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BEAUTY, FIRST AND LAST OF ALL THE TRANSCENDENTALS: GIVENNESS AND AESTHETIC, SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION IN THOMISM AND JEAN-LUC MARION

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IN THE FACE OF reductionistic theories of various beings, Thomistic philosophers have been staunch realists and anti-reductionists.[1] We see this anti-reductionism in Thomistic accounts of the human person, which defend a rich hylomorphic conception of the human person against more reductionistic dualisms, materialisms, and idealisms. We also see it in Thomistic accounts of the categories of being, which insist on the irreducibility of beings in each of the ten Aristotelian categories, against views that would reduce some purported categories to others.[2] And we see it in the emphasis many Thomists of the last century have placed on beauty, its transcendental status, and its irreducibility to other transcendentals. Even artifacts, moral beings, and beings of reason get their proper due in Thomistic metaphysics, without being reduced to one another.[3]

[1] Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. Gerard Phelan (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 76-77.

[2] See my "The Category of *Habitus*: Artifacts, Accidents, and Human Nature," *The Thomist* 79 (2015): 113-54, for a history of Thomistic anti-reductionism about the categories.

[3] Matthew K. Minerd, "Beyond Non-Being: Thomistic Metaphysics on Second Intentions, *ens morale*, and *ens artificiale*," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 91 (2017): 353-79.

Aquinas and his followers aim at the truth about all beings; they are not merely interested in how things are perceived.[4] Yet, the starting point for reasoning to the truth about things is the world as it shows up for us; for example, we reason from objects as we perceive them back to the acts by which we perceive them and thence to our underlying powers and nature.[5] Thomism, like Aristotelianism, seeks to "save" appearances—not by endorsing false theories that accomplish this preservation, but by discovering the truth about how things appear without explaining those appearances away.[6] Still, Thomistic metaphysics is rooted not just in things' appearances, but also in historically held views from a variety of metaphysical traditions; it seeks to incorporate into itself the ways that things appeared to other metaphysicians, insofar as these are in accord with the truth about things.[7] In all these methodological tendencies, Thomism can be seen to be anti-reductionistic about both beings and how they appear, in its pursuit of the truth about all things.

Thomistic philosophy also tends to emphasize conceptual and causal accounts of beings. That which is received in acts of sense perception is merely potentially intelligible, and when rendered actually intelligible by the intellectual act of abstraction, a concept, expressible in a word, is produced; concepts, in turn, can be joined in judgments, in which, if true, the mind is conformed to reality. Following upon this awareness of sensible beings facilitated by concepts and judgments, we can reason causally about those beings, and so explain them through their final, formal, efficient, and material causes. Our highest natural cognition of beings, intellectual cognition, thus seems largely to involve, in Thomistic philosophy, concept-formation and causal reasoning.[8]

[4] I *De caelo et mundo*, lect. 22: "studium philosophiae non est ad hoc quod sciatur quid homines senserint, sed qualiter se habeat veritas rerum."

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

[6] II *De caelo et mundo*, lect. 17 (Marietti, ed., 451).

[7] *Nic. Ethic.* 7.1.1145b1.

[8] Aquinas discusses the structure of intellectual cognition in many places; see e.g. *In Boet. De Trin*, qq. 5 and 6; *STh* I, qq. 84-86.

Some recent postmodern philosophers, by contrast, have argued that there are phenomena that show up in experience that cannot be adequately conceptualized, thought of as beings, or reasoned about causally, but can only be cognized in some other way, for example, aesthetically. Some postmodern philosophers argue that phenomena such as beautiful works of art or the moral call felt in seeing the face of another person exceed in their content what can be contained in any possible concept, or that they precede or make possible concept formation, thinking in terms of being, and causal reasoning themselves. As a result, these phenomena are not able to be adequately conceptualized, judged, or reasoned about causally.[9]

Given the prevalence of these views and given Thomism's focus on "saving the appearances" as explained above, it is worth considering how Thomism would account for such phenomena. One might think that although Thomism certainly has methodological reasons to take these claims about appearances seriously, it would ultimately conclude that such phenomena *can* be rendered actually intelligible, conceptualized, and explained causally. The Thomist might grant that while concepts are means by which the intellect is conformed to reality, no human concept can be the means by which one grasps the entirety of a being or its essential characteristics in themselves, and so in that sense the postmodern philosophers are correct that phenomena exceed what is contained in our concepts.[10] Nevertheless, the Thomist might argue, this weakness in our concept-forming abilities does not negate the fact that it is accurate to think conceptually, causally, and in terms of the notion of "being" when considering any phenomenon.

[9] For a fine overview of postmodernism and its focus on irruptive, aesthetic, and hermeneutic phenomena, see Gary Aylesworth, "Postmodernism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2015 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta; http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/postmodernism/. Probably the most important work that grounds this line of reasoning, and which has most strongly influenced subsequent reasoning of this sort, is Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969).

[10] See *De ente et essentia*, c. 5; *De Verit.*, q. 4, a. 1, ad 8; *De spirit. creat.*, a. 11, ad 3; *Commentary on Apostles' Creed*, prol.; *STh* I, q. 85, a. 2; q. 86, a. 1.

I argue that Thomistic metaphysics and aesthetics have the resources to take on board more of the postmodern account of certain phenomena than this. A confrontation with at least one postmodern thinker, Jean-Luc Marion, and the phenomenon of givenness that he describes—with a description that seems to match up with actual experience—shows ways in which Thomistic aesthetics can be developed so that these phenomena are not explained away.[11] This, in turn, allows for a new defense and a new understanding of the claim made by many Thomists that beauty is a transcendental. Indeed, I argue here that incorporating Marion's account of givenness into Thomistic metaphysics and aesthetics shows that the Thomist should conceive of being (*ens*) fundamentally as beauty, that is, as holistically giving itself.

I first explain Marion's phenomenological account of givenness, and then I consider Aquinas's own account of givenness. Although Aquinas does not use this contemporary language, he does speak of being in a way that can be plausibly read as paralleling Marion's account. Finally, drawing on more recent developments in Thomistic philosophy, I propose a way to incorporate Marion's phenomenological observations about experience and the given into a Thomistic framework. Here, I consider how this synthesis would affect the Thomistic understanding of the transcendental properties of being and their role in human cognition. My goal is certainly not to ascribe the resulting view to Aquinas, for I draw on later Thomistic claims—for example, from John of St. Thomas and Jacques Maritain—which are not found in Aquinas himself. I do think that the account of the transcendentals and of human cognition that results from this confrontation between Aquinas and Marion is a correct development of Thomistic philosophy. But even if the reader remains unconvinced by these claims—for example because he or she is unconvinced by Marion's account

[11] Others have also recently argued for developing Thomistic metaphysics on the basis of a confrontation with Marion's thinking; see, e.g., Taylor Knight, "Real Relation and the Saturated Phenomenon," *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 59 (2017): 353-70.

of experience—I think the exercise is still worthwhile. It indicates ways in which the Thomistic account of being and of human cognition is at least open to development and to synthesis with more recent phenomenological and postmodern strands of philosophical thought; it suggests ways in which Thomistic metaphysics can aid in understanding and resolving problems in postmodern philosophy; and it points toward a way in which Thomism can better consider reality in an antireductionist way.

I. Marion on Givenness

Marion describes the history of phenomenological method as a history of kinds of "reduction." Phenomenology aims at describing the actual structure of concrete, conscious life, that is, at describing any phenomenon that gives itself experientially. Understanding this requires grasping how Marion defines a few key terms. "Experience" refers to the whole scope of conscious life. "The given" or "a phenomenon"—everything that is an instance of one is an instance of the other—refer to anything that appears in conscious life, that is, to anything perceived, remembered, thought, or grasped in any other modality of consciousness, and to any conscious act or modality of consciousness in itself. "Phenomenon" picks out anything that appears insofar as it appears in conscious life, while "given" picks out that which appears in itself, rather than as having a direct reference to conscious life. "Givenness" refers to the event of the appearing of a given or a phenomenon, the event in which a given or a phenomenon gives itself experientially.[12] For phenomenology to accomplish its task of describing any phenomenon or given, the given must be "reduced." "Reduction" here is not to be understood as a "reductionistic" method in the sense opposed above. Rather, in this method one

[12] Jean-Luc Marion, *Being Given*, trans. Jeffrey Kosky (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002), 32; idem, *In Excess*, trans. Robyn Horner and Vincent Berraud (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 21, 60-61.

brackets from one's attention all factors extrinsic to precisely what gives itself in a particular instance.

In Edmund Husserl's reduction, as Marion interprets it, we bracket from consideration any thought of the real existence of, causes of, or explanatory views about, phenomena. This allows us to focus just on objects as they show up in intentional (or object-directed) acts, such as acts of sensory or intellectual cognition. In intentional acts, as Husserl and Marion understand them, objects, such as sensory contents, fulfill or correspond to our meaningful intentions toward the world. For example, the sensory content of a seen book fulfills the concept of "book" through which I intend it or direct my attention toward it. By bracketing any consideration of extrinsic factors, I am able to consider precisely how the sensory content of the book shows up in my experience, the structure of this act, what other acts are presupposed by this event of this object being given to me, and how what is given in this sensory act fulfills the content of the concept "book."

Martin Heidegger's reduction goes further than Husserl's.[13] Heidegger notes that we often experience beings other than as intentional objects, that is, as objects of our direct, conscious regard that correspond to meanings we already had in mind prior to experiencing those objects. For example, we can experience beings as tools that we use without thinking about them. Furthermore, Husserl's reduction does not clarify how we exist in such a way that we are able to have objects of our intentional acts. According to Heidegger's reduction, we do not consider beings as the particular kinds of beings that they are; rather, we consider how they exist—for example, as objects present to our intentional acts, as tools of use, as beings that we merely "let be" without seeking to control or dominate them. Phenomenology is thus a method for describing all the ways that beings can exist, and for grasping the difference between

[13] Marion calls Heidegger's method a reduction; since I am talking about Marion, I use his terminology, whether or not it is really appropriate to Heidegger's method.

particular beings and Being, the condition for beings existing, appearing, and being intelligible and interpretable.[14]

Marion argues that, while many phenomena are given in ways such that they could be examined through these reductions, other phenomena are obscured by them. A beautiful painting, for example, cannot be seen in its "bedazzling" beauty if it is seen as Husserl's reduction would have us see it. According to Husserl's reduction, the painting and its beauty would be seen as a sensory impression fulfilling a prior intention, that is, a meaning that I already had in mind through which I considered the painting and its beauty. That would limit what can appear to me in the painting to the meanings I had sought in it.[15] Not only are there always aspects of the painting for which I lack concepts, but even those features of the painting that I intend through some concept or to which my concepts correspond overflow or "saturate" any meaning that I intended in it. By this Marion means that what is given in the beauty of the painting corresponds to but also more than fulfills the meaning that I intentionally aim at in it. Given beauty is not an "object" containable in my intentional act, but a "saturated phenomenon": it gives more content than could be anticipated or predicted by any intention.[16] When I consider a great painting through a concept like "beautiful," what I receive in seeing the painting corresponds to that concept, but also vastly exceeds anything I had in mind in considering the meaning of that concept.

[14] For Marion's reading of Husserl and Heidegger's accounts of reduction, see Jean-Luc Marion, *Reduction and Givenness*, trans. Thomas Carlson (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1998), 204; *Being Given*, 27-39; *In Excess*, 13-23. Husserl's reduction is largely described in Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. F. Kersten (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983), 57-62 and 131-43. Heidegger's is described in Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1996), 23-35.

[15] Marion, *Being Given*, 39-51; *In Excess,* chap. 3.

[16] Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Text*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 83-86; *Being Given*, 131-34, 225-28, 234-47; idem, *Negative Certainties*, trans. Stephen Lewis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 185-86.

Again, "intention" in this phenomenological context does not mean, as Thomists might understand the term, any act of apprehension, but an act of grasping some object such that the object corresponds to and fulfills a meaning one already had in mind. The excess of the saturated phenomenon over the intended meaning is not the same as the Thomistic distinction, noted above, between a real being and those aspects of the being that are grasped in a cognitive act. Rather, the distinction Marion is making here is entirely within conscious life. Some consciously given content entirely corresponds to meanings that one had in mind before receiving that content; for example, I know what a book is, and, when I glance at a book, I grasp the visible content I receive as corresponding to what I mean by the concept "book." But other consciously given content exceeds or saturates what I had in mind when I intended it through that concept; for example, I might glance at the book and receive far more content than I had in mind in the concept "book." Both of these are intentional acts in a Thomistic sense, but only the former is an intentional act in Marion's sense.

Husserl's reduction thus does not allow me to consider beautiful paintings as they actually give themselves, for they exceed or "saturate" any meaning I might intend in them. But neither is Heidegger's reduction adequate. The beauty of a painting, Marion argues, does not give itself merely as a subsisting or useful being, but as arising before me as an "event" of appearing. To let the beauty of the painting in itself appear to me, I cannot approach it through conditions of intelligibility and appearing distinct from itself like Heidegger's Being. To think of the beauty of the painting as a being in Heidegger's sense is already to think of it under certain conditions, to let only certain aspects of it give themselves, and so not to allow it to appear in itself, on its own terms.[17] Seeing beauty in itself requires bracketing out thinking of it as an intentional object, a being, or in any other way that would subordinate it to any conditions external to itself.[18] Marion takes this so far as to

[17] Marion, *Being Given*, 120; *Negative Certainties*, 126, 173-81.

[18] Marion, *Being Given*, 85-113, 120; *Negative Certainties*, 93-99.

contend that this entails that the given cannot be considered in terms of logical laws, such as the principles of identity, non-contradiction, or sufficient reason, and that it exceeds any stable identity, cause, or explanation that one could assign to it.[19] Furthermore, when I experience being given a saturated phenomenon, such as beauty, I experience myself as being given to myself in that experience. I do not experience myself first as capable of receiving this given phenomenon, and then actually receiving it; rather, it is only in the experience of receiving it that I am aware of being capable of receiving it. And in being given a saturated phenomenon, I experience it calling me to some response, such as aesthetic appreciation or ethical action.[20]

Properly reduced, anything can be experienced as a saturated phenomenon, but there are paradigmatic cases, such as a beautiful painting or the face of another person which calls me to ethical respect and action, where the "saturation" or "overflow" of my intentional concepts is easily experienced.[21] But while the saturated phenomenon gives itself, my subjectivity, and the proper response to it without conditions, including any anticipation of the given on my part, I cannot experience such a phenomenon unless I have a stance of love toward the world, an open readiness to receive whatever gives itself.[22] Normally, I experience the world as strictly corresponding to and fulfilling the concepts and meanings through which I intend the world,

[19] Marion, *Being Given*, 159-73; *Negative Certainties*, 103-14, 181-88.

[20] Marion, *Being Given*, 262-71.

[21] Other paradigmatic cases include my self-sensing flesh, events, and the revelation of God; see Marion, *Being Given*, 267; *In Excess*, passim; *Negative Certainties*, 190-93.

[22] Jean-Luc Marion, *In the Self's Place: The Approach of Saint Augustine*, trans. Jeffrey Kosky (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 138-9; *God without Being*, 46-49; *Negative Certainties*, chap. 2; idem, *The Erotic Phenomenon*, trans. Stephen Lewis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 21-22. There are echoes here of Hans Urs von Balthasar's key notion of "indifference," in the sense of "availability" to all that is given, or rather to all that God gives; see Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, v. 2, *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1990), 59-61. Throughout his work, Balthasar emphasizes the idea of perceivable form as giving itself without any conditions except what it contains in itself. On Marion's debt to Balthasar see Jean-Luc Marion, *The Rigor of Things*, trans. Christina Gschwandtner (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), 24-27.

rather than as overflowing such meanings, for I generally neither have or practically need the stance of openness required to see that overflow. [23] Though saturated phenomena are received without antecedent reasons, they are not irrational, but give their own norms for thinking about them. Though there is a normative way to think about any given, this does not yield stable or fixed concepts adequate for a full understanding of the given; rather, each given calls for endlessly deeper interpretation, on the basis of what is given now and what has been given previously.[24]

As I have been emphasizing, we can see the truth of these claims about givenness and saturated phenomena above all in the case of beauty. Although we have a concept of beauty, beauty most often appears not as a concept, even a transcendental concept to which all things correspond, but as the given and the truth about the given insofar as these are loveable. Drawing on St. Augustine, Marion says that beauty appears as a radiance that reveals itself, but also draws me out of myself, and calls or seduces me to love it and to see my own lack of beauty, especially in my moral state. In the face of that call or seduction, I am faced with a decision: to hate the beauty whose radiance I suffer, because I cannot control it and because it places demands on me, and so to be rendered unable to see the truth about all the given; or to love beauty, to confess my own

[23] There is generally nothing wrong with this practical or scientific attitude, but it is necessary, in order genuinely to experience ethical calls and the beauty of the world, as well as to experience God's revelation, that I be open to saturated phenomena.

[24] Jean-Luc Marion, *Givenness and Hermeneutics*, trans. Jean-Pierre Lafouge (Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette University Press, 2013), 42-47; *Being Given*, 294-96; *In Excess*, 173-77; *Negative Certainties*, 198-99. This grounds Marion's response to the objections of Sameer Yadav, *The Problem of Perception and the Experience of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 139-87, who holds that if we are aware of something, any content received from the world must be conceptually structured, not exceeding our conceptual schemes; otherwise, he thinks, all such phenomena would be irrational and we would be unable to make sense of them. But Marion argues that the normative structuring of the world goes beyond conceptualizable structuring, and that we become actual concept-using selves only on the basis of prior experience. See Thomas Hibbs, *Aquinas, Ethics, and Philosophy of Religion* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2007), 64-66.

lack of moral beauty, and then to let myself become beautiful though drawing closer to the beauty I have seen. All things can appear beautiful, as saturated phenomena, on Marion's view.[25]

Marion takes all of this account to be not just about experience, but also about the given or phenomena themselves: whatever else they might be or do, they give themselves as beauties. A beautiful painting will not appear as such so long as I treat it merely as a product of a time or place, as a thing with some physical structure, an element of my psychology, or a set of stable substances with accidents; irreducible to all these, it is this splendid beauty that gives itself. One reason to hold that these claims are true is that if all knowledge is conditioned by prior meaning-intentions or causal explanation, and is not immediately given, then it has no grounding at all beyond what is contained within the human mind.[26] Another reason is that these claims match experience: at times, as when before a beautiful painting, we are aware of beauty "blazing up" overwhelmingly before us, failing to fit any pre-given idea, calling us to a loving response.

II. Aquinas on Givenness

To begin to bring Marion's account of givenness into confrontation with Aquinas's thought, we must consider Aquinas's account of how the given gives itself. I am first given and am made aware of the sensible accidents of material substances, such as color. Second, I am given my own sensing, and I judge the forms as existing as other than me.[27] Third, sensible accidents given to distinct senses are received in a combined way, so that I am aware of an intersensory whole, and of distinctions among my sense acts.[28] Fourth, this intersensory content (or phantasm) is retained, so that I can later be

[25] Marion, *In the Self's Place*, 138-44.

[26] Jean-Luc Marion, *The Reason of the Gift*, trans. Stephen Lewis (Charlottesville, Va.: Virginia University Press, 2011), 20.

[27] III *De Anima*, lect. 2.

[28] II *De Anima*, lect. 13; III *De Anima*, lect. 2.

aware again of what was given,[29] and its potential intelligibility is "illumined" and "actualized,"[30] so that I am given its intelligible and conceptualizable content. While the senses can only receive some givens, the intellect can receive what is intelligible in any given.[31] Aquinas explains this actualization of what is potentially intelligible in what is sensed by concluding that there is a power, the "agent intellect," whereby I abstract or make an intelligible form of the content drawn from the given phantasm. And there is another power, the "potential intellect," whereby I receive that content, by which I then understand that given content, and express that content in concepts and words.[32] I can then make an act of judgment which can be expressed in a proposition. In this act I am aware of the being that is the source of the given as actually existing. As Marion also said, both at the level of the sensory and of the intellectual given, the given leads me to respond to it. I am not consciously aware of any of these powers (or of myself) until they are put into act by the given.[33] In Aquinas's metaphysical way of thinking, these powers exist before they are put into act; in Marion's phenomenological way of thinking, however, they do not appear or consciously exist before they are put into act.

Thomists disagree as to what it means to say that the agent intellect "illumines" the phantasm.[34] The basic idea is that for me to receive any intelligible content, it must be received under the correct "light";[35] such light allows the given to appear but does not add any conditioning content to the given—that is, any content that would distort or add extra content to what is

[29] II *De Anima*, lect. 6.

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

[31] *De Verit.*, q. 11, a. 3, ad 11.

[32] III *De Anima*, lect. 10.

[33] *STh* I, q. 87, a. 1.

[34] Daniel Heider, "Abstraction, Intentionality, and Moderate Realism: Suárez and Poinsot," in Victor Salas, ed., *Hircocervi and Other Metaphysical Wonders: Essays in Honor of John Doyle* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette University Press, 2013).

[35] III *De Anima*, lect. 6; *De Verit.*, q. 12, a. 1.

given.[36] Just as visible light is needed to see colors, so the agent intellect is needed to cognize what is actually intelligible.

A key debate on how this occurs took place in the Baroque period. Thomas Cajetan held that in illumination, the phantasm under the influence of the agent intellect shines forth its actualized intelligibility, and the intellect "sees" this and forms a concept to match the phantasm's content.[37] John of St. Thomas objects that Cajetan's view does not causally explain this intellectual "seeing." John of St. Thomas, following Aquinas, argues that, like other parts and powers of the human body, powers for considering phantasms, such as the imagination, not only have a natural potency for their proper acts, but also have an "obediential potency" for being raised to new kinds of acts by the intellect. An obediential potency is a potency that a being has to be enabled to perform acts that it could not naturally perform, but which it can perform under the influence of something higher than itself in the hierarchy of being. Many bodily powers, such as our sensible appetites, are capable of obeying the intellect, and so they do not just pursue sensible goods, but they pursue the intellect's goods under the intellect's direction.[38] John of St. Thomas contends that illumination bestows on the phantasm a new power, which exceeds what is natural to it, whereby it can actualize the intellect.[39] I will return to this interpretation below.

Regardless of which interpretation is correct, we can only intellectually cognize anything, in the view of Aquinas and his interpreters, under the notion (*ratio*) of "being" or "existent" (*ens*); all intellectual content falls under the content of this

[36] IV *Sent.*, d. 49, q. 2, a. 1, ad 15; *De Verit.*, q. 18, a. 1.

[37] Thomas de Vio Cajetan, *Commentaria in Summa theologiae*, I, q. 79, a. 3, nn. 9-10 (Rome: Leonine ed., 1889), 266.

[38] On this use of the notion of obediential potency in Aquinas and later Thomists see my "Habits, Potencies, and Obedience: Experiential Evidence for Thomistic Hylomorphism," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 88 (2014): 165-80.

[39] John of St. Thomas, *Cursus philosophicus thomisticus*, vol. 3 (Paris: Vives, 1883), p. 3, q. 10, a. 2, pp. 451-58.

notion, and this is the first concept formed by the intellect.[40] We draw from this concept further concepts, the transcendentals, which pick out what belongs to every being. Every being can be cognized as having some essence (the transcendental *res*), as one or not distinct from itself (*unum*), as distinct from others (*aliquid*), as true or ordered to the intellect (*verum*), and as good or ordered to appetite or will (*bonum*).[41] The intellect composes these concepts into principles, such as those of noncontradiction and identity, which are judgments that can be made about any being. These principles, in turn, condition the cognition of every content given to the intellect.[42]

This is the context in which many Thomists place Aquinas's discussion of beauty.[43] Aquinas never lists beauty among the transcendental properties of being when he derives the concepts of properties of being, but he does argue that every being is good, and that good and beauty are identical in subject, though distinct in conceptual content. It would seem to follow, then, that every being is beautiful, and so the concept "beautiful" can be regarded as a transcendental property of being. The conceptual content of beauty differs from that of good inasmuch as "good" picks out each being insofar as it is able to be the object or final cause of an appetite, but "beauty" picks out something that is good or pleasing just when it is seen or known, rather than, as in the case of good, when it actually grasped by the one

[40] *STh* I, q. 16, a. 4, ad 2; q. 77, a. 7; q. 79, a. 9, ad 3; I-II, q. 94, a. 2; *De Virtut.*, q. 1, a. 2, ad 8; *Super De Causis*, lect. 6.

