii de divinis nominibus*, c. 4, lect. 9-10 (*Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia*, vol. 15 [Parma: Fiaccadori, 1852-73; New York: Musurgia Publishers, 1950]); *Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus*, q. 4, a. 1, ad 9 (*Quaestiones Disputatae*, vol. 2, ed.

appear in the *Commentary on the Sentences*, the *Summa theologiae*, and the *Questiones quodlibetales*. We will examine these major treatments, of which there are six, with an eye to the role played in them by the part-whole relationship.[18]

A) II *Sent*., d. 3, q. 4, a. 1

The first occasion on which Aquinas argues for love of God above self is in book 2 of the commentary on the *Sentences*, distinction 3, question 4, article 1. This article specifically addresses the question of whether in a natural state, apart from grace, an angel might love God above self and all things. Aquinas answers as follows:

> It is necessary to assert that the angels had love of friendship towards God since according to their natural goods the divine likeness shone in them. It pertains, however, to the notion of friendship that although it may have delights and utilities connected with it, it is not to these that the eye of the lover looks, but to the loved good. Therefore, in the heart of the lover the loved good is preferred to all the utilities and delights that come from the loved one. But there was no good in an angel that was not from the loved one, namely, God. Therefore, they would love more the divine good that they loved than the good that they themselves were, or which was in them.[19]

Aquinas's argument depends on two things: an understanding of love of friendship, and God being the universal first cause. Because God is the universal first cause of the angel, the

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E. Odetto [Rome and Turin: Marietti, 1965]); *De perf.,* c. 13; *ScG* III, cc. 16-22 (*Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII P. M.,* vol. 14 [Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1882-]).

[18] Stevens ("Disinterested Love of God," 515-23) and Osborne (*Love of Self and Love of God*, 74-86) also present and analyze Aquinas's arguments for love of God above self. Their accounts are broader in their focus. The form of the argument and the role, if any, of the part-whole relationship in it is my exclusive concern.

[19] II *Sent*., d. 3, q. 4, a. 1 (Parma ed., 426): "oportet enim ponere Angelos ad Deum habuisse dilectionem amicitiae, cum secundum bona naturalia similitudo divina in eis resplenderet. Hoc autem est de ratione amicitiae quod quamvis habeat dilectiones et utilitates annexas, non tamen ad has oculus amantis respicit, sed ad bonum amatum. Ergo in corde amantis praeponderat bonum amatum omnibus utilitatibus vel dilectionibus quae consequuntur ex amato. Sed nullum bonum erat in Angelo quod non esset ex ipso amato, scilicet Deo. Ergo plus diligebant bonum amatum divinum quam bonum quod ipsi erant, vel quod in eis erat."

angel has a likeness to God, for, presumably, as Aquinas often states elsewhere, "every agent acts similar to itself."[20] Likeness, however, causes love of friendship, and so, as a consequence of its likeness to God, the angel has a love of friendship for him. If the angel has love of friendship for God, it follows, then, that the angel loves God more than anything that the angel has received from God. The angel, however, has received everything from God, including its own self. Consequently, the angel loves God more than its own self.

B) III *Sent.*, d. 29, q. 1, a. 3

Aquinas's second treatment of love of God above self appears in book 3 of the commentary on the *Sentences*, distinction 29, question 1, article 3. It is here that Aquinas first employs the part-whole relationship. In response to the question of whether God is to be loved above self by charity, Aquinas notes that the good that someone most wishes to preserve is that which is most pleasing to him and this good is "his good" (*suum bonum*).[21] The *suum bonum* of a person, however, is not necessarily the good that exists or might exist in the person himself. Aquinas writes:

> The good of the lover [i.e. the *suum bonum*] is found more where it exists more perfectly. And, therefore, because whatsoever part is imperfect in itself, having its perfection in the whole, it follows that by a natural love the part tends more to the conservation of its whole than to that of itself. For this reason an animal naturally raises its arm for the defense of its head on which the well-being of the whole depends. It is also for this reason that particular men expose themselves to death for the preservation of the community of which they are parts. Therefore, because our good is perfect in God, as in a universal, first, and perfect cause of goods, the good that is in him is naturally more pleasing than that in ourselves. Therefore, even by love of friendship, God is naturally loved by men more than their own selves.[22]

[20] For example, *STh* I, q. 19, a. 4: "omne agens agit sibi simile."

[21] III *Sent.*, d. 29, q. 1, a. 3 (Parma ed., 318): "Bonum autem illud unusquisque maxime vult salvari quod est sibi magis placens: quia hoc est appetitui informato per amorem magis conforme; hoc est autem suum bonum."

[22] Ibid.: "Bonum autem ipsius amantis magis invenitur ubi perfectius est; et ideo, quia pars quaelibet imperfecta est in seipsa, perfectionem autem habet in suo toto; ideo

Aquinas then connects this argument, which works on the level of nature, with charity: if man apart from grace can naturally love God above self, and if charity perfects nature, it follows that by charity God is to be loved above self.

Here, Aquinas argues that we love God above self because (1) we love our good more where it exists more perfectly, and (2) our good exists more perfectly in God than in our self. The part-whole relationship plays a role in this argument, but it is not entirely clear what this role is. There are two possible readings. According to one, Aquinas appeals to the part-whole relationship in order to support the claim that we love our good more where it exists more perfectly: in the part-whole relationship we have a case in which the good of one thing, namely, the part, is more perfectly found in another, namely, the whole, and here we observe that the part prefers the good of the whole to its own good. According to the other reading, Aquinas uses the part-whole relationship to establish his second claim, namely, that our good exists more perfectly in God. On this reading, Aquinas is arguing that because God is the universal, first, and perfect cause of our good he relates to us as whole to part, at least by analogy; consequently, our good exists more perfectly in him than it does in ourselves. If this interpretation is correct, the part-whole relationship is an essential part of the argument; if, however, the first interpretation is correct, the relationship merely provides supporting evidence.

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etiam naturali amore pars plus tendit ad conservationem sui totius quam sui ipsius. Unde etiam naturaliter animal opponit brachium ad defensionem capitis, ex quo pendet salus totius. Et inde est etiam quod particulares homines seipsos morti exponunt pro conservatione communitatis, cujus ipsi sunt pars. Quia ergo bonum nostrum in Deo perfectum est, sicut in causa universali prima et perfecta bonorum, ideo bonum in ipso esse magis naturaliter complacet quam in nobis ipsis; et ideo etiam amore amicitiae naturaliter Deus ab homine plus seipso diligitur." My translation of the beginning of this passage has been guided by Stevens, "Disinterested Love of God," 516.

C) STh I, q. 60, a. 5

Aquinas's next major treatment of love of God above self occurs in question 60, article 5 of the *Prima pars*. Responding to the specific question of whether an angel loves God more than self by a natural love, Aquinas directs attention to the motion of natural things on the grounds that "the natural inclination in these things that lack reason demonstrates the natural inclination in the will of an intellectual nature."[23] He then explains:

> Among natural things, everything that by its very nature is of another [*secundum naturam hoc ipsum quod est, alterius est*] is more principally and strongly inclined to that of which it is [*id cuius est*] than to its own self. This natural inclination is demonstrated by those things that are acted upon naturally, because "according as a thing is moved naturally, it has an inborn aptitude to be thus moved," as is said in the second book of the *Physics*. For we see that a part naturally exposes itself for the conservation of the whole, just as the hand, without deliberation, exposes itself to a blow in order to save the whole body. And because reason imitates nature, we find an inclination of this sort among the political virtues, for it pertains to the virtuous citizen that he might expose himself to the danger of death for the safety of the whole society—if a man were naturally a part of this city, this inclination would be natural to him. Therefore, because God himself is the universal good, and under this good are contained an angel, man, and every creature, for every creature naturally, according to what it is, is of God, it follows that by a natural love angels and man more and principally love God than their own self.[24]

[23] *STh* I, q. 60, a. 5: "inclinatio enim naturalis in his quae sunt sine ratione, demonstrat inclinationem naturalem in voluntate intellectualis naturae."

[24] Ibid.: "Unumquodque autem in rebus naturalibus, quod secundum naturam hoc ipsum quod est, alterius est, principalius et magis inclinatur in id cuius est, quam in seipsum. Et haec inclinatio naturalis demonstratur ex his quae naturaliter aguntur: quia *unumquodque, sicut agitur naturaliter, sic aptum natum est agi,* ut dicitur in II *Physic*. Videmus enim quod naturaliter pars se exponit, ad conservationem totius: sicut manus exponitur ictui, absque deliberatione, ad conservationem totius corporis. Et quia ratio imitatur naturam, huiusmodi inclinationem invenimus in virtutibus politicis: est enim virtuosi civis, ut se exponat mortis periculo pro totius reipublicae conservatione; et si homo esset naturalis pars huius civitatis, haec inclinatio esset ei naturalis. Quia igitur bonum universale est ipse Deus, et sub hoc bono continetur etiam angelus et homo et omnis creatura, quia omnis creatura naturaliter, secundum id quod est, Dei est; sequitur quod naturali dilectione etiam angelus et homo plus et principalius diligat Deum quam

It is natural for an angel or man to love God above self because (1) everything whose nature is "of" another is more principally and strongly inclined to the good of that other than to its own good, and (2) every creature is, by its nature, "of" God. The part-whole relationship plays a role in this argument, but once again its precise function is difficult to discern. Aquinas appeals to the hand's defense of the body and the virtuous citizen's defense of the city as evidence for a natural inclination to prefer the good of that "of" which something is, but it is unclear whether he is understanding the "of" relationship as being identical with the part-whole relationship. If he means that the two are identical, then he is saying, as Rousselot claims he does, that we love God above self because we relate to him as a part to a whole.[25] If, however, the "of" relationship is not identical with the part-whole relationship but only includes it, then either Aquinas's identification of God as the universal good signifies some "of" relation between creatures and God other than that of the part to the whole (in which case the role of the part-whole relationship in the argument will be merely that of providing support for the claim that anything that is "of" another is more principally inclined to the good of that other), or it does not signify some other relationship, in which case Aquinas's argument for love of God above self would again depend on our relation to God being that of part to whole.

D) STh I-II, q. 109, a. 3

We find two other arguments for love of God above self in the *Summa theologiae*. The next occurs in question 109, article 3 of the *Prima secundae*, where Aquinas asks whether man is

seipsum." For the quotation from the *Physics* I have adopted the translation used by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province [New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1947]).

[25] On the association of the part-whole relationship and the "of" relationship see Osborne, *Love of Self and Love of God*, 79; Stevens, "Disinterested Love of God," 521-22; and Lawrence Dewan, "St. Thomas, the Common Good, and the Love of Persons," in *Wisdom, Law, and Virtue* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 275-76.

able to love God above all apart from grace. After referring the present question back to that of the natural love of the angels for God (*STh* I, q. 60, a. 5), Aquinas makes explicit something that was implicit in his earlier treatment, namely, that it is natural for all things, not just for angels or man, to love God above all things—according, of course, to the mode of love proper to the nature of each. Aquinas then offers his explanation for this universal love of God above self:

> The reason for this [love of God above all] is that to each thing it is natural that it seek and love something according as it is apt by nature to do so, for "a given thing acts just as it is apt by nature to," as is said in the second book of the *Physics*. It is manifest, however, that the good of the part is on account of the good of the whole. Whence by a natural appetite or love each particular thing loves its own proper good on account of the common good of the whole universe, which is God.[26]

Aquinas then concludes that in the state of integral nature (i.e., before the fall) man would have loved God above self; in the present state of corrupt nature, however, man is no longer able to love God in this way unless he is first healed by grace.

The part-whole relationship once again appears in the argument, but Aquinas uses the relationship in a very different way than he did earlier. In the two previous treatments, he either uses it to support some other claim (such as that we love our good more where it exists more perfectly) or he makes the argument depend on our relation to God being, or being analogous to, that of a part to a whole. Here, however, Aquinas essentially argues that it is natural to love God above self because (1) it is natural for a part to love more the good of its whole than its own good, and (2) we, as creatures, are parts of a whole, namely, the universe, whose common good is God. The part-whole relationship is essential to the argument, but the

[26] *STh* I-II, q. 109, a. 3: "Cuius ratio est quia unicuique naturale est quod appetat et amet aliquid, secundum quod aptum natum est esse: *sic* enim *agit unumquodque, prout aptum natum est*, ut dicitur in II *Phys*. Manifestum est autem quod bonum partis est propter bonum totius. Unde etiam naturali appetitu vel amore unaquaeque res particularis amat bonum suum proprium propter bonum commune totius universi, quod est Deus."

argument does not depend on God being our whole; it depends on him being the common good of our whole.

E) STh II-II, q. 26, a. 3

The last treatment that Aquinas gives of love of God above self in the *Summa theologiae* occurs in question 26, article 3 of the *Secunda secundae*. In answer to the question of whether from charity we ought to love God more than self, Aquinas employs an *a fortiori* argument. God is the source of both the good of nature and the good of grace. On the grounds of God's sharing or giving of natural goods to creatures, there arises a natural love by which man in his integral state, and all other creatures in a way proper to themselves, love God above all things and more than self.[27] But if by nature God is loved more than self, even more so ought he to be loved more than self by charity.

In explanation of the natural love of God above self, Aquinas offers the following:

> any given part naturally loves the common good of the whole more than its particular, proper good. This is made manifest from the operation [of nature], for every part has a principal inclination to common action useful for the whole. This also appears in the political virtues, according to which citizens sometimes sustain loss of their private possessions and their own person for the sake of the common good.[28]

This passage provides only half of the argument for natural love of God above self. Aquinas does not explicitly state the other

[27] *STh* II-II, q. 26, a. 3: "a Deo duplex bonum accipere possumus: scilicet bonum naturae, et bonum gratiae. Super communicatione autem bonorum naturalium nobis a Deo facta fundatur amor naturalis, quo non solum homo in suae integritate naturae super omnia diligit Deum et plus quam seipsum, sed etiam quaelibet creatura suo modo, idest vel intellectuali vel rationali vel animali, vel saltem naturali amore, sicut lapides et alia quae cognitione carent."

[28] Ibid.: "unaquaeque pars naturaliter plus amat commune bonum totius quam particulare bonum proprium. Quod manifestatur ex opere: quaelibet enim pars habet inclinationem principalem ad actionem communem utilitati totius. Apparet etiam hoc in politicis virtutibus, secundum quas cives pro bono communi et dispendia propriarum rerum et personarum interdum sustinent."

half, but his explanation of love of God above self from charity allows us easily to infer it. Whereas natural love is founded on God's sharing of natural goods with us, the love of charity, Aquinas says, is founded on his sharing of the gifts of grace; consequently, "from charity a man ought more to love God, who is the common good of all, than himself, for beatitude is in God as in a common and fontal principle of all who are able to participate in beatitude."[29] If, by charity, we love God above self because he is the common good of all those who share in beatitude, we may infer that by nature we love God above self because he is the common good of all who share in the good of nature. Aquinas's argument here is thus essentially the same as that in the previous selection. It is natural to love God above self because (1) it is natural for a part to love the common good of its whole more than its own particular good, and (2) God is the common good of all nature, which is to say, the universe, of which all creatures are part.

F) Quodl. I, q. 4, a. 3

The last major treatment of love of God above self to consider is found in question 4, article 3 of *Quodlibet* I.[30] Here, Aquinas asks whether in the state of innocence man would have loved God more than all things and above self, and then proposes for consideration the theoretical case of a man existing in a purely natural state. Aquinas explains that it is natural to all things to love God above all and more than self, according to the way possible for each. That it is natural to love God above

[29] Ibid.: "ex caritate magis debet homo diligere Deum, qui est bonum commune omnium, quam seipsum, quia beatitudo est in Deo sicut in communi et fontali omnium principio qui beatitudinem participare possunt."