[41] *De Verit.*, q. 1, a. 1. While for everything we cognize, we do so under the *ratio* of *ens*, we need not explicitly consider each phenomenon under each transcendental; see *STh* I, q. 16, a. 3, ad 3.

[42] *De Verit.*, q. 11, a. 1; *STh* I, q. 117, a. 1.

[43] This is true both of those who hold that beauty is a transcendental (i.e., a property of being as such), and of those who hold that it is not, but only a property of the good. See, e.g., Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*, trans. J. F. Scanlan (New York: Scribner, 1930), 128-30, 132-33; Umberto Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Hugh Bredin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), 20-48; Jan Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: Brill, 1996); Christopher Scott Sevier, *Aquinas on Beauty* (Lanham: Lexington Press, 2015).

who has the appetite.[44] This is not to say that Aquinas is a subjectivist or relativist about beauty: beauty is an objective content found in beings by virtue of which they are pleasing when seen.[45] The objective basis in beings for calling them beautiful involves three aspects.[46] First, beauty involves beings having the perfection due to their kind, without lacking any of the integrity that belongs to a species of being. Second, it involves having proportion among the various parts and principles of the being, or by analogy and appropriation, in the case of God who is simple, in the image-relation between the Son and the Father. Such proportion can be found in physical things and in spiritual beings, for example in the moral and intellectual virtues.[47] Everything "fits" among the various parts or principles of that which is beautiful.[48] Third, it involves having clarity or splendor. Like Marion, Aquinas draws on Augustine in his account of beauty, and this is seen especially in the property of clarity or splendor. In Augustine, this primarily refers to physical beautiful things having pleasing colors, but Aquinas expands this notion, such that clarity or splendor refers to any manifestation of a good being.[49] We might call this, as others have done, the "shining forth" of beauty, that which inspires wonder, joy, and satisfaction in the beautiful. The key claim here is that beauty is not just a perfection and proportion internal to beings, but their radiant self-manifestation as perfect and proportioned as well.

Beauties, it would seem, give themselves to both cognition and appetite or love. Indeed, just as in Marion, beauty for Aquinas is a cause of love, insofar as it calms the desire when it is seen, heard, or known.[50] And, insofar as love is the cause of all that a lover does, and properly ordered love leads to virtue, which is itself beautiful, beauty may be regarded for Aquinas,

[44] *STh* I, q. 5, a. 4, ad 1.
[45] *In De divin. nom.*, c. 4, lect. 10.
[46] *STh* I, q. 39, a. 8.
[47] *STh* II-II, q. 141, a. 2, ad 3; q. 145, a. 2; q. 180, a. 2, ad 3.
[48] Cf. *STh* III, q. 1, a. 1.
[49] *STh* II-II, q. 132, a. 1.
[50] *STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 1, ad 3.

just as it is for Marion, as leading one to become beautiful oneself.[51]

Yet despite these similarities, there are two apparent conflicts between Aquinas's and Marion's accounts of beauty and givenness. The first apparent conflict is phenomenological.[52] In Aquinas's view, it seems we cannot intellectually cognize any given except as fulfilling an intentional act guided by the concept "being" or the law of noncontradiction.[53] The Thomistic account of beauty just offered is a conceptual account, in which beauty is grasped as a concept following upon the concept of being, to which various sensory experiences correspond, rather than being, as in Marion's account, a pure given exceeding all concepts. No given, it would seem, can show itself in a way unconditioned by intentional concepts. This seems to be true even of God, who also can only be understood as a being, although "being" as applied to God must be understood in a way analogous to the way it is applied to creatures. The issue here is that all givens are understood by Aquinas as corresponding to, subsequent to, and not exceeding the concept "being" and the principles derived from it. This seems inconsistent with Marion's claim that saturated phenomena give themselves as exceeding all intentional meanings.

The second apparent conflict comes in the different ways that Aquinas and Marion frame their philosophical accounts of givenness and beauty. Aquinas posits conditions on the given too, such as the "light" of the agent intellect, which is always extrinsic to any given content. The light of the agent intellect, like any light, does not distort or add content to what it illumines. But in each of the phenomenological methods considered above, the goal was to bracket everything extrinsic to the given and to consider only the given as such. Aquinas does not seem to allow for bracketing the extrinsic light of the

[51] *STh* I-II, q. 28, a. 6.

[52] Jean-Luc Marion ("Saint Thomas d'Aquin et l'onto-théo-logie," *Revue thomiste* 95 [1995]: 31-66) acquits Aquinas of the charge that he treats God only as part of a causal or ontological system, but this does not answer the claim, which I consider here, that Aquinas reduces the given as such to causality and being.

[53] *STh* I, q. 25, a. 3.

agent intellect and considering the given as such; the given only appears under extrinsic lights, rather than, as Marion says, giving itself.

One might respond that there is not necessarily a conflict here: the light of the agent intellect is always already included in any intellectual given, rather than being extrinsic to it. When using the phenomenological method, in which one brackets what is extrinsic to the given, one is bracketing explanatory theories of the given, not any of the factors inherent in the given itself. Just as in a phenomenological account of how visible objects give themselves to sight one would include an account of how visible light illumines those objects, so in a phenomenological account of how intellectual objects give themselves to thinking one would include an account how those objects are "illumined" by the mind. Indeed, Aquinas affirms that the clarity or light that manifests beauty pertains to reason; hence, intellectual virtues are beautiful in themselves, while moral virtues, which involve a participation of the bodily powers in reason, only participate in the beauty of reason.[54] This does not exclude the possibility that the clarity or light that manifests beauty can be found in other things besides reason; indeed, Aquinas affirms that the forms and proportions found in all things are their clarity or self-manifestation, but that they have this clarity as a handing over of God's luminous rays (*traditionem sui radii luminosi*), that is, a sharing in God's intellectual beauty.[55] Here, there seems to be the possibility of each beauty giving itself, and of this including a participation in intellectual light, whether God's alone or the human mind's as well, with this light being intrinsic to the given as such, not extrinsic to it.

However, a potential conflict between Aquinas and Marion in the structure of their philosophical accounts still remains. When Aquinas describes the agent intellect acting upon sensible forms, or beauty and clarity being handed over to things by God, he does so by giving a causal account. Although the notion

[54] *STh* I-II, q. 180, a. 2, ad 3. cf. Sevier, *Aquinas on Beauty*, 112.

[55] *In De divin. nom.*, c. 4, lect. 5.

of "being" is prior to and does not include the notion of "cause," all contingent beings must be explained as being caused, in Aquinas's view.[56] This is possibly inconsistent with Marion's demand for an account of the pure given as such, or an account in which the given is allowed to appear in itself. Rather than describing how beauty or other givens give themselves, Aquinas turns to a causal explanation of the given. Even the Thomistic account of givenness presented above was an account of a causal order among our powers. But causal accounts must be bracketed in the phenomenological method, to allow the given to appear as such. It seems that Aquinas's account needs to be set aside to arrive at Marion's account of the given, or that Marion's demands for a method that allows the given as such to appear needs to be rejected in favor of an account that is always causal.

III. A Resolution

In what follows, I propose a way to develop the Thomistic account of givenness and of being so as to overcome these apparent disagreements with Marion. This proposal is meant to allow the Thomist to "save the appearances" with respect to the experiences Marion describes, and, more importantly, to discover and uphold the truth in Marion's account. My proposal builds on a few other Thomistic accounts of the experience of beauty, to which I now turn.

The Lublin Thomists Mieczysław Krąpiec and Piotr Jaroszyński contend that the first step of experience, at least in the order of knowing, is a holistic aesthetic experience of concrete beings. This experience is had by the whole person and involves the simultaneous impact of the beautiful on sense, intellect, appetite, and will. Being first impacts all of these powers at once, leading consciousness to transcend itself in awareness of this real being, to find itself called to respond to the being that confronts it, to go out intentionally to the being as it gives itself, and to experience it as beautiful. We first know

[56] *STh* I, q. 44, a. 1, ad 1.

and love a whole being as beautiful. Only subsequent to this first impact of being do we experience ourselves engaging in the acts of particular powers.[57] This account of the givenness of the beautiful seems somewhat closer to Marion's account, but needs further unpacking.

Jacques Maritain also attempted to express such a holistic experience of beauty in his notion of "intellectualized sense." In seeing a being as beautiful, he contends, we are aware of the intelligibility of the given being without abstraction and conceptualization, but through a sensory intuition; we are aware of beauty in a way that, with some similarities to Marion's account, exceeds and precedes all concepts, and that calls forth a response of joy.[58] The intellect and the senses here together perform together one experienced act, with the intellect acting as form and the senses as matter.[59] Maritain contends[60] that this nonabstractive use of the senses by the intellect is possible because these powers arise from the one root of the soul, and sensory powers arise from and are imperfect participations in the intellect,[61] and so sensory acts are always present to the intellect. Because sensory acts are present to it, the intellect can use and attend[62] to them as instruments without needing to abstract and conceptualize.

[57] Piotr Jaroszyński, *Beauty and Being: Thomistic Perspectives*, trans. Hugh MacDonald (Toronto: PIMS, 2011), 171-88; Mieczysław Krąpiec, *Metaphysics: An Outline of the History of Being*, trans. Theresa Sandok (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 179-89. See *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 2 on the experience of beauty.

[58] Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*, 162.

[59] See my "What is it Like to be an Embodied Person? What Is It Like to Be a Separated Soul?" *Angelicum* 93 (2016): 219-46 for a further account of how two powers can perform a single act.

[60] Jacques Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Poetry and Art* (New York: Pantheon, 1953), 106-10.

[61] *STh* I, q. 77, a. 7.

[62] Although Aquinas discusses attention at times (e.g., *In De sensu et sensato*, lect. 9), his cognitive theory is not built on the notion of attention. Other Scholastics, however, such as Francisco Suárez, describe acts of attention whereby we use a power directly to intend some object, perhaps in some cases without being informed by the content of that object; see Heider, "Abstraction." If this notion of acts of attention were imported into Thomism, it could help solve this problem, but I do not go that route here.

Doug Flippen has objected[63] to Maritain's account on the grounds that for the intellect to be in act, it must first be informed, and this requires abstraction under the light of the agent intellect, even if not conceptualization. But in Maritain's view, the intellect seems to act without receiving anything. So, Flippen contends, it is not clear that the Thomistic view of human powers can accommodate such an act. Furthermore, in Aquinas's view we only become aware of the intelligible under the illumination of the agent intellect. But in Maritain's account of our intellectual-and-sensory awareness of the beautiful given, we become aware of an intelligibility in the sensory given itself. I would contend that this matches our experience: upon seeing some beautiful sight or hearing beautiful sounds we are often struck by the sheer meaningfulness of the beauty, without in any way being able conceptually or linguistically to articulate that beauty. Maritain's account also seems to align fairly closely with Marion's account of our experience. Yet, as Flippen argues, it does not at first glance fit into a Thomistic framework.

What follows is my proposal for how to reconcile at least significant aspects of Marion's account with the central claims of Aquinas's account, along with how to reconcile some of the other Thomistic accounts considered in this article. This is a proposed reconciliation of Thomistic principles with the appearances described by Marion, not an account of Aquinas's view or that of any other Thomist.

According to my proposal, the given gives itself intellectually not only by lights extrinsic to itself, such as the agent intellect, but by its act of existence (*esse*).[64] *Esse* is the supreme actuality and perfection in a being by which it exists;[65] Jaroszyński notes that *esse* is more fundamental to a being than any content belonging to that being, such as its essence or accidents.[66] Created beings have their *esse* through their form: that is, it is

[63] Doug Flippen, "The Non-Abstractive and Non-Conceptual Character of Poetic Intuition in Maritain," in Travis Dumsday, ed., *The Wisdom of Youth* (Washington, D.C.: American Maritain Association, 2016), 173-75.

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

[65] *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 2, ad 9.

[66] Jaroszyński, *Beauty*, 159.

form that determines the act of existence as the actuality of this specific kind of being, and it is through form that matter is actualized, made really to be, really to share in the act of existence.[67] Aquinas calls form, by which a thing has its *esse*, a kind of "light," and a manifestation of and participation in the divine "light" or "clarity," a handing over, as we have seen, of a ray of divine beauty.[68] By its form and *esse*, then, every being is its own light: it gives itself from itself, manifests itself, and seeks to impress its light, beauty, and content on anything that can receive it.

Flippen is right to contend that on a Thomistic view we cannot perform acts of intellectual understanding unless the intellect is informed by content drawn from the senses. But this informing of the intellect does not require abstraction if the light of form and *esse* can give itself to the intellect directly, without the abstractive illumination of the agent intellect. According to my Maritain-inspired account, the light of the agent intellect does not always abstract; rather, the intellectual light illumining the phantasm adds to the light of the being's form and *esse* contained in the phantasm the power to impress itself on the intellect. The phantasm is rendered actually intelligible without an intelligible species being abstracted or a concept being formed. I propose, in agreement with Cajetan, that when the intellect illumines the phantasm, the phantasm shines forth its intelligibility. Experientially speaking, this means that we see the sensible itself as deeply meaningful in itself, though in a way we cannot articulate, and without any concept formation. I propose, in agreement with John of St. Thomas, that this illumination raises the sensible to have a power it does not normally have. When I see or hear the beautiful, I no longer see mere paint or colors or hear mere sounds or melodies, but I see or hear a rich depth of meaning that seems to exceed what

[67] See, e.g., *De ente et essentia*; II *Sent*., d. 12, q. 1, a. 4; *ScG* II, c. 55; *STh* I, q. 14, a. 2, ad 1.

[68] *In De divin. nom*., c. 4, lect. 5; cf. *ScG* III, c. 97. See Mark D. Jordan, "The Evidence of the Transcendentals and the Place of Beauty in Thomas Aquinas," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 29 (1989): 393-407; Alice Ramos, "Beauty and the Perfection of Being," *Proceedings of the ACPA* 71 (1997): 255-68.

mere sensible qualities could bear. What is given to me is a holistic impression, in which the being as a whole gives itself to me and to each of my cognitive and appetitive powers. The intellectual light just provides a “space” for the given to be received and to manifest itself, rather than imposing conditions that would mask it. This account preserves Aquinas’s claim, seen above, that the clarity of beauty is primarily in intellects, including the human intellect: beautiful sensible forms must be made to participate in intellectual light in order to be grasped as beautiful. But it avoids the causal, abstractive account that was inconsistent with Marion’s account, and allowing us to see better how the light of the agent intellect is already included in the givenness of beauty.

When Maritain describes a being nonabstractively impressing itself on my intellect, he does so by describing the experience of “knowledge by connaturality.”[69] In at least one version of this experience, sensory experience gives rise to an emotion, which gives me an affinity for some given being. This emotion in turn becomes the means by which I am intellectually aware of the given, through the way in which it affects my subjectivity and draws me toward it. The emotion, under the light of the agent intellect, is rendered capable of informing the potential intellect and drawing it toward the given. This impression in turn is the basis for artistic expression.[70]

This should not be seen as a subjectivistic account, as if I were only aware of my emotion and its meaning in this case. Rather, given that emotions, or at least virtuously formed emotions, are open to real being and are means of self-transcendence,[71] this knowledge via awareness of my emotional affinity for or connaturality with beings is a kind of awareness of real beings. Indeed, in Aquinas’s view, there is something deeper about this kind of awareness than awareness through abstraction. For example, one can have a deeper, although less

[69] *STh* II-II, q. 45, a. 2.

[70] Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 111-27.

[71] See *STh* I, q. 16, a. 1.

articulable, awareness of how to act chastely through knowledge by connaturality than through knowledge of ethics.

However, Jaroszyński objects to this account of knowledge by connaturality. He argues that the initial impact of being, the initial holistic experience of the beautiful, is prior to any such experience of knowledge by connaturality. [72] Although it can involve genuine self-transcendence, poetic cognition by connaturality is in many cases an experience that can be highly colored by my own emotional subjectivity, and there is something less than intelligible about it, since it is guided by the sensitive appetites.[73] But the initial impact of being is entirely an experience of what gives itself, not an experience of my own subjectivity, and it is eminently intelligible. To see what is beautiful as such is to be struck by the beauty itself, and only thereby called to some emotion or response appropriate to the beauty in question. While I would oppose Jaroszyński's suspicion of knowledge by connaturality as described here, he seems to be right that being struck by beauty itself is prior to and the basis for knowledge by connaturality. It is not, unlike knowledge by connaturality, an experience of beings via an awareness of my own subjectivity.

However, this being struck by beauty requires a fundamental attitude of openness, similar to Marion's account of how the openness of love is required to receive saturated phenomena. It is similar to genuine knowledge by connaturality in that a proper emotional state is required to receive the given beauty, but it is unlike knowledge by connaturality in that one is not aware of beauty via an awareness of how it affects one's emotional state. This openness is similar to what Aquinas calls the "consent" of the will which tends to a felt union with each being.[74] If I have this openness, then the being that gives itself by the light of its form and *esse* can awaken in me any response

[72] Jaroszyński, *Beauty*, 181.

[73] *STh* I, q. 1, a. 9; I-II, q. 101, a. 2, ad 2.

[74] *STh* I-II, q. 15, a. 1, ad 3, following the interpretation of Balthasar; see Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord*, v. 1, *Seeing the Form*, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1982), 235-41.

that it calls for, including a poetic or emotional response.[75] But if I do not have this fundamental openness, then the emotional response evoked in me will distort my awareness of the given as such, and I will focus more on my subjectivity than on the given. It is in part because of our focus on our own emotional lives that we so often fail to attend to what gives itself, and that those emotions are distorted responses to the given, not allowing genuine knowledge by connaturality.

The experience of beauty is an act prior to forming the concept of "being" or any of the concepts and principles that are derived therefrom, prior to all judgments of existence, and prior to all causal reasoning. Beauty is, as it were, "before" the transcendentals, or perhaps the "first" of the transcendentals, experientially speaking, since, according to this account, it is the first impact of being upon the person. This overcomes the phenomenological objection to Aquinas's account given above. Our concepts of being and of the transcendentals, and the first principles, such as the principle of noncontradiction, insofar as we form them, guide concept formation, but they do not guide the first impact of beauty. The beautiful is not first grasped as falling under any *ratio* or principle, but as what impacts me first, a dynamic event of *esse* and form impinging upon me and evoking in me a response.

This is not to deny the first principles or their universal scope. It is also not to claim that the concepts of being and the transcendentals, or the first principles, are imposed by the mind upon a prior given. These concepts and principles are rightly derived from and genuinely correspond to real beings that give themselves to us. Real beings, with their *esse*, are what give themselves to us experientially, and they really exist, are one, true, good, non-self-contradictory, identical to themselves, and so forth. None of these claims needs to be denied by the Thomist who would accommodate experiences described by Marion. Marion's claims are phenomenological: in the order of

[75] This should not exclude anything Maritain says about the artist reflecting on the impact of the given on his or her subjectivity: each *esse* can give itself differently to each artist, at least by evoking a different response.

knowing, given beauties are received in a way experientially ungoverned by our own concepts and principles, regardless of those concepts' and principles' sources. In the way that they give themselves, saturated phenomena and beauty exceed any identity and sufficient reason that we can, in the order of knowing, assign to them; in this way, they might seem to violate first principles like the laws of noncontradiction and of sufficient reason.[76] But they do not in fact violate these principles in the order of real being; they only seem to insofar as they exceed any conceptual content we can derive from or assign to them. My claim, then, is rather that beings give themselves in such a way that, in the experience of beauty, they are meaningfully grasped prior to even an implicit grasp of the concept of "being" or any other concepts, let alone an explicitly experienced grasp of such concepts. Indeed, this initial impact of beauty does not saturate an intention, but is prior to, the basis of, and exceeds all intentions.[77] This initial impact of beauty is an even more unconditioned given than anything Marion describes, for all his givens saturate a prior intention or concept. This is a claim about the order of knowing, that the impact of being is experientially prior to all concept formation. But it is also a claim about the order of being, that real beings give themselves in this holistic, meaningful, splendid way, which is a kind of self-manifestation other than and prior to self-manifestation as non-self-contradictory, identical to oneself, and so forth.

One might object that this initial, unconditioned, self-given givenness of *esse*, prior to all causal analysis, might not be able to be traced back to God as its source, and so (according to this account) some creature, given beauty as such, would exist entirely apart from God. But this is not so. When I see

[76] Marion, *Negative Certainties*, 105-14.

[77] This excess must be properly understood. It is the excess of real, dynamic existence over what is essential and thereby conceptualizable (and the chief object of the intellect). It is not the excess indicated by the higher mode of being of material natures in the intellect as opposed to their real mode of being. To be in the human intellect is more perfect *qua* nobility of being than to be in material being, since to be in the human intellect is a spiritual, immaterial mode of being.

something beautiful, it does not just bedazzle me with its own self-given meaningfulness, but it appears with an infinite depth, appearing in and signified by its sensible and intelligible qualities. In being experienced as beautiful, each being is capable of being experienced as a ray of divine light, signifying God, allowing him to appear, albeit under creaturely veils.[78] This spiritual perception of God through beauty is not a substitute for the proofs for the existence of God. As we shall see below, the experience of beauty can be conceptually unpacked and articulated, and in doing so one forms concepts and judgments, which allow one to reason from beings causally back to God. The experience of spiritually perceiving God in the beautiful is an experiential basis for proofs for the existence of God. God appears as giving himself in each given. God's relation to each creature is expressive, not just causal, and his expressive relation to creatures appears to us prior to any awareness of his causal relation, for that awareness requires causal reasoning, and the expressive relation appears in the initial holistic experience of beauty. This point allows the Thomist to overcome the second apparent inconsistency with Marion's account, which was based on the differing structures of their philosophical accounts.

If this is all experientially accurate, then Thomistic metaphysics can also provide a phenomenological corrective to Marion.[79] In Marion's view, every stable concept, every conceiving of the given as a stable object, falls short of and is in some sense a betrayal of the given. But, as the Thomistic account shows, when we experience beauty, we experience it not just as unconditioned and excessive, but also as having a definite signification. Although we initially experience beauty as meaningful in a way that we cannot articulate conceptually or linguistically, the beauty given in holistic experience is oriented to causing stable concepts and propositions in the intellect,

[78] I *Sent.*, d. 16, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4; *In De divin. nom.,* c. 4, lect. 5; cf. *STh* I, q. 45, a. 7 on the trace of the Trinity in all creatures.

[79] This is also a corrective to Maritain's view that aesthetic cognition and conceptual cognition are entirely different paths for the intellect; in my view, both arise from and "unpack" the initial impact of being as beauty.

which really correspond to the given and which can be used in causal reasoning. The given first gives itself as beautiful, as holistically impacting all our powers, and this includes God's veiled appearance in the given as giving himself in it. But this does not preclude our subsequent, and on the basis of the initial experience of the given, forming of concepts of being and the other transcendentals that correspond to and properly elucidate the given being, or discovering a causal relation between God and the given creature as well, or finding that what gives itself in a dynamic event is also a stable object.[80] As Marion says, the given sets norms for thinking about it—but, contrary to Marion, these norms sometimes direct us to certain, stable, conceptual thought, and not always to endless interpretation. Notions of causality and subsistence are experientially given subsequent to the given as such, and we must never think that the given is exhausted in any causal or categorical account. But it is not a betrayal of the given to turn to such accounts, so long as they do not come to substitute for the experience of the given as such (though we often err in making such a substitution, and miss the given entirely, as Marion notes). Indeed, since our concepts arise from the given, they can become "icons" of the given (including of God), returning our attention to the original given, and helping us take up a more open stance toward the given. It is in this subsequent concept formation that we discover, for example, the universal scope of the transcendental concepts and of first principles like the law of noncontradiction, as I described above.

Just as Marion presents his account of the given not just as an account of experience of what the phenomena are as such, so my account of beauty should be understood as a development of the Thomistic understanding of being as such. It is given beauty, the self-givenness of *esse* and form, that I first experience, and that causes the concept of "being" in my intellect. But "being" is an analogous concept, where each being, each given, is a unique analogate.[81] Every time I receive a new given, my notion of

[80] *Contra* Marion, *Negative Certainties*, 199.

[81] *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 2; I *Peryherm.*, lect. 8.

"being" can be augmented; because I come to know a new analogate, I need not impose a prior concept of "being" on any given, but can receive a new, better concept from each beauty that is given to me, each of which is given before any consideration of the concept of "being." All concepts subsequent to "being" are guided by transcendental concepts and first principles, but still are an unpacking of the original given beauty. Old concepts can guide my conceptual understanding of the given, but they are also revised by new givens. We can also, in a second intellectual experience of beauty, form a transcendental concept of "beauty" at this stage of thinking, subsequent to the other transcendental concepts.

After I intellectually form concepts and make judgments, I intellectually return to the phantasm. Normally, I then experience a particular sensory object as falling under (and thereby fulfilling, in Husserl's sense) my intellectual intention. For example, I sense some being as "this existing man" or "this dangerous thing."[82] But I can also experience my intellectual intention as saturated by given beauty. Here is where Marion's phenomenological account of the saturated phenomenon fits into the Thomistic account of cognition. This is a third experience of beauty "after" the transcendentals, one which, like Marion's saturated phenomenon, is guided by but exceeds or saturates all meanings through which we intend that beauty. This is also the stage at which we can have the experience that Maritain calls the "intuition of being": the light of *esse* once again impresses itself on the intellect without abstraction, saturating my intention so that I am struck by the sheer existence of some being that I have conceptualized. I am now aware not just of the initial impact of beauty, but of how this beauty aligns with and exceeds, my conceptual understanding:[83]

[82] *STh* I, q. 84, a. 7; q. 86, a. 1; II *De Anima*, lect 13.

[83] See the texts from Maritain cited in John F. Wippel, "Maritain and Aquinas on Our Discovery of Being," in Dumsday, ed., *Wisdom*, 120-46. Wippel shows that this act is not in Aquinas—but that is not a problem for my purposes here, for I do not seek to give Aquinas's view, but a broadly Thomistic view. In Aquinas's view, we can only intuit beings sensibly, not intellectually. But in light of this experience, which was not adequately explored by Aquinas, either one should say with Maritain that this is a

there is a sort of union between my concepts and the self-giving beauty. Beauty appears, as Maritain says, as the splendor of all the transcendentals together;[84] that is, in beauty, all my fundamental concepts are fulfilled in unity with each other and saturated by the glorious given. As Aquinas says, beauty here is the good of delighted cognition.[85]

In these experiences, beauty is given as prior to the transcendentals (or as the first transcendental, so long as "transcendental" need not indicate a concept but can indicate anything that applies to all beings), as a transcendental concept in its own right, and as subsequent to and summing up the transcendentals (or as the last transcendental, again no longer understood as a concept, but as the saturating splendor of all the transcendental concepts). In light of these experiences, I propose that beauty be understood not as a distinct property of being, but what *ens* in its fullness fundamentally is: it is what holistically and dynamically gives itself[86] from itself.[87] *Ens* is

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sensory intuition made use of by the intellect, or one should deny Aquinas's view, and hold that we are capable of intellectual intuition. I favor the latter view, but for my purposes here it is not essential to determine which solution is correct. Wippel objects to Maritain that his account of the discovery of being through intuition does not include the key step of the discovery of what being is for Aquinas, the intellectual act of *separatio*. But the fact that we can discover being by intuition does not exclude discovering it in other ways too. One can come to much true knowledge without ever attending to the given as such, for the given gives itself and is the basis of all our conscious awareness whether we attend to it or not.

[84] Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*, 172.

[85] *STh* I, q. 5, a. 4, ad 1; I-II, q. 27, a. 1, ad 3.

[86] This developed Thomistic account is close to the account of beauty given by phenomenologist Dietrich von Hildebrand, who argues that the experience of beauty is an experience not just of it giving itself to us, but of something like being "loving" us. To say of the beautiful that "it loves" is to see in it a transfiguring splendor that draws us to union with it and confers benefits on us, but also expresses a love, a "song of praise" for God; see Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, trans. Brian McNeil (Steubenville, Ohio: Hildebrand Project, 2016), 345, 451. While von Hildebrand denies the transcendentality of beauty, the Thomist could extend this account of beauty as seeming to love us to all being; see my "Sense Perception and the Flourishing of the Human Person in von Hildebrand and the Aristotelian Traditions," *Tópicos, revista de filosofía* (2019): forthcoming. This account also resembles that of Balthasar in *Theo-Logic*, vol. 1, *Truth of the World*, trans. Adrian J. Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 216-25, according to which beauty is a mysterious, infinite depth of self-

what it is fundamentally through an actuality, *esse*, and so is already fundamentally something dynamic and active. What my account adds is that we fundamentally grasp this self-manifesting dynamism not by judging, reasoning, or thinking about metaphysical concepts, but in the holistic experience of beauty. This Thomistic account of being, clarified through experience, coincides with Marion's phenomenological account of givenness.

A practical implication follows. If this account is correct, metaphysics must not just be explanatory or couched in conceptual and ontological terms, but also include descriptive, phenomenological, and aesthetic aspects. It must include accounts of the way particular beings holistically and perceptibly manifest themselves; it must include a wonder-inducing account of the beauty of each being, guiding the metaphysician to a perception of each irreducible, beautiful

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communication and love that is what each being most fundamentally is. For a Thomistic account of dynamic activity, relationality, and love being transcendentals see W. Norris Clarke, *Person and Being* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette University Press, 1993); "Action as the Self-Revelation of Being," in *Explorations in Metaphysics: Being-God-Person* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 45-64; "To Be Is to Be Substance in Relation," in *Explorations*, 102-22. Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 28, a. 6.

[87] An obvious objection is that some beings appear as ugly and horrific. But on my account, they still appear as beautiful in the sense that they are holistically self-manifesting and saturate any meaning through which they are intended. When a being manifests itself as beautiful, it does so on the basis of its *esse*, and through its accidents. When its accidents fail to fit with each other or with its underlying nature or *esse*, it is experienced as ugly or horrific. Likewise, I sometimes experience the world as meaningless or absurd: something is stripped of its correspondence to any intention, and it does not appear as a stable being (and in this respect is like the saturated phenomenon), but it does not give itself with excessive content saturating my intentions, but as having no content at all, or as having a negative significance. This can happen for a few reasons. One is that I am actually viewing the world through a false conceptual scheme, which leads me to see things as meaningless. Another is that I have succeeded in getting beyond the Husserlian and Heideggerian reductions, but I have not yet received the saturating given; rather, all givenness is being held in suspension. Yet another is that I am receiving the saturation, but, expecting all meaning to be fulfilling a meaning-intention, I do not know what to do with this given, and experience it as meaningless. Still another is that I am receiving the saturating content, but it is so far from anything in my experience that I cannot process it, and it appears absurd.

being, for only there is the fundamental structure of reality fully grasped.

Marion's phenomenology of givenness provides a criterion for a plausible account of experience: any account that does not allow for experiences of the given unconditioned by anything prior fails to account for all of our experience. We have seen that Thomistic realist metaphysics, with its emphasis on saving the appearances and on the irreducibility of all the various features of reality, does indeed allow for such experiences in the holistic experience of being as beautiful, which involves all of our powers, but is prior to all meaning-intention, conceptualization, or abstraction. We have also seen that Thomistic metaphysics has the resources within its basic principles to adapt, and thus to account for new phenomena discovered or elucidated by contemporary philosophers.[88]

[88] An earlier version of this article was presented as "Before the Transcendentals: Marion and Aquinas on Givenness and Aesthetic, Spiritual Perception," at the Aquinas in Postmodernity Project session at the annual meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association in San Francisco on November 5, 2016. I am grateful to the organizers of that session, Mirela Oliva and Joseph Trabbic, for inviting me to write this article, and for their helpful feedback, as well as for comments from the other presenters in that session, Fr. Justin Gable, O.P., and Mary Catherine Sommers, and from those who attended the session. I am also thankful to James Hanink and some anonymous referees for their comments on this paper.

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TRINITARIAN SUFFERING AND DIVINE RECEPTIVITY AFTER BALTHASAR

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IN HIS TREATMENT of God's relationship to evil, Hans Urs von Balthasar seeks to maintain a delicate balance between the kenoticist strain of contemporary theology and the traditional theology of divine immutability articulated by Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and their disciples. Wishing to avoid both the "classical dogmatism" on divine impassibility and the putatively mythological excesses of modern passibilist accounts, Balthasar strives to incorporate contingent realities into God's immutable identity via the intradivine personal relations themselves as eternally enriching. Guy Mansini summarizes Balthasar's argument in the *Theodramatik* regarding the relationship between the Trinitarian God and the created world:

> If creation is really to count and add something to God, if created freedom is to be in real dialogue with God, if the event of the Cross is really to matter to the interior life of God, then the reality of God must be such as to be an ever-more increasing event of Trinitarian exchanges.[1]

I concur with this straightforward interpretation. In what follows, I will attempt to decipher whether there might still be legitimate insight in Balthasar's treatment of divine suffering, despite his engagement with kenoticism. Thus, while I am still generally appreciative of the dialogue Balthasar's articulation generates, this essay will critically engage methodological

[1] Guy Mansini, O.S.B., "Balthasar and the Theodramatic Enrichment of the Trinity," *The Thomist* 64 (2000): 499-519, at 508.

dimensions of his soteriology in dialogue with several of his interpreters and interlocutors.

One of the central Balthasarian theses is that the Trinitarian processions are constituted by what he calls *ur-kenosis*, or an original analogue to the love-filled suffering permeating Christ's redemptive work. Mark A. McIntosh comments on a passage from *Das Endspiel*:

> [T]he divine Persons have themselves, on the Cross and in the Resurrection, revisited the alienated distance between human and God, emplotting it once more with the 'space' between the Father and the Son: 'The extreme distance between Father and Son, which is endured as a result of the Son's taking on of sin, changes into the most profound intimacy . . . The Son's eternal, holy distance from the Father, in the Spirit, forms the basis on which the unholy distance of the world's sin can be transposed into it, can be transcended and overcome by it' (*TD4*, 361-2; see also *TH*).[2]

Hence, pointing to the Father as the origin of Trinitarian surrender, Balthasar reflects:

> Inherent in the Father's love is an absolute renunciation: he will not be God for himself alone. He lets go of his divinity and, in this sense, manifests a (divine) God-lessness (of love, of course). The latter must not be confused with the godlessness that is found within the world, although it undergirds it, renders it possible and goes beyond it.[3]

[2] Mark A. McIntosh, "Christology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar*, ed. Edward T. Oakes and David Moss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 35. Matthew Levering keenly observes: "The problem nonetheless remains: how does a fundamentally 'intellectual' distance—it has to be such, since the divine Persons never hate each other—encompass a willful distance constituted by *hatred* of God?" (*Scripture and Metaphysics: Aquinas and the Renewal of Trinitarian Theology* [Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004] 130). He notes that Balthasar thinks Adrienne von Speyr solves this problem in *Theologik*, Band II, *Wahrheit Gottes* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1985), 321-22, an enigmatic text. When citing major works of Balthasar, I will cite the page numbers in the English translation followed by the corresponding pages in the original-language version referenced in the first citation of the work ('G' for German).

[3] *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. 4, *The Action*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1994), 323-24 (*Theodramatik*, Band III: *Die Handlung* [Einsiedeln: Johannesverlag, 1980], 301). This is the kind of approach Edward Oakes adopts in his essay, "'He Descended into Hell': The Depths of God's Self-Emptying Love on Holy Saturday in the Thought of Hans Urs von Balthasar," in *Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-Emptying of God*, ed. C. Stephen Evans (New York: Oxford

It is statements like these that lead some to believe that Balthasar is unduly influenced by Hegel, albeit via Moltmann and Bulgakov.[4] But the matter is quite a bit more complicated. Not only does the distinction between the so-called immanent Trinity and economic Trinity play a significant role in the great debate concerning divine impassibility, but discourse on analogical and metaphorical predication also ought to figure into this complex question. Kevin Duffy, on the basis of contemporary Thomistic discussions, critiques Balthasar's peculiar attempt to combine metaphorical discourse and analogical predication.[5] Therefore, I

University Press, 2006), 218-45, where what might be called the aesthetic excess of paradoxism is exhibited (see 218-19). By "paradoxism" I mean to indicate the tendency to view affirmation of apparent contradiction as a pathway to truth, born of the notion that truth at its profoundest consists in the (at least apparent) truth of contradictories, the most radical *coincidentia oppositorum*.

[4] In *Theodramatik*, Band IV: *Das Endspiel* (Einsiedeln: Johannesverlag, 1983), Balthasar obliquely expresses essential agreement with Moltmann and distances him from "pure Hegelianism or a radical process theology," but he seems hesitant to accept the full thrust of Moltmann's Trinitarian theory, most likely due to the latter's lack of nuance regarding the economic-immanent identity (see *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. 5, *The Final Act*, trans. Graham Harrison [San Francisco: Ignatius, 1998], 172-73 [G 152-53]). At the same time, it is evident that he wants to go beyond both Moltmann and Rahner (on the opposite side of the debate), incorporating their insights into his theory of Trinitarian *ur-kenosis* (see, e.g., *TD* IV:322-23 [G 300]); in the process of such synthesis, though, he utilizes Bulgakov, perhaps too much (see especially *TD* IV:323-24 [G 300-301]).

[5] See Kevin Duffy, "Change, Suffering, and Surprise in God: Von Balthasar's Use of Metaphor," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 76 (2011): 370-87; see also Gerard F. O'Hanlon, S.J., "A Response to Kevin Duffy on von Balthasar and the Immutability of God," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 78 (2013): 179-84. Duffy mentions Balthasar's option for a neo-Chalcedonian Christology, problematic with respect to coherent theological discourse according to Rahner, who opts instead for classical Chalcedonianism (see Gerard F. O'Hanlon, *The Immutability of God in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007], 171, cited by Duffy, "Change, Suffering, and Surprise in God," 382 n. 61). The deep-seated difference between Balthasar and Rahner has its roots in their very distinct appropriations of modern philosophy. Rahner's theology is fundamentally characterized by the "transcendental Thomism" of Maréchal, while Balthasar comes to reject wholesale the anthropocentric tendency born of the subjectivist epistemology inherent in Maréchal's purported synthesis of Thomas and Kant in *Le point de départ de la métaphysique: Leçons sur le développement historique et théorique du problème de la connaissance,* 5 vols, (Bruges-Louvain, 1922-47). Brian Daley, however, states that "Like Karl Rahner and other Catholic theologians of the mid-twentieth

will engage Duffy's argument in dialogue with defenders of Balthasar on this point.

Before investigating whether or not Balthasar's analogical discourse on Trinitarian suffering is coherent, it is necessary to probe briefly the disputed role of Hegelian dialectic in Balthasar's Christocentric approach. Cyril O'Regan has recently done a masterful job of exonerating Balthasar of the accusation that he is fundamentally Hegelian.[6] I will argue that Balthasar borrows

century, Balthasar's understanding of scholastic philosophy was heavily influenced by Maréchal's dynamic perspective" ("Balthasar's Reading of the Church Fathers," in Oakes and Moss, eds., *Cambridge Companion*, 205 n. 25). Surely, Balthasar's approach is "dynamic," but in the course of his critique of Rahner he comes to repudiate his earlier call to engage Maréchal (see "On the Tasks of Catholic Philosophy in Our Time," *Communio* 20 [1993]: 147-87; Fergus Kerr, "Balthasar and Metaphysics," in Oakes and Moss, eds., *Cambridge Companion*, 224-38). Karen Kilby argues that Rahner's Kantianism is not as determinative of the weaknesses discerned in his theology as is commonly argued (see *Balthasar: A (Very) Critical Introduction* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012], 7, referencing her argument in *Rahner: Theology and Philosophy* [London: Routledge, 2004]; see also idem, "Balthasar and Karl Rahner," in Oakes and Moss, eds., *Cambridge Companion*, 256-68). Rowan Williams and John Riches concur that the respective theologies of Balthasar and Rahner are irreducibly at odds on certain key points precisely because of this fundamental philosophical difference (see John Riches, "Afterword," in *The Analogy of Beauty: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, ed. John Riches [Edinburgh: T&T Clarke Ltd., 1986], 186-88). For a concise and precise summary of Rahner's development of Maréchal's attempted synthesis and Balthasar's critique of this project, both foundationally and in its theological implications, see Rowan Williams, "Balthasar and Rahner," in Riches, ed., *Analogy of Beauty*, esp. 15-21. See also Cyril O'Regan's comments on the difference from a Christological perspective: "Von Balthasar and Thick Retrieval: Post-Chalcedonian Symphonic Theology," *Gregorianum* 77 (1996): 227-60, at 256ff. For Balthasar's comments on Maréchal, Williams cites, in addition to *Karl Barth: Darstellung und Deutung seiner Theologie* (repr.; Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1976); *Love Alone Is Credible*, trans. D. C. Schindler (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 34; *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 1, *Seeing the Form*, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, ed. Joseph Fessio, S.J., and John Riches (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982), 149, and *Herrlichkeit* III/1 (799, 881, 884, 904).

[6] O'Regan displays how Balthasar consistently undercuts Hegel's pseudo-Christian project in many respects, even though he maintains a dialogue with post-Hegelian theological concerns; see *The Anatomy of Misremembering: Von Balthasar's Response to Philosophical Modernity*, vol. 1, *Hegel* (New York: Herder & Herder, 2014). Kevin Mongrain in some ways anticipates O'Regan's fundamental project of casting Balthasar as subverting the gnosticism of Hegel (see *The Systematic Thought of Hans Urs von Balthasar: An Irenaean Retrieval* [New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 2002]).

more from kenoticism with respect to the Trinitarian being than is acceptable for the classical Christian theology of divine impassibility.[7] Nevertheless, in the process of engagement he reaps legitimate insight into the profundity of divine suffering and into the very identity of God, if his discourse is effectively "de-mythologized" through rigorous philosophical parsing. Jacques Maritain's cursory treatment of divine impassibility[8] provides a philosophically attuned articulation that does not exclude the notion of receptivity in God and highlights the affectivity of God without projecting contingent categories into the divine life itself. I will seek to legitimate this kind of approach against those who assume the Balthasarian reading (or appropriation) of Maritain.

After explicating the influence of dialectic in Balthasar's Christology and the putatively symbolic-metaphorical character of his discourse on the divine life, I will contrast this kenotic-mystical approach with the more philosophically rigorous treatment of divine impassibility offered by Jacques Maritain, distinguish the latter from Balthasarian interpretations of it, relate both of these to subsequent appropriations in four contemporary theologians of divine (im)passibility, and finally clarify in light of such analyses in what sense one might speak of divine self-enrichment through the salvation economy and in what ways Balthasar's doctrine of God ought to be tempered by rational precision.

I. Hegelian Dialectic and Christocentric Analogy

Before turning ultimately to the question of divine receptivity, it is imperative to take a brief foray into the topic of dialectical-analogical discourse concerning the incarnate God. According to what is sometimes called "the Athanasian rule," whatever is said of one divine person must be said of the others, except the

Adequate engagement with O'Regan's voluminous treatment would require much more space than is available here.

[7] I will not examine the patristic or medieval sources here.

[8] See my "God Relation to Evil: Divine Impassibility in Balthasar and Maritain," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 80 (2015): 191-211.

mutually defining relations by which each subsists in distinction from the others. Christologically, the question revolves around the so-called *communicatio idiomatum*. Gerard O'Hanlon displays the connection between the Christological and Trinitarian dimensions of the issue in Balthasar's attempt to resolve it:

[Balthasar] arrives at the necessity of positing a real kenosis in God, and from his repeated emphasis on the ontological, personal identity of the Logos as the subject who unites the two distinct natures in Christ, he will refuse to limit the change and suffering which Christ experiences [to] his human nature alone. This is the advance on Chalcedon and its traditional interpretation which Balthasar proposes. The tendency to consider the human nature of Christ as an *instrumentum conjunctum* which does not affect the divine person he sees as Nestorian in character. And so he is anxious to insist on a more than merely logical *communicatio idiomatum*, to accept that the formula 'one of the Trinity has suffered' does indeed mean that God has 'suffered', albeit mysteriously. But why 'mysteriously': why not say univocally that God suffers? Because—and here we find Balthasar's respect for Chalcedon—there *is* an enduring and incommensurable difference between God and the world, between the divine and human 'unmixed' natures of Christ.[9]

In fact, Balthasar seeks to build on Maritain's reflections and go beyond them,[10] utilizing twentieth-century Hegelian-influenced Protestant sources from Moltmann to Barth.[11]

Thomas Weinandy offers the following reflection concerning Balthasar's posture on the question of divine impassibility in relation to Hegel and Moltmann:

[W]hile he wishes to uphold the immutability and impassibility of God in himself, he also argues that, because of God's free and loving engagement with

[9] O'Hanlon, *Immutability of God*, 43, also cited by Oakes, "He Descended into Hell," 244 n. 48.

[10] O'Hanlon comments: "with Varillon Balthasar believes one must go further [than Maritain] and at least begin to suspect that in God becoming is a perfection of being, movement a perfection of immobility and mutability a perfection of immutability" (*Immutability of God*, 71).

[11] Celia Deane-Drummond points out several similarities between Balthasar and Moltmann's theology, particularly on the relationship between the Cross and the Trinity (see "The Breadth of Glory: A Trinitarian Eschatology for the Earth through Critical Engagement with Hans Urs von Balthasar," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 12 [2010]: 46-64, esp. at 49), although she also thoroughly exhibits disturbing signs of an evolutionist worldview.

the world, he can be said to be mutable and passible in his relationship to the created order. His perfect immutable love allows him to be affected by the created order and so respond to it. Von Balthasar wishes to steer a position between the mythological notion of God's action in the world as, he believes, is found in Hegel, Moltmann, process theologians and others, and that of the traditional position, as found in Aquinas, where God appears to be disengaged from the vicissitudes of human life.[12]

Whether the ghost of Hegel lurks in the background (a la Moltmann) remains a valid question, and Balthasar is cognizant of it.[13]

Perhaps incorporating Hegelian dialectics into his interpretation of key scriptural texts,[14] in dialogue with Moltmann's radical "death of God" theology,[15] Balthasar reflects on hell's relationship to the economic Trinity, intending to rescue the imagery of the Old Testament from the realm of the merely metaphorical.[16] Interpreting Philippians 2, especially, he states:

[12] Thomas G. Weinandy, O.F.M.Cap., *Does God Suffer?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 13 n. 38.

[13] For instance, "If our reflection proceeds (as in the case of Moltmann) exclusively from the perspective of the Cross, the divine freedom to create the world becomes questionable (just as Moltmann questions it)" (*TD* V:234 [G 211]). Brian J. Spence points out differences (as well as similarities) between Moltmann's and Balthasar's relationship to Hegel's philosophy of religion; see "The Hegelian Element in Von Balthasar's and Moltmann's Understanding of the Suffering of God," *Toronto Journal of Theology* 14 (1998): 45-60. Concerning Balthasar's intention to avoid Moltmannian conflation of immanent and economic Trinity, despite common "crucicentrism," see David Luy, "The Aesthetic Collision: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Trinity and the Cross," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 13 (2011): 154-69, at 155.

[14] For example, Balthasar states, "What we see in Christ's forsakenness on the Cross, in ultimate creaturely negativity, is the revelation of the highest positivity of Trinitarian love" (*TD* V:517 [G 473]).