[30] *Quodl.* I, q. 4, a. 3 may not be chronologically last; it appears to have been written between the writing of *STh* I-II, q. 109, a. 3; and *STh* II-II, q. 26, a. 3. Osborne dates the former of these texts at 1268, the latter at 1271-72, and *Quodl.* I, q. 4, a. 3 at 1269 (see Osborne, *Love of Self and Love of God*, 78-83). Also see G. Emery, "Brief Catalogue of the Works of Saint Thomas Aquinas," in Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1, *The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 333 and 337.

all is made evident to us from the natural activity of things that operate without reason, for "a given thing in nature acts just as it is apt by nature to be acted upon." A now familiar line of argument follows:

> We see that any given part by a certain natural inclination operates for the good of the whole, even with danger or detriment to its own self, as is clear when someone exposes his hand to a sword in order to defend his head, on which the welfare of the body depends. Whence it is natural that any part in its own way might love the whole more than its own self. Whence both according to this natural inclination and according to political virtue the good citizen exposes himself to the danger of death for the sake of the common good. It is manifest, however, that God is the common good of the whole universe and of all its parts. Consequently, each and every creature in its own way naturally loves God more than itself: insensible things naturally, brute animals sensitively, and rational creatures through intellective love which is called *dilection* [*dilectio*].[31]

This argument is virtually identical to the previous two. Both the hand's sacrifice for the body and the citizen's sacrifice for the city are proposed as evidence for the claim that a part naturally loves its whole more than self, a claim that is clearly being understood as interchangeable with the claim that the part loves the good of the whole more than its own good. Since God is the common good of the whole universe, and so of all creatures who are parts of the universe, it is natural for all creatures to love God above self.

[31] *Quodl.* I, q. 4, a. 3 (Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*, ed. Raymond Spiazzi [Turin: Marietti, 1956], 9): "Videmus autem quod unaquaeque pars naturali quadam inclinatione operatur ad bonum totius, etiam cum periculo aut detrimento proprio: ut patet cum aliquis manum exponit gladio ad defensionem capitis, ex quo dependet salus totius corporis. Unde naturale est ut quaelibet pars suo modo plus amet totum quam seipsam. Unde et secundum hanc naturalem inclinationem, et secundum politicam virtutem, bonus civis mortis periculo se exponit pro bono communi. Manifestum est autem quod Deus est bonum commune totius universi et omnium partium eius. Unde quaelibet creatura suo modo naturaliter plus amat Deum quam seipsam: insensibilia quidem naturaliter, bruta vero animalia sensitive, creatura vero rationalis per intellectivum amorem, quae dilectio dicitur."

G) Summary

Aquinas's argument for a natural love of God above self develops over the course of his career. The most substantial change occurs between his first and second treatments of the problem in the commentary on the *Sentences*. Since he does not, to my knowledge, contradict anything that we find in his first treatment, it seems more likely that the change was due not to a decision that the earlier argument was mistaken, but to his finding a line of argument better suited to his purposes. If such is the case, then the principles used in that first treatment are still relevant and may shed light on his later solution.

Aquinas introduces the part-whole relation in his second treatment and employs it in all subsequent accounts, but he does not immediately settle on a form for the argument. The second and third passages considered above, as well as the treatment of love in his commentary on Dionysius's *De divinis nominibus* (c. 4, lect. 9 and 10),[32] belong to an intermediate stage of development in which Aquinas experiments with explaining a creature's love of God above self by means of its analogy with the part's love for its whole.[33] It is not entirely clear whether the arguments he offers depend directly or indirectly on this analogy. The dependence would be direct if one of the premises of the argument asserted the analogy. It would be indirect if the analogy were merely being used to support one of the premises, such as the claim that anything that is "of" another is more

[32] *In De div. nom.*, c. 4, lect. 9 (Parma ed., 314): "unde naturaliter pars amat totum, et exponitur pars sponte pro salute totius. Quod enim est superius in entibus, comparatur ad inferius sicut totum ad partem, inquantum superius perfecte et totaliter habet quod ab inferiori imperfecte et particulariter habetur, et inquantum supremum continet in se inferiora multa" ("whence the part naturally loves the whole, and the part willingly exposes itself for the safety of the whole. For what is superior among beings is compared to the inferior just as whole to part inasmuch as the superior perfectly and totally has what is imperfectly and partially had by the inferior and inasmuch as the superior contains in itself many inferiors"). The same idea is expressed again in the following *lectio*. God, of course, is that which is most superior among beings.

[33] Stevens and Osborne emphasize the unity of Aquinas's argument for love of God above self, particularly after the treatment in II *Sent*. My account differs from theirs primarily in terms of its identification of an intermediary phrase of development.

principally inclined to the good of that other than to its own. This latter possibility seems to me the more likely.[34]

Aquinas arrives at the final form of the argument in the passage quoted from the *Prima secundae*. He once again appeals to the part-whole relationship, but his argument no longer depends, directly or indirectly, on our relationship to God being analogous to that of a part to a whole. It depends, rather, on creatures being—properly and not by analogy—parts of the universe. In this final form, Aquinas argues that we love God above self because (1) it is natural for a part to prefer the good of its whole to its own good, and (2) we are parts of a whole, namely, the universe, whose good is God.[35]

In light of this examination, we can see that Rousselot and Gilson are each in some sense right and in some sense wrong. Rousselot is right to assert the importance of the part-whole relationship while Gilson is wrong to dismiss it as a metaphor. Nevertheless, Gilson is not entirely wrong in objecting to the use that Rousselot makes of the relationship; while it is possible that the argument in its intermediary stage depends, as Rousselot claims, on an identification of God as our whole, in its mature form the argument clearly depends on God being, not our whole, but the common good of our whole.

II. The Part-Whole Relationship

The part-whole relationship is a notable feature of all but the first of Aquinas's accounts of love of God above self, and it is

[34] Stevens and Osborne, however, appear to attribute a direct rather than a merely supportive role to the part-whole relationship in III *Sent.*, d. 29, q. 1, a. 3; and *STh* I, q. 60, a. 5.

[35] It seems worth noting that Aquinas's mature account also distinguishes itself from his earlier ones by its contention that love of God above self is natural to *all* creatures. Aquinas may have settled on the final form of the argument because he saw it as conducive to making this assertion. It is precisely in this way that he distinguishes himself in the medieval discussion about the natural love of God—most thought that such love was possible, but only Aquinas asserted it was possible for all creatures. See Gagnebet, "L'amour naturel de Dieu chez saint Thomas et ses contemporains," 414. For the position of Aquinas's predecessors see ibid., 397-409; and Osborne, *Love of God and Love of Self*, chaps. 1 and 2.

essential to the argument in its mature form. Why, then, did scholars, particularly in the mid-twentieth century, so often neglect this relationship and pursue an alternative explanation? It was not because they were unfamiliar with the texts examined above. Nor, it seems, was it simply that they believed that appeal to the part-whole relationship is inessential to Aquinas's understanding of love of God above self. The neglect was due, at least to a large extent, to the belief that Aquinas's use of the part-whole relationship is not only unnecessary, but also problematic.

Now that we have identified Aquinas's argument and have seen that the part-whole relationship is essential to it, we need to examine this controversial feature more closely. We will begin by considering why, for Aquinas, the part loves the good of the whole more than its own individual good. With an explanation in place, we will then consider the problems that scholars have had with using the part-whole relationship to explain love of God above self. We will see that most of these problems can be easily resolved and that none of them justifies the abandonment or neglect of the "part-whole argument."

A) Why the Part Loves the Good of the Whole More Than Its Own

While Rousselot and Héris have suggested that the part's love for the whole should be understood from the perspective of unity,[36] when we examine Aquinas's arguments for love of God above self as well as his account of love in his commentary on Dionysius's *De divinis nominibus* (c. 4, lect. 9), we do not find him treating the matter in this way. Rather, we find in his statements about the part and the whole three different, although presumably related, approaches to the part's love. In one, the part's love for the good of the whole above its own is considered from the perspective of what the whole does for the part: the part loves the whole because the whole makes the

[36] See esp. Rousselot, *Pour l'histoire du problème de l'amour au moyen âge*, 12; and Héris, "L'amour naturel de Dieu," 296.

part's good complete. Aquinas takes this approach in his commentary on Dionysius: "the whole is the good of the part, for the part is not perfect except in the whole: for this reason the part naturally loves the whole, and the part exposes itself willingly for the welfare of the whole."[37] In another approach, the part's love for the whole is considered in terms of *where* the part's good is more perfectly found. This line of explanation appears in the commentary on the *Sentences*: "The good of the lover is more found where it exists more perfectly. And, therefore, because whatsoever part is imperfect in itself, having its perfection in the whole, it follows that by a natural love the part tends more to the conservation of its whole than to that of itself."[38] In a third way, the part's love is explained in terms of the part's good being "on account of" (*propter*) the good of the whole. We find this approach in the *Summa*, where Aquinas explains that, "the good of the part is on account of [*propter*] the good of the whole."[39]

The first line of explanation, that which claims that the part loves the whole because the part is not perfect except in the whole, bears a troubling resemblance to an explanation offered by Gilson. According to Gilson, the hand defends the body because the body is "the necessary condition of its own existence";[40] it is, he says, "as if the hand knew that it was not able to subsist apart from the body of which it is part, and so grasped that to defend the body was *equivalent to defending*

[37] *In De div. nom.*, c. 4, lect. 9 (Parma ed., 314): "totum est bonum partis: non enim est pars perfecta nisi in toto: unde naturaliter pars amat totum, et exponitur pars sponte pro salute totius."

[38] III *Sent.*, d. 29, q. 1, a. 3 (Parma ed., 318): "Bonum autem ipsius amantis magis invenitur ubi perfectius est; et ideo, quia pars quaelibet imperfecta est in seipsa, perfectionem autem habet in suo toto; ideo etiam naturali amore pars plus tendit ad conservationem sui totius quam sui ipsius."

[39] *STh* I-II, q. 109, a. 3: "Manifestum est autem quod bonum partis est propter bonum totius."

[40] Gilson, *L'esprit de la philosophie médiévale*, 2:81: "la condition nécessaire de son existence."

itself."[41] Gilson appears to understand the part's love for the whole as reducible to its love of self. Aquinas's explanation resembles Gilson's in that Aquinas also identifies the cause of the part's love for the whole as something that the whole does for the part. Aquinas, however, cannot mean what Gilson appears to maintain, for the part-whole relation is not, as Gilson thinks, a metaphor but a part of the argument, and this understanding of the part's love for the whole would utterly subvert the purpose of the part-whole relation in the argument. It seems exceedingly unlikely that Aquinas would repeatedly make an obvious error of this sort. If, then, Aquinas and Gilson cannot mean the same thing, the difference between their explanations is noteworthy. For Gilson, the whole is the condition of the part's existence. For Aquinas, the whole is the condition of the part's perfection, which is to say, its goodness. The whole does not simply cause the part to be; it causes it to be good.

Aquinas's second approach to the part's love for the whole explains the love in terms of *where* the part's good exists more perfectly. Understanding the context of this argument in the *Sentences* commentary is necessary for its proper interpretation. After setting forth the distinction between love of friendship and love of concupiscence, Aquinas explains that the good that a thing most wishes to preserve (and by implication most loves) is "its good," and that the thing will more wish to preserve this good where it exists more perfectly.[42] It is for this reason, then, that a part will be more inclined to the conservation of its whole than that of itself, for "every part is imperfect in itself, but has its perfection in its whole."[43] If we take this statement about the

[41] Ibid.: "Tout se passé, en effet, comme si la main savait que, puisqu'elle ne peut subsister à part du corps dont elle fait partie, defender ce corps équivaut pour elle à se defender elle-même" (emphasis added).

[42] III *Sent.*, d. 29, q. 1, a. 3: "Bonum autem illud unusquisque maxime vult salvari quod est sibi magis placens: quia hoc est appetitui informato per amorem magis conforme; hoc est autem suum bonum. Unde secundum quod bonum alicujus rei est vel aestimatur magis bonum ipsius amantis, hoc amans magis salvari vult in ipsa re amata. Bonum autem ipsius amantis magis invenitur ubi perfectius est."

[43] Ibid.: "et ideo, quia pars quaelibet imperfecta est in seipsa, perfectionem autem habet in suo toto; ideo etiam naturali amore pars plus tendit ad conservationem sui totius quam sui ipsius."

part-whole relation simply by itself, we could interpret it as proposing the same explanation identified above: the part loves the whole because the whole makes the part perfect or complete. The context, however, suggests a different interpretation. In his prior discussion about the "good of the lover," Aquinas appears to understand this good as capable of existing in different subjects in varying degrees. In this article, after speaking about the part-whole relationship, he concludes that we love God more than self because "our good is perfect in God." Since his argument here implies, or perhaps even directly depends on, an analogy between God and the whole, we may infer that the part loves the whole not only because the whole makes the part's individual good complete, but also because the good of the whole is more the part's good than its own good is.

This understanding of the part's love for the whole is also implicit in the commentary on Dionysius. There, speaking primarily about love of friendship, Aquinas declares that "everything that we love, we love inasmuch as it is our good," and then proceeds to distinguish four ways in which something may be "our good," namely, by being (1) our very self, (2) something "equally coordinated" with us in some order, (3) a part of us, or (4) a whole of which we are a part. Aquinas understands this division as applicable to love at all levels, not just properly human love. He explicitly connects the fourth way of something being "our good" with the part's natural preference for the whole, according to which it *spontaneously* exposes itself for the conservation of the whole. If, then, a thing can only love that which is "its good" (*suum bonum*), and a part loves the good of its whole more than its own privately possessed good, the implication is that the good of the whole is more the good of the part than its own good is.

The difficulty posed by the first line of explanation is that of explaining how the part's love for the whole does not reduce to love of self (for the part loves the whole because of what the whole does for it). The difficulty posed by the second line of explanation is that of explaining the apparent paradox of how the good of something can be more that possessed by another

than that possessed by that thing itself. How could the good of another be more "my good" than my own?

Aquinas's third approach to the part's love for the whole suggests an answer. In the *Summa*, Aquinas explains the part's preference for the good of the whole as being because "the good of the part is on account of [*propter*] the good of the whole."[44] "On account of" (*propter*) can signify causal relations other than that of final causality,[45] but in this case it is extremely unlikely that Aquinas has another form of causality primarily in mind. If the good of the whole is the end of the good of the part, we could say—since the good has the notion of an end and vice versa[46]—that the good of the whole is more the good of the part because it is more the end of the part than the part's own good is.

Not only does this understanding make sense of the claim that the good of the whole is more the good of the part than the part's own good is, but it also allows us to connect the second line of explanation with the first. The first line of explanation claims that the part loves the whole because it is not perfect except in the whole. To be perfect, however, is to be good, and so the part loves the whole because the whole makes it good. How does it make it good? By being the part's end, it seems—for what the end does for those things that are ordered towards it as an end is to make them good.[47] That, however, on account of which something is good and loveable is itself even more good and loveable—*propter quod unumquodque, illud magis*. Consequently, the good of the whole is, for the part, more loveable than its own good.

[44] *STh* I-II, q. 109, a. 3: "Manifestum est autem quod bonum partis est propter bonum totius."

[45] See *STh* II-II, q. 27, a. 3.

[46] *STh* I, q. 103, a. 2: "Manifestum est enim quod bonum habet rationem finis"; *STh* I, q. 19, a. 1, ad 1: "finis enim habet rationem boni."

[47] *STh* I-II, q. 8, a. 2: "Ea vero quae sunt ad finem, non sunt bona vel volita propter seipsa, sed ex ordine ad finem." See also I *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 14 (*Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII P. M. edita*, 47/1 [Rome: Leonine, 1969]): "Nam ea quae sunt in finem habent rationem boni ex ordine in finem."

If we consider the case of a whole such as the organic body, we can easily see how this explanation applies. The heart supplies blood for the whole body, the lungs provide oxygen, and the stomach digests food. The end for which each of these parts primarily operates is not its own individual good, but the good of the whole. Other parts of the body, such as the bones, do not themselves actively operate for the good of the whole, but their good (being strong and healthy) serves, and is on account of, the good of the whole—clearly, the skull exists for the sake of protecting the brain, on whose safety the good of the whole especially depends. The good of the whole is the end and the primary good of the part because the part's private good (being able to pump blood, being strong and healthy) exists to bring about or preserve the good of the whole.

In the case of a whole such as the city or the army, we can see something similar. Certain goods of the individual soldier are good because they contribute to the attainment of victory, which is the good of the whole army. Such goods include strength, skill with a weapon, courage, the ability to follow orders, and the ability to fight well together with others. There is, however, an important difference between this sort of whole, which we might call a "whole of order," and the organic whole, namely, that the whole is not a substance. It is the parts of the whole, the soldiers, that are substances, and they form the whole by virtue of an order that they bear to each other. Because it belongs to substance to possess, the whole is only able to possess the good by virtue of its members possessing it. Consequently, while some goods of the individual part are good because they are productive or conservative of the good of the whole, the ultimate good that the part can possess does not relate to the good of the whole as a means to an end, for this good is nothing other than the part's partial possession of the good of the whole. The ultimate good that a soldier can possess is a share in victory, just as the ultimate good that a rational creature can possess is a share in the divine life.

While this ultimate individual good is not a means to an end, the good of the whole still functions as its end. Victory over the enemy is the end that each soldier, qua solider, seeks, but the

individual solider does not bring about this good alone; it is the whole army, that is, the soldiers working together, that brings it about. The individual solider can claim a share in victory because he helped bring about this good, but an effect properly belongs to the cause that properly produces it, and here that cause is the army as a whole. Consequently, if he truly loves victory, he will love it as a common good, that is, as a good whose proper subject is the whole. His love for the common good, which is his principal love, will then be the reason why he finds his share in this good to be itself good and lovable. In this way, the common good of victory will be the end of the soldier's ultimate individual good.

B) Objections to the Part-Whole Relation

With this explanation in place, we may now consider the objections that scholars have had to the use of the part-whole relation in explaining love of God above self. As we will see, none of these objections poses a difficulty sufficient to warrant our abandoning the part-whole argument in search of an alternative explanation to be assembled from other of Aquinas's texts.

Gilson's belief that the part-whole relationship functions merely as a metaphor is likely the consequence of his belief that the part-whole relationship simply cannot be used to argue for love of God above self. Were the part-whole relation part of the argument, the argument would fail; therefore, it must be merely a metaphor. The reason Gilson gives for why the part-whole relationship cannot be used is that "God is not a whole of which man is a part." This objection fails for two reasons. First, as we have seen, there is a way in which the argument can depend on the part-whole relationship without identifying God as our whole; Aquinas's mature argument depends on God being, not our whole, but the good of our whole. Second, while God is not our whole in the sense of something that we constitute, this fact does not in itself preclude the possibility of arguing for love of God above self on the grounds of the analogy between God and the whole, or even of speaking of God as our whole in a

broader sense of the term, as the Platonists do when, according to Aquinas, they speak of him as a "whole before the parts."[48]

Gregory Stevens, commenting on Gilson's treatment of the part-whole relation, remarks that "it is somewhat strange that the author who bases his whole interpretation of St. Thomas on the doctrine of analogy did not interpret this principle in an analogical sense."[49] I believe that Gilson's understanding of the part's love for the whole is the reason he does not. We adverted to this understanding earlier. Gilson believes that the hand exposes itself to danger because defending the body is equivalent to defending itself, for the hand cannot exist without the body. The hand's defense and "sacrifice" is thus similar to that of a man in the desert defending his water with his life. In such cases, the defence of the other arises from a calculation of self-love; it does not indicate a preference for the good of the other above one's own. If Gilson understands the part's love for the good of the whole in this way, he would certainly not consider the part-whole relation as an analogy capable of explaining love of God above self; the best the relationship could do is serve as a metaphor, and a very imperfect one at that.

In light of the above explanation of the part's love for the whole, we can with confidence say this understanding is not Aquinas's. Nor does it reflect the truth of the matter. The heart does not pump blood through the body because if it did not, it would die; it does so because that is what, by its very nature, it exists to do. A citizen does not defend his city, nor a father his family, for the same reason that the man in the desert defends his water; the citizen or father does so because he cares about those he protects.

Other interpreters find the hand-body example unfitting for the opposite reason. "In reality," writes Geiger, "it is the man who exposes his hand in order to save the life of the body."[50]

[48] *In De div. nom.*, c. 2, lect. 9 (Parma ed., 276).

[49] Stevens, "Disinterested Love of God," 316.

[50] Geiger, *Le problème de l'amour chez Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, 26 n. 4: "En réalité, c'est l'homme qui expose sa main pour sauver la vie du corps."

Nicolas concurs.[51] The case of the hand blocking a blow is not a case of a part preferring the good of the whole to its own private good, but rather that of the whole using a part to preserve itself. The example demonstrates the whole's love of self, not the love of the part for the good of its whole.

Geiger and Nicolas are right to claim that the whole sacrifices the hand for its own preservation. The hand, in this action as in any other, will not act unless it is first acted upon by the judgment of the cogitative power. Nevertheless, it does not thereby follow that the sacrifice of the hand does not indicate a preference on the part of the hand for the good of the whole. That conclusion would follow if the hand contributed nothing to the action, that is, if the hand were acted upon violently, as the stone is when thrown upwards. The hand, however, does contribute something, namely, a disposition to be acted upon in this way. This disposition is evidenced by the hand's *spontaneous submission* to the judgment that it ought to defend the body. Natural inclinations are discovered not only in the way that a thing acts but in the way that it is *acted upon.* It is noteworthy that Aquinas, in his argument for love of God above self, sometimes casts the principle that he takes from the second book of *Physics* in the active and sometimes in the passive.[52] Unlike the stone, which resists being thrown upwards, the hand offers no resistance to being used to defend the body; its readiness to be moved in this way indicates a natural inclination to be so moved.

Nicolas offers another criticism. Even if the part did sacrifice itself for the whole, he says, such sacrifice is not apt to explain, at least not metaphysically, what is going on when a rational creature loves God, for a rational creature, rather than losing something in preferring God to itself, gains its proper perfection.[53] This objection, however, fails to understand the

[51] Nicolas, "Amour de soi, amour de Dieu, amour des autres," 23: "c'est en réalité le tout qui sacrifie une partie moins importante à une autre qui l'est davantage."

[52] *STh* I, q. 60, a. 5: "*unumquodque, sicut agitur naturaliter, sic aptum natum est agi*"; *STh* I-II, q. 109, a. 3: "*Sic* enim *agit unumquodque, prout aptum natum est*."

[53] Nicolas, "Amour de soi, amour de Dieu, amour des autres," 33: "L'exemple de la partie qui se perd pour assurer le bien du tout n'est pas convaincant, si on veut y voir

purpose of the hand-body and citizen-city examples. Aquinas does not appeal to them because he wants to establish that it is natural for a part to sacrifice its good for the sake of the whole; he appeals to them because he wants to establish that it is natural for a part to prefer the good of its whole to its own particular good. The sacrifice of one good for another is an exceptionally clear indication of preference.

Héris offers us a final objection. He uses the part-whole relation to explain the love of irrational creatures for God, but when he comes to rational creatures, he resists explaining their love in this way because he believes that existence as a part is contrary to a rational creature's status as an "end in itself," which is something that cannot be sacrificed.[54] He seems to suggest that created persons should be considered more as wholes than as parts, and he declares that in their case we ought to speak not about parts but participations.

Although this objection that rational creatures cannot be considered as parts does not, to my knowledge, appear elsewhere in scholarly treatments of love of God above self, I suspect that it, more than any other objection, is responsible for the tendency of mid-twentieth-century scholarship to neglect the part-whole relationship. The threat of totalitarianism loomed large in the mid-twentieth century, and Aquinas's talk of persons as parts and his assertion of the subordination of the good of the part to the good of the whole bears a troubling resemblance to totalitarianism's utilitarian reduction of the individual to the good of the collective. If a person relates to his political community as a part to a whole, does this not mean

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une première réalisation des rapports de l'amour de soi et de l'amour de Dieu, puisqu'en fait, s'il s'agit du moins des créatures spirituelles, loin de se perdre en préférant Dieu à elles-mêmes elles assurent par là leur propre perfection."

[54] Héris, "L'amour naturel de Dieu," 302: "il [l'être intelligent] constitue donc de ce chef une fin en soi: et par suite il a droit de s'aimer non plus comme une simple partie, dans le tout et à travers le tout, mais comme constituant lui-même un tout véritable et immuable." Ibid., 303: "Jamais une nature intelligente, considérée comme telle, ne pourra être sacrifiée à l'ordre universel du monde . . . l'intelligence créée est, non point partie, mais participation du tout infini auquel est suspendu le mond."

that the community can sacrifice him for its own good, as the body does the hand?

One mid-twentieth century response to this difficulty was to claim that, contrary to appearances, Aquinas in fact maintains that the common good is ordered to the individual good of the person. We find such an interpretation, for instance, proposed by Mortimer Adler and William Farrell in "The Theory of Democracy."[55] Such "personalist" accounts of the relation between the private and the common good were vigorously attacked by Charles De Koninck, which lead in turn to his famous and fiery exchange with Ignatius Eschmann.[56] De Koninck maintained that the subordination of the individual good to the common good, proposed by Aquinas, is fundamentally different from and opposed to totalitarianism's subordination of the individual to the collective.[57]

In response to the objection, voiced by Héris, that persons cannot be considered as parts because persons are ends in themselves and not expendable, we ought to note two things.

[55] Mortimer Adler and William Farrell, "The Theory of Democracy," part 1, *The Thomist* 3 (1941): 397-449; part 2, *The Thomist* 3 (1941): 588-652; part 3.1, *The Thomist* 4 (1942): 121-81; part 3.2, *The Thomist* 4 (1942): 286-354; part 4.1, *The Thomist* 4 (1942): 446-522; part 4.2, *The Thomist* 4 (1942): 692-761; part 4.3, *The Thomist* 6 (1943): 49-118; part 4.4, *The Thomist* 6 (1943): 251-77; part 5.1, *The Thomist* 7 (1944): 367-408; part 5.2, *The Thomist* 7 (1944): 80-131. Reduction of the common good to the individual good is found especially in part 3.2; on pages 323-24, for example, the authors assert: "In short, every act of justice refers to the common good and, paradoxically, by that very fact is selfish, because the common good is not an end in itself; it is a means to the individual happiness which each man seeks, but can only achieve through virtue, justice included."

[56] Charles De Koninck, *De la primauté du bien commun contre les personalistes* (Quebec: Editions de l'Université Laval; Montreal, Editiones Fides, 1943). I. Th. Eschmann responded with "In Defense of Jacques Maritain" (*The Modern Schoolman* 22 [1945]: 183-208). De Koninck responded in turn with "In Defence of Saint Thomas: A Reply to Father Eschmann's Attack on the Primacy of the Common Good" (*Laval théologique et philosophique* 1.2 [1945]: 9-109). For an account of the debate see Michael Smith, *Human Dignity and the Common Good in the Aristotelian-Thomistic Tradition* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen University Press, 1995), chap. 4: "The Primacy of the Common Good over Private Goods: The De Koninck-Eschmann Controversy."

[57] See, for instance, the *Avant-propos* of *De la primauté du bien commun contre les personalistes*.

First, Aquinas does not hesitate to speak about created persons as being parts of a whole and the subordination of the private good to the common good cannot be denied without doing violence to the text.[58] Even if we disagree about the truth of the matter, we are not, as interpreters, thereby justified in ignoring the part-whole line of argument proposed by Aquinas in his formal accounts of love of God above self.

Second, the existence of a created person as a part of some whole does not necessarily imply that that person is expendable. The return to prominence of the part-whole relationship in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century is due in great part, I believe, to the estimation of those writing on the topic that in the controversy over the primacy of the common good it was De Koninck, not Eschmann or Jacques Maritain, who correctly interpreted Aquinas.[59] At the heart of De Koninck's account was the idea that the common good is not an "alien good," that is, not a good possessed by some entity separate from the persons who comprise the whole. The common good is a good that each person possesses, although not in its entirety.[60] This same understanding appears in the account given above of the part's love for the whole. Because in a "whole of order," the common good is a good possessed by the persons who are its principal parts, the whole cannot use persons, in contrast to things, as expendable for the sake of the common good, for to harm or destroy a person, who is a partial subject of the common good, is to attack and harm the common

[58] Aquinas asserts that man is part of the family in *STh* II-II, q. 47, a. 10, ad 2; that man is part of the city in texts such as *STh* I-II, q. 92, a. 1, ad 3; *STh* I-II, q. 96, a. 4; and *STh* II-II, q. 59, a. 3, ad 2; and that an intellectual creature is a part of the universe in *ScG* III, c. 112. The subordination of the good of the part to the good of the whole is, of course, essential to Aquinas's account of love of God above self. See also *ScG* III, c. 17: "Bonum particulare ordinatur in bonum commune sicut in finem: esse enim partis est propter esse totius; unde et *bonum gentis est divinius quam bonum unius hominis*" ("The particular good is ordered to the common good as to an end, for the being of the part is on account of the being of the whole; whence it is that 'the good of a nation is more divine than the good of one man'") (Leonine ed., 40).

[59] See Osborne, *Love of Self and Love of God*, 88-89. De Koninck's influence is evident throughout Sullivan's article.

[60] See, for instance, *De la primauté du bien commun contre les personalistes*, 7.

good, not further it.[61] A community can demand that certain of its members put themselves in harm's way for the sake of the common good—which is to ask that they perform an act of virtue, and, if Aristotle is correct, an act of virtue that is a greater good than they would achieve by a longer life comprised of lesser acts—but the community is not permitted to kill its innocent members for the sake of its preservation. In this way, Aquinas's understanding of the primacy of the common good differs from the utilitarianism of the totalitarian state.

III. Why God, as the Common Good of Our Whole, Is Loved with Love of Friendship

Aquinas appeals to the hand's defense of the body and the citizen's defense of the city in order to establish the natural preference of a part for the common good of its whole. Because God is the common good of the universe, to which all creatures belong as parts, Aquinas concludes that it is natural for all creatures to prefer the good of God to their own. Aquinas understands this preference for the good of God as signifying a greater love of friendship for God than for oneself. In the hand-body and citizen-city examples, it is *the whole* that appears to be loved with something like love of friendship, for it is that for which the good is willed; *the good of the whole*, its safety and conservation, appears to be loved with love of concupiscence, for it is that which the part wishes for the whole.[62]

[61] *STh* II-II, q. 64, a. 6: "occisio peccatoris fit licita per comparationem ad bonum commune, quod per peccatum corrumpitur. Vita autem iustorum est conservativa et promotiva boni communis: quia ipsi sunt principalior pars multitudinis." The notion of intellectual creatures as principal parts of the universe appears in *ScG* III, c. 112. On the issue of principal parts see especially Steven J. Jensen, *Good and Evil Actions: A Journey through Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), chap. 4, "Love of Others," and esp. 4.3.1, "The Chief Parts," (152-55).

[62] *STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 4 is the principal text for Aquinas's mature and fundamental understanding of the distinction between love of friendship and love of concupiscence. Briefly, any act of love involves a twofold tendency: a tendency to a "good," that is, a perfection (health) or what is productive of one (wine), and a subject for whom this "good" is willed, which is normally a person. The former tendency is called *love of concupiscence*, the latter *love of friendship*. Thus understood, love of friendship may be

Aquinas would be in trouble if there were only one way of being a common good, but there is not. Something can be the common good of a whole by being an inhering form or perfection possessed by the whole, and it is in this manner that safety and preservation in Aquinas's examples are common goods. As accidents, such "intrinsic common goods" are loved with love of concupiscence for the sake of the whole. In another way, however, something can be the common good of a whole by being a further end or good, separate from the whole, towards which the intrinsic common good of the whole is ordered. Artifacts provide a useful analogy. In a car, parts have their own individual good and perfection, such as being rotatable in the case of a tire; these goods are good because they allow the car as a whole to perform its proper function, namely, that of transporting people. The ability to perform this function and, even more so, the exercise of it, is the intrinsic common good of the whole car. This good, however, is not an end in itself; it exists for the sake of a further good, namely, that of persons. The good of persons is the extrinsic good of the car. Similarly, in the case of a statue, the aspects of each part are good because they contribute to the whole's ability to represent some beautiful person (assuming the artist has this end in mind). The representation of beauty is the intrinsic common good of the statue; the beauty that it represents, which exists in some person, is its extrinsic common good.