[15] See, for example, *TD* V:243 [G 219]. Despite explicitly confessing an understanding of divine suffering essentially in agreement with Moltmann (see Hans Urs von Balthasar and Adrienne von Speyr, *To the Heart of the Mystery of Redemption*, trans. Anne Englund Nash [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010], 38; originally published as *Au Coeur du Mystère Rédempteur* [Paris: Artege, 1980]), their differences on divine impassibility are outlined throughout *TD* V. See also Steffen Lösel, "Murder in the Cathedral: Hans Urs von Balthasar's New Dramatization of the Doctrine of the Trinity," *Pro Ecclesia* 5 (1996): 427-39, esp. 428-29; and Thomas G. Dalzell, "The Enrichment of God in Balthasar's Trinitarian Eschatology," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 66 (2001): 3-18, at 4-5.

[16] See *TD* V:214-15 (G 193).

The event by which he consents to be transferred from the form of God into the 'form of a servant' and the 'likeness of men' (Phil 2:6f.) affects him as the eternal Son. It does not matter whether we say that eternity enters into time 'for a while' or that eternity takes a particular 'time' and its decidedly temporal contents into itself: neither statement explains how such a process is possible. We can call it *kenosis*, as in Philippians 2, but this does not imply any mythological alteration in God; it *can* express one of the infinite possibilities available to free, eternal life: namely, that the Son, who has everything from the Father, 'lays up' and commits to God's keeping the 'form of God' he has received from him. He does this in order to concentrate, in all seriousness and realism, on the mission that is one mode of his procession from the Father. There is nothing 'as if' about this: the outcome is that he is forsaken by God on the Cross. Yet this 'infinite distance', which recapitulates the sinner's mode of alienation from God, will remain forever the highest revelation known to the world of the diastasis (within the eternal being of God) between Father and Son in the Holy Spirit.[17]

[17] *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. 3, *The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 228; *Theodramatik*, Band II: *Die Personen des Spiels*, Teil II: *Die Personen in Christus* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1978), 209. Concerning this "infinite distance" within God, Kilby enumerates "two routes by which he arrives at this point" and only considers the second, which itself is not formulated very well. The first route is, in fact, the fundamental one: it is the notion that the divine persons as distinct hypostases are utterly other than one another, a notion she confesses not to understand (Kilby, *Balthasar*, 109-10). In other words, the divine hypostases are who they are precisely insofar as their identities must be irreducibly distinct from one another (i.e., the divine persons possess in an exemplary fashion the irreducible difference that distinguishes one personal subject from another); the Thomistic Trinitarian language of "mutual relations of opposition" help express this point, and Kilby never has recourse to such a key expression. Since the "second route" (the Cross as revelation of Trinitarian relations) is really founded upon the first route, as the economic Trinity reflects but does not exhaust the immanent Trinity (for Balthasar), a point on which she also is not keen, her comments about deriving a Trinitarian theory from questionable exegesis of the "cry of dereliction" (on 107-8) are misguided. Hence, O'Hanlon says: "We saw how realistically Balthasar described this death—*to the point of Christ's experience of the 'second death' of the sinner in hell.* It is Balthasar's argument that the Trinitarian personal distinctions, *based on the opposition of relations*, are indeed sufficiently real and infinite to embrace, without loss of unity, the kind of opposition between Father and Son which is involved in their common plan to overcome sin. This is so because divine love has the power freely to unfold its richness in such different modalities that the Son's experience of opposition in a hostile sense remains always a function and an aspect of his loving relationship to the Father in the Holy Spirit" (*Immutability of God*, 119 [emphasis added]). But Balthasar does also at times utilize quasi-Hegelian language to describe the Trinitarian distinctions (see, e.g., *TD* IV:325 [G 302]; *TD* V:264 [G 239]).

Balthasar seems to endorse the trend in modern theology of professedly abandoning "a Greek theo-ontology of 'absolute Being'" in favor of "the Johannine definition that God is love," succumbing to the oft-repeated claim that a truly impassible God must be indifferent and uncaring toward his creation, instead of recognizing Greek metaphysics as providentially included in the notions themselves employed by the sacred writers.[18]

Furthermore, in the final volume of the *Theodramatik*, quoting Hegel with apparent approval, he states:

> "the human, the finite, the frail, the weak, and the negative are all features of the divine. All this is in God himself; otherness, finitude, negativity are not outside God . . . they are an element of the divine nature itself" . . . This is of course the idea of the Trinity, indissolubly bound to the Cross and death of Christ; yet we can still ask whether Christ is to be regarded, on the one hand, as the unique historical event or, on the other, as the necessary, the highest "representation" of the most general law of being.[19]

In the end, it remains unclear what his answer is to this question, if it is not "both." It is interesting to see Balthasar summarizing Hegel in a way that could very well apply to his own thought (particularly in *TD* II and IV):

> Hegel emphasizes that the absolute Idea's self-expropriation—and its adoption of the categories of nature and history—becomes visible in the destiny of one man, Jesus Christ. In the end, however, this is only the visible appearance of a basic spiritual law, namely, that if there is to be a uniting of the 'infinite with the finite', the finite must not cling to itself: it must surrender to the infinite.[20]

Yet adopting some aspects of Hegelian logic is a far cry from embracing it in the full force of its metaphysical and epistemological consequences or embracing the Hegelian project as such.[21] The question of consistency and coherence in such

[18] See, for example, *TD* V:213, 217f., 235 (G 291, 195f., 212). For theological application (particularly Origen's) of the Greek philosophical notion of *apatheia*, see O'Hanlon, *Immutability of God*, 69.

[19] *TD* V:226 (G 204).

[20] *TD* IV:128 (G 118).

[21] See O'Regan, *Anatomy of Misremembering*, vol. 1, *Hegel* for a thorough examination of Balthasar's anti-gnostic posture toward Hegelianism. In the context of

cautious appropriation is always valid, nonetheless. Balthasar has this to say about the Hegelian dialectic:

> We are not saying that the eternal separation in God is, in itself, 'tragic' or that the Spirit's bridging of the distinction is the sublation of tragedy, that is, 'comedy'. Nor are we saying, in a Hegelian sense, that the trinitarian drama needs to pass through the contradictions of the world in order to go beyond the 'play', to go beyond the 'abstract, and become serious and concrete.'[22]

The influence of the German dialectical mode of thinking on Balthasar's conceptualization of Trinitarian life is already discernible in the second volume of the *Theodramatik*: "The hypostatic modes of being constitute for each other the greatest opposition we could think of (and so are always inexhaustibly transcendent to each other), precisely so that the most intimate interpenetration we could think of becomes possible."[23] Balthasar subscribes to both dialectical and dialogical "methods" as complementary in the second volume of the *Theologik*.[24] "Dialectic," classically understood, is prominent in Plato and other ancient authors, even though it does not take the same shape or form as in Hegel.[25] While Balthasar may intend to

defending Balthasar's conviction that Christ's kenosis must reveal something about the immanent Trinity, even while the immanent-economic distinction must be maintained, Vincent Holzer tries also to distance Balthasar's "analogical dialectic" from Hegel's "dialectic of identity" (see "La kénose christologique dans la pensée de Hans Urs Von Balthasar: Une kénose christologique étendue à l'être de Dieu," *Theophilyon* 9 [2004]: 207-36, at 210-11, 233ff.).

[22] *TD* IV:327 (G 304).

[23] *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. 2, *The Dramatis Personae: Man in God*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 258; *Theodramatik*, Band II: *Die Personen des Spiels*, Teil I: *Der Mensch in Gott* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1976), 234. A better translation of this passage is in Rowan Williams, "Balthasar and the Trinity," in Oakes and Moss, eds., *Cambridge Companion*, 41.

[24] See *Theo-Logic*, vol. 2, *Truth of God*, trans. Adrian J. Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 43ff.; *Theologik*, Band II, *Wahrheit Gottes* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1985), 40ff. Some use the term "dialogical" to distinguish Balthasar's methodology from that of Hegelian dialectical logic (e.g., see Aidan Nichols, *Say It Is Pentecost: A Guide through Balthasar's Logic* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001], 71-72), but "dialectical" need not have Hegelian overtones or implications.

[25] Implicitly resisting accusations of Hegelian influence, Balthasar himself states: "the term dialectic has a unique, theological sense that must not be confused with any of the

adhere more to Kierkegaard's literary-dialectical style, it might be argued that Kierkegaard himself, although it was almost his sole purpose to oppose Hegel, evidently could not escape entirely the influence of Hegelian logic.[26] This is because, while Kierkegaard flips Hegel on his head in giving primacy to the individual over the universal, he shares with him an implicit rejection of Aristotelian syllogism in favor of a form of dialectical reasoning that, while not confounding the first logical principle of contradiction, exhibits a proclivity to replace distinction, division, and definition with pure paradox.[27] Although Balthasar certainly utilizes some Hegelian *terminology*, he strives admirably to avoid the pitfalls of attempting to synthesize Thomistic analogical discourse with idealist dialectical discourse (i.e., Hegel's radicalization of Kant's antinomous approach). None-

many meanings that philosophy has given it" (*TL* II:238 [G 216]), adding: "Among these we can mention the Platonic art of conversation, Kant's 'dialectical appearance', and Hegel's dialectical logic, in which thought and reality share a common, unity movement" (*TL* II:238 n. 44 [G 216 n. 44]). Even while still utilizing Hegelian terminology (especially in the *Theo-Logic*), he overtly attacks Hegel's dialectic in theology: "From the theological, and especially the Johannine, point of view, dialectic can occur only in the form of the denial of the one and only truth—that God is love, as he proves in giving up his Son—and so in the form of sin. Sin has no place in a 'dialectic' (such as Hegel's) that claims philosophical neutrality. Yet this dialectic is only a late form of a theological dialectic that imagined it could or had to sublate the principle of noncontradiction by declaring that man simultaneously yea-says and gainsays, believes and disbelieves, loves and hates, is *Justus et peccator* [righteous and sinner]" (*TL* II:317 [G 289]). Balthasar also criticizes Hegelian logic applied to the Trinity and its relationship to creation, arguing that Hegel and Buddhism are ignorant of both sin and the Holy Spirit (see *TL* II:336 n. 32 [G 306 n. 5]). At the same time, it is undeniable that when it comes to the Cross, borrowing from Luther, he indulges in a dialectic that cannot simply be attributed to St. John in place of any philosopher: "In the suffering Lord there exists an unconquerable dialectic between the infinite suffering by means of which he [Christ] exhibits the effect of sin on God and the equally infinite suffering that, having been 'made sin' (2 Cor 5:21) on account of his unity with all sinners who offend God's love, he causes in God" (*TL* II:325 [G 296]; see also 326 [G 297]).

[26] See, e.g., Jon Stewart, *Kierkegaard's Relations to Hegel Reconsidered* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[27] Despite these similarities, Balthasar does not much like Kierkegaard's own critique of Hegel; see O'Regan, *Anatomy of Misremembering*, 275-76 and 584 n. 2.

theless, whether or not he succeeds is debated.[28] Matthew Levering, hinting at Balthasar's conspicuous incorporation of German dialectic into Thomistic metaphysics, comments on his mutation of analogical discourse: "Once 'analogy' ultimately overturns the principle of contradiction, one wonders whether the limits of human language about God have been overstepped."[29] The question, of course, is whether Balthasar stretches analogy beyond the principle of contradiction and, if so, how precisely.

Balthasar generally intends to transition from dialectic to dialogic to analogic; the last item Aidan Nichols characterizes as "enquiry into reflection of the Trinity in the truth and being of the world."[30] Fergus Kerr notes that

> [Balthasar and Erich Przywara] would agree that Aquinas's notion of analogy is not a semantic theory, just about the use of words, as many interpreters would say. On the contrary, the 'analogy of being' (not that Aquinas ever used the

[28] Primarily concerned with the unity of the Trinity and pointing to Balthasar as one example of the problem, Bruce Marshall says: "Trinitarian theology has generally assumed it could avoid the theologically unhappy consequences they had in Hegel's own hands. But the confidence of theologians that they could embrace Hegel's novel Trinitarian claims while avoiding his radical revision of central Christian teachings has been, I will suggest, misplaced" ("The Absolute and the Trinity," *Pro Ecclesia* 23 [2014]: 147-64, at 148). In other words, he deems it naïve to suppose that parts of Hegel's thought, at least with respect to the divine, may be appropriated without assuming the logical consequences drawn out by Hegel himself. His fundamental argument is that adoption of Hegelian dialectic in regard to the Trinity inevitably involves restricting the divine freedom to create. While I agree that a conflation of immanent and economic Trinity does succumb to Hegel's denial of divine transcendence, Balthasar makes valiant efforts to preserve the distinction, even if he resists the Augustinian-Thomistic mode of reflection on the immanent Trinity in favor of the salvation-historical view, which sees the immanent Trinity only through the prism of the salvation economy. Ben Quash argues that Balthasar is significantly influenced by Hegel concerning aesthetics and drama (see J. B. Quash, "Between the Brutely Given and the Brutally, Banally Free: Von Balthasar's Theology of Drama in Dialogue with Hegel," *Modern Theology* 13 [1997]: 293-318).

[29] Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics*, 132, cited by John Yocum, "A Cry of Dereliction? Reconsidering a Recent Theological Commonplace," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7 (2005): 72-80, at 74 n. 8.

[30] Aidan Nichols, "The Theo-logic," in Oakes and Moss, eds., *Cambridge Companion*, 164.

phrase) refers to the creature's real participation in the divine life, anticipated here and now by faith.[31]

Nicholas Healy reflects on the analogical relationship between the immanent and economic dimensions for Balthasar:

The relation between the events of the economy and the eternal processions within the Godhead is one of analogy (difference-within-unity). The simple reason for this distinction is the ontological difference between God and the finite world. A God who does not radically transcend the process of world history is a mythological God unworthy of belief. However, this abiding difference does not mean that the immanent Trinity is merely formal or static, with the seriousness of love and death reserved for the economic Trinity. In fact, the economic Trinity reveals just the opposite to be the case: "The immanent Trinity must be understood to be that eternal, absolute self-surrender whereby God is seen to be, in himself, absolute love; this in turn explains his self-giving to the world as love, without suggesting that God 'needed' the world process and the Cross in order to become himself."[32]

This type of reasoning, more than being a product of Hegelian influence, results from Balthasar's dialogue with Karl Barth, whose influence is indisputable and whose rapprochement with process thought is disputable.[33] But, as John Webster notes, Balthasar goes beyond Barth's Christocentrism:

[B]oth [Balthasar and Barth] explore how God's saving works and God's immanent being are mutually interpretative, particularly through reflecting on the obedience of the Son as the form of the intratrinitarian relations. In both, this issues in a doctrine of God which registers the effects on trinitarian teaching of the Son's act of self-emptying, though without imperiling the aseity of God. Though Balthasar presses the logic of kenosis further than Barth, his core claim

[31] Kerr, "Balthasar and Metaphysics," 225-26. For more on the relationship between Erich Przywara's and Balthasar's metaphysics, see James Zeitz, "Przywara and von Balthasar on Analogy," *The Thomist* 52 (1988): 473-98.

[32] Nicholas J. Healy, *The Eschatology of Hans Urs von Balthasar: Being as Communion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 129.

[33] Barth's influence is well known, but for Balthasar's relationship to Barth, see especially D. Stephen Long, *Saving Karl Barth: Hans Urs von Balthasar's Preoccupation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014); see also John Webster, "Balthasar and Karl Barth," in Oakes and Moss, eds., *Cambridge Companion*, 241-55.

('that the God-man can surrender himself to God-abandonment, without resigning his own reality as God'; *MP*, 81) is explicitly derived from Barth.[34]

Perhaps Balthasar would have done better to emphasize his Barthian inheritance over and against his sympathy for Moltmann's intentions. Yet, it is up to Barth scholars to determine to what extent process theology may have influenced even Barth.[35] Even though Balthasar is not fundamentally Hegelian (as is Moltmann), he sometimes tends to capitulate too much to contemporary death-of-God theology, which nonetheless itself is sublated by the Trinitarian theology that he extracts from Adrienne von Speyr's mystical visions, which certainly exerted the most profound influence.[36]

In any case, O'Hanlon offers a compelling defense of Balthasar's understanding of the divine being as "trinitarian event," arguing that God's eternal being is both immutable and "super-mutable."[37] Central to this notion that there is an event-

[34] Webster, "Balthasar and Karl Barth," 252.

[35] In response to Marshall, "The Absolute and the Trinity," which targets the appropriation of Hegelian dialectic to Trinitarian theology in authors like Balthasar, Paul D. Molnar, although essentially in agreement with Marshall's critique, adds Barthian considerations distinct from what Balthasar seems to be advocating ("A Response: Beyond Hegel with Karl Barth and T. F. Torrance," *Pro Ecclesia* 23 [2014]: 165-73, at 173). While I sympathize with his reflections in terms of the Athanasian rule, I think the predication of pain to the divinity must be one of metaphorical analogy, even though the union of the Son's divinity to Christ's humanity is hypostatic, precisely because it is a question of how the divine suffers *in* the human.

[36] The notional link between Moltmann and Speyr seems to be Russian kenoticism, especially as seen in Bulgakov (see, e.g., *TD* IV:314 [G 292]); but this is merely a peripheral observation of similarities, not a historical claim. To see how Adrienne von Speyr's thought factors into Balthasar's, see especially Michele M. Schumacher, *A Trinitarian Anthropology: Adrienne von Speyr and Hans Urs von Balthasar in Dialogue with Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 2014). On the intended union of heart and mind between the two, see Johann Roten, S.M., "The Two Halves of the Moon: Marian Anthropological Dimensions in the Common Mission of Adrienne von Speyr and Hans Urs von Balthasar," in *Hans Urs von Balthasar: His Life and Work*, ed. David Schindler (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011). See also Matthew Lewis Sutton, *Heaven Opens: The Trinitarian Mysticism of Adrienne von Speyr* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014).

[37] For this notion in Balthasar, see, e.g., the interesting footnote in *TD* III:159 n. 18 (G 145 n. 18); see also *TL* II:352 (G 321). Quash notes the patristic origin of some of his

quality to the divine being is the idea that in God is the perfection of both being and becoming, as if the perfection of becoming is not simply *ipsum esse*.[38] It is argued by O'Hanlon (and others) that *ipsum esse* is not as "static" as it is commonly assumed to be, but rather contains within it both the staticity of being and the pure dynamism of becoming (hence the event-quality of the Trinitarian life).[39] O'Hanlon wants to clarify that this is not a capitulation to process theology:

more controversial points: "Maximus the Confessor had prepared the ground for Balthasar's elevation of existence to the level of a special mode of being (perhaps even the most divine mode), in order to overcome the difficulties with the language of essence (see *CL*, 56-57). Gregory of Nyssa had argued for the suitability of dynamic categories for description of the immanent life of God (*TD5*, 77). His galvanized ontology of the divine life can lead him to suggest that it is not only love which has a heavenly form that can tentatively (analogically) be attributed to the Trinitarian Persons, but that faith and hope have such a heavenly form too. Human experiences of faith and hope have their analogical counterparts in the way that the Persons of the Trinity are eternally oriented to one another in anticipation while eternally having this mutual anticipation met, rewarded, and exceeded in the response of the others" ("The *theo-drama*," in Oakes and Moss, eds., *Cambridge Companion*, 151-52). Regarding the influence of Maximus on Balthasar's thought, see O'Regan, "Von Balthasar and Thick Retrieval." Alyssa Pitstick argues that Balthasar misinterprets Maximus: "Development of Doctrine, or Denial? Balthasar's Holy Saturday and Newman's *Essay*," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 11 (2009): 131-45, at 141.

[38] Hence, it strains the limits of language to justify Balthasar's use of the term "event" in reference to God's inner life as "analogous" (see Anne Hunt, *The Trinity and the Paschal Mystery* [Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1997], 63). On the merely metaphorical character of attributing mixed perfections (purified by the *via eminentiae*), see, e.g., *The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, and History of the Catholic Church*, vol. 2, ed. Charles G. Herbermann et al. (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1907), 63.

[39] Mansini argues that the Balthasarian "event" must exist in itself (as substance), if it is not to be process or becoming, and adds: "If one wants to think of such an 'in itself' as a pure event, as a pure liveliness, then what is wanted, it would seem, is a sort of pure act—a line of thought already well developed in the history of Western theology and metaphysics" ("Balthasar and the Theodramatic Enrichment of the Trinity," 518). To the objection that such an argument unduly forces Balthasar's thought into Aristotelian categories, he responds: "This is not a matter of a Thomistic and Aristotelian account of change versus some other possibility of thought. There is no other analysis of change besides that of Aristotle. There are denials of change, from Parmenides to (in his own way) Hume. There are assertions that some kinds of change are really other kinds of change, as with the reduction of qualitative to quantitative change in materialism. There are assertions of novelty with no ground or cause, with Nietzsche and Bergson. There are

> Within this context [of trinitarian kenosis] there is no simple identification, as in Process Theology, between the world process (including the cross) and the eternal, timeless 'process' of the divine hypostases. The economic does not constitute the immanent Trinity. Rather, we must tentatively approach the mystery of the inner-trinitarian event by means of a negative theology which rules out any inner-wordly experience and suffering in God, and yet which establishes that the conditions for the possibility of such realities outside God are in fact to be found within God. But these realities of pain outside God have Christological and trinitarian implications, so that one is then forced to conclude that the trinitarian event must also allow God to participate in suffering.[40]

While the God of the philosophers may be immutable being, the God of Christian revelation, Balthasar thinks, must be "something more," namely, infinitely dynamic. This seems to cohere better with the vision of God as Trinitarian life, the very life of *amor ipsum*.[41] Certainly, there is even more to the God of revelation than is discoverable in the realm of pure philosophy, but it is another question whether that "something more" is aptly expressed in the terminology of dynamism.

Evidently, speaking of God in terms of event involves more than simply affirming dynamism of the life of divine love. O'Hanlon states:

> This emptying [of cross and incarnation] is real even if throughout it God still remains God. This means that an historical event affects God. This is so even though the temporal cross is present eternally in God so that it is real in God 'before', 'during' and 'after' its earthly occurrence and, in particular, even after the resurrection, the cross of Jesus is an abiding reality in heaven, the eternal

reversals of the priority of act to potency, with Hegel. But there is no *analysis* of change, a location of the principles of change, except that of Aristotle. It is hard to see how the invocation of a change in God unlike that which we find in our earthly experience, therefore, can be anything more than words. Change requires passive potency; it requires composition in the subject of change. To speak of change that is not like this, that does not involve a passage from potency to act, is not to speak of anything at all" (ibid., 518).

[40] O'Hanlon, *Immutability of God*, 38.

[41] After much ado about the intra-Trinitarian freedom of the divine processions (against Aquinas), Antoine Birot states: "These things cannot be understood unless the mystery of God is seen to be, from the beginning, a mystery of love, and thus in a metaphysical sense as *both being and event simultaneously*" ("The Divine Drama, from the Father's Perspective: How the Father Lives Love in the Trinity," *Communio* 30 [2003]: 406-29, at 413 n. 10).

God being capable of containing all these different modalities. There is a great mystery here, in the way a temporal event can be present to God eternally, and can affect God albeit in a non-temporal way.[42]

Balthasar's ultimate answer to the question of divine impassibility is the following:

[I]f we ask whether there is suffering in God, the answer is this: there is something in God that can develop into suffering. This suffering occurs when the recklessness with which the Father gives away himself (and *all* that is his) encounters a freedom that, instead of responding in kind to this magnanimity, changes it into a calculating, cautious self-preservation. This contrasts with the essentially divine recklessness of the Son, who allows himself to be squandered, and of the Spirit who accompanies him.[43]

Hence, for Balthasar, there is in the tri-hypostatic essence of God a primordial analogue to the suffering that follows contingently upon creation and sin. It is the "condition of possibility" (to use a Kantian phrase he frequently utilizes) for divine affectivity to exist in God's relationship to his creatures.[44]

Despite my paraphrasing of the argument from the perspective of the analogy of being, the argument seems to be fundamentally Christological. It is not an accident that Balthasar notoriously designates Christ as the incarnation of such analogy, the "concrete *analogia entis*":[45]

[42] O'Hanlon, *Immutability of God*, 28.