God is the extrinsic common good of the universe, and his being so is intimately connected with his being the universe's first agent cause. When a human agent acts, he acts on account of an end that is in some way or other "his good," and he orders what he acts upon to this end. When God acts, he likewise acts on account of an end which is "his good" and he orders those things on which he acts to this end. The good towards which God orders things is the good that exists in himself, for the proper object of the divine will is the divine

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directed to the self or to another, and love of concupiscence may be directed to a good willed for the self or a good willed for another.

goodness.[63] Unlike a human agent, however, God is perfect and in need of nothing, and so when he acts on things, he orders them to his goodness, not in the sense of an end to be brought about, but only in the sense of an end to be attained and shared in.[64] Also, unlike a human agent, he does not require pre-existing matter upon which to act;[65] what he acts upon comes entirely from him, and so the inclination to his good that he gives to things is intrinsic to them and not forced on them from the outside, as it is in the case of human artifacts.

God thus gives to each creature an inherent order or inclination to his good as an end to be attained and shared in. Each creature attains and shares in this good through its likeness to God,[66] but representation of the divine good is better attained by the universe of creatures acting as a whole (like soldiers working for victory together rather than separately), and it is for this reason that Aquinas identifies the order of the universe as the greatest created good.[67] The representation of the divine good exhibited by the universe as a whole is, consequently, the intrinsic common good of the universe, and God is the universe's extrinsic common good because he is that towards which the intrinsic good is ordered.

The good that each creature, and the universe as a whole, possesses is good because it is a sharing in the divine good

[63] *STh* I, q. 19, a. 1, ad 3: "obiectum divinae voluntatis est bonitas sua."

[64] See *ScG* III, c. 18; and *STh* I, q. 44, a. 4, ad 1.

[65] See *ScG* II, c. 16.

[66] See esp. *ScG* III, c. 19.

[67] *STh* I, q. 47, a. 1: "Produxit [Deus] enim res in esse propter suam bonitatem communicandam creaturis, et per eas repraesentandam. Et quia per unam creaturam sufficienter repraesentari non potest, produxit multas creaturas et diversas, ut quod deest uni ad repraesentandam divinam bonitatem, suppleatur ex alia: nam bonitas quae in Deo est simpliciter et uniformiter, in creaturis est multipliciter et divisim. Unde perfectius participat divinam bonitatem, et repraesentat eam, totum universum, quam alia quaecumque creatura." *ScG* III, c. 64 (Leonine ed., 179): "Res autem participant divinam bonitatem per modum similitudinis, inquantum ipsae sunt bonae. Id autem quod est maxime bonum in rebus causatis, est bonum ordinis universi, quod est maxime perfectum" ("Things participate the divine goodness through the mode of likeness inasmuch as they themselves are good. That, however, which is most good among caused things is the good of the order of the universe, because it is most perfect").

whose proper subject is God himself. For a sharing in something to be good and loveable, that which is shared in needs to be good and loveable. It is for this reason that it is natural for creatures to love God above self in terms of love of friendship or what is analogous to it at the level of irrational nature. A rational creature can grasp the relationship between his own good and that possessed by God. Seeing that his good is loveable because it is a sharing in the divine good, it is natural for the rational creature to prefer and be more pleased by the good as it exists in God than by his own participation in it. Irrational creatures cannot grasp the relation between what they seek and the good that exists in God, but they can be said to love God above self with something like love of friendship inasmuch as God exists for them as the subject whose possession of the good is principally responsible for their desire and enjoyment, or their motion and rest—the good they seek is good because it is a likeness to the divine good,[68] and a likeness is good because of the goodness of its original.

IV. Exitus-Reditus: The Good That Is from God and for God

I have argued that the part-whole relationship is essential to Aquinas's argument, that the part's preference for the good of the whole is to be understood in terms of the greater finality of this good, and that, at least in its mature form, the argument depends on God being the common good of the whole rather than the whole itself. A final question might be, is the part-whole relationship essential, not to the argument that Aquinas chooses to employ, but to his fundamental understanding of love of God above self? Could he have offered an argument that did not include the part-whole relationship?

Aquinas, of course, did offer such an argument in his very first treatment of the problem, but he later abandoned it.

[68] *ScG* III, c. 24: "Bonum autem hoc vel illud particulare habet quod sit appetibile inquantum est similitudo primae bonitatis. Propter hoc igitur tendit in proprium bonum, quia tendit in divinam similitudinem, et non e converso."

Earlier, I remarked that this abandonment was more likely due to Aquinas's finding a new line of argument better suited to his purposes than to his finding the old line of argument to be mistaken. Our examination of Aquinas's mature argument gives support to this suspicion, for it reveals a commonality between the two accounts, namely, that in each, love of God above self is intimately connected with God's existence as our first agent cause.

Strictly speaking, the part-whole relationship is not essential to Aquinas's fundamental understanding of love of God above self. A creature's love for God above self could be demonstrated apart from any consideration of its existence as a part of the created universe. God's existence as its first agent cause would suffice. For Aquinas, an effect qua effect always loves its agent more than itself, and the reason for this preference is that "every agent acts for an end that is proper and fitting to itself,"[69] and in acting, an agent orders things to its own proper good and gives them an inclination to the same good that it loves.[70] The good principally belongs to the agent that produces it, and the agent is the one who will properly possess, or already possesses, the good of the effect. Nevertheless, the part-whole relationship can never be entirely absent. Were we to explain the matter simply in terms of agent and final causality, the reason that the creature loves God above self would still be because the creature's own good is a sharing in—which is to say, a participation or partial possession of—the good properly possessed by God; the divine good would remain the common good of the creature.

[69] *ScG* III, c. 162 (Leonine ed., 472): "omne agens agat ad proprium finem et sibi convenientem."

[70] *STh* I, q. 44, a. 4: "Est autem idem finis agentis et patientis." *Comp. theol.* I, c. 103, in (*Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia*, vol. 16 [Parma: Fiaccadori, 1852-73; New York: Musurgia Publishers, 1948], 27): "Si sint multa agentia ordinem habentia, necesse est quod omnium agentium actiones et motus ordinentur in bonum primi agentis sicut in finem ultimum" ("If there are many agents causes ordered together, it is necessary that the motions and the actions of all the agents might be ordered to the good of the first agent as to an ultimate end").

Conclusion

In order for scholarly discussion of the problem of love to give adequate attention to other kinds of love, it needs to arrive at some conclusion as to how to understand Aquinas's teaching on love of God above self. To arrive at such a conclusion two things are required. First, Aquinas's argument needs to be recognized for what it is, namely, one that depends on the part-whole relationship, and explained accordingly. Interpretations that simply make a concessionary remark about the part-whole relationship and then attempt to construct an argument based on other texts not only run the risk of wandering away from Aquinas's thought, but also leave the reader in the dark about what to make of Aquinas's actual arguments. Second, the fundamental understanding on which Aquinas's arguments are based needs to be identified. Discerning the fundamental principle of Aquinas's thought on this matter is not only valuable in its own right, but is also important for avoiding unnecessary conflict between the part-whole explanation and other legitimate ones. Not all scholars who have rejected or neglected the part-whole line of argument have offered a false explanation in its place.[71] A consensus can much more easily be reached if it can be shown that there is accord rather than conflict between these alternative lines of explanation and the one that Aquinas offers in his explicit treatments of the subject.

[71] Gilson's explanation, for instance, is essentially correct.

BOOK REVIEWS

Évangile et Providence: Une théologie de l'action de Dieu. By EMMANUEL DURAND. Paris: Cerf, 2014. Pp. 345. €35.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-2-204-10201-8.

Emmanuel Durand offers a refreshing perspective on the question of divine action, so much discussed in recent years in the dialogue between theology and science. While not neglecting the fruit of that discussion, his framing of the question under the headings of "Gospel" and "Providence" opens a new vista that is evident in his opening question: "What theology of Providence is needed today for the Gospel of salvation?" (7).

Although contemporary theology readily affirms the biblical proclamation of God's universal offer of salvation, its account of God's salvific action on behalf of each person has become "uncertain and problematic." Discussions of divine "kenosis, self-limitation, retreat, and powerlessness" have led many to the conviction God's action must somehow be "limited" (8). The result is the paradox of a limited God attempting to offer universal salvation. The remedy lies in the recovery of a correct understanding of "the sovereignty of God"—the God who acts not only in the "intimacy of human hearts" but also in and through the "happy and unhappy contingencies" of human life (8-9).

Durand begins by placing the question of divine action in the context of contemporary theology and culture, considering first the relationship between divine and human action, then the question of God's action in history, and finally the understanding of divine action that has surfaced in the dialogue between theology and science (chap. 1). His next task is to clarify the notion of "action" itself. This entails an account of analogy (chap. 2). The discussion then turns to the "creative reappropriation" (10) of three classical theologies of divine providence, those of St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and John Henry Newman. This involves a careful consideration of the *Confessions* of Augustine, the *Summa contra gentiles* of Aquinas, and the sermons of Newman (chaps. 3-5).

The flip side of the question of divine action is of course the problem of evil and why a God who is capable of overcoming evil does not do so. Durand proposes not to "resolve" (*résoudre*) such problems here, but simply to help us "press" (*serrer*) them (11) as a preparation for listening to what revelation may say of them (chap. 6). The question of evil serves as the background for the discussion of Scripture that follows, where aspects of the books of Wisdom, Luke, and John are considered (chap. 7). Durand concludes with a

constructive proposal for understanding Providence in the world as we find it today, afflicted with evil (chap. 8).

Durand begins his book with a discussion of the widespread opinion in contemporary philosophy and theology that divine and human action are somehow opposed to or in competition with each other. He traces this notion to Sartre, arguing that it now seems to pervade our culture despite the efforts of theologians such as Sertillanges to refute it. God's action in the world is thought to diminish as humanity matures historically. The sovereign God gives place to the suffering God, who can act only through the actions of humans. The contemporary notion of history itself poses problems for divine action. It is difficult to affirm God's saving and directing action in history, when history itself has lost its direction: "The loss of confidence in the intelligibility of history also jeopardizes the representation of God as sovereign, cause, author, director or guarantor of history" (29). Finally, the ability of science to explain natural events has led some to the conviction that there is simply no room for God to act in the world without interfering with the order of scientific laws. Durand presents a fine summary and critique of the responses to this dilemma that have surfaced in the ongoing dialogue between theologians and scientists, especially under the auspices of the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley (31-60).

Durand employs Aquinas in his discussion of the analogy of divine action and finds three major characteristics. First, the analogy begins and is constructed "from the quite varied field of human activities." Second, "it exploits the difference and connection between immanent and transitive operations." Third, "through the ways of negation and eminence, it accentuates the difference between divine action and human actions" (69-70). By employing Aquinas's account of primary and secondary causality, he is able to show that neither contingency, chance, nor human freedom is excluded from the realm of divine providence (143-50). He also suggests a way in which we might understand God's "response" to prayer (150-68), and shows that God's providence is both universal and particular (168-78). In all of this, a "metaphysical approach" is required "to establish certain truths that are indispensable for a solid foundation for the evangelical doctrine of Providence" (181). Yet the scriptural context must not be forgotten. There, divine action is always portrayed as personal and associated with the notion of covenant. In this way, divine action implies a "relation of Person to person or of Person to community more than a relation of agent to patient," and so "is related more directly to the domain of ethical action than that of physical causality" (75). Although divine action (especially in the theology-science dialogue) is frequently divided between a "subjective" and an "objective" interpretation, Durand insists that both are necessary: "The interaction of the objective and the subjective is the only guarantee that something takes place that is truly divine and is received by the human individual" (89).

Durand begins his discussion of the question of evil with a scriptural reflection on how the suffering of the just leads through evil to goodness, as in the Old Testament story of Joseph and his brothers, and the New Testament witness of Paul: "We know that God makes all things work together for the good of those who have been called according to his decree" (Rom 8:28). He concludes: "These biblical reflections attest that the evils affecting the just are found finally surpassed by the goods of another order—not only for the individual but also for others" (228). Metaphysically, evil is seen as a privation of good (228-32), but theologically it is always "subjected to divine government" (232). Two dangers are to be avoided: "on the topic of evils, one of the great difficulties of confessing reason [*raison confessant*] is not to crush empirical perception under the weight of a totalizing theology and, reciprocally, not to neutralize the theological expression of the faith by according a unilateral preference to immediate perceptions" (238).

Continuing his discussion of providence in relation to evil, Durand presents three scriptural meditations. The first is the providential deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt as narrated in Wisdom 10-19. Here, God's mercy, justice, and sovereignty over all creation are evident. The present suffering of the just is acknowledged, but the orientation of the narrative is towards their eschatological reward of incorruptibility. Second, Luke's gospel reveals Christ's assurance of God's care in the midst of persecutions as well as in the daily anxieties of life. Durand finds, "in this gospel of confidence and prayer, the frame in which one may develop a theology of Providence" (283). Finally, Durand considers the Gospel of John. Here, the account of Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection shows that "the design of God transcends and goes through all the contingencies of human action to accomplish and reveal the ultimate offer of salvation. . . . Through all the ambiguity of the behavior of human actors, the sovereign God pursues the ultimate end of his salvific plan, the gathering together of all his scattered children. . . . The Passion reveals definitively that no human situation is so complex or distorted that the Son of God is unable to be present and to reveal the offer of salvation" (292, 294).

In his constructive proposal, Durand insists that a contemporary theology of providence must begin with Scripture in order to have a sure foundation, but must also be related to the "particular circumstances of our time" (295). The biblical stories of how God brought good out of the suffering of the just, most especially in the suffering of his Son, suggest that God may continue to act through the suffering of his sons and daughters today. Although God's action may not be immediately visible, "the bright moments of biblical revelation have precisely the function of sustaining faith in Providence, even in complex situations where its mode of accomplishment is not revealed or luminous" (299).

God may act externally in the world, internally within the human person, or in both ways at once, but his action is always personal—always in the context of his Covenant with his creatures—"to establish, broaden,

accomplish or restore it" (302). As primary cause, God acts through secondary causes in the ordinary course of nature, and beyond such causes in miracles. But Durand also finds room for a third mode of divine action "that is at once special and ordinary, subtle and discrete, using all the passive potencies of the created being, but without being easily recognized as a miracle" (306). He gives the intriguing example of time itself as a creature of God, that is also "wounded" by the fall of Adam, and that God may lead through ordinary events to a quite unexpected "fullness of time," a moment filled "with grace and salvation" (307).

Durand employs the notion of God's antecedent and consequent will to discuss how God may bring good out of evil. The fundamental analogy is the Passion of Christ. Appealing to Aquinas's *Commentary on Romans*, Durand notes that death itself is always "detestable and unacceptable in the eyes of God," and the actions of those who put Christ to death are likewise a "source of indignation." It is only "through the use to which Jesus put these events, in his loving obedience to the Father and his infinite love for humankind, that this same death is accepted by God and thus becomes reconciliatory" (312). As the sinful actions of those who put Christ to death should not be seen as positively willed by God, so no evil acts are willed by God. But as God was able to accomplish the salvation of the world through the death of Christ, so God may continue to bring good out of evil.

God acts through his Word and Spirit, through the witness of the faithful, and through the sacraments of the Church. Yet, God's influence may also be discerned in every human act of faith, hope, and love, since each reveals, even on the natural level, a rupture of pride in one's own intelligence (faith), or self-will (hope), or self-sufficiency (love). In sum, "the human being, even maimed by the fall of original sin, remains in (passive) potency to the call and guidance of God through acts of faith, hope and love" (326).

By emphasizing the scriptural context of God's covenant with his people, Durand provides a new orientation for the discussion of divine action that, under his careful scholarship, opens the way to an encompassing (and encouraging) vision of God's providential concern and care for all creation.