[43] *TD* IV:327-28 (G 305).

[44] "Here the God-man drama reaches its acme: finite freedom casts all its guilt onto God, making him the sole accused, the scapegoat, while *God allows himself to be thoroughly affected by this, not only in the humanity of Christ but also in Christ's trinitarian mission*. The omnipotent powerlessness of God's love shines forth in the mystery of darkness and alienation between God and the sin-bearing Son" (*TD* IV:335 [G 312], emphasis added).

[45] As Aidan Nichols notes: "After the writing of his Barth book, variant versions of this formula pullulate in Balthasar's work," citing *A Theology of History,* 74, and *Epilog*, 69 (see Aidan Nichols, *A Key to Balthasar: Hans Urs von Balthasar on Beauty, Goodness, and Truth* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2011], 85 n. 91). See also *TD* III:221-22 (G 204). Regarding Balthasar's Christocentric metaphysics, see Junius Johnson, *Christ and Analogy: The Christocentric Metaphysics of Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013). For more on the significance of Christological debates in Balthasar's theology, see O'Regan, "Von Balthasar and Thick Retrieval."

> [T]here is the basis in God for what can become suffering. . . . It seems strange that the kind of influence which the earthly life of Jesus has on the *persons* of the Trinity should have no foundation at all in their own *nature*. . . . Christ's humanity is an appropriate expression of the divinity . . . the obedience of Christ [is] the supreme manifestation of the divine being . . . the whole being of the Son is there to express and represent the Father . . . [created realities] point to a mode of love that embraces a self-giving to the point of being freely affected by the other, and a divine enrichment that is neither necessary, nor temporal, nor caused by anything external to God.[46]

Does it make sense to speak of this Trinitarian life as an eternal event? One last comment from O'Hanlon is necessary to assess the meaning Balthasar evidently intends to convey:

> The relationship between God and Christ is one of *expression* and of *dialogue*. . . . By 'expression', a term developed in some detail by Balthasar in his treatment of Bonaventure, he does not mean that Christ is a mere reduplication of the Father. Rather—and this takes us on to the second aspect of the relationship—Christ is personally other than the Father, so that God is revealed as a trinitarian event in which there is mutual interaction and dialogue between the personal poles. In being so clear about the tri-personal nature of the mysteriously one, identical, absolute, divine being, Balthasar is affirming the reality of a real I/Thou exchange within God who is love.[47]

Even if it is granted that love is an interpersonal reality, it is not clear exactly what dialogue has to do with event, process, becoming (that is, *change*). Eternal dialogue need not be mutable. Either God is eternally self-changing because of his interpersonal nature (and then there is little obstacle to saying he can be changed by creatures, since he became one), or there is no change, no process, no event-quality to the infinite love that constitutes his hypostatically interpersonal nature. The fact that God became man, that Christ reveals something (in fact, a great deal!) about God, and even that therefore God may be said to be affected (at least in some sense) by the sins of men—none of this seems to necessitate change. There is simply no reason to import the mutability of Christ's human nature into the immutable being of *ipsum esse*. The inner life of the Trinitarian God need not be

[46] O'Hanlon, *Immutability of God*, 44-45.

[47] Ibid., 47.

an amalgamation of being and becoming in order not to be static. Being is not static, but dynamic (in the best sense of the term)! Thus, if "event" implies temporality, it cannot apply to the divine life, assuming one grants that the supreme being is *actus purus*. Hence, the language of "event" when speaking of the Trinitarian processions must be designated as, at best, metaphorical.

II. The "Metaphor Defense"

Duffy argues against what he calls "the metaphor defense" of Balthasar on divine impassibility, opposing as incoherent the argument of O'Hanlon (and Thomas Dalzell)[48] that Balthasar's predication of change, suffering, and surprise to God is justifiable on the basis of his unique blend of metaphor and analogy. Striving to clarify the difference between metaphor and analogy, Duffy responds to the Balthasarian claim that "God is metaphorically super-mutable, but in a non-creaturely way" by engaging contemporary philosophical discussions of metaphor, siding ultimately with Aquinas's restriction of analogical predication (in the case of God) to created realities that do not involve intrinsic imperfection.[49] In his view, Balthasar so blurs the line between metaphorical and literal (analogical) predication

[48] See Dalzell, "Enrichment of God." In defense of Balthasar's thesis that the Trinity is in some ways enriched by its relationship to creation, Dalzell has recourse to the "metaphor defense" that Duffy in turn rebuts: "When Balthasar talks about the trinitarian event in terms of an eternal 'I-thou' relationship, he is clearly speaking analogically. But when he starts to describe the dynamism of that 'I-thou' in terms of suffering, surprise, and increase, he is using properly metaphorical language. He argues that concepts alone fail to tell us much about the mystery of God's love and must be combined with metaphor and image. To his mind, this way of paradox yields more knowledge than conceptual thought alone, and is closer to the approach of the Scriptures. Yet, if this use of metaphor means suspending the objections from negative (apophatic) theology, Balthasar does recognise that metaphorical language can be stretched too far and needs a corrective. Hence if he thinks 'the metaphysical without the metaphorical is empty', he does accept that 'the metaphorical without the metaphysical is blind'" (Dalzell, "Enrichment of God," 8).

[49] "Some terms can only be used metaphorically [of God], because creatureliness is part of their meaning. Change, suffering, and surprise, like courage, sorrow and contrition, imply creaturely imperfection" (Duffy, "Von Balthasar's Use of Metaphor," 375).

that his predications of suffering to God cannot be merely metaphorical and the value of analogical predication in theological discourse is undermined.[50] The result is confusion: "For 'I-thou' discourse between the divine persons is analogous; divine surprise at the content of their dialogue is metaphorical. A statement that God is immutable is analogous; to say that he is super-mutable is metaphorical."[51] O'Hanlon's argument seems to be that mutability, in Balthasar, can be both affirmed and denied of God in different respects such that the *via eminentiae* takes precedence, and yet Duffy illustrates how only metaphor can be both affirmed and denied and still remain coherent. In the end, it is apparently unimportant to Balthasar to clarify when a predication is metaphorical and when it is properly analogical; thus, Duffy accuses him of a "qualified pan-metaphoricism," a perspective that Balthasar does not seek to justify.

Furthermore, Duffy claims that certain statements are by their very nature to be taken literally, not metaphorically, and that "I cannot make a statement such as 'there is super-change in God' metaphorical simply by saying that I am speaking metaphorically or that I am associating my statement with a metaphor."[52] He argues that metaphor and simile are generally equivalent and that where a real simile exists, the predication cannot be then denied, whereas when Balthasar says, "there is something like change in God," it would not make sense for him later to say that, literally speaking, there is nothing like change in God, and therefore his affirmation is a literal one.[53] After taking out such "hard distinctions," Duffy confesses:

> Von Balthasar's understanding of the divine nature stands or falls on whether or not new analogical senses of change, suffering, and surprise can pass muster in their own right. The nub of von Balthasar's project, as articulated in the metaphor defense, is to bring what is proper to poetry and symbolism into theological language by extracting what is most distinctive in metaphor and expressing it in literal, analogical terms . . . literal statements containing

[50] See ibid., 379, citing Blankenhorn, "Von Balthasar's Method of Divine Naming," *Nova et Vetera* 1 (2003): 245-68, at 257.

[51] Duffy, "Von Balthasar's Use of Metaphor," 380.

[52] Ibid., 383-84.

[53] Ibid., 384.

expressions such as 'super-change' or 'something like change' would have to be vehicles for what, in metaphors, escapes paraphrase and is intimated rather than asserted.[54]

It remains unclear not only how something that is intimated may be asserted, but also whether there are any metaphorical statements about God that yield anything significant for our knowledge of God as such.

It seems from Balthasar's adamant use of such rhetorical excess that he wants to restore to metaphor an epistemic validity that equals that of literal predication (in this case, analogical), and this on the basis of the centrality of metaphor in Scripture's language about God (particularly in the Old Testament). And this does not necessitate collapsing all knowledge into the realm of the metaphorical.[55] But Duffy concludes his essay thus:

Given the way in which human language works—its *modus significandi* (mode of signifying)—von Balthasar is to be seen as trying to state what cannot be stated literally. Predicating change, suffering, and surprise of God, he tries to give literal expression to what in metaphors is essentially non-propositional, and to what is intimated or suggested rather than asserted. The result in a classical context is incoherence.[56]

Is human language really so restrictive? Certainly, poets daily attempt to put in words what cannot be expressed, at least, in prose. But the point is that Balthasar is purportedly writing theology, not poetry. That is precisely the problem: to what degree ought mystical utterances to be translated into rational

[54] Ibid., 386.

[55] While Duffy briefly reports the views of George Lakoff and Nicholas Lash that theological discourse is universally metaphorical and cites radical statements of Anthony Kenny and Robert Butterworth (see ibid., 380-81), thus making a veritable slippery slope argument against what he calls the "metaphor defense" of Balthasar's fluid usage of analogical and metaphorical predication, he neglects to mention that it is typical of transcendental Thomists, who frequently draw upon Paul Ricoeur as well, to speak of language as fundamentally metaphorical, particularly in the realm of theology, since what transcends ordinary experience is being approached. Despite his eventual misgivings about this school of thought, represented for him principally by Rahner, Balthasar does not seem exempt from this "transcendentalist" error; see *TL* II:273-75 (G 247-48).

[56] Duffy, "Von Balthasar's Use of Metaphor," 387.

discourse? Perhaps "kataphatic excess" is the inevitable result of such a project. Duffy's proposed remedy is to pay greater attention to the Chalcedonian distinction between the divine and human natures of Christ.[57]

If change, suffering, and surprise cannot be predicated of God either metaphorically or literally, then they are such imperfect realities that they cannot find any place in God, however one conceives of them. This seems an unacceptable conclusion in light of the events of salvation history (particularly the redemptive incarnation). While it is necessary to emphasize the *communicatio idiomatum*, and while the lack of a precise understanding of the relationship between grace and nature contributes to Balthasar's shift toward a "neo-Chalcedonianism," it is also true that the horizon of grace has so perfected nature through Christ that we can learn something, even if it remains beyond the realm of propositional truth, about the love that is God through a modest phenomenological analysis of human love in its primordial innocence. Hence, O'Hanlon replies to Duffy:

> Qualities like increase ('ever-more'), receptivity, and surprise have not, of course, traditionally been seen as perfections, and this is where von Balthasar's claim will stand or fall. Arguing from the human experience of love, von Balthasar notes that love given is not perfected until received, that mystery increases rather than decreasing in proportion to greater intimacy, so that a knowledge that is 'already in the picture' is symptomatic of a love grown cold. Again, where love is on the way to perfection, there exists a reserve and discretion that allow and want the other to be other in a way that preserves the freedom of self-giving and the creativity, wonder, and surprise which accompany that freedom. As Duffy notes, materiality and composition, including of course temporality, are intrinsically creaturely and so may not be predicated analogously of God. But, with careful modification, even 'light' and 'generation' may so be predicated, perhaps even 'desire' (Rowan Williams in Duffy) and certainly liveliness.[58]

As beautiful as such expressions may be at first sight, it is incumbent upon the theologian to parse out with precision what exactly is being said and to determine which claims can be justified.

[57] See ibid.

[58] O'Hanlon, "A Response to Kevin Duffy," 182.

Thus, Bernhard Blankenhorn, while pointing to the role of Speyr's mysticism and dialogical philosophy as detrimental,[59] focuses precisely on Balthasar's peculiar employment of the doctrine of divine naming via the *analogia entis*, which he understands in dialogue with Barth (imitating Erich Przywara's example). Blankenhorn argues effectively that Balthasar seems to distort the *via eminentiae* in particular by "operating on the premise that creaturely limitation must have its foundation in God,"[60] that is, by "his refusal to fully negate attributes found in creation that seem to be intrinsically tied to limitations."[61] Straining the limits of language, Balthasar wants to predicate of God death, surprise, becoming, potentiality, and other notions ruled out by Aquinas's threefold method of divine naming.[62] Balthasar's insufficiently apophatic approach to divine naming results in the projection onto the inner life of God notions that are peculiar to created reality, such as the fact that freedom needs time and space to respond to love with thanksgiving.[63]

Blankenhorn argues that, contrary to O'Hanlon and Dalzell's interpretation, Balthasar does not speak of his theological predications in terms of metaphor because metaphor for him is an inadequate basis for real knowledge of God through revelation.[64] Perhaps Balthasar does not sufficiently appreciate metaphor as a unique form of analogical predication in theological discourse, but Blankenhorn hastily dismisses the possibility that receptivity may in a qualified sense be a simple perfection. Recognizing receptivity as a perfection does not require "posit[ing] the ability to be *negatively* affected by another

[59] See Blankenhorn, "Balthasar's Method of Divine Naming," 253, 256, 261, 263, 265. I would opine that the problem is not so much Speyr herself as it is Balthasar's attempt to interpret her mystical experience through recourse to dialogical philosophy without a robust understanding of threefold predication in the Thomistic *analogia entis*.

[60] Ibid., 255.

[61] Ibid., 263.

[62] See ibid., 245.

[63] See ibid., 253.

[64] See ibid., 257-58, quoting *Theologik* II. Blankenhorn also notes that this is the interpretation common to Rudolf Krenski, Margaret Turek, and Anne Hunt (see ibid., 258).

as divine perfection,"[65] nor does it correspond to a failure to distinguish "the limited as limited and the limited as imperfect perfection,"[66] nor does it involve affirming "that potency as such is act as such, and becoming as such is being as such."[67] Still, Blankenhorn is right to assert:

> The understanding of the content of supernatural revelation, however, itself requires reason and philosophical analogies. We must bring a philosophical understanding of humanity to the revelation of Christ, and while this understanding must be perfected by grace, it must include true philosophical insights into human nature. We cannot say what is creaturely and what is divine if we refuse to distinguish the content of the revelation of Christ and the humanity of Christ. Without a philosophical *analogia entis* that plays a determining role in the interpretation of revelation, the image and the original would fuse into one, and we would have no way of distinguishing the two.[68]

It is for this reason that Speyr's mystical imagery, which Balthasar does not sufficiently appropriate for theological discourse, must be philosophically demythologized.

III. Divine Impassibility beyond Balthasar: Retrieving Maritain and Barth

The way to get beyond the problems with Balthasar's doctrine of God is to return to the philosophical analogical discourse that was sublimated by his Speyrian mystical discourse, which replaces precision with hyperbole. Jacques Maritain offers a Thomistic alternative to Balthasar's own articulation, although the latter sought to incorporate and transcend Maritain's formulation of the matter. Despite the differences between Balthasar's and Maritain's articulations of divine impassibility, many today have unwittingly taken the Balthasarian reading of Maritain as a point of departure for their own articulations, which suffer from the same sorts of problems as does Balthasar's own. Yet, their utilization of other sources for Balthasar, such as Karl Barth,

[65] Ibid., 264.
[66] Ibid., 267.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid., 266.

sometimes results in slightly more intelligible articulations of divine impassibility. To a greater or lesser degree, four influential thinkers on divine impassibility from relatively diverse schools of thought—Gary Culpepper, Robert Jenson, Bruce McCormack, and David Bentley Hart—are manifestly influenced by a Balthasarian reading of Maritain, each utilizing it in a distinct manner. Without claiming to do justice to these complex thinkers here, it is illuminating briefly to explore how some Christian theologians today have received twentieth-century Catholic reflection on divine impassibility.

While Maritain may have accepted a Balthasarian view of the descent,[69] he does not project Christ's sufferings into the Trinitarian processions themselves.[70] In the following excerpt from his exemplary essay on theological knowledge, Maritain establishes the philosophical foundation for his position on divine impassibility:

> Each time that a creature sins (and in each case the creature takes the first initiative, the initiative of nothingness), God is deprived of a joy ("above and beyond" according to our way of looking at things) which was due to Him by another and which that other does not give Him, and something inadmissible to God is produced in the world. But even before triumphing over what is inadmissible by a greater good which will overcompensate for it later on, God Himself, far from being subject to it, raises it above everything by His consent: In accepting such a privation (which in no way affects His being but only the creature's relation to Him), He takes it in hand and raises it up like a trophy, attesting to the divinely pure grandeur of His victorious Acceptance (ours is never such except at the cost of some defeat); and this is something that adds absolutely nothing to the intrinsic perfection and glory of the divine *Esse*, and is eternally precontained in Its essential and super-eminent infinity. For this is an integral part of a mysterious divine perfection which, even though it has reference to the privation of what is due to God by creatures existing at some particular point in time, is infinitely beyond the reach of these creatures. In fact,

[69] See Jacques Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, trans. Joseph W. Evans (New York: Herder & Herder, 1969), 61; and "Beginning with a Reverie," in *The Collected Works of Jacques Maritain*, vol. 20, *Untrammeled Approaches*, trans. Bernard Doering (South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 3-26, at 11 n. 13 (*Approches sans Entraves* [Paris: Librairie Artheme Fayard, 1973], 15 n. 12).

[70] It is worth noting that Joseph Ratzinger, commonly taken as a Balthasarian, also seems to follow Maritain's more cautious path here: see my "Damnation and the Trinity in Ratzinger and Balthasar," *Logos* 18, no. 3 (2015): 123-50.

the creature, by his free nihilation, is indeed the cause of the privation in question in whatever concerns itself, in his relation to God, which is real only from his side, responsible for some privation or other of what is due to God. And such privations are presupposed from all eternity by that mysterious divine perfection I am speaking about. The divine perfection is eternally present in God and, by the infinite transcendence of the Divine Being, is the unnamed exemplar, incapable of being designated by any of our concepts . . . which corresponds in uncreated glory to what is suffering in us. . . . What sin 'does' to God is something which reaches God in the deepest way, not by making Him subject to some effect brought about by the creature but by making the creature, in its relation to God, pass over to the side of the unnamed perfection, the eternal exemplar in Him of what suffering is in us.[71]

Thus, Maritain holds that there is a merely receptive relationship to moral evil in the divine being. Almost every time he refers to the suffering of God, he makes sure to clarify that he is speaking metaphorically in applying such a term to the divine. Hence, he states:

There are concepts whose object also implies limitation and imperfection in its very notion and so cannot be said of God except metaphorically, but which in the reality to which it refers as we experience it, does designate a perfection *emerging* above the sensible, as is the case with suffering in the human person. Suffering is an evil and an imperfection, but by the fact that the spirit approves of it and consents to it and seizes upon it, it is incomparably noble as well. . . . From this we can understand that the concept and the word *suffering* can be used only metaphorically with regard to God and that nevertheless we ought to seek in an *unnamed* divine perfection the eternal exemplar of what in us is suffering with all its noble dignity.[72]

Maritain reflects on something Balthasar addresses frequently throughout his many works, stating that "[Christ] does keep for all eternity His five wounds which are glorious forever," which he says is metaphorically reflected in the sufferings reported by Our Lady of LaSalette; and just before this, he states:

This mysterious perfection which in God is the unnamed exemplar of suffering in us, *constitutes an integral part of the divine beatitude*—perfect peace at the

[71] Jacques Maritain, "Quelques réflexions sur le savoir théologique," *Revue Thomiste* 69 (1969): 5-27, at 19-21; translation in *Untrammeled Approaches*, 257-58.

[72] *Untrammeled Approaches*, 261 (p. 23 in French original).

same time infinitely exultant beyond what is humanly conceivable, burning in its flames what is apparently irreconcilable for us.[73]

Perhaps realizing the danger of importing economic categories into the Trinitarian relations themselves, O'Hanlon effectively contrasts Maritain's and Balthasar's takes on the matter:

> The question remains open as to whether this Trinitarian drama involves a 'wound' in God which is identical to the Trinitarian processions themselves, or is merely 'consequent' on the decision to create—the question already raised as to whether or not God is essentially kenotic. . . . [Balthasar] is asserting that while secondary, created causes cannot *per se* change God, they can, when taken into the trinitarian life, become part of that eternal drama of love which allows opposites to exist and reconciles them.[74]

It is because God is the object of his own permission of evils initiated by creatures that he can be said to be "affected" by such evil,[75] albeit indirectly, such that the *sym*pathy inherent to his infinite love for his creatures becomes *em*pathy in the form of the incarnation of the Son, who represents the free tendency of divine receptivity (in Son and Spirit as from the Father) to surrender itself (*kenosis*) in love.[76]

[73] Ibid., 259 (pp. 21-22 in French original).

[74] O'Hanlon, *Immutability of God*, 34.

[75] There are typically two meanings given to "affectivity," namely, ontological and psychological. Ontologically, it simply means being the object of some act, whether internal or external to the subject. Psychologically, it indicates the capacity of the heart (or the person's core being) for value-laden experience. There is an analogous relationship, though, between these two meanings, which is glimpsed if one realizes that feelings are typically involuntary responses to stimuli, whether internal or external to the subject. In other words, one can only be affected by something when one is the object of some value-laden act (i.e., experiencing oneself responding to an act presupposes the fact of being the object of some act). Moreover, affectivity is closely aligned with emotivity, and we can recognize in ourselves the existence of emotions or sentiments that are not tied up with animal appetites, but are spiritual in nature, even if still imperfect (see Dietrich von Hildebrand, *The Heart: An Analysis of Human and Divine Affectivity*, ed. John F. Crosby [South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2007]). Hence, when affectivity is predicated of God, only the perfection belonging to spiritual feelings (e.g., compassion) is intended and attributed to the transcendent *per via eminentiae*.

[76] Hence, Maritain concludes toward the end of his article: "To the problem of evil taken in all its dimensions, there is only one answer, the answer of faith in its integrity. And at the heart of our faith is the certitude that God, anyway Jesus said so, has for us

Of the four theologians I have mentioned as apparently influenced by the Balthasarian appropriation of Maritain (which also incorporates and transcends Barth's perspective), Gary Culpepper seems to be the most indebted to Maritain himself (as Balthasar reads him).[77] For Culpepper, Christ's suffering (and incarnation) shows us that our suffering can be a "participation in the eternity of the joyous suffering of the divine persons."[78] Human suffering finds its proper analogical basis ultimately in the distinction between divine persons, and proximately in the distinction between the antecedent and consequent wills in God.[79] Culpepper borrows from Maritain the notion that the permissive will of God encompasses a divine "wound" caused by sin,[80] constituted by the Father's knowledge and permission of the sufferings imposed upon his incarnate Son. God himself is said to "suffer" in the secondary sense of the word, that is, in being an object of action.[81] Thus, the Father "suffers" the otherness of the Son, being "moved to love by the other," and the Son likewise suffers the Father. The person moving each to love is the Spirit.[82] This suffering is infinitely greater than that of his antecedent will from the moral evil initiated by his creatures.[83] The "suffering" of God is simply a being-moved by another.[84] The human suffering of Christ, therefore, is merely a human form of the divine suffering intrinsic to the Trinitarian processions.[85]

the *feelings of a Father*. . . . the great mystery of what, in an infinitely perfect and infinitely happy God, corresponds to what suffering is in us, not with regard to the frightening mark of imperfection it implies, but with regard to the incomparable grandeur that it also reveals" ("Reflections," in *Untrammeled Approaches*, 263 [F 26]).

[77] See Culpepper's essay "'One Suffering in Two Natures': An Analogical Inquiry into Divine and Human Suffering," in James F. Keating and Thomas Joseph White, eds., *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009), 77-98.

[78] Ibid., 98.

[79] See ibid., 78 and 96 n. 42.

[80] See ibid., 87.

[81] See ibid., 81-82.

[82] See ibid., 89ff.

[83] See ibid., 82, 88, 90, 92. 96-97.

[84] See ibid., 86-88, 90.

[85] See ibid., esp. 95ff.

Hence, for Culpepper, there is an analogical basis in God for the reality creatures experience as suffering, revealed in the economic manifestation of God's eternal nature (i.e., Jesus Christ).[86]

There seems to be a fusion here of Maritain's and Balthasar's approaches to divine impassibility, but the synthesis is faulty. Such a position falls prey to a temptation to make the love of God admit the necessity of an object *ad extra*, an objection Culpepper inadequately counters.[87] Again, there is here a reluctance to distinguish between the economic and immanent dimensions of the Trinitarian God. To project onto the inner life of the Trinity an image (albeit exemplary) of the drama of suffering endured by Christ in the face of those who resist his grace is too kataphatic. Divine self-movement, a Platonic notion employed to describe the dynamism interior to God,[88] need not entail being acted upon by another, whether this "other" exists *ad intra* or *ad extra*. We cannot know except through divine revelation that the "movements" of divine knowledge and love involve a multiplicity of subsistent relations in the one Supreme Being. To speak of these relations in terms of action and passion is to venture into the terrain of affirming multiple, really distinct, wills in the one God.

Culpepper's development of Maritain's insight concerning affectivity in God appears not to take account of the latter's doctrine of nihilation. Maritain merely admits that the antecedent will of God "suffers," so to speak, the nihilation of free initiatives to moral evil, yielding a consequent will that does not ensure the salvation of all and thus involves God in a kind of eternal disappointment that nevertheless cannot take away from the infinite joy that constitutes his essence. But Culpepper, like Balthasar (following Barth), wants to go a step further to say both that there is suffering, properly speaking, in God due to this rupture, and that there is also a deeper ground for such a reality constitutive of the inner life of the Trinity. Maritain, as a good Thomist, would quickly rebut such an extrapolation on the

[86] See ibid., 93.

[87] See ibid.

[88] See ibid., 92.

grounds that suffering as such is an evil and therefore a privation; privations do not demand the existence of correlate realities in God, as the analogy of being is rather constituted by entities and only relates in a cognitional and relative manner to nonentities. Maritain's insight was to discern in love-filled suffering a relative perfection that is not notionally present in *caritas simpliciter*; hence the necessity for the notion of affectivity in God. It is a wholly distinct endeavor to see suffering itself as an entity worthy of analogous representation in the very constitution of the Trinitarian processions, for which no one has proffered proper metaphysical justification.

Although Culpepper draws most directly upon Maritain's line of thought to argue for a modified form of divine possibility,[89] he explicitly claims essential agreement with Robert Jenson's analysis of (super-)temporality in God and admits also some agreement with the Barthian position of Bruce McCormack.[90] While there are certainly problems with Barth's Christology, and while his concept of affectivity in God borders on the anthropomorphic, the positing of humility in God, the distinctive mode of being-God that is the Son,[91] who is most fittingly made incarnate, anticipates in a way what I would like to revise in Balthasar a la Maritain.

Robert Jenson exhibits concerns similar to those of Maritain when he argues for a divine providence that takes into consideration time-bound prayerful petitions in an indeterminist manner. He wants both to maintain Aquinas's causal view of providence (i.e., his answer to the problem of necessity in predestination) and to give the prayer of petition a determinative power in the divine execution of that providence.[92] He also

[89] See ibid., 86-88.

[90] See ibid., 97 n. 44. For McCormack, see his essay, "Divine Impassibility or Simply Divine Constancy? Implications of Karl Barth's Later Christology for Debates over Impassibility," in Keating and White, eds., *Divine Impassibility*, 150-86.

[91] See McCormack, "Divine Impassibility or Simply Divine Constancy?" 170ff. It is unclear what the link is between humility and affectivity for Barth, but there appears to be one.

[92] See Robert W. Jenson, "Ipse Pater Non Est Impassibilis," in Keating and White, eds., *Divine Impassibility*, 117-26, at 125-26. This is also not outside the realm of concern for

argues for something similar to Balthasar's "super-temporality," namely, that time and timelessness are together constitutive of eternity.

Jenson's novel approach to time sees an analogous relationship between narrative time and the immanent life of God.[93] He defines narrative time as "neither linear nor cyclical . . . the ordering of events by their mutual reference."[94] This "immanent narrative time" is neither a total negation of linear time, nor identical to linear time. The Trinitarian processions are therefore the archetype of all times.[95] The eternal cannot be the mere negation of time; it must both transcend and encompass the narrative time in which God reveals himself. Hence, Jenson reframes the whole question of impassibility versus passibility in God in terms of his own conception of time, which he extrapolates from divine revelation. Like Balthasar, he emphasizes that God's history with us is the economic revelation of something about the immanent Trinity. Nevertheless, he maintains that Moltmann's God is no more biblical than the impassible God invoked from Nicaea to Chalcedon.[96]

Jenson wants to transcend the language of paradox and reframe the question so as to deny both passibility and impassibility of God, since Scripture affirms that he is in some way affected by human sinfulness.[97] For Jenson there is *passio* in the Father and the Son, but only in a dynamic manner, since in the economic order God is always "in narrative" with us. Taking a cue from Origen's apparent attribution of suffering to the Father, Jenson asserts that both impassibility and passibility must be only partially negated of God, and hence the two are not

Balthasar, although he does not capitalize on the issue: "We recall the doctrine of intercessory prayer as set forth by Thomas, concerned to preserve the freedom of the *causa secunda*: the immutable God is affected by the freedom of his creature insofar as, from eternity, he has included the latter's prayers in his providence as a contributory cause" (*TD* IV:278 [G 257]).

[93] See Jenson, "Ipse Pater," 124.

[94] Ibid., 122.

[95] See ibid., 124.

[96] See ibid., 120.

[97] See ibid., 120-21.

conceived as mutually exclusive (where one is the total negation of the other). Thus, God is not the total negation of both attributes, rather, a partial negation of passibility is most applicable to a God that transcends but lives within linear time. God is both within and without narrative time, thus indicating impassibility and passibility in different respects (for which Jenson sees an analogy in Western music).[98] However, Jenson's faulty point of departure is the assertion that if we can say that "One of the Trinity has suffered" there is no grammatically correct sense in which we can say "God is impassible."[99] His argument is ultimately undermined from the beginning by the false claim that the Cyrilian formula inevitably undercuts the attribution of impassibility to God.

Bruce McCormack's Barthian approach attempts to sever divine impassibility from divine immutability, upholding the latter with no interest in preserving the former.[100] Yet, the proposal that the subsistent relation of filiation inherently involves a primordial humility (whose created realization would be the obedience of Christ's human nature) comes closest to what I propose in reconciling Balthasar and Maritain.[101] In this model divine suffering in time is understood as the "outworking" of the humility that is itself proper to God as Son (the originate or begotten Deity).

McCormack's Barth does better than Balthasar insofar as he appropriates humility to God the Son, and since humility here seems to be quasi-equivalent to Balthasar's *ur-kenosis*, the fittingness of suffering would be effectively limited to the Son.[102]

[98] See ibid., 121ff.

[99] Ibid., 119.

[100] See McCormack, "Divine Impassibility or Simply Divine Constancy?" 173, 180

[101] See ibid., 170ff.; see also my "God's Relation to Evil: Divine Impassibility in Balthasar and Maritain," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 80 (2015): 191-211.

[102] While Nicholas Healy seems only to see in Balthasar an *ur-kenosis* attributed to the Father's act of begetting the Son, other Balthasarians, such as Gerard O'Hanlon (see *Immutability of God*, 14 and 20) and John Riches (see "Afterword," in *The Analogy of Beauty*, 193), refer to the inner-Trinitarian "kenosis" of the processions, for which there is much basis in the *Theodrama*. Ben Quash says, "Balthasar has taken a theological model with a long pedigree—a kenotic interpretation of the second Person of the Trinity in the economy of salvation—and has extended it to apply to all three Persons of the Trinity in

Insofar as humility (and obedience) is a created moral virtue, it cannot be applied in one-to-one fashion to any divine person—a robust doctrine of analogy is needed for anyone who wishes to discern the sense in which such can be predicated of the transcendent. But even Barth, the self-declared enemy of *analogia entis*,[103] sees a problem with transposing onto the triune God the event-quality of the salvation economy.[104]

Without attributing a multiplicity of wills to the divine nature, something analogous to humility and obedience may be appropriated to the Son's distinctive mode of being-God insofar as he is most fittingly made incarnate.[105] Christ's *kenosis* reflects

the differentiated unity of their immanent life. The total 'kenosis' of each and the thankful ('eucharistic') return to each of himself by the others becomes the ground of Trinitarian unity, being, and love" ("The theo-drama" in Oakes and Moss, eds., *Cambridge Companion*, 151). For Balthasar's Trinitarian *ur-kenosis*, see, for instance, *TD* III:188 (G 172); *TD* IV:323-31 (G 300-308); *TD* V:243-46 (G 219-22). Concerning the "kenosis" of the Holy Spirit, see *TD* II:261 (G 237); *TD* III:188 (G 172); *TD* IV:362 (G 337); *A Theological Anthropology*, 73 (G 94); see also Jeffrey A. Vogel, "The Unselfing Activity of the Holy Spirit in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar," *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 10, no. 4 (2007): 16-34. Steffen Lösel, however, correctly notes: "Although Balthasar refers at times to the Spirit's experience of suffering, he emphasizes that the Spirit only reflects the passion of the Son. He emphasizes that 'we cannot state a *kenosis* of the Spirit's freedom' (Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theologik*, vol. III, *Der Geist der Wahrheit* [Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1987], 218). Cf. also *idem*, *Theologik* III, 188; idem, *Pneuma und Institution. Skizzen zur Theologie* IV (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1974), 264f" (Lösel, "Murder in the Cathedral," 438 n. 64).

[103] See Barth, *Church Dogmatics* I/1, *The Doctrine of the Word of God: Part 1*, trans. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (New York: Continuum, 2004), xiii.

[104] See, e.g., Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/2, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation: Part 2*, trans. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (New York: Bloomsbury, 2004), 59. Nonetheless, he also expresses agreement with Patripassianism (see *Church Dogmatics* IV/2:357). Balthasar sees a problem with Barth's reluctance to impose the events of the passion onto the internal life of God, in effect separating the processions from the missions (see *TD* V:236-39, 243-46). I agree with David Lauber's assessment that Balthasar veers closer to Moltmann than he should in critiquing Barth, whose modesty should serve as a corrective for Balthasar (see "Towards a Theology of Holy Saturday: Karl Barth and Hans Urs von Balthasar on the *descensus ad inferna*," Ph.D. dissertation [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1999], 344).

[105] See *Church Dogmatics* IV/1, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation: Part 1*, trans. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (New York: T&T Clark, 1961), 193. For an appreciatively critical appropriation of Barth's Trinitarian theory, see Thomas Joseph White, O.P., "Intra-Trinitarian Obedience and Nicene-Chalcedonian Christology," *Nova et Vetera*

the divine receptivity that is the second divine person, and in this sense whatever perfection belongs to humility may be appropriated to the Son in an eminent way. In other words, since the divine being proper to the second hypostasis is filiation and is therefore characterized by a free tendency toward incarnation, supposing the free decision to create, the Son is the exemplar of all created obedience, even though he does not actually exercise obedience except by means of the human will of Christ. Thus, I think it warranted to predicate humility of God in an improper manner, at least by way of metaphorical analogy. Since "obedience" is a manifestation of humility and etymologically signifies "hearing" (*ob-audire*) in its deepest sense (i.e., listening), and listening is fundamentally a form of receptivity (even if it formally supposes a distinction of wills), the incarnation of the Son points to the divine exemplar of such creaturely virtues, that is, the receptivity proper to the Son's self-surrender.[106]

Building on Augustine's analysis of *apatheia*,[107] David Bentley Hart asks a question very pertinent to Balthasar's own reflections on divine impassibility and immediately answers it:

For Gregory of Nyssa it is even possible to say that nothing that does not lead to sin is properly called a pathos [*Contra Eunomium* III.4.27, GNO II ; 44]. But, one might ask, at this point has not the meaning of the term impassibility been so thoroughly altered as to have no real use? Is it not the case that once

(English edition) 6 (2008): 377-402. For a refutation of the idea that humility may be properly applied to God, see also Guy Mansini, "Can Humility and Obedience be Trinitarian Realities?" in Bruce L. McCormack and Thomas Joseph White, O.P., eds., *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth: An Unofficial Catholic-Protestant Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2013): 71-98. Mansini, therefore, rightly criticizes Balthasar for "[imagining] the Son 'offering' to become incarnate and the Father being 'touched' at this offering" (ibid., 96). But he does not capitalize upon Thomas's words that "for the Son *to hear* the Father is to receive his essence from him" (ibid., 97, citing *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis Lectura*, no. 2017). If to receive his essence from the Father can be called in some sense "hearing," then the divine receptivity of the Son must in some sense be the exemplar of created obedience.

[106] White speaks of the Son's divine receptivity, invoking Thomas, in "Intra-Trinitarian Obedience," 398-99. Mansini speaks of obedience in terms of hearing in "Can Humility and Obedience be Trinitarian Realities?," 78.

[107] See *De civitate Dei* 14.9.4 (*CCL* 48:428), cited in David Bentley Hart, "No Shadow of Turning: On Divine Impassibility," *Pro Ecclesia* 11 (2002): 184-206, at 195.

we have admitted love into our definition of the word we have thus rendered it unintelligible, inasmuch as love is a reaction evoked by what one suffers of another? To state the matter simply—No: love is not primordially a reaction, but the possibility of every action, the transcendent act that makes all else actual; it is purely positive, sufficient in itself, without the need of any galvanism of the negative to be fully active, vital, and creative.[108]

He adds:

At least according to the dominant tradition, love is not, in its essence, an emotion—a pathos—at all: it is life, being, truth, our only true well-being, and the very ground of our nature and existence. Thus John of Damascus draws a very strict distinction between a pathos and an "energy" (or act): the former is a movement of the soul provoked by something alien and external to it; but the latter is a "drastic" movement, a positive power that is moved of itself in its own nature. Of such a nature, most certainly, is love. Or—to step briefly out of the patristic context—as Thomas Aquinas puts it, love, enjoyment, and delight are qualitatively different from anger and sadness, as the latter are privative states, passive and reactive, whereas the former are originally one act of freedom and intellect and subsist wholly in God as a purely "intellectual appetite."[109]

Thus, he concludes: "*Apatheia,* defined as infinitely active love, 'feels' more than any affect could possibly impress upon a passive nature."[110]

Clearly learning from Balthasar (but without citing him),[111] Hart goes beyond this articulation of divine impassibility by referring to "the eternal *event* that is God's being"[112] and asserting, "God's eternal being is, in some sense, kenosis."[113]

[108] Hart, "No Shadow of Turning," 195.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Ibid., 200. It is also important to note: "To call this infinite act of love *apatheia,* then, is to affirm its plenitude and its transcendence of every evil, every interval of sin, every finite rupture, disappointment of longing, shadow of sadness, or failure of love—in short, every pathos" (Ibid., 199).

[111] The clearest allusion is the final sentence of the body of his article, in which his reliance on Balthasar could not be more obvious: "The terrible distance of Christ's cry of human dereliction, despair, and utter godforsakenness—'My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?'—is enfolded within and overcome by the ever greater distance and always indissoluble unity of God's triune love: 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit'" (ibid., 205).

[112] Ibid., 197.

[113] Ibid., 202.

Underlying this conviction is a concession that pervades his work, a concession to Heidegger's critique of onto-theology as encompassing much (if not all) of classical and Scholastic metaphysics. Hart's penchant for the Platonic over the Aristotelian yields the notion that God is as much beyond being as he is beyond becoming, and yet both may be super-eminently predicated of his *energeia*.[114] Hence, the Orthodox theologian prefers the Greek Fathers to Augustine and the Scholastics, even though he tries to incorporate the latter. Balthasar, however, enters more directly into dialogue with Western metaphysics, even if he also suffers from Heideggerian influence.

Despite intending to maintain a distinction between the immanent identity of God and his economic manifestations,[115] Hart fails to purify analogical theological discourse of the imperfection proper to the world of becoming. Hart and Balthasar seem to share a similar perspective on analogical predication, projecting categories of dynamism peculiar to the created world into the Trinitarian life itself. In other words, paradoxically, anyone who denies what I might call the "theorem of analogy"—borrowing Bernard Lonergan's phraseology[116]—ends up collapsing the economic and immanent dimensions of the Trinity, even if the express intent is precisely apophasis.

IV. Divine Self-Enrichment

Having addressed in cursory fashion a few recent theologies of impassibility that seem to have received Balthasar's attempt

[114] "The only way in which the distinction between being and becoming can be overcome (if this is at all possible or desirable) is by way of a complete collapse of the difference. Being must be identified with the totality of becoming as an 'infinite' process. Otherwise one cannot avoid some version of Heidegger's onto-theological critique (and frankly, Heidegger's critique almost certainly holds against the complete system anyway)" (ibid., 190).

[115] Ibid., 191-92.

[116] Lonergan calls the development of the distinction between the natural and the supernatural "the theorem of the supernatural." See *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas: Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 1, ed. Frederick E. Crowe, S.J., and Robert M. Doran, S.J. (repr.; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 18-20, 185-87, 210ff.

both to incorporate and transcend Maritain's and Barth's perspectives on the matter, I will continue to employ the Thomistic reasoning exemplified by Maritain to decipher whether or not the ultimate result of Balthasar's reflections on divine receptivity to creation may be acceptable in a revised, qualified form. Without engaging in the debate concerning the ontology of receptivity and *relatio* with respect to the intra-Trinitarian relations, which is beyond the scope of this essay,[117] I will argue that there is a sense in which it can be said that the triune God "enriches" himself through his own creative activity, insofar as diffusing one's glory into participatory manifestations may be designated "self-enriching."

The concluding paragraph of the entire *Theodramatik* asks, "What does God gain from the world?" and answers, "an additional gift" given by each divine person to the other, as the world is given "divine things" "and return[s] them to God as a divine gift" by its participation in the interior life of God.[118]

[117] Balthasar seems to use the principle that there is greater dissimilitude between God and creation than similitude to speculate about the event-quality of God's inner Trinitarian processions: see, for example, *TL* II:82-83 (G 76-78). But concerning the relational ontology that would be indispensable for further discussion of receptivity in God as Trinity, see W. Norris Clarke, *Person and Being* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1998), an extended version of his article, "Person, Being, and St. Thomas," *Communio* 19 (1992): 601-18; idem, "Response to David Schindler's Comments," *Communio* 20 (1993): 593-98; idem, "Response to Long's Comments," *Communio* 21 (1994): 165-69; idem, "Response to Blair's Comments," *Communio* 21 (1994): 170-71; Hans Urs von Balthasar, "On the Concept of Person," *Communio* 13 (1986): 18-26; Joseph Ratzinger, "Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology," *Communio* 17 (1990): 439-54; David L. Schindler, "Norris Clarke on Person, Being, and St. Thomas," *Communio* 20 (1993): 580-92; idem, "The Person: Philosophy, Theology, and Receptivity," *Communio* 21 (1994): 172-90; Kenneth L. Schmitz, "The Geography of the Human Person," *Communio* 13 (1986): 27-48; idem, "Selves and Persons: A Difference in Loves?" *Communio* 18 (1991): 183-206. For the critiques addressed by Clarke and Schindler, see Steven A. Long, "Divine and Creaturely 'Receptivity': The Search for a Middle Term," *Communio* 21 (1994): 151-61; and George A. Blair, "On *Esse* and Relation," *Communio* 21 (1994): 162-64.

[118] *TD* V:521 (G 476). Thus, Healy begins his book on Balthasar by presenting the concluding section of *Das Endspiel* as the fundamental philosophical contribution of Balthasar's dramatic theory to the metaphysical synthesis of Thomas Aquinas. See *Being as Communion*, 1-6.

Dalzell thinks this aspect of Balthasar's theology is opposed to Aquinas's position:

> God freely allows himself out of love, it is suggested, to be affected by the freedom he has made and any increase implied is situated in an eternal increase resulting from the ongoing exchange of love constituted by the divine processions. While Aquinas understood creation in terms of a real relationship of dependence between the creature and God, he safeguarded God's transcendence by ruling out the existence of a real relationship between God and creation. The fact that Balthasar understands the increase implied by created freedom's affecting God to be over and above an already realized perfection of divine love ensures that God's transcendence is not compromised and so it can be argued that he makes a good case for leaving Thomas' position behind.[119]

Perhaps offering a defense of Balthasar's nuanced posture with respect to the notorious Thomistic notion that God has only a "virtual"[120] (rather than a "real") relation to creation, but more likely providing an exegesis in line with Maritain's speculations, Thomas Weinandy argues to the contrary that, according to Aquinas:

> God is actually related, in reality, to the creature, not because of some change in him, but only because the creature is really related to him as he exists in himself as *ipsum esse*. It is because the creature is really related to God that we come to understand God in a new way as Creator. Thus God is in reality Creator and is actually related to the creature, but only because the creature is related to him as he is.[121]

Taking as a point of departure the medieval notion that created otherness is not a deficiency, Balthasar develops reflections on the giftedness of being as revealed in the experience of inter-

[119] Thomas G. Dalzell, *The Dramatic Encounter of Divine and Human Freedom in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 290.

[120] Regarding the different kinds of distinctions, see a classic Scholastic manual, such as Celestine Bittle, *Ontology: The Domain of Being* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Bruce Publishing Company, 1939), esp. 155-61, on different kinds of logical distinction, particularly "virtual distinction."

[121] Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, 136 n. 69. Still, as Weinandy notes there, Aquinas is clear that "it cannot be said, however, that these relations exist as realities outside God" (*ScG* II, c. 13).

personal love, phenomenologically examined.[122] To escape from Plotinian Platonism it is necessary to affirm the "positivity" of created being, at once true and good and beautiful.[123] Healy explains how Aquinas conceived the "positivity" of created otherness:

> As Thomas writes, "even the difference between one being and another is a being. Wherefore since God is not the cause of a thing tending to non-being, but is the author of all being, he is not the principle of evil, but he is the cause of multitude" [*De Potentia*, q. 3, a. 16, ad 3]. . . . *Esse* [which is non-subsistent in creatures] is a unity—it contains all the perfections of being—that, without ceasing to be one, contains a polarity within itself such that it depends on another. Difference is inscribed in the heart of the unity of being as something fundamentally positive.[124]

In other words, multiplicity is no longer conceived, in the Christian tradition, as a necessarily privative reality; both created multiplicity and divine multiplicity are good, even while God alone is perfectly one.[125] Therefore, while God cannot gain anything, strictly speaking, from finite beings, he does make himself vulnerable to the realities he creates in such a way that his desires for them may either be fulfilled or frustrated.

Nonetheless, impugning Balthasar's rapprochement with Hegelianism, Weinandy disputes the related notion that only a triune God would be free not to create.[126] Bruce Marshall,

[122] For development of this and related themes, see especially Kenneth L. Schmitz, *The Gift: Creation* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1982); D. C. Schindler, *Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Dramatic Structure of Truth: A Philosophical Investigation* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004).

[123] Hence, Balthasar states: "[Both Bonaventure and Thomas enunciate the axiom] that (derived, worldly) otherness vis-à-vis God presupposes an (original, trinitarian) otherness in God, an otherness that, as such, is supreme positivity. We can immediately infer from this basic axiom that anyone who reckons the world's otherness as purely negative in comparison with the sheer divine One will *ipso facto* take a path radically divergent from that of Christianity" (*TL* II:107 [G 99]).

[124] Healy, *Being as Communion*, 52.

[125] See ibid., c. 2; Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2004), 178ff. (*Einführung in das Christentum* [Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1971], 165ff.).