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Amours: L'Église, les divorcés remariés, les couples homosexuels. By ADRIANO OLIVA, O.P. Paris: Cerf, 2015. Pp. 166. €14.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-2-204-10679-5.

This book, written by a Dominican priest who is president of the Leonine Commission, has generated public controversy primarily on account of its treatment of homosexuality. For instance, the French news magazine *Le Point* published an article on it called "How Saint Thomas Justifies Homosexuality." This perception is bolstered by the cover artwork of Saints Sergius and Bacchus, who are considered in some circles to be patron saints of homosexual love. In fact, the book has two distinct parts. The first part is entirely on marriage between persons of the opposite sex. Oliva argues that Thomas Aquinas's teaching on marriage was obscured in the nineteenth century, reappropriated by the Second Vatican Council, and now can be used to justify the reception of Communion and sacramental penance by Catholics who divorce and remarry while their spouse is still living and their marriage is not annulled. Only in the second part of the book does Oliva argue for the civil and ecclesiastical recognition of homosexual unions that are not marriages.

The book is addressed to a general audience, although it refers to scholarship when needed. Oliva's purpose is to use Thomas to contribute to contemporary theology and pastoral care. He does not entirely reject magisterial teaching on sexual ethics. For instance, he sympathetically discusses the treatment of heterosexual sex in *Humanae vitae*, and is generally opposed to simultaneous sexual relationships that are between more than two persons.

In the first part of the book, Oliva notes that for Thomas marriage has a twofold perfection. The first perfection consists in the union of the spouses (which need not involve sexual acts), and the second in the generation and education of children. According to Oliva, only the first perfection is essential to marriage, which is shown by the fact that a marriage is valid even if the spouses voluntarily choose to abstain from the sexual act. Oliva eventually argues that recognition of this point should lead to the acceptance of second marriages (i.e., marriages after divorce) and the recognition that circumstances might prevent sexual acts in such marriages from being sinful.

According to Oliva, Thomas's understanding of the essence of marriage was used by the Fathers of the Council of Trent in what he describes as a decision to avoid the condemnation of divorce and remarriage for those in the Christian East. This interpretation of Trent is highly questionable and seems to rely partly on Giancarlo Pani's recent popularization of Piet Fransen's controversial scholarship (147 n. 41). In fact, Oliva does not show how Thomas's understanding of marriage was supposedly used against those who wished to condemn divorce and remarriage. In general, he ignores the Council of Florence and various medieval and late Scholastic discussions of marriage, and generally passes over theologians from outside the Dominican Order.

Oliva correctly notes that the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* follows Thomas in distinguishing between three motives or ends of marriage, namely, society and mutual support, procreation, and the remedy for concupiscence. He passes over the other motives discussed in the *Catechism*, such as beauty, wealth, and the desire for heirs. Moreover, he does not mention the *Catechism*'s discussion of the three goods of marriage, namely, union, children, and fidelity, and how these might be related to marriage's motives and essence. This oversight is odd because the *Catechism*'s treatment resembles Thomas's discussion in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, book IV, chapter 78, in which Thomas explains how marriage is ordered to procreation. In general, Oliva neglects texts that might not fit well with his interpretation of Thomas, such as this chapter and the unedited IV *Sentences*, d. 33, q. 1, a. 2c.

Oliva argues that Thomas's teaching on the essence of marriage was neglected by the Magisterium and rejected by the 1917 Code, although it was revived to some extent by the encyclical *Casti connubii* and Vatican II. According to him, the contemporary Magisterium has opened the way to the reception of Communion by the divorced and remarried. He recognizes that this reception has been limited to those who have a grave reason to remain in a second union and who have agreed to live as brother and sister. According to Oliva, this exception indicates that the second union should be recognized by the Church, and he thinks that the reception of the sacraments should be expanded. He asserts that it will be hard for those in such a union to remain abstinent, since they are not called to a vocation of perfect continence. He stops short of stating that they do have a vocation to sex within a second marriage.

If such couples engage in sexual acts, do they sin? Oliva claims (1) that their sexual acts might only be venial sins on account of the act's circumstances(which "circumstances" seem to include the spouses' mutual love and union), (2) that such circumstances might change the acts so that they are not in any way sinful, and (3) that such circumstances would legitimate any offspring. Oliva's argument for these theses is opaque. Moreover, he does not indicate to the general reader that he is using the term "circumstance" idiosyncratically.

The second part of the book applies Thomas's understanding of individual inclinations to contemporary discussions of homosexual love. Oliva notes that although Thomas did not hold for a certain contemporary concept of more or less fixed "homosexuality," he did discuss the inclination of some humans for sexual activities with those who belong to the same sex. According to Oliva, Thomas's account of this inclination indicates why the Church should bless homosexual unions.

Oliva's interpretation of Thomas is in large part based on the discussion of unnatural pleasure in *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 31, a. 7. In this passage, Thomas addresses the apparent inconsistency in holding both that pleasure

involves the proper functioning of a natural power and that some pleasures are unnatural. He addresses this difficulty by observing that some pleasures are unnatural simply speaking and contrary to the nature of the human species, even though they come to be connatural to an individual man because of the damage or corruption of the nature that exists in him. Such pleasures might become connatural to him on account of a defect on the part of the body (just as bitter things become sweet to the sick or as some can be afflicted by disorder in the body's psychological composition) or on account of a defect on the part of the soul. Examples of this last category include unnatural pleasures such as eating humans, copulating with nonhuman animals, and the copulation of males with other males. The connaturality of the pleasure in such cases results from some corruption in the individual's soul that results from habituation (*consuetudo*). Oliva correctly concludes from this discussion that some humans take delight in homosexual sex that is unnatural simply speaking but connatural to them. He attempts to show, but unsuccessfully, that for Thomas these pleasures indicate a natural inclination, or that such persons who enjoy such pleasures are born with homosexual souls.

In this passage, Thomas distinguishes between two kinds of connatural pleasure in that which is of itself unnatural: first, that which is connatural on account of the body, and second, that which is connatural on account of the soul. Homosexual pleasures belong to the second category. While Thomas sometimes identifies "natural inclinations" for the first category, he also calls them evil (*De Malo*, q. 15, a. 2; cf. *STh* I-II, q. 91, a. 6). In contrast, he does not discuss "natural inclinations" for pleasures that belong to the second category even though they are connatural to the individual. Oliva correctly notes that Thomas in this passage is not directly making an ethical point. But Oliva passes over those passages in which Thomas uses these same distinctions to explain moral deficiency (cf. *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 4; VII *Ethic.*, lect. 5). Oliva fails to explain how this text on simply unnatural but connatural pleasures can possibly support his contention that there is a natural inclination for homosexual pleasure, or that the pleasure's connaturality is rooted directly in the soul's nature rather than in the soul's habits.

Oliva recognizes that Thomas describes sodomy as a species of unchastity, but he thinks that Thomas's many texts on sodomy are irrelevant because they concern a kind of unchaste sin. The sin of sodomy is also condemned in the Bible, and many biblical scholars say that such sinful sodomy is different from the loving sexual activity of homosexually inclined males with each other. Oliva states that the Christian tradition before Thomas's time encouraged and blessed homosexual love even while it rejected sodomy. He relies in this matter on the work of such figures as John Boswell, and he does not mention that this work is widely regarded as deficient in its scholarship and polemical (161 n. 37). According to Oliva, the text on unnatural pleasure is the central text for understanding how Thomas holds that homosexuality is rooted in the human soul.

Oliva uses the encyclical *Humanae vitae* to argue that some homosexual acts are virtuous. According to the encyclical and the previous tradition, couples for grave reasons may abstain from sexual activity during fertile periods and yet engage in sexual activity during infertile periods. Oliva states that the licitness of such infertile activity shows the licitness of sexual activity between males. Both the infertile couple and the homosexual couple are unable to produce children. Their sexual activity contributes not to procreation but to their union.

It is important to recognize that Oliva does not explicitly argue that it is licit to render an otherwise fertile act infertile, or that heterosexual couples can licitly engage in anal sex. He states that gay couples can participate in presumably anal sex because they are unable to perform on each other the kinds of acts that can produce children. He compares such gay sex to polygamy among the patriarchs. Since there was a need for the patriarchs to beget many children, it was licit for them to pursue procreation with several women at the expense of their union with one spouse. Similarly, since gay persons are inclined to sexual acts that are not reproductive, it is licit for them to pursue sexual union with their partners apart from procreation.

Oliva does not entirely separate procreation from marriage even if he fails to indicate their exact relationship. Although he thinks that gay sex is valuable for the sake of the homosexual union, he thinks that such union cannot be marriage precisely because its sex is not procreative. But he does think that the state has a moral obligation to recognize gay sexual unions and that the Catholic Church should bless them. Such homosexual unions and gay sex would be a path of sanctity for—and only for—those individuals who have homosexual souls. (He does not discuss bisexual souls.)

Oliva's book concludes with a reflection on pastoral care, God's mercy, and the parable of the prodigal son. Such a conclusion is appropriate for a book that is motivated by pastoral concerns, and it is clearly connected with Oliva's desire to further certain trends that were raised during the 2015 Synod on the Family. Clearly, the book was written for our time. The book contributes little, if anything, to the scholarship on Thomas Aquinas or on homosexuality. Moreover, Oliva relies on highly polemical and questionable scholarly works without indicating that they are controversial. In general, the argumentation and scholarship suffer through their complete subordination to the author's religious and political goals. Few Thomists will be convinced by its arguments.

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Christianity and Secular Reason: Classical Themes and Modern Developments. Edited by JEFFREY BLOECHL. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012. Pp. vii + 288. $40.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-0-268-02228-0.

It does not bode well for a collection of essays when the introduction needs to make a concession like the one found here: "This volume brings together a plurality of approaches to a loosely related set of questions, themes, and phenomena" (6). Yet, surely, truth in advertising is an uncommon virtue. The frank honesty of Jeffrey Bloechl, the editor of this volume, is much to be commended.

What unifies the essays in this volume is not a common topic or a common approach but a common concern with the problem of understanding the relation between Christianity and secular reason. The issue in play is how much respect a religion that claims to be the recipient of divine revelation owes to autonomous reasoning in any particular age. The problem is exacerbated in those periods of history that are marked by strong claims for the powers of human reasoning.

Bloechl's introduction is particularly helpful due to its distinction between secular reason and secularized reason. Unless a believer takes the fideist position of holding that only claims grounded in faith are valid knowledge-claims, there is no reason to deny or cast skeptical aspersions on secular reason. The term simply names the use of reason according to its proper governing principles on any topic where the justifications for various truth-claims are drawn only from this-worldly experience and, for disciplinary reasons, make no use of divine revelation. It is the type of reasoning that is done within a *saeculum*, that is, within a given period of time, according to the canons of sound reasoning operative in that epoch. The term "secularized reason," by contrast, names the view of reason that is hostile to the legitimacy of any knowledge-claim that involves the testimony of divine self-disclosure as its warrant. The proponents of secularized reason often conveniently overlook the likelihood that such hostility risks begging the question by disallowing any form of divinely backed testimony in principle, while allowing human testimony in such spheres as history or courts or law. If one is prepared in general to accept testimony as a justification for a truth-claim, then the proper criterion is the credibility of the source. But then there is no principled way to preclude in advance the possibility that testimony that originates with God might provide the strongest possible type of warrant for certain knowledge-claims. It is mere prejudice to decide in advance that this alternative is simply beyond the pale of consideration.

Threaded through the essays in this volume is the perennial problem of the relationship of faith and reason. Earlier ages posed the problem on their own terms, sometimes quite different from modern assumptions. Readers unfamiliar with the thought of Thomas Aquinas, for instance, might well be

surprised to learn that the very first question of the *Summa theologiae* asks whether any sort of *sacra doctrina* is necessary beyond the philosophical sciences. Such a stance does not raise a question about whether faith can be a genuine source of knowledge, but merely asks if there is need for the sort of knowledge that is grounded in faith. Aquinas answers the question not only by reflecting on the difficulties that arise from expecting that everyone will have the necessary time, interest, and intellectual resources to figure out for themselves the things that they need to know for the sake of salvation; he also notes certain areas that are entirely beyond the scope of unaided reason, such as knowledge about the triune nature of God.

By contrast, the proponents of secularized reason tend to cast doubt on the very possibility that any truth-claim based on religious faith could even be counted as knowledge. Brad Gregory's recent book, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Harvard University Press, 2012) does a masterful job in tracing the unforeseen effects of a wide variety of events and trends that first emerged during the rise of the Protestant movement. Gregory covers not only such areas as law and government, economics, and social organization, but also the sociology of knowledge and the problem of faith and reason that is at the core of the volume under review here. In particular, Gregory shows how the contemporary academy has come broadly to assume three interrelated theses: (1) that there are no valid knowledge-claims except those that arise from the empirical methodology of modern science, (2) that there are no legitimate implications for knowledge-claims in one discipline upon those generated by other disciplines, and (3) that no secular discipline has any legitimate implication for human conduct.

Some of the essays in Bloechl's volume are focused on the patristic and medieval periods. Peter Casarella, for instance, reflects on the twelfth-century background for thirteenth-century views on the relation of faith and reason. His particular lens is the investigation of a wide range of authors on the nature of desire. His survey highlights certain inclinations already evident in the twelfth century to depersonalize nature so as to make possible a science of nature. Where earlier authors were prone to view nature as a product of God's activity and preferred to use allegory and myth, the innovators of the twelfth century were already shifting toward the categories of thought that have come to be associated with autonomous reason.

Many of the essays in this volume examine the period of classical modern philosophy. Cyril O'Regan, for instance, urges that there is a curious blind spot in the Kantian project by pointing out the places where it accepts Christian faith as an essential supplement to what can be attained by the philosophical methods of the *Critique*s despite the studied efforts of that entire approach to exclude reliance on anything beyond the phenomenal order (including religion), lest doing so interfere with the justification for examining truth-claims by the scientific method. In a similar vein, Adriaan Peperzak

proposes various areas where there is need to turn to religious traditions and a religious view of humanity in order to tame the arrogance and expose the pretenses typical of philosophical reason during the Enlightenment.

A third group of essays addresses the topic from the resources of phenomenology. Kevin Hart, for instance, reflects on the ways in which a strictly secular worldview tries to confine the meaning of our human condition and the possibilities for reaching truth to the interplay of appearances and this-worldly forces while forgetting (if not openly refusing) "the primordial horizon" of what Christianity calls True Life. The essay by Anthony Kelly takes up the same sort of problem by addressing a central mystery of the Christian faith that secularized reason finds most troubling: the Resurrection. The essay by Adriaan Peperzak has a similar perspective when considering the ways in which the world still needs a strong sense of discipleship by the faithful to supplement the idea of mastery championed by secularized reason. The essay by Jean-Yves Lacoste uses the Christological arguments found in Kierkegaard's *Philosophical Fragments* to point out certain ways in which the dimension of love can easily be lost in secularity and the ways in which culture needs the Gospel of Jesus Christ to supplement its efforts to know about God with appropriate habits of loving God.

The final pair of essays have an ecclesial perspective, for both take up the dialogue on the relation of faith and secular reason between Joseph Ratzinger and Jürgen Habermas. James Swindal traces the development of Habermas's views from a highly theoretical understanding of secularization to his more recent reflections on our "postsecular" situation in the wake of the events of September 11, 2001. As Swindal shows, Habermas's (perhaps unexpected) openness to the theology of culture promoted by Joseph Ratzinger is a sign of the respect that secular reason ought to show for the contributions of religious thinking about action and policy in the public sphere. There is also an essay by Frederick Lawrence that critiques Pope Benedict's views from a Lonerganian perspective.

This volume is a welcome addition to the literature on the topic of faith and reason, particularly because of its focus on the difference between secular and secularized reason, and its explicit consideration of what the Christian faith can bring to contemporary philosophical discussion.

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Memory in Augustine's Theological Anthropology. By PAIGE E. HOCHSCHILD. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. 251. $125.00 (cloth). ISBN 978-0-19-964302-8.