[126] See Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?*, 139 n. 75. Alluding to other influences, Weinandy offers the following insights: "Immutability and impassibility must never be

likewise pointing to Hegel as the catalyst of such thought, states: "nothing in the contingent history of creation or salvation realizes, perfects, intensifies, or otherwise alters the divine Persons in either their distinction or their unity."[127] Strictly speaking, this is true (according to perennial Christian doctrine) and is granted by Balthasar, but the question remains whether there is some sense in which it might be said that the Trinitarian God, already entirely self-sufficient, is super-abundantly fulfilled, as it were, *ad extra,* through his own economic self-expressions in creation, incarnation, passion-death-descent, resurrection-ascent, and final judgment (and/or universal consummation).[128] Perhaps another way of stating the same is to assert that, according to the intimate relationship between the economic and the immanent dimensions of the God of revelation, there would in fact be no creation if God were not a Trinity of subsistent relations.

perceived, as Galot and von Balthasar do, as stumbling blocks that need to be overcome, as if, despite being immutable and impassible, God is, nonetheless, in a dialectic fashion, still loving and merciful. Rather, God's immutability and impassibility are the absolute presuppositions and prolegomena for ensuring that he is perfectly loving. Moreover, by attempting to distinguish between God-in-himself and God-for-us, a distinction that is highly dubious in itself, they have placed a breach between God as he truly is and God who relates to us. Such a chasm is not only philosophically unwarranted, but it is also theologically detrimental to biblical revelation and the Christian tradition, which glories in the fact that God actually interacts with and relates to us as he truly is in the fullness of his divinity. God need not 're-fashion' himself in order to interact with us" (ibid., 163 n. 31).

[127] Marshall, "The Absolute and the Trinity," 163.

[128] Balthasar apparently agrees with Rahner's opinion that the final judgment occurs at one's own death (*TD* V:357 [G 326]), which would leave for the end of time only the "consummation of all things." Regardless, it is thanks to the God-man's transformative passion that his timeless love encounters the freedom of every man in the mysterious "moment" of his death (which is thus understood in personalist terms as an existential event); see my "The Possibility of Universal Conversion in Death: Temporality, Annihilation, and Grace" *Modern Theology* 32 (2016): 307-24. For Maritain, the consummation of all things will follow the final judgment in a progressive manner (see "Beginning with a Reverie"). As Healy puts it, Christ "undergirds" death by his death (see *Being as Communion*, 204).

It seems that, according to Balthasar's mode of thought, if God were not a Trinity, Hegel and process theology would be right, as O'Hanlon asserts:

> If God were simply one he would become ensnared in the world-process through the incarnation and cross. But because God is triune, with both poles of difference and unity guaranteed by the Holy Spirit, the difference between Father and Son can accommodate all created differences including that extreme distance shown on the cross which becomes a revelation of the closest togetherness of Father and Son. In this way the ever-greater trinitarian love of God is the presupposition of the cross.[129]

On the flip side, taking Balthasar's speculations about Trinitarian distance undergirding sinful distance as a point of departure, Richard Barry makes the intriguing claim that without "inter-trinitarian distance . . . there would be no space for genuine otherness (every distance would be collapsed), and there would be no space for finite freedom (every freedom would be overwhelmed), and thus there would be no sin; and there would be love."[130] In other words, if God were an absolute monad, creation would not exist.[131] If, on the contrary, the infinite goodness of the absolute One is *diffusivum sui*, then creation would be necessary, unless within himself being itself is communicated in an infinitely perfect manner, rendering creation almost superfluous. Yet, created freedom exists; ergo, it must be fitting for the Trinitarian necessary being to communicate his love *ad extra* with perfect freedom.

When commenting on this notion of "enrichment" in Balthasar's Trinitarian theology, Dalzell may not be careful enough to avoid what Marshall designates as the infiltration of Hegelian dialectic into Trinitarian theology, according to which the world is a dialogue partner, as it were, of God's own identity as supreme love:

[129] O'Hanlon, *Immutability of God*, 27.

[130] Richard Barry, "Retrieving the Goat of Azazel: Balthasar's Biblical Soteriology," *Nova et Vetera* (English edition) 15 (2017): 13-35, at 23 n. 37.

[131] Against the notion that it would be incoherent to think of God as personal without admitting his Trinitarian nature, see Christopher J. Malloy, "The 'I-Thou' Argument for the Trinity: Wherefore Art Thou?," *Nova et Vetera* (English edition) 15 (2017): 113-59.

> Balthasar claims that such receptivity on God's part is made possible by the eternal receptivity in God, the Son's receiving from the Father and the Father's receiving from the Son. . . . It is this positing of an excess (*Überfluss*) of loving in God that allows Balthasar to save the world's gift to God from being regarded as superfluous. While God's love is ever complete, its ever-greater dimension is perceived as making room for the world's contribution. Rather than the latter being understood as adding to God's love so as to complete it, it is thought to find its place in the ever-greater dimension of that love in such a way that what comes about can even be spoken of as an enrichment (*Bereicherung*) of heaven, a becoming ever-richer (*Je-reicher-Werden*) of the Trinity and an embellishment (*Ausschmuckung*) of the Father's richness.[132]

At the same time, I do not think it can be denied that God in his love is *de facto* incapable of being indifferent toward his own creation, and that the self-effusiveness of the good, or the *ek*-static quality of love, is precisely the transcendent sufficient reason for being as a whole (that is, for *ens commune*).

Dalzell concedes that "it is one thing to use an 'I-Thou' analogy to understand the love in God and another to describe that love, as Balthasar does, in terms of suffering, surprise, and increase."[133] Moreover, it is one thing to speculate on some analogue of receptivity in the divine intra-Trinitarian exchange, and another to put such a notion at the center of one's Trinitarian theology, alongside infinite *ek-stasis*, as if one has familiarity with the inner workings of the divine life. It seems the most we can say is that in some sense God makes himself receptive to the reality of evil, that his creative acts flow superabundantly from his infinitely free love, and that the distinction of hypostases within his own nature is the prototypical origin of creaturely otherness (both as the world relates to its Creator and, derivatively, as finite things relate to one another).[134]

Clearly going beyond the realm of precise speculation, bordering on the mystical (which is necessarily nebulous to the human mind), Dalzell paraphrases some of Balthasar's more eccentric theorizing about the Trinitarian life:

[132] Dalzell, "The Enrichment of God," 15.

[133] Ibid., 7.

[134] Balthasar argues the third point through Thomas and Bonaventure, utilizing particularly the interpretative work of Gustav Siewerth, throughout *TL* II, but especially at 179-86 (G 165-70).

In letting the Son be, the Father is thought to give himself away to the Son. Indeed, the Father is said *to be* this 'giving up movement', holding nothing back for himself. There is then, according to Balthasar, an absolute renunciation in the first divine person of being God alone, a letting go of being God and in that sense a divine Godlessness (*Gott-losigkeit*) out of love which, he proposes, pre-eminently lays a foundation for the very possibility of worldly Godlessness—that of those who have abandoned God but also the 'Godlessness' of the one abandoned on the cross. . . . The Father doesn't cease to be God in expropriating himself, for it is precisely in that self-expropriation that the Father is God. . . . the Son's reception of the divinity must, it is argued, include self-gift and this is understood in terms of a readiness to affirm his own being God as a loving response to the original *kenosis* of the Father. Balthasar will even go so far as to suggest that the Father 'only' (but eternally) receives himself as Father when the Son 'agrees' to be the Son.[135]

The talk of Godlessness in the Father's self-gift and the Godlessness of hellish suffering seems more like an equivocation than a genuine analogy, but here again we run up against the limits of language when confronted with the reality of love that is expressed in suffering.

As created otherness mirrors Trinitarian difference for Balthasar, he finds in the Trinity the ground for his theology of the God-man's sufferings, expressed dialectically:

The Son is eternally begotten by the Father: within the infinite divine nature, in other words, one Person is 'let be' in absolute Otherness; what deep abysses are here! God has *always* plumbed them, but once a finite world of creatures has been opened up, these depths must be traversed stepwise as forms of alienation. Nonetheless these steps can only be taken as part of a journey already (and always) accomplished in the infinite Trinity. And when the particular mystery of the Son's Incarnation takes place, he traverses—as man and together with all sufferers and on their behalf—the realms of forsakenness that, as God, he has already (and has always) traversed.[136]

[135] Dalzell, "The Enrichment of God," 6-7. Concerning the Holy Spirit, Dalzell continues: "It is this dramatic giving and receiving of love in God that leads Balthasar to characterise the Holy Spirit as the 'correspondence' of fathering gift and filial answering gift. As the identity of giving gift and thanking gift, the Holy Spirit is said to be self-gift in the form of an absolute 'We', which not only holds open the infinite difference between the 'I' and the 'Thou' in God, but eternally bridges it over" ("The Enrichment of God," 7). For concise criticism of Balthasar's Trinitarian theology, see Bertrand de Margerie, S.J, "Note on Balthasar's Trinitarian Theology," trans. Gregory F. LaNave, *The Thomist* 64 (2000): 127-30.

[136] *TD* V:502 (G 459).

Balthasar here ties together everything in his *Theodramatik*, essentially a soteriological eschatology, founded ultimately on the Trinitarian life, which "undergirds" even the very possibility of evil and the redemptive incarnation that takes it up. While O'Hanlon might be correct that, in some sense, "the Incarnation itself does affect God," that is, God affects himself through his own acts, as even God's transitive acts are also necessarily intransitive first,[137] nonetheless it goes beyond proper analogical discourse to assert "the incorporation of godforsakenness into the trinitarian relation of love," as Balthasar himself does.[138]

CONCLUSION

Building on argumentation in favor of Maritain's creatively Thomistic position on divine impassibility vis-à-vis divine receptivity to evil (as an invention of his free creatures),[139] I have sought here to engage the best of the secondary literature on Balthasar and his utilization of kenoticism in addressing the problem of how God relates to moral evil, primarily with respect to the Trinitarian dynamic in his *Theodramatik* as it has been received, critiqued, and defended. Certainly, Balthasar displays significant differences with Hegel and even Moltmann. Yet that does not negate the fact that throughout his engagement with philosophical modernity he seeks a rapprochement with post-Hegelian theology, not merely a refutation of its mis-remembrance of Christian tradition, capitulating at least in part on the question of divine impassibility.[140]

[137] Still, I do not see justification for asserting as he does in the same sentence, "its reality is present and effective within the divine *event*" (O'Hanlon, *Immutability of God*, 24 [emphasis added]), as if God's being is infinite becoming.

[138] *Theodramatik*, IV:236; cf. *TD* V:261, translated more ambiguously by Graham Harrison.

[139] See my "God's Relation to Evil."

[140] O'Regan, in his magisterial treatment of Balthasar's engagement with modern (particularly, German) philosophy, admits as much: see *Anatomy of Misremembering*, 241 and 262. He also seems to acknowledge the legitimacy of Weinandy's "subtle criticism" in *Does God Suffer?* (see O'Regan, *Anatomy of Misremembering*, 242). However, Rodney Howsare highlights Balthasar's constructive engagement with Hegelian thought, despite obvious differences (see his "Why Hegel? A Reading of Cyril O'Regan's *Anatomy of*

Assuming a particular paradigm of the relationship between infinite and finite freedom, Balthasar cannot understand God's relationship to the reality of evil in the same way in which a Thomist such as Maritain does. He must, therefore, revert to reflections from the "death of God" theology, which he nevertheless attempts to temper and modify, in order to account for God's relationship to evil and suffering. The Trinitarian "undergirding" of sin itself points up the intricate connection that exists between Balthasar's implicit theology of evil and his staked-out position on the question of divine impassibility. It also indicates where Balthasar sees the potential resolution of the aporia between God's infinite love and man's final rejection of his glory, namely, in God becoming "sin who knew no sin" (2 Cor 5:21), being condemned for our sakes, separating out the good and evil within each person, and incinerating the latter so as to redeem the former.

Without entering into a protracted discussion of the implications Balthasar himself draws out of his appropriation of Maritain on evil, I have found it fitting here to elucidate both the complex relationship to the dialectical method utilized principally in Hegel that Balthasar exhibits, and the vast influence of his attempt to integrate both Maritain and Barth into his own synthetic articulation of divine (im)passibility. Deciphering such influences and how they might fit together in the kenotic perspective on divine suffering, which has pervaded much of contemporary theology, allows one to discern which statements of Balthasar might be validated philosophically (e.g., harkening back to Maritain) and which statements are unjustified except as mystical utterances devoid of precision and susceptible to rhetorical excess. At the heart of the matter is whether meta-symbolic discourse has a proper place in theology, or whether it is less helpful than proper analogical speech aided at times by metaphorical images.

Misremembering, Volume 1," *Nova et Vetera* [English edition] 14 [2016]: 983-92). Balthasar's appropriation of (Russian) kenoticism goes hand-in-hand with the influence that Barth's appropriation of Calvinistic Augustinianism exerted on his thought. For more detail on this claim, see my "The Possibility of Refusal: Grace and Freedom in Balthasar," *Josephinum Journal of Theology* 21 (2014): 342-61.

I do not argue that Balthasar's conclusions are dogmatically heterodox, but that they are theologically questionable and in need of a particular "demythologization." Without entering into his intriguing spiritual and theological relationship with Adrienne von Speyr, or the legitimacy of the latter's experiences, the potential theological import of her mysticism is certainly difficult to evaluate, and reliance upon it is not likely to yield speculative rigor or precision of thought. Hence, without a detailed psychological and theological interpretation of mystical experience as such,[141] recourse to symbol can only go so far in theological discourse. Arguably, the task of "doing theology on one's knees" does not necessitate importing mystical symbolism into speculative theology.[142] In any case, regardless of Balthasar's influences or methodology, his thought has had enormous impact in a number of theological discussions, particularly the significance of naming the divine being "impassible." Thus, the debate rages on concerning the precise relationship between the Trinitarian God of love and the sin-laden world of free creatures, while divine receptivity remains steadfast in the face of evil.

[141] For diverse philosophical interpretations of mysticism as a phenomenon, see Steven T. Katz, ed., *Mystical and Philosophical Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

[142] Concerning the relationship between sanctity and theology in Balthasar, see Antonio Sicari, O.C.D., "Hans Urs von Balthasar: Theology and Holiness," in Schindler, ed., *Hans Urs von Balthasar: His Life and Work*.

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DIVINE EXEMPLARITY, VIRTUE, AND THEODICY IN AQUINAS

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BRIAN DAVIES famously defends a controversial reading of Aquinas and the problem of evil.[1] According to Davies, Aquinas contends that God is not a moral agent in "any sense we can fathom or adjudicate on."[2] He is subject to no moral law and has no moral context. God's goodness is not moral goodness. Therefore, God needs no justification in the face of evil.[3] Brian Shanley attacks this account in *The Thomist Tradition*, claiming that "Davies is at odds with Aquinas himself in claiming that moral virtue cannot intelligibly be ascribed to God, and so it would seem that God could be called morally good."[4] God can rightly be claimed to exhibit the spiritual perfection of moral goodness and should thus be called a moral agent. Davies responds, in *The Reality of God and the Problem of Evil,* that Shanley is not engaging with his position.[5]

If Aquinas takes moral virtue to exist in God, it is only because he thinks that nothing God produces can fail to have some grounding in God's nature. . . .

[1] Brian Davies, "The Problem of Evil," in *Philosophy of Religion: A Guide to the Subject*, ed. Brian Davies (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1998), 163-201.

[2] Brian Davies, O.P., "Is God a Moral Agent?" in *Whose God? Which Tradition?* ed. D. Z. Phillips (London: Routledge Press, 2008): 97-122, at 118.

[3] Brian Davies, O.P., *Thomas Aquinas on God and Evil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 113.

[4] Brian Shanley, O.P., *The Thomist Tradition* (New York: Springer, 2002), 116.

[5] Brian Davies, O.P., *The Reality of God and the Problem of Evil* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2006), 100.

Aquinas thinks that cats derive from God and therefore reflect what he is. But he never suggests that we should embrace the slogan 'God is feline'.[6]

Davies continues to defend this interpretation of Aquinas in *Thomas Aquinas on God and Evil*.[7]

Both Shanley and Davies cite question 61, article 5 of the *Prima secundae* in favor of their respective positions.[8] Therein, commenting on the Augustinian axiom that the soul must follow God to acquire virtue,[9] Aquinas says: "thus it is necessary that the exemplar of human virtue pre-exist in God, just as in him pre-exist the *rationes* of all things. So therefore, virtues may be considered as existing exemplarily in God, and thus they are called exemplar virtues."[10] In Aquinas's mature treatments of God's knowledge the word *rationes* signifies the divine ideas.[11] What neither Davies nor Shanley points out is that the debate surrounding the implications and exegesis of this passage is a debate concerning modes of God's exemplarity and the divine ideas. In other words, the key to understanding this debate more fully lies in Aquinas's doctrine of exemplarity.

[6] Ibid., 98.

[7] Davies, *Thomas Aquinas on God and Evil,* 59-62. Davies' commentary on *ScG* I, cc. 92-94 (Brian Davies, O.P., *Thomas Aquinas's "Summa Contra Gentiles": A Guide and Commentary* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2016]) may be relevant, but it is ambiguous. Davies does not treat the topic of God's moral goodness directly, but simply says, "God can be thought to have virtues insofar as he is totally good and the source of goodness in creatures" and "again, therefore, the principal thesis of SCG I, 92 is, and only is, that God is perfectly good and contains in some sense the goodness enjoyed by anything that has goodness" (ibid., 130). He goes on to affirm that Aquinas predicates certain virtues of God, but stresses (rightly, I think) that they exist in God in a nondivided, nonhabitual, and preeminent way. Whether this is out of keeping with his position on God's moral goodness is unclear to me.

[8] Shanley, *Thomist Tradition,* 115. Davies, *Reality of God,* 98.

[9] Augustine, *De moribus ecclesiae* 6.10 (*PL* 32: 1315).

[10] *STh* I-II, q. 61, a. 5 (Rome: Leonine Commission, 1888-1906): "Oportet igitur quod exemplar humanae virtutis in Deo praeexistat, sicut et in eo praeexistunt omnium rerum rationes. Sic igitur virtus potest considerari vel prout est exemplariter in Deo, et sic dicuntur virtutes exemplares." All translations are my own, unless noted.

[11] *STh* I, q. 15, a. 3. See Gregory Doolan for the distinction between *rationes* and *exemplares*; Gregory T. Doolan, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas as Exemplar Causes* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 14ff.

Both Davies and Shanley are right about God's moral goodness, but in different ways. Both admit that God is the *exemplar* of all virtue but disagree about the implications this has for God as a moral *exemplum* (an example to imitate) and his moral goodness.[12] I argue in this article that God is an exemplar in three ways: natural, analogous intellectual, and metaphorical intellectual. Shanley is arguing from analogous intellectual exemplarity to God's moral exemplarity and moral goodness. Davies is arguing from metaphorical intellectual exemplarity to deny that God is a moral exemplar or exhibits moral goodness.

Put differently, Davies is correct for those virtues which have imperfection in their *res significata*. God exemplifies these virtues by metaphorical intellectual exemplarity.[13] Hence, he cannot be said to have these virtues in any morally relevant sense. Based on these virtues, God is not morally good and is not a moral *exemplum*. On the other hand, Shanley is right to claim that those virtues which have no imperfection in their *res significata* pre-exist in God according to analogous intellectual exemplarity. These virtues are participations in the divine essence and are predicated in an analogical way. With respect to these, God can be said to exhibit the virtues and moral exemplarity; he can be imitated as a moral *exemplum*. His goodness would supereminently encompass moral goodness.

In my conclusion, I argue against Shanley's implication that this would require one to offer a justification of God. One can hold Shanley's position on analogical predication of some virtues (from which follows God's moral exemplarity) and still follow Davies in claiming that God needs no moral justification. Again, the key is Aquinas's doctrine of exemplarity.

[12] Davies, *Thomas Aquinas on God and Evil,* 61.

[13] Davies, "Is God a Moral Agent?" 119.

I. Exemplar Causality and God

Though most Thomistic scholars divide God's exemplar causality into natural and intellectual,[14] I think one can extend this analysis and distinguish three types of divine exemplarism in Aquinas. This is vitally important for the overall purpose of this article, since the new category of divine exemplarity I posit is at the heart of the dispute between Shanley and Davies. Although Davies admits that God is the *exemplar* of all created virtue, he makes no distinctions between different types of exemplarity and virtue.[15] The type of ontological exemplarity God exercises, however, has essential implications for God's moral exemplarity and moral goodness.[16] To argue this is the case, I first outline natural and intellectual exemplarity in Aquinas, and then show the need for a third category.

Exemplar causality is, according to Aquinas, a type of external formal causality.[17] Technically speaking, an exemplar form is a form after which something is made intentionally by an agent who sets the end for himself.[18] The exemplar is not, properly speaking, the agent itself but rather the form of the agent or the idea in the mind of the agent causing the coming to be (or the being) of the effect. The exemplar cause makes the exemplified become like unto itself. Properly speaking, the exemplar cause does not transfer itself into the effect, but causes the effect to receive a determinate form by mode of imitation.[19]

In this regard, Aquinas locates three senses of "exemplar" related to the three ways the form can exist in the agent-patient

[14] E.g., Doolan, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas*, 219ff.

[15] Davies, *Reality of God,* 99. See also Davies, *Thomas Aquinas on God and Evil,* 61: "Given the *omne agens agit sibi simile* principle, Aquinas is happy to agree that human moral virtue, since it is caused to be by God, reflects God's nature. Yet Aquinas thinks that *all* instances of created goodness reflect what God is, which, in turn, means that *none* of them are to be taken as anything like what we might call a picture of God."

[16] Davies, *Thomas Aquinas on God and Evil,* 61.

[17] Doolan, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas*, 42.

[18] *De Verit.*, q. 3, a. 1 (Rome: Leonine Commission, 1975-76).

[19] *STh* I, q. 44, a. 3; X *Metaphys.*, lect. 2 (1959); XII *Metaphys.*, lect. 7 (2535). Parenthetical references in citations of Aquinas's commentary on the *Metaphysics* refer to paragraph numbers in the Marietti edition (Rome and Turin: Marietti, 1950).

relationship. The intrinsic form of the patient is the *forma secundum quam*. The form of the agent is the *forma a qua*. The idea in the mind of the agent or something outside the agent is the *forma ad quam*.[20] The *forma a qua* is the first sense of exemplar, also known as a natural exemplar.[21] A natural exemplar is the agent's form inasmuch as it causes the effect to receive a determinate form.[22] Aquinas's typical example for this type of exemplarity is the univocal generation of animals[23] (though it also holds for equivocal causality).[24] Nevertheless, this is exemplarity only in a wide sense, since the agent does not determine its intended end.[25] The form is intended by nature, not art.[26] The second sense of exemplar is an external exemplar, as the artist looks at a landscape in order to paint it. The landscape is an external exemplar. Nevertheless, this sense of exemplar is also said improperly because the external exemplar only exercises its causality on the patient through the intellectual exemplar.[27] In other words, the external exemplar is reducible to the intellectual exemplar. The final instance of exemplarity, the intellectual exemplar, is the proper sense of exemplar. The intellectual exemplar is the form in the mind of the agent which causes a definite form in the patient by way of assimilation or imitation.[28] It measures both the end of the agent

[20] Doolan, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas*, 160-61.

[21] *De Verit.,* q. 3, a. 1: "In one way, it is that from which a thing is formed, just as the informing of an effect proceeds from the form of the agent."

[22] Doolan, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas*, 21 n. 45: "Thomas does not himself employ the term 'natural exemplar,' although he does describe such a form as exercising a type of exemplarism. Moreover, he also notes that this sort of (natural) exemplarism can occur when the effect shares an analogous likeness to the agent's nature."

[23] *STh* I, q. 44, a. 3, ad 1.

[24] *De Verit.,* q. 3, a. 1; *STh* I, q. 44, a. 3, ad 1.

[25] Doolan, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas*, 22.

[26] *De Verit.,* q. 3, a. 1. In this sense, natural exemplarity should not be thought of as accidental, but rather the end as set by a more primary agent. It is still the work of intelligence.

[27] *STh* I, q. 44, a. 3.

[28] Ibid.; *De Verit.,* q. 3, a. 1; XII *Metaphys.*, lect. 7 (2535).

(termination of action) and the end of the patient (purpose or flourishing).[29]

With a necessary caveat that God is not a part of any created reality (as an intrinsic formal cause is),[30] Aquinas uses this doctrine of exemplarity to explain, analogously, God's exemplar causality of all created beings.[31] He also specifically applies this to God's exemplar causality of virtue.

> Hence, the divine virtues are said to be exemplars of ours, for those things which are contracted and particular are similitudes of absolute being, just as the light of a candle is to the light of the sun. However, other virtues, which are not properly fitting to God, do not have the divine nature for their exemplar, but only the divine wisdom, which includes the proper *rationes* of all being.[32]

Implicit in this passage is Aquinas's conviction that God exemplifies all things by either natural or intellectual exemplarity.[33] God needs no external exemplar.[34]

[29] XII *Metaphys.,* lect. 7 (2535); *De Verit.,* q. 3, a. 1.

[30] *ScG* I, c. 27 (*Liber de veritate catholicae fidei contra errores infidelium seu summa contra gentiles* [Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1961]).

[31] *ScG* I, c. 49; *STh* I, q. 15; *STh* I, q. 44, a. 3.

[32] *ScG* I, c. 93: "Unde et divinae virtutes nostrarum exemplares dicuntur: nam quae sunt contracta et particulata, similitudines quaedam absolutorum entium sunt, sicut lumen candelae se habet ad lumen solis. Aliae vero virtutes, quae Deo proprie non conveniunt, non habent exemplar in divina natura; sed solum in divina sapientia, quae omnium entium proprias rationes complectitur; sicut est de aliis corporalibus rebus."

[33] *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 7, ad 6 (*Quaestiones disputatae de potentia* [Rome and Turin: Marietti, 1953]): "Between creatures and God there is a twofold similarity. The first is the similarity of creatures to the divine intellect, and so the form understood by God is one *ratio* with the thing understood although they do not have the same mode of being. This is so because the form as understood is only in the intellect, but the form of a creature is in the thing. The second is the similarity of all things to the divine essence by a supereminent similarity. The divine essence and things are not, however, of one *ratio.* It is from this second similitude, not the first, that good, et cetera, are predicated commonly of God and creatures. For when we say this is the *ratio* of God, that God is good, we do not mean this because God understands the goodness of creatures. It was made clear earlier that not even the house in the mind of the builder is said to be univocal with the house as it exists in matter."

[34] *STh* I, q. 44, a. 3, s.c.: "Therefore, the exemplars of all things are not beyond God."

Natural and intellectual exemplarity correspond to two "moments" in creation, as well as to God's intellectual and volitional activity. In the first moment God knows himself, and by knowing his essence he knows the infinite ways it can be imitated (the divine ideas).[35] These ideas are distinguished one from another by the definite mode of imitation and from God by the fact that they are all particular modes of being.[36] As Doolan puts it, relative nonbeing enters into the mind of God and distinguishes each ideas from the others and from God.[37] In the second moment God selects a particular order and particular beings from among the infinite number of possibilities and creates that particular order.[38] In this moment he gives *esse*. This *esse* is limited by the relative nonbeing of the divine idea. The product thus perfectly imitates its divine idea and only participates in the divine essence, through both essence and *esse*.[39] The first of these two moments is formal and has to do with God's intellectual exemplarity of all created effects. In the second moment God exemplifies by natural exemplarity, making other things like him in being.

This picture can be expanded to include a third category of exemplarity. Combining Aquinas's doctrine of the divine ideas and exemplarity with his doctrine of analogical predication allows us to distinguish three ways in which God exemplifies creatures and their respective revelatory power.[40] First, God exemplifies the transcendentals—being and those *rationes* only

[35] *STh* I, q. 15, a. 2: "For he understands his own essence perfectly. Hence, he understands it in all the ways by which it can be understood. God's essence is able, however, to be understood not only as it is in itself, but as it is able to be participated in according to a certain mode of similarity by the creature."

[36] *ScG* I, c. 30; c. 54.

[37] Doolan, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas*, 235ff.

[38] Note that though many orders are possible (*ScG* I, c. 81), that does not preclude necessity within the order chosen. See also *ScG* II, cc. 30 and 46.

[39] Doolan, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas*, 228.

[40] This combination is justified because Aquinas's doctrine of analogical predication rests on his doctrine of participation. Analogy follows from the fact that all creatures participate in God through creation and that God is the exemplar of all created things. See Jan Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 384.

logically distinct from it (one, true, good, etc.)[41]—by a pure natural exemplarity.[42] Since the transcendentals are only conceptually distinct from being, whatever God creates must necessarily have these traits. This most closely resembles natural exemplarity; though the causality is equivocal, there is still a certain analogical likeness.[43] Likewise, because these traits have an analogous likeness (not a generic or specific likeness)[44] to God's own nature, the terms are predicated analogically of both creatures and God. In other words, the transcendentals have no creaturely mode of existence essential to them or imperfection in their *res significata*. Although the terms denoting these realities are first applied to creatures, the perfection they denote applies most properly and primarily to God.[45]

The second category is analogous intellectual exemplarity. This type of exemplarity occurs when the divine idea after which God fashions a created being is a proper participation in God's essence. Falling into this category would be "pure but not

[41] *De Verit.,* q. 21, a. 1.

[42] For the distinction between notions and ideas see *STh* I, q. 15, a. 3, ad 2; V *De divin. nom.*, lect 3 (665) (*In librum B. Dionysii De divinis nominibus expositio* [Rome and Turin: Marietti, 1950]). Granted, the transcendentals are, by necessity, always in God's created effects. However, no one would want to say that God produces these unknowingly or unintentionally, as if by accident. However, this does not amount to intellectual exemplarity, but only notional knowledge of being and its attributes.

[43] *STh* I, q. 44, a. 3; *De Pot.,* q. 7, a. 1, ad 8: "The form of the effect is found in the agent through nature when the agent assimilates the effect to its own nature, since every agent makes something similar to itself. Now this happens in two ways. First, when the effect is perfectly assimilated to the agent, inasmuch as it is equal to the agent's power, then the form of the effect is in the agent according to the same *ratio,* as is the case for univocal agents (e.g., fire generates fire). When the effect is not truly assimilated to the agent, as it is not equal to the agent's power, then the form of the effect is not in the agent according to the same *ratio,* but in a higher way, as in an equivocal agent (e.g., when the sun generates fire). In agents who act through art, however, the effect's form preexists according to the same *ratio,* but not in the same mode of being, for in the effect the form has material being and in the mind of the artificer it has intelligible being. . . . But the divine art does not use an exterior nature for acting, but by the power of its own proper nature makes its effect. Therefore, the forms of things are in the divine nature as in an operative power, but not according to the same *ratio* since no effect is equal to that power."

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

[45] *STh* I q. 13, a. 6.

transcendental perfection[s]."[46] As in the case of natural exemplarity, those realities exemplified by analogous intellectual exemplarity have a likeness to God's essence.[47] They do not have any essential imperfection or creaturely mode of existing in them.[48] Hence, the terms signifying these things would be literally, though analogously, predicated of God and creatures.[49] Nevertheless, there are differences between natural exemplarity and analogous intellectual exemplarity. First, pure perfections are not necessarily in all of God's effects; the transcendentals are. Second, God is not only the natural exemplar of pure perfections inasmuch as they exist, but also their intellectual exemplar inasmuch as they imitate their respective divine ideas. In other words, God is both the natural and intellectual exemplar of the forms in this category.[50] Wisdom is a good example. The virtue of wisdom is certainly an analogical participation in God's essence and is predicated of God by Aquinas.[51] It is only predicated analogically, however, because the exemplar idea of wisdom is a proper participation in God's essence. In other words, God produces this participation through a divine idea, since wisdom is a separable accident.[52]

The third and final category is also a mix of natural and intellectual exemplarity. I will call this third category metaphorical intellectual exemplarity.[53] Included in this category are

[46] John Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 472.

[47] For Thomas's discussion of some pure perfections, see *STh* I, qq. 14, 15, 18, and 19.

[48] *STh* I, q. 13, a. 3: "These perfections are in God according to a more eminent way than in creatures."

[49] Ibid.

[50] Another difference, by no means exclusive to the difference between natural exemplarity and analogous intellectual exemplarity, is that although God has notions of being, truth, goodness, etc., these are not exemplars.

[51] *ScG* I, c. 94.

[52] *STh* I, q. 15, a. 3, ad 4.

[53] *STh* I, q. 105, a. 1, ad 1; Gregory Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God: Thomas Aquinas on the Interplay of Positive and Negative Theology* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 276-78.

realities which are necessarily imperfect (i.e., their terms imply imperfection in their *res significata*). The likeness to God's essence in this case is wholly indirect. Hence, a divine idea is the proper exemplar; any reality with an essentially imperfect mode of being does not directly participate in God's essence. For example, prime matter and those properties that flow from informed matter (extension, place, sex, etc.) are not proper participations in God's essence, but only imitate a divine idea.[54] In other words, the revelatory power of these realities terminates at the divine knowledge and does not communicate a specific likeness to the divine essence.[55]

One might doubt that metaphorical intellectual exemplarity constitutes a third category. Aquinas does think that all the divine ideas are ways in which God's essence can be imitated,[56] and therefore it would seem that even essentially imperfect modes of being imitate and participate in the divine essence. Metaphorical intellectual exemplarity and analogical intellectual exemplarity would then collapse into one another.

In response, one might first note that for many of these traits (e.g., prime matter) there is no separate divine idea, and thus the question is moot.[57] As for other traits, using Aquinas's

[54] *STh* I, q. 15, a. 3, ad 3.

[55] *STh* I, q. 13, a. 3, ad 1: "Certain names signify perfections of this sort which are proceeding from God into created things in such a way that the very imperfect way in which the creatures participate in the divine perfection is included in the signification of the name itself, just as a rock signifies a material being. Names of this kind are not able to be attributed to God except metaphorically. Certain names, however, truly signify perfections themselves absolutely, without this mode of participation being included in their signification, such as being, good, living, and others of this kind. Such names are properly said of God." See also *STh* I, q. 13, a. 3, ad 3: "These names which are properly said of God imply corporeal conditions not in the very signification of the name but in the way of signifying. On the other hand, those names applied to God metaphorically imply a corporeal condition in the very thing signified."

[56] *STh* I, q. 44, a. 3; *STh* I, q. 15, a. 2: "Therefore, inasmuch as God understands his essence as imitable by such a creature, he understands it as the proper *rationem* and idea of this creature."

[57] *STh* I, q. 15, a. 3. It may be that this is the distinguishing factor, whether or not it has a separate divine idea. If it does, then it is a proper participation. If it does not, it is not. However, to prove this fully a careful analysis of Aquinas's distinctions between

doctrine of analogy and predication can help clarify their status.[58] Those traits which fall into this category can only be predicated metaphorically of God. The likeness to God is truly an imitation of his essence (one need not deny this of any divine idea), but one that is wholly indirect (i.e., dependent on, but not identical too, a proper analogous participation).[59] Metaphorical intellectual exemplarity is not reduced to analogous but is dependent on it. Put differently, the analogy of proportionality is based on the analogy of proportion.[60]

How does one know if a trait essentially tied to a creaturely mode of existing can also be predicated of God metaphorically? The central question concerns what Aquinas calls effects.[61] Do God and the thing share a similar effect (*similitudinem effectus*)? More precisely, does an effect or property of that thing have any similarity to God?[62] For example, Scripture calls God our rock.[63] This is possible because one of the properties of a rock is stability, which has an analogical likeness to God's faithfulness. Hence, "rock" can be predicated of God metaphorically, though it is not a participation in God's essence.

It seems correct to affirm on Aquinas's terms that God's ontological exemplarity of created effects comes in three kinds. First, God exemplifies the transcendentals by natural exemplarity. Though these created effects do not share specifically or generically in God's essence, they are proper participations in his essence and are predicated analogically of both creatures and God. Second, God exemplifies the pure perfections by an analogical intellectual exemplarity. Though these traits are also participations in the divine essence, God

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exemplar ideas and notions, as well as their respective negations of the divine essence, would have to be undertaken, and this would take us too far afield.

[58] *STh* I, q. 13, a. 3, ad 1.

[59] In other words, this does not bias Aquinas's clear commitment to all the divine ideas being participations in the divine essence. For Aquinas's commitment that all the divine ideas are participants in the divine essence, see *ScG* I, c. 54.

[60] Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God*, 107 n. 45.

[61] *ScG* I, c. 9.

[62] Properly speaking, God is not similar to anything, as if both participated in a third.

[63] Ps 18:2.

produces them by a divine idea. Thus, he exemplifies them in both natural and intellectual ways. Finally, God exemplifies those traits that are essentially tied to a creaturely mode of existing by a metaphorical intellectual exemplarity. These traits are not participations in God's essence, but are exemplified solely by a divine idea. Their revelatory power terminates in God's knowledge.

As said above, Davies does not deny God's ontological exemplarity of all virtue.[64] Neither does Shanley. To see the disagreement between them requires an appeal to the distinctions in types of exemplarity. The disagreement implicitly concerns the types and implications of God's ontological exemplarity. Davies, since he does not make distinctions in types of divine exemplarity, seems to admit only metaphorical intellectual exemplarity of virtue or to reduce analogous intellectual exemplarity to the implication of metaphorical (that it communicates nothing specific about God's goodness or moral exemplarity).[65] Shanley, on the other hand, implicitly claims that God exemplifies at least some virtues by analogous intellectual exemplarity. This would imply that moral goodness and moral exemplarity could be properly predicated of God in some cases. In other words, there is no reason to treat virtue

[64] Davies, *Reality of God,* 99.

[65] Davies does admit analogous predication. He has even defended it in a recent debate with Richard Cross. See Brian Davies, "Are Names Said of God and Creatures Univocally?" *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 92 (2018): 321-27; idem, "Response to Richard Cross on 'Are Names Said of God and Creatures Univocally?'" *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 92 (2018): 333-36. On the other hand, he does not follow the implications of this commitment to their conclusion, which would be the position of Shanley. To deny that God's goodness encompasses moral goodness, but to admit analogous predication, is incoherent. There is no reason to treat virtue as analogous but then treat moral goodness as univocal. See Davies, *Thomas Aquinas on God and Evil,* 64: "In ascribing justice to God, however, all Aquinas retains of this notion is that of bringing about what is owed, and he does so on the assumption that what is and what is not owed always derives from God's will. Whether you describe the result as employing a highly attenuated notion of justice (given the contexts in which we normally speak of people being just) or as ascribing justice to God in a higher sense than it has when possessed by people does not matter for my present purposes."

analogously and then treat moral goodness and agency univocally.[66]

II. ONTOLOGICAL AND MORAL EXEMPLARITY IN AQUINAS

The real issue in the debate is the relation between ontological and moral exemplarity. The dispute concerns not only the types of God's ontological exemplarity but more precisely what these imply for the claim that God is an *exemplum*. All that was treated above was ontological exemplarity, God as an *exemplar*. Any reader of Aquinas knows that he distinguishes between an *exemplar* and an *exemplum* (ontological and moral exemplarity).[67] While both Davies and Shanley admit ontological exemplarity (though neither distinguishes types of it), Davies certainly seems to deny God's moral exemplarity, whereas Shanley wants to defend it. One can put the disagreement in even stronger terms. Davies denies that ontological exemplarity implies moral exemplarity. Shanley

[66] Davies seems to treat moral goodness as univocal. See Davies, *Reality of God,* 99: "In the passage from Aquinas just quoted, his basic idea is: moral goodness as it exists in people must derive from God and must therefore reflect what he is. I do not want to quarrel with that conclusion here, but it does not seem to me that the most perspicuous way of expressing it is to say that God is morally good. At any rate, given ways in which people commonly think of moral goodness, it is misleading to say that God is morally good if we are thinking of God along the lines that Aquinas does."

[67] The distinction between these is the same as that between ontological and moral exemplarity. For example, when speaking of believers as fashioned after Christ ontologically, Aquinas uses the term "exemplar" (e.g. *STh* III, q. 3, a. 8: "Fittingly, those things which are similar are united. The person of the son himself, however, who is the word of God, has, in a certain way, a common agreement with all creatures. This is so because the word of the artificer, that is his concept, is the exemplar similitude of those things made by the artificer"; see also *STh* III, q. 23, a. 2; q. 24, a. 3; q, 54, a. 2; q. 8, a. 1). When speaking of believers as imitating Christ, Aquinas uses the term *exemplum* (e.g., *STh* III, q. 1, a. 2: "Fourth, regarding right action, in which he gave himself to us as our *exemplum*"; see also *STh* III, q. 14, a. 1; q. 15, a. 1; q. 21, a. 3; q. 39, a. 6, ad 4; q. 40, a. 2, ad 1; q. 46, aa. 3 and 4; q. 48, a. 5, ad 3). One can also reference the literature on Aquinas's axiom *omnis Christi actio, nostra est instructio.* See, for example, Richard Schenk, "*Omnis Christi actio nostra est instrictio*: The Deeds and Sayings of Jesus as Revelation in the View of Thomas Aquinas," in *Studi Tomistici,* v. 37 (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1990): 104-31.

defends this idea, though he does not distinguish types of exemplarity or show the intrinsic connection between ontological and moral exemplarity. Here I wish to explain what Aquinas means by ontological and moral exemplarity and then argue for their intrinsic connection (at least in cases where the agent in question is the ontological exemplar).[68]

One simple way to distinguish ontological and moral exemplarity is on the basis of the distinction between being and operation.[69] Ontological exemplarity causes the patient to receive a determinate form by way of imitation. It concerns the being or coming to be of the effect. Aquinas is adamant in applying this to God: God is the first exemplar of all things;[70] he creates all things. He has no need to look outside himself to discover a perfection after which he will fashion creation.[71] All things are made in imitation of the supereminent perfection of God himself. Moral exemplarity, on the other hand, primarily concerns activity.[72] In moral exemplarity, the perfections of the

[68] It is certainly possible that something be a moral exemplar for humans without being an ontological exemplar of humans. See Adam M. Willows, "The role of Non-Human Exemplars in Aquinas," *New Blackfriars,* vol. 99, issue 1081 (May 2018): 332-45.

[69] E.g. *STh* I, q. 6, a. 3; Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., *Christ and Spirituality in St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 86-102.

[70] *STh* I, q. 44, a. 3.

[71] Ibid., s.c.

[72] One can also explain the difference between ontological and moral exemplarity using an agent/patient pair (keeping in mind that this is an example and nothing prevents something from being a moral exemplar of an action without having been a previous ontological exemplar of that being). According to ontological exemplarity the agent brings some form to be in the patient (or the whole patient in the case of creation). According to moral exemplarity, the previous patient becomes active and brings an action into being based on the example of the previous agent. The form of the previous agent now functions as an external intellectual exemplar of activity and exercises moral exemplarity through the idea formed about that previous agent's being and activity. Thus, the previous agent does formally cause the activity through external intellectual exemplarity (but obviously only through the idea in the mind of the proximate agent). Obviously, God always functions as the ontological exemplar. In the case of moral exemplarity, God brings it about that the patient voluntarily imitates the perfections which preexist in him, thereby making the patient imitate him in a new way ontologically.

exemplar function as an external intellectual exemplar of the activity to be done.[73] The disciple is like an artist painting a landscape.[74] In the case of moral exemplarity another's character/activity is the landscape and one's free activity is the canvas. The moral exemplar's character/activity causes the coming to be of the action formally. However, just as in the case of ontological intellectual exemplarity, it can only inform the effect by means of the interior idea the agent forms about the external moral exemplar.[75]

The intrinsic connection between ontological and moral exemplarity can be seen in Aquinas's use of the axiom *omne agens agit sibi simile*.[76] The root of his use of this axiom is his commitment to ontological exemplar causality. An agent makes a patient like unto its own form (natural exemplarism), the form in its mind (intellectual exemplarity), or some external form (through the intellectual form). Because of this, a form always exists, at least virtually, in a more perfect way in the cause than in the effect.[77] Therefore, Aquinas says that the perfection of effects is to imitate their causes, since the form exists there in a higher way.[78] Things are most perfect when they return to their

[73] A moral *exemplum* is something imitated. If this requires advertence, then the ontological exemplar is not always the moral exemplar. If it does not require advertence, then the ontological exemplar would always function as the moral exemplar. In the case of God, it does not seem to require advertence, since he is the source of all goodness in all its modalities. Any moral growth requires deeper imitation of God, though the agent may not advert to this.

[74] Thomas Ryan, *Thomas Aquinas As Reader of the Psalms* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 96.

[75] John Meinert, "*In duobus modis:* Is Exemplar Causality Instrumental for Aquinas?" *New Blackfriars* 95, no. 1055 (January 2014): 57-70, esp. 67-68.

[76] *STh* I, q. 4, a. 3: "Since every agent makes something to be similar to itself inasmuch as it is an agent . . .". See also Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 517ff.

[77] *STh* I, q. 4, a. 2: "Whatever perfection exists in an effect must be found in its effective cause either according to the same *ratio* (if it is a univocal agent—as man generates man) or in a more eminent way (if the agent is equivocal—just as in the sun is the similitude of those things which are generated through the power of the sun)." See also *ScG* I, c. 29.

[78] *ScG* I, c. 31; *ScG* I, c. 60; *ScG* III, c. 20; *De Pot.,* q. 3, a. 16, ad 14; *De Pot.,* q. 7, a. 5, ad 10; *STh* II-II, q. 163, a. 2.

source.[79] If the agent is the ontological exemplar of virtue, then that same agent is also the highest moral exemplar.[80] In other words, the patient not only imitates the agent ontologically, but also should imitate that agent's perfections voluntarily, since those perfections exist in the agent in a higher and more perfect way. That which is imitated in free activity is precisely what Aquinas means by a moral exemplar (*exemplum*).[81]

Put differently, the ontological exemplar measures both the termination of the agent's action and the flourishing of the patient.[82] The agent's ontological activity ceases when the form is introduced into the patient (though this is not the case with God).[83] Yet that same form which served as an exemplar now measures the flourishing of the patient.[84] To measure flourishing/happiness, in the case of humans, is to measure free human operations.[85] Clearly, Aquinas affirms that God is the creative origin and ontological exemplar of all created being.[86] Because of this, he is also committed to God's being the proper moral exemplar (*exemplum*) of all free creatures. All perfections preexist in God in a preeminent way. Put simply, God is both

[79] *ScG* I, c. 46.

[80] One can see this principle at work in the case of Christ, who is the ontological exemplar of the whole moral life. By that very activity, he becomes the moral exemplar. However, the principle also holds in the case of the divine essence and activity. For Christ's ontological exemplarity see *STh* III, q. 8, a. 5; *Super Ioan.*, c. 1, lect. 10 (200-207); parenthetical numbers refer to paragraphs in the Marietti edition (*Super Ioannem* [Rome and Turin: Marietti, 1972]). Therein Aquinas makes it clear that Christ is the origin, font, and author of grace ontologically. Also see, Torrell, *Christ and Spirituality,* 107ff. By way of example, for Christ's moral exemplarity see *Super Ioan.,* c. 13, lect. 1 (1743); c. 10, lect. 1 (1368-70). Also see Torrell, *Christ and Spirituality,* 87ff.

[81] E.g., *In symb. apostol.*, a. 4 (919-24); parenthetical numbers refer to paragraphs in the Marietti edition (*In symbolum apostolorum* [Rome: Marietti, 1953]).

[82] *De Verit.,* q. 3, a. 1.

[83] I *Sent.,* d. 4, q. 49, a. 1 (*Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, ed. Mandonnet [Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1929-47]); See also *De Pot.,* q. 5, a. 1, ad 2.

[84] *De Verit.,* q. 3, a. 1: "and the divine and good will of existing things predetermining and effective. It is according to these that the supersubstantial being predefines and produces all things."

[85] *STh* I-II, q. 3, a. 2.

[86] *STh* I, q. 44, a. 3; *De Pot.*, q. 5, a. 4.

the unreceived exemplar of all being and the ultimate object of imitation.[87] To deny this would be tantamount to denying God's ontological exemplarity, that is, creation. That is not something Aquinas is willing to do.[88]

Nevertheless, as noted above, one cannot lump God's ontological exemplarity into a single category and claim that it implies moral exemplarity. Only two of the three types of ontological exemplarity unequivocally imply moral exemplarity: natural and analogous intellectual. In these cases