When students of St. Augustine consider his teaching on memory, they turn instinctively to the *Confessions*, book 10, and to *On the Trinity*, books 11 and 12. The lyrical passage in the *Confessions* is easy to teach and intriguing in its contents. Paige Hochschild paints a much larger picture, drawing on far more sources. She also sees memory as a central category in Augustine's thought. In the opening paragraph of the introduction, she describes memory (for Augustine) as the way the mind meets the world, as the way things external to the body are apprehended, as the way intelligible objects are known, and as what it means to be constituted in the image of God. This is a big order. And "order," in Augustine's sense, is key: the mind, as memory, brings order to the natural world, but also brings to light a providential order that is implicit in the sensible.

The book is divided into three parts: (1) the philosophical tradition (Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus), (2) Augustine's earlier writings (from the Cassiciacum dialogues up to *De magistro* and *De musica*), and (3) the *Confessions* and *De trinitate*. The conclusion of this complex study is that memory is salvific: it accounts for the soul's progress by the dialectical play of the knowledge and love of what is possessed, yet not possessed. The lifelong process of healing in which memory functions is fulfilled in contemplation.

Two characteristics of Hochschild's book can be mentioned at the outset. First, she studies each author diachronically, measuring progress and growth in the author's thought, and particularly in his understanding of memory. Second, she readily invokes a wide range of categories to explain and illuminate her main topic. The book is anything but an extended encyclopedia article on "*memoria* in Augustine." The two principal terms in the title, "memory" and "theological anthropology," are richly developed and elaborated.

Chapter 1 begins with a short note on Augustine's knowledge of Plato. It is generally admitted that Augustine read some of the dialogues of Plato in translation: the *Timaeus*, the *Republic* (albeit only parts of it), the *Phaedo*, and the *Phaedrus*. Some of these works, at least, may have come down to him through doxographers. But Plato's influence on Augustine remains shadowy. It is "Platonism," and particularly Plotinus, that influences him so clearly, a point made memorably in *Confessions* 7.9.13-15, and its intriguing reference to the *libri Platonicorum*. Before all else, Platonism delivers Augustine from the bondage of materialism.

Hochschild treats Plato's doctrine of memory under four headings: sense perception, knowledge as recollection, divisions in the ways of knowing, and the practice of dialectic. In regard to sense perception, the sharp distinction (found in the *Republic*) between opinion (*doxa*) and knowledge (*epistêmê*)

needs to be refined, Hochschild avers. At least in some later works, the sensible is an image of the intelligible, and hence some sense perception can be infallible. On the next topic, Plato invokes recollection to explain direct apprehension of the forms, but recollection does not recall what was perceived in the past but is a restoration of a clear, logical relationship. The *Republic* introduces a new element, "the illuminative power of the Good" (21). The final section of chapter 1 treats dialectic, concluding that "knowledge is fulfilled in virtue, and the art of dialectic is not merely an exercise in definition, but a *hexis*, and a way of living" (27).

Chapter 2, on Aristotle, begins with the observation that, if Plato's influence on Augustine was indirect, Aristotle's was even more indirect, reaching Augustine through Plotinus. Most familiar, of course, are Augustine's account of reading Aristotle's *Categories* during his days at Carthage (*Confessions* 4.16.28-31) and his later use of the categories of substance and relation in his understanding of the Trinity, creating the category of "substantial relation," which would have been incomprehensible to Aristotle. Most interesting are Hochschild's treatment of Aristotle's *De memoria et reminiscentia* and the contrast with book 10 of the *Confessions*: for Aristotle, we remember only the past, while Augustine expands the understanding of memory until it is in fact identical with consciousness—of the past, present, and even the future. There follows a much longer summary of Aristotle's *De anima*.

Chapter 3 treats Plotinus. It was Plotinus who caused Augustine, in his earlier writings, to reflect on memory. For Plotinus, memory links the embodied soul with its true home. An extended treatment of Plotinus on soul, body, sense perception, and affection follows. Most relevant are the concluding sections on memory and on sense perception in relation to memory. In summary, Hochschild finds four senses of memory in Plotinus: a power of the soul that retains sense images, a power of the soul that pertains to intellect, active recollection of images, and a moral sense.

Hochschild's important conclusion to part 1 is that "Augustine's speculative roots cannot be explained by reference to this [Platonic] tradition alone" (62). In other words, part 1 has a sort of negative function: to show Augustine's progress and originality in contrast with the essentially "Platonic" tradition presented in that part.

As part 2 details, memory is not a central category in Augustine's early writings. The topic of memory will rather come up when Augustine is concerned with "the unity of the human person" (63), thus reflecting the title of the book. Memory, for example, is incidental to the Cassiciacum dialogues; their fundamental concern is rather the nature of wisdom. Memory is not discussed in *Contra academicos* or *De beata vita*. *Contra academicos* is precisely a refutation of skepticism set in the course of a discussion of the nature of knowledge. In a summary statement on the Cassiciacum dialogues, Hochschild writes, "[*De ordine*] suggests an intermediate function for memory

as necessary for the gathering of what is multiple into what is unified (synthesis) and for the comprehension of the composite as multiple and whole (analysis). . . . The question of the precise status of memory with respect to sense perception and knowledge has clearly been deferred for later consideration" (87).

The next section, on *De immortalitate animae* and *De quantitate animae*, treats at length illumination rather than memory. To highlight passages that do deal with memory, Hochschild adds a sort of appendix, discussing texts that deal explicitly with memory and the nature of the soul (97-106).

The final chapter of part 2 treats the dialogue *De magistro* and the little-read *De musica*. (As part of an extensive analysis of Augustine's *De musica*, the author includes a helpful tabular synopsis of the argument of this work.) Hochschild presents them as "examples of the *exercitatio animi* thought by Augustine to be necessary for the purification of the soul. The goal is to purge excessively sense-based opinions" (110).

In a conclusion to part 2, Hochschild stresses number as a "principle of creation" and therefore a principle of order and providence. She relates number, creation, and time to each other. Number and time function in analogous ways. (Number—and numbers—is one of the most intriguing categories in Augustine's thought, if one of the more difficult to follow. Wisdom 11:40, "But thou hast arranged all things by measure and number and weight," was a key text for Augustine.)

With the *Confessions* and *De trinitate*, we (or many of us) are on more familiar territory. Hochschild names chapter 7 "Introduction to Memory: *Confessions* 10" and follows the order of that book in her analysis. She will ask not only about the nature of memory as explained in the first half of book 10 of the *Confessions*, but also how it functions within the argument of that book and the remaining three books of the *Confessions*, books often found to be difficult and obscure. As she presents them, Hochschild writes that the goal of books 10 to 13 "is to see the abiding significance of a memory-based anthropology" (152). When she treats books 11 and 12, the author focuses "on the theological motivations for the discussions of time and eternity in the eleventh book, and the restoration of the memory of the Church through a hermeneutic of scripture in the twelfth" (153).

In the final chapter, appropriately entitled "Perfection of Memory in the Vision of God: *De trinitate*," Hochschild begins her treatment with book 11 of *De trinitate*, the one most concerned with memory, and specifically with the inner trinity of memory, intellect, and will, which in turn constitutes the *imago Dei* in man. An interpretation of the final books of *De trinitate*, too much to be summarized here, concludes the book.

If the thesis of the book were to be (over)simplified, one might say this: binaries like body and soul, sensation and intellection, the temporal and the eternal, *scientia* and *sapientia*, the world and the mind, the finite and the infinite, creator and creature—some found in Greek philosophy, others

distinctive to Augustine (particularly the earlier Augustine)—are resolved into unity by Augustine through the category of the Incarnation and what follows from it, the Church. Thus Hochschild can make statements like these: "the incarnation is a principle of unification of the temporal and eternal" (191), or "our study of memory inserts anthropology into these dichotomies [of time and eternity, *scientia* and *sapientia*], and their reconciliation in Christ" (226).

Perhaps the scope of the book is best expressed when the author asks, "Why is memory at the heart of Augustine's anthropology?" (186). Hochschild has read widely in ancient philosophy and in the writings of St. Augustine, including some of the less frequently read earlier works. She searches for references to memory in some works in which the topic is scarcely found or is not key, perhaps to illustrate the growth of Augustine's understanding of the importance of memory. Her treatment of the books she studies is more than a paraphrase or narrative of the argument, but not quite a critical analysis of them. Sometimes, page after page seems to run on the same level. She has clearly done a great deal of work. This valuable book should stimulate further consideration of an important topic.

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Will Many Be Saved? What Vatican II Actually Teaches and Its Implications for the New Evangelization. By RALPH MARTIN. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2012. Pp. 332. $24.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-0-8028-6887-9.

The proper interpretation of the Second Vatican Council remains a pressing topic fifty years after the Council's completion. Pope Benedict XVI made it a hallmark of his pontificate to insist upon a hermeneutic of continuity in interpreting the council in relation to the past, opposing this view to one of discontinuity and rupture (see his "Christmas Address to the Roman Curia," Dec. 22, 2005). Viewing the council in terms of rupture and correspondingly as an opportunity for disruptive innovation has been described by many as the "Spirit of the Council." Recently, the conflict of these rival hermeneutics has resurfaced in vehement fashion in relation to proposals for innovation in pastoral practice and even in doctrine regarding marriage and sexuality.

Ensuring a proper interpretation of the council requires not only a deep and thorough examination of texts themselves of the council, but also a careful placing of the texts within the Catholic tradition. In this endeavor,

Ralph Martin's *Will Many Be Saved?* provides a needed analysis of the council's teaching concerning salvation and its pastoral implications. In particular, Martin focuses on the meaning, historical and scriptural sources, and theological interpretation of *Lumen Gentium* (*LG*) §16. In doing so, he touches on a number of key issues relating to the legacy of Vatican II, most importantly the decline of the missions and evangelization in general. Martin argues that abandoning the proclamation of sin and the possibility of hell in favor of the universality of salvation has led to a serious crisis of evangelization.

The first chapter, "Vatican II and the Priority of Evangelization," places the theme of evangelization at the center of the council's message. Pope Paul VI declared in *Evangelii nuntiandi* that the very purpose of the council was to make the Church more fit for the evangelization of the modern world. The topic of evangelization was taken up by Pope John Paul II in his own call for a New Evangelization. Although the New Evangelization focuses on restoring faith in the context of post-Christian cultures, John Paul also sought to reinvigorate the foreign missions, as seen in his encyclical *Redemptoris missio*. Martin contrasts this emphasis on evangelization with its diminishment in practice due to "a lack of conviction that being a Christian is really necessary in order to be saved. If it is not really necessary . . . why bother to evangelize?" (5). Although Martin recognizes that the Church teaches the possibility of salvation outside of the visible bounds of the Church, he also posits that "doctrinal ignorance or confusion about what the Church is actually teaching about the possibility of salvation" creates "one obstacle . . . to evangelization" (6). To respond to this confusion, he turns specifically to *LG* §16 to clarify the Church's teaching.

The second chapter provides Martin's initial observations on this central text. Martin divides the text into three sections. The first, 16a, enunciates that those who have not received the gospel are still related to the people of God in various ways, mentioning Jews and Muslims explicitly, and affirms God's universal will for salvation in 1 Tim 2:4. 16b deals with the possibility of salvation for those ignorant of the gospel, who live rightly in accord with conscience. 16c offers a sobering note, stating that "very often" the deception of the evil one and sin lead to "ultimate despair" and ending with the need to evangelize in order "to procure . . . salvation." Martin notes that *LG* §16 was not controversial during the conciliar debates, though it did raise some concern from missionary bishops, who insisted on a strong reinforcement of the need for evangelization. Though *LG* only speaks of the possibility of salvation, Martin recognizes a leap from possibility to "*probability* or even certainty" in the later interpretation of the council (17, italics original), and he cites Kevin McNamara as an example.

Chapter 3 seeks to place *LG* §16 within the context of the development of doctrine. Martin begins by situating the council's teaching on the relation of non-Catholic Christians to the Church, which "represents a major shift" in

"opening the way for a more positive assessment of the[ir] status" (26). This leads to a sustained reflection on the meaning of the "theological axiom" *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, noting the council's "clear recognition . . . that the salvation of non-Catholic Christians is indeed quite possible" (29). In his treatment of the development of this axiom, Martin relies heavily, and almost exclusively, on Francis Sullivan's *Salvation outside of the Church: Tracing the History of the Catholic Response*. After examining the Fathers, Aquinas, and developments after the discovery of the New World, Martin ends the chapter with developments in the magisterial treatment of the topic prior to the council. He also briefly notes that some theologians after the council, such as Karl Rahner and Jacques Dupuis, argued that a sharp change in the Church's teaching had occurred, opening the way for "optimism" regarding the salvation of non-Christians (54-56).

The fourth chapter changes the focus to Sacred Scripture, as Martin attempts to provide the foundation for *LG* §16c's cautionary tone in Romans, because "the 'hinge' on which [*LG*'s] argument for the continued urgency of evangelization turns is its citations of Romans 1:21, 25" (58). Martin quotes heavily from works of biblical exegesis in his detailed exposition of Romans 1:14-31 and his broader overview of Romans 2-3. He summarizes his findings as follows: "The clarity that Romans give us, not only about the reality of sin and the wrath of God and the darkness and rebelliousness of the human heart, but also about the pervasiveness of this participation in darkness, is essential knowledge in the shaping of our message and is an important motivation for the urgency of mission" (91). A proper understanding of the early chapters of Romans is key to Martin's argument, not only because of *LG* §16's citation of the letter, but because this epistle directly influenced the text's understanding of conscience as well (84).

Chapter 5 marks a major transition in the book, from a direct discussion of the council's teaching to the work of two eminent Catholic theologians of the postconciliar period, Karl Rahner and Hans Urs von Balthasar. Martin begins with Rahner, focusing on his two famous theories: the supernatural existential and anonymous Christians. After briefly summarizing these ideas and their ramification for the salvation of non-Christians, Martin recalls Rahner's claim that "this thesis of the anonymous Christian is actually also taught materially in the Constitution on the Church of Vatican II (no. 16)" (106). In response, Martin argues that a problematic eclipse of *LG* §16c has occurred and goes on to detail the pastoral implications of Rahner's position. In conclusion, he states: "Rahner's theory of the 'anonymous Christian' . . . has, in my opinion, greatly weakened the impetus to evangelization. It is very easy to get the impression from Rahner's essays on the topic that almost everyone, if not everyone, is already in a saving relationship with Christ" (126). Ultimately Martin determines that Rahner's theory does not do justice to "Scripture, tradition, and the teaching of Vatican II . . . which, unfortunately, can put in serious jeopardy the salvation of souls" (128).

In chapter 6 Martin turns to Hans Urs von Balthasar, particularly his 1986 work *Dare We Hope That All Men Be Saved?* Although Balthasar frames his work in terms of simply advocating hope for the salvation of all, Martin challenges this qualification, pointing to Balthasar's reasoning that while "it is theoretically possible for someone to be damned it is 'infinitely improbable'" (139, where Balthasar is quoting St. Edith Stein). Martin traces three of Balthasar's central influences: Rahner's interpretation of gospel passages on judgment simply as warnings, Karl Barth's tendencies toward universalism, and the revelations of Adrienne von Speyr. Two crucial theological assertions that stem from the influence of von Speyr, in particular, are "possible chance(s) after death" for salvation and Christ's descent into Hell, which pardons "even those who died unrepentant" (155, 162). To respond to Balthasar's position, Martin focuses on the objective meaning of scriptural passages and the clear teaching of the Magisterium, which "seems to rule out Balthasar's interpretations" of Scripture (160). In sum, he argues that Balthasar "departs from the content of revelation and the mainstream theological tradition of the Church in a way that undermines the call to holiness and evangelization and is pastorally damaging" (178).

The final chapter, "The Pastoral Strategy of Vatican II: Time for an Adjustment?" advocates for a shift in emphasis in the Church's call to evangelize. Even when the Church has forcefully declared the need for evangelization and missionary activity since the council, it has done so in ways that "are predominantly positive" (192). Martin explains further: "This, of course, is in stark contrast to the traditional focus on the eternal consequences that rest on accepting or rejecting the gospel that motivated almost two thousand years of mission" (193). Listening to Scripture and the full message of Vatican II should lead us to speak of the need for repentance and grace, breaking this "unwise silence, a flawed pastoral strategy," and thus "'rebalancing' . . . our message and strategy" (202). This rebalancing is necessary in order to interpret Vatican II correctly, opposing a universalism that undermines evangelization, and focusing more positively on "a deeper 'yes' to the call to conversion and holiness and the embodiment in living witnesses of the hope and promise of Christ and the Council" (208).

Martin is at his strongest point in this last chapter, bringing to bear his historical, scriptural, and theological analysis on pastoral concerns. The book strives to reawaken us to the pressing high stakes of the Church's central mission of evangelization. The decline of the missions and evangelization bears directly upon salvation, depriving people of the opportunity for conversion in explicit response to the gospel. Martin points out the need for a reemphasis of doctrinal points that have fallen out of favor: sin, original sin, hell, and the need for conversion. His book can and should bring these points back to the forefront of discussion in catechesis and evangelization. It is hard to deny the urgency of Martin's overarching point: losing focus on the

teaching of Scripture and the Magisterium on sin, hell, and redemption has led to a pastoral crisis.

The crossover between dogmatic theology and the concerns of evangelization is at once part of the book's importance, but also one of its greatest challenges. The book is probably too dense for many people that engage in pastoral work. On the theological side, it could use more direct engagement with and a sustained analysis of primary sources. Martin apologizes a few times for his extensive employment of long block quotations (e.g., 58). The book reads in some sections like a compilation of texts that are not always unpacked and do not always transition well. These difficulties do not vitiate the book's potential for making an important impact on its two audiences, but working through it may require significant effort and diligence on the part of the catechist (who may lack some necessary background on the council and the theologians addressed) and some patience on the part of the theologian at points where deeper reflection from the author is called for.

Finally, the chapter on Balthasar, the longest of the book, interrupts the book's narrow focus on *LG* §16. Although I am sympathetic to Martin's critique of Balthasar, the chapter does not focus specifically on Vatican II as the others do, both because Balthasar was not a key figure at the council as was Rahner, and because *Dare We Hope?* was published long after the problematic interpretation of *LG* §16 was already established. The chapter also focuses almost exclusively on *Dare We Hope?*, with only passing references to other pertinent points from Balthasar's corpus, which Martin rightly notes would be beyond the scope of the chapter. Skipping over them, however, makes the treatment of Balthasar somewhat incomplete. Balthasar's work, nonetheless, remains an important sign of the continued influence of the universalist position (or at least of a position very sympathetic to universalism) that undermines evangelization.

On the whole, Martin's book is a welcome treatment of a topic that needs to be addressed, both theologically in confronting the problematic positions of Rahner and Balthasar, and pastorally in terms of establishing the right doctrinal foundation for evangelization. It is also timely in helping to promote a proper hermeneutic for the Second Vatican Council on its fiftieth anniversary, recognizing how *LG* presents development in continuity with tradition. For these reasons, I hope that Martin's book will encourage fruitful theological and pastoral discussion.

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Paul in the Summa Theologiae. By MATTHEW LEVERING. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014. Pp. 336. $61.00 (cloth). ISBN: 978-0-8132-2597-5.

It is not apparent to all readers of Thomas Aquinas that the Bible plays an indispensable role in his theology. That seems to be an unstated thesis of Matthew Levering in his book, *Paul in the Summa Theologiae*. After decades of relative neglect in the first half of the twentieth century and into the second half, Aquinas's scriptural commentaries began to receive scholarly attention. Less attention, however, has been paid to the role of Scripture in Aquinas's synthetic works, including the *Summa theologiae*. Using as a reference point Wilhelmus G. B. M. Valkenberg's magisterial study *Words of the Living God: Place and Function of Holy Scripture in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, which evaluates scriptural citations in the *Summa theologiae*, Levering proposes a more circumscribed study, namely, to discover the particular contribution of Pauline texts to the *Summa theologiae*. Taking the Pauline corpus for what Aquinas understood it to be, namely, the fourteen letters of the New Testament from Romans to Hebrews, Levering undertakes a detailed study of Paul's influence on Aquinas.

Levering's book is divided into three sections. The first section examines how Aquinas applies Pauline texts in his exposition of three theological topics: the Trinity, Christ's passion, and baptism. In his treatment of each of these three topics, Levering follows the order of the *Summa theologiae*, locating each Pauline text and commenting on where and how Aquinas uses it, whether in an objection, the *sed contra*, the *respondeo*, or the reply to an objection. With respect to the Trinity, Aquinas uses Paul especially in the questions of the *Prima pars* on human knowledge of God (q. 12), God's knowledge (q. 14), God's will (q. 19), predestination (q. 23), God the Father (q. 33), and the missions of the Son and Holy Spirit (q. 43). Levering finds that Paul's emphasis on human salvation is what links these theological topics. God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, wills to save humanity through Christ's atoning death and resurrection, and the sending forth of the Holy Spirit allows humanity to respond in faith and love to the Father's revelation in Christ.

Regarding Christ's passion, which Aquinas treats in questions 46 to 49 of the *Tertia pars*, Levering draws three main conclusions about Aquinas's engagement with Paul. First, Aquinas emphasizes the importance of Christ's love and obedience while enduring his suffering and death. Paul testifies to Christ's love in Ephesians 5:2 and Galatians 2:20, and he underscores the role of Christ's obedience to the Father in Philippians 2:8 and Romans 5:29. Second, Aquinas draws from the Pauline writings various soteriological elements of Christ's death. These elements include the meriting of exaltation for himself and for those who believe in him (Phil 2:9), the sacrificial and redemptive dimensions of his death (Eph 5:2; Gal 3:13), and the exemplary

and revelatory functions by which God manifests his power and glory through human weakness (1 Cor 1:18 and 1:25; 2 Cor 12:4). Third, Aquinas describes how Christ's passion changes the lives of believers. God elicits through Christ a free response in faith and love (Rom 3:25 and 5:8), reconciles humanity to himself (Rom 5:10), and liberates humanity from the power of the devil (2 Thess 2:9).

Aquinas discusses the sacrament of baptism a little later in the *Tertia pars* (qq. 66-69). Levering finds that Pauline texts in the first three questions, which pertain to the nature of baptism, the minister, and the recipients respectively, play a smaller role than they do in question 69, which contains 26 of the 89 Pauline quotations Aquinas appropriates in the questions on baptism. Most of these quotations derive from Romans, in which Paul discusses baptism at some length. Romans 6:11 claims that Christians have been baptized into Christ's death and that Christians should consider themselves "dead to sin" and "alive to God in Christ Jesus." Also, "We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin" (6:6). Romans 8:11 promises that "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you." Aquinas uses these passages and others from Romans to address questions such as whether all sins are removed in baptism, what virtuous effects might be communicated in the rite, and whether baptized children receive such benefits. Levering notes that Aquinas's theological concerns are much different from Paul's, yet he contends that with 89 citations from the Pauline corpus (including the deutero-Pauline letters and Hebrews) Aquinas's theology of baptism is very much indebted to Paul.

The second section of the book explores how Aquinas uses each of Paul's letters within three sets of questions in the *Summa theologiae*: on the Mosaic Law, on grace, and on the virtue of religion. In this section, Levering follows the order of the Pauline letters through each of these sets of questions. He finds in the chapter on the Mosaic Law that Romans 7:8-8:4 plays a particularly significant role. In this passage, Paul describes both the goodness of the Law and its inability to make him holy; Christ, however, fulfills the Law and sends the Holy Spirit to form the Church. Aquinas also appropriates typological passages from the Pauline corpus, including 1 Corinthians 9-10; Colossians 2; and Hebrews 10.

In the questions on grace from the *Prima secundae*, Aquinas draws from a wide variety of Pauline texts, most of which emphasize the necessity of God's grace in meritorious human action. Romans 3:24 discusses justification by God's grace, Romans 5:5 mentions the roles played by charity and the Holy Spirit, Romans 6:23 describes eternal life as God's free gift, and Romans 7:25 illustrates how concupiscence functions. 1 Corinthians 3:16 testifies to the power of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, while Galatians 6:15 and

Ephesians 2:10 highlight God's role in making humans new creations. Levering notes how "speculative" (175, 261) many of Aquinas's concerns are, such as the distinctions between grace and nature, habitual grace and superadded graces, sanctifying grace and gratuitous graces, and grace as a new quality or as an accidental form. Other theological questions Aquinas raises are drawn from important developments and debates in the history of the Church, such as the issues concerning Pelagianism and arguments about the possibility and actuality of meritorious works.

Aquinas treats the virtue of religion in questions 81 through 89 of the *Secunda secundae*. Levering notes that while there are many important sources other than Paul in these questions, nonetheless Pauline writings figure significantly in Aquinas's discussion of three things. First, Paul has a number of things to say about prayer. He acknowledges that we "do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us" (Rom 8:26), and he exhorts Christians in several communities to pray together or for him as he carries out his pastoral ministry (see Rom 15:30; 2 Cor 1:11; 1 Thess 5:17; 1 Tim 2:1; and 2 Tim 3:5). Second, Aquinas uses Pauline texts to justify the material support of ministers; Levering notes that Aquinas cites 1 Corinthians 9:4 (in which Paul asks about the right of the apostles to food and drink) several times in these questions. Third, Aquinas appeals to Hebrews 6:16-18 six times in his question on oaths (q. 89). That passages remarks: "Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us." For Aquinas, this passage on the one hand justifies man's use of oaths in calling God as a witness and in settling disputes and, on the other hand, explains that when God swears an oath, the implication is not that God would be untrustworthy otherwise, but that the oath confirms his promise and shows "more convincingly . . . the unchangeable character of his purpose."

The last section of Levering's book focuses on three Pauline texts and traces Aquinas's use of them throughout the *Summa theologiae*. The first text is Romans 1:20, which states that "Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse; for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened." Aquinas uses this passage to discuss a wide variety of topics, including angelic and human knowledge as mediated through material objects, the relationship between faith and knowledge, justification, the worship of God, and the incarnation.

The second passage Levering traces through the *Summa theologiae* is the entire thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians. The first part of the chapter discusses the importance of charity, and the second part describes the importance of faith. Levering finds that Aquinas cites 1 Corinthians 13 a total of 69 times and that these citations play an important role in Aquinas's discussion of the virtue of charity, human and angelic knowledge, Christ's knowledge, prophecy, miracles, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, religious vows, and the relationship between faith and vision.

The last passage Levering examines is Philippians 2:5-11, which depict Christ as emptying himself and taking the form of a servant, becoming obedient even to the point of dying on the Cross. Not surprisingly, most of the references to this passage occur in the *Tertia Pars*, where Aquinas uses Paul's account to investigate the relationship between Christ's divinity and humanity and his *kenosis*. With modern kenotic theologies in mind, Levering emphasizes that, for Aquinas, Christ's self-emptying does not involve the loss of divine attributes nor does it reveal any eternal obedience of the Son to the Father or temporary abandonment by the Father. Rather, the Son becomes truly human and shares all the conditions of postlapsarian humanity (except for sin) so as to redeem humanity from sin, and through the cross and resurrection merit eternal life.

The book achieves very well what Levering has set out to accomplish. As the scriptural writer most often cited by Aquinas in the *Summa theologiae*, Paul is an extremely important voice in numerous questions in the *Summa*. Levering acknowledges that his task of identifying and commenting on Aquinas's citations of Paul is a "plodding" one (xiii), but it is one that bears much fruit. Although engagement with secondary literature is somewhat sparse, except at the beginnings of chapters, Levering hopes to engage scholars who are interested not only in Aquinas as an interlocutor for contemporary readings of Paul but also in the historical context of Aquinas's writings on the Pauline corpus. Levering does seem concerned throughout the book that contemporary readers of the *Summa theologiae* might perceive Aquinas to be obscuring Paul's true meaning. Levering identifies tensions between Paul's writings as understood by modern historical-critical biblical scholarship and as appropriated by Aquinas for "speculative" theological lines of inquiry. Admitting both that some of Aquinas's interpretations of Paul seem forced and unpersuasive and that Aquinas was not interested in the "historical Paul" (284-85), Levering explains in several places that this is due to the fact that Aquinas's concerns were different from Paul's. It is true that Aquinas shows much less interest in the historical context in which Paul was writing than do exegetes of today, but as he demonstrates in the prologue to his commentary on the Pauline letters and in the opening of each commentary, he is concerned about such questions as: authorship (including that of Hebrews), the order in which the Pauline epistles were written, and where Paul wrote various letters. Aquinas of course lacked the abundant historical sources afforded modern

scholars and the various critical methods developed during and after the Enlightenment; but he was interested in the historical context in which Paul wrote.

The overall picture of Aquinas that emerges is of a medieval Scholastic theologian who was indebted to Paul's writings in borrowing their content and authority to teach on such topics as the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit, grace, the Mosaic Law, religion, Christ's salvific work, and the sacraments. Thus, Aquinas's teaching of *sacra doctrina*, as Levering rightly argues, is both "profoundly Pauline and profoundly attuned to post-Pauline discussions" (288).

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Approaching God: Between Phenomenology and Theology. By PATRICK MASTERSON. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013. Pp. 204. $27.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-1-62356-308-0.

The title of this book contains, as its author notes, an ambiguity: "Does it envisage us approaching God or God approaching us?" (1). The introduction and indeed the whole book examine three discourses in which language about God could arise. First, there is lived experience and reflection on lived experience: "Phenomenology of religion is one very influential contemporary form of such philosophical reflection" (ibid.). It "concentrates its attention exclusively on phenomena, which have a bearing upon religious experience, as they give themselves to human experience" (ibid.). Second, "the affirmation (or denial) of God occurs also in the context of detached metaphysical reflection about the nature of ultimate reality or being" (ibid.). Third, "there is the reflective discourse about God which arises as a theological elaboration of what God himself has allegedly revealed about himself and his relationship to things other than himself and to human existence in particular" (2). Each approach seeks to be a systematic understanding of the totality of being.

As the author presents the matter, "The first three chapters examine individually each of these three approaches in their distinctive bearing on the affirmation of God. The discussion of phenomenology is principally concerned with the innovative thought of the French Phenomenologist Jean-Luc Marion. The chapter on realist metaphysics is a personal representation of Thomas Aquinas" (3). The author notes the importance of this last chapter. It is to serve as an antidote to the "frequent dismissal (of metaphysics) by

phenomenologists as a discredited philosophical endeavour" (ibid.). Chapter 3 examines the implications of knowledge of God within revealed theology, and its connections to metaphysics. The excursus on Karl Barth is related to a discussion of Jean-Luc Marion, and acts as a foil to Aquinas's position.

Chapters 4-6 "discuss various comparisons and relationships which can be held to obtain between these three approaches to God" (4). Chapter 4 offers a sympathetic review of the significance of Hegel's attempt at a synthesis of phenomenology, metaphysics, and revealed theology. Chapter 5 examines the relation of phenomenology to metaphysics with special emphasis on the thought of Jean-Luc Marion. Chapter 6 takes up a discussion of the important philosophical implications of the biblical concepts of creation and divine love for human life. It raises the issue of how metaphysics impacts our interpretation of these biblical concepts. The conclusion, chapter 7, argues for a combination of phenomenological and metaphysical approaches.

The author himself places the book in context. He notes that "the book has emerged from a long process of reflection on issues in the philosophy of religion" (ibid.). Indeed, this process began with a work titled *Atheism and Alienation: A Study of the Philosophical Sources of Contemporary Atheism* (South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971). The author returned to the philosophy of religion with his 2008 monograph, *The Sense of Creation: Transcendence and the God Beyond* (Ashgate). The present volume follows naturally upon this last book.

The first chapter is most important in that it sets out clearly how the author understands the fundamentals of phenomenology. It acknowledges the fundamental phenomenological principle of allowing the things themselves to show themselves from themselves without the distortion of presupposition and unrelated theorizing. But one notices that for the author this broad phenomenological principle is reduced to a form of Cartesian immanence. At least, he understands Edmund Husserl to have argued for a position of pure immanence.

The phenomenology of religion is presented as a method that provides a description of lived religious experience that is not given, and cannot be given, adequate expression in a detached metaphysics. The crux of the matter, however, has to do with a "phenomenological reduction," that is, with the bracketing of the natural attitude in regard to knowledge and reality claims. This issue is central to Masterson's argument that, as valuable as phenomenology is in a descriptive account of the lived experience of religion, it is necessary in the interest of realism to *overcome* the "phenomenological reduction." This is so because phenomenology alone is a "method which achieves a reduction, a leading back or return, to a presupposition-less world in which a strict co-relativity of *knowing and known obtains and in which the being of things is methodologically identified with its manifestation in consciousness*" (9, emphasis added). This correlativity, is, indeed the difficulty. Outside of it one cannot say what is real or not real. So it is for the

phenomenologist. But then a certain correlativity between knowing and the being known is required also in metaphysics. The issue at stake is the status of the "being known."

Masterson explains: "This phenomenological reduction which suspends our naïve commonsense presupposition of the independent reality of the world is not intended *as an absolute denial of its reality* but rather as a bracketing of the validity of this presupposition and of any attendant presumptions about its independent metaphysical status and structure. Therefore, rather than an outright denial of independently existing reality, what is achieved is a change of attitude towards it. One obtains a first-person perspective which enables attention to be focused on an investigation of reality as it is given in its significance and manifestation for human consciousness as the co-relative of this attentive consciousness. Phenomenology is critical of metaphysical realism which it views as a pre-critical naïve endeavour of the natural attitude to provide an account of the world and its modalities as though obtaining prior to our conscious engagement with it" (9-10, emphasis added).

Now, this raises a big question. If phenomenology does not imply *an absolute denial of the reality of the world*, can we then claim as the author does, that phenomenology must remain a purely immanentist project? This is the difficult issue. Can one consistently unite a phenomenological idealism and a pure metaphysical realism? It is doubtful. How about various forms of "phenomenological realism"? Perhaps such forms could be united with a pure metaphysical realism. Masterson points to a residue of Cartesian immanence in Husserl. Certainly, Heidegger attempted to overcome Cartesian immanence. Even so, Jean-Luc Marion argues that there is still Cartesianism inherent to *Being and Time*.

Masterson's strategy in chapter 1, following a discussion of the nature of phenomenology, is to present three separate issues: first, a sympathetic though critical consideration of Richard Kearney's Levinas-influenced God of Possibility, and a brief review of Paul Ricoeur; second, a preliminary exposition and critique of the position of Jean-Luc Marion (a fuller treatment is found in chapter 5) in which critique Masterson skillfully enlists the observations of Roger Chambon and Marlene Zarader; third, the well-known objections of Zarader, Janicaud, and Derrida to Marion's account of revelation as a "saturated phenomenon." This last issue is central to Marion's claim that while there are many examples of saturated phenomena in ordinary experience—such as art—in the unique case of God's presence, one is dealing with a situation in which the *noema* codetermines the *noesis*. That is, the object of religious experience, the *magnum mysterium*, overcomes the purely autonomous rational subject and helps to bring about a reconstituted subject.

Masterson presents a careful and subtle account of the objections of Zarader, Janicaud, and Derrrida to Marion's position. He is of the view that

these arguments are strong and raise serious doubts as to whether Marion's position is compatible with a true Husserlian-based phenomenology.

Chapter 3, on metaphysics, makes an important contribution. It is here that Masterson presents his account of the incoherence of a positive concept of the infinite. In a sense, it all goes back to the rational status of Anselm's famous argument. Masterson begins by identifying the realism he wishes to defend not only primarily with the tradition associated with modern representatives of Thomism from Gilson and Maritain to Lonergan, Clarke, Geach, Kenny, and scholars at Louvain, but also with "many effective contemporary defenders of [metaphysical realism] such as Searle, Armstrong, Nagel, Harré, Bhaskar, Hesse, Pettit and Papineau" (33-34). These thinkers defend a realism that in some sense can be called metaphysical, but one must note that the kinds of realism defended are not quite the same. For instance, perspectival realism is not quite the same thing as Hobbesian realism, but it can be quite close to phenomenological realism.

Rather than engage in a treatment of realism, the chapter moves quickly to a discussion of finite and infinite being. The author outlines two "doubtful" approaches. The first one is Anselm's famous "ontological argument." The second is represented by Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Bonaventure, transcendental Thomism, and to some extent by Marion. Masterson refers to this latter approach as a short-cut metaphysics. This involves the claim that "some awareness of God as infinite being is a concomitant condition of our affirmation of finite being" (38). Marion sees Descartes's concept of infinite being as a saturated phenomenon whose coherence is without contradiction. Masterson's strong criticism of the whole transcendental tradition, ancient and modern, raises the philosophical stakes. Is the whole tradition a form of short-cut metaphysics? Many do not think so. This is very much a disputed question.

All of the argumentation in chapters 5 and 6, and indeed the criticism of Hegel in chapter 4, depend on the author's account of the concept of infinity. Plainly, for Masterson, only a Thomistic account of metaphysical causality can save the concept of infinity. As he notes, "Thus, Aquinas, in his preliminary metaphysical consideration of the finitude of material beings, accepts a version of the traditional Greek view that to be finite connotes positive perfection and to be infinite connotes imperfection, privation and unreality" (45). This will require a movement beyond the physical concepts of matter and form; it will require the distinction of essence and existence, and in particular, a unique account of existence. This will require a movement from contingent being to that of necessary subsistent existence (*esse*). How then does one argue from the existence of finite being to infinite being, especially given that the author believes that "infinity" is not "a positive possible coherent idea"? "The most we can claim," Masterson maintains, "is that it is negatively possible, that is, we do not know whether it is positively possible and coherent or positively impossible and incoherent" (51-52).

Knowledge of whether such an idea is coherent will depend on our ability to prove that such an idea has real reference. This can only come about if we can show that finite being is contradictory and incoherent without the existence of an infinite creator. Now, this will have to be an indirect and *a posteriori* proof. It cannot be a direct and *a priori* proof. It cannot be a proof from sufficient reason, and so it must be a proof based on the principle of non-contradiction. Here one might note that the principle of non-contradiction is fundamental to Duns Scotus's transcendental thinking.

Chapters 5 to 7 provide the reader with a nuanced comparison and contrast of the phenomenological and metaphysical positions. The heart of the matter in this book emerges when phenomenology is brought into play. For Masterson, the real issue is the conflict present in "the interesting epistemological turn of modern philosophy since Descartes, which accords fundamental primacy to human self-consciousness." As he sees it, "this epistemological turn which underpins and characterizes phenomenology is very different from the metaphysical orientation of Aquinas's philosophy—and of his theology also to the extent that it involves philosophical reflection" (80). If this is indeed the case, how can the metaphysical orientation of Aquinas be unified with the Cartesian-influenced position of Marion? Perhaps, the real issue in the end is: how in the context of modern finitude must we think the infinity of God? And what does it mean to prove that infinity has real reference?

This is a thought-provoking book. It displays the skill and care of a good teacher. In a sense, it can be seen as a Hegelian project of subsuming phenomenology and revealed theology into metaphysics. An issue underlying all of this that Masterson does not address in the book is the relation between experience and thought.

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Thomism in John Owen. By CHRISTOPHER CLEVELAND. Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate Publishing, 2013. Pp. 173. $90.00 (cloth). ISBN: 978-1-4094-5579-0.

Renaissance Scholasticism generally falls out of the contemporary philosophical and theological canon, and thus this form of argumentation is, and has for a long time, been a severely neglected area of study. However, a renewed interest in this field is increasingly exposing the philosophical and theological stereotypes of the few earlier studies. Although institutional

philosophy and theology throughout Europe between the Reformation and the Enlightenment continued to identify itself as Scholastic, it is now clear that it was far from homogeneous. One of the diverse currents was the Scholasticism in Evangelical Protestantism. Within the reformed Church, academies aimed explicitly at continuing and contributing to the theological and philosophical tradition of the entire Church. Several studies have in particular suggested continuity between Thomas Aquinas and philosophers and theologians of good standing in the reformed Church. The most recent study is Christopher Cleveland's *Thomism in John Owen*.

The subject of this study is well chosen. John Owen (1616-83) was an influential pastor, scholar, vice-chancellor of the University of Oxford, and chaplain of Oliver Cromwell. He received a first-rate education at Oxford and maintained a wide-ranging scholarship throughout his life. His complete works comprise twenty-four volumes in the critical edition, and these are often thorough and systematic. From his tutor and friend Thomas Barlow, Owen seems to have gained a deep and lifelong appreciation of Aquinas, Alvarez, Bañez, and other Scholastics.

Cleveland rightly aims at a focused investigation. His purpose is to "expand the inquiry into Reformed Thomism" (17) and "examine the role of Thomism in the theology of John Owen" (2). By "Thomism" he means "Aquinas" and sometimes "Diego Alvarez and Domingo Bañez." In the first chapter Cleveland outlines the book and surveys some of the secondary literature. In the second chapter he contends that Owen was influenced by Aquinas's concept of *actus purus* in arguing divine simplicity, divine immutability, and divine concurrence. In the third and fourth chapters he asserts that Aquinas's understanding of infused "habits" strengthened Owen's explanation of justification and sanctification. In the fifth chapter Cleveland proposes that Owen's account of the hypostatic union is greatly indebted to Aquinas. Strangely the author concludes that Owen's thought represents "a Western Trinitarian Theology" although he does not treat Owen's doctrine of the Trinity.

This book is a laudable and well-needed attempt to determine the particular influence of Aquinas on Owen. However, Cleveland's work would benefit from a greater methodological rigor. Let us first consider Cleveland's criteria for tracing Aquinas's influence. He suggests that there are "four categories into which Thomistic influence falls." These are: (1) quotations or paraphrases of "Thomas or a Thomist author," (2) the development of a subject by means of similar theological concepts, (3) the "use of similar but not identical principles," and (4) a coincidence of thought because of a common source. The second criterion is said to identify the most common type of influence, and the fourth the rarest (3). Now, that Owen was influenced by Aquinas is not in contest; the question is: how was Owen influenced? And there are limitations to what can be drawn from the application of these categories. The first category is not decisive, since any

author may be quoted or paraphrased for widely various reasons, and some influential authors may not be quoted or paraphrased. The fourth criterion is somewhat irrelevant, since the coincidental rarely reveals steady influence.

Cleveland identifies "three major areas of Thomistic influence upon Owen's theology" (4; similarly 154). These are God as *actus purus*, infused dispositions of grace, and the hypostatic union. Yet, the book contains no argument for that conclusion. Having formulated four criteria for the assessment of influence in the first chapter, Cleveland surprisingly does not return to them in the remainder of the book. The reader is thus left to wonder whether these three major areas of influence were determined by applying the criteria or chosen for some other reason.

In the second chapter Cleveland clearly brings out Owen's thorough acquaintance with Aquinas, Alvarez, and Bañez. One thing he could have done better is to specify just what *actus purus* signifies and how it is operating in Owen's doctrines of grace and God. On the whole, Cleveland could have analyzed the concepts and arguments of Owen more extensively. Unfortunately, in this chapter Cleveland follows Gilson's dated and questionable interpretation of Aquinas.

The treatment of virtue in the third and fourth chapters is rather superficial. For instance, Cleveland inaccurately makes it sound like temperance and courage are virtues of the will: "virtues are of two types, according to the two faculties of action, appetition or desire, and intellect. Virtues of the faculty of the will are called moral virtues. Virtues of the intellect are intellectual virtues" (93). In fact, temperance and courage should be seated in the concupiscible and irascible passions, respectively. Although Cleveland correctly notes that the Greek *hexis* should be translated as "a state or disposition," he opposes Anthony Kenny's arguments for "disposition" (74 n. 16) and constantly uses "habit" while Owen regularly uses "disposition" and "disposed." The contemporary English meaning of "habit" is of course not what Owen intended, and this leads Cleveland to odd empirical claims, such as that "there are no habits contrary to nature" (71), and dubious theological assertions, such as that there is a "habit of grace" (81). For instance, Cleveland writes that an "infused habit produces holy actions, but is not itself produced by them" (85). It is not dubious that God immediately infuses a *disposition* to holy actions, but it is dubious that there can be a *habit* that is not produced by a history of repeated actions or that God can change the past history of action that an individual has produced.

In order to establish that Aquinas's account influenced Owen's account, one has to identify what is distinctive in the former and document this in the latter. It does not suffice to claim that similar formulations (110-11) in Owen are "consistent with Thomas's words about habits and virtues" (110; similarly 107). A relation of consistency is not identical with a relation of dependence, since in a relation of dependence that which depends cannot be without that on which it depends, whereas in a relation of consistency there need not be a

relation of dependence. The issue of dependence in this case is also troubled by the fact that Owen and Aquinas may simply both depend on Aristotle; and as Aquinas relied on Moerbeke's scholarship so Owen relied on Thomas Barlow's. Cleveland seems to be unaware that the *Nicomachean Ethics* was a standard textbook in confessional Protestant contexts.

Chapter 5 deals with Christology. Aquinas's account of the hypostatic union is where Cleveland believes that "Owen is closest to Thomas" (3; similarly 6, 7). For Owen's "Christological formulation of the hypostatic union . . . is heavily influenced by Thomas Aquinas" (122) or "derived directly from" the *Summa theologiae* (155). But what is Aquinas's distinctive account? According to Cleveland it is that Christ's human nature is not merely an accident of his divine human nature, but "the hypostatic union occurs in the person of the Word" (124; for a longer statement, 129). However, this does not distinctly identify Aquinas's account, since all Chalcedonian accounts agree that the person of the Son unites a human nature to himself. Moreover, this chapter does not identify the distinctive position of Aquinas as a union between a whole and a part, and does not establish Owen's dependence on that account. Finally, this chapter also manifests a gap in the secondary literature on Owen's Christology.

A crucial question that could be explored further is *how* Aquinas influenced Owen. This could be done by making a comparison to Scotus's positions. For instance, Aquinas's account of analogy and Scotus's account of univocity are very different, and showing that Owen endorses Aquinas's account of analogical predication—even in his *Greater Catechism*—would be decisive in manifesting how Aquinas influenced Owen. In ethics a comparison between Scotus's account of the twofold human tendencies of happiness and justice together with his emphasis on law in contrast to the emphasis on virtue in Aquinas and Owen would be clarifying. In Christology a juxtaposition of Scotus's substance-accident account with Aquinas's view would similarly be elucidating. Lastly, it would be illuminating to explore how Aquinas and Owen differ over whether the formal cause of justification is the infused righteousness of the Christian or the imputed righteousness of Christ, within their agreement on *sola gratia* and the virtue of faith.

Ralph McInerny once wrote: "The strength of Thomas's view is that it is not his—it is ours, and it is ours because it is true." This supposes that there are not only viewpoints, perspectives, or readings in philosophy and theology where an authority bears much weight—as Cleveland seems to suggest—but also truths to be discovered and made one's own. Cleveland does not consider that Owen was searching for the truth and found Aquinas a lovely friend here, but seems instead to make a historicist assumption that there are only texts, authorities, and the like that are more or less explicitly influential for historical reasons. Certainly Owen was influenced by Aquinas, but the ultimate question is how he was dependent on Aquinas for discovering truths he would make his own. Only rarely does Owen manifest explicit dependence

on Aquinas as an authority, and occasionally there may be implicit dependence, but generally there is persistent dependence in the discovery of truths.

All this is not to question the predominant influence of Aquinas on Owen, but to question the procedure of showing this. Cleveland is clearly on to something, but he does not adequately identify and analyze the continuities and similarities between Aquinas and Owen. What is needed in future studies is a more detailed knowledge of medieval Scholastics as well as renaissance Scholastics.

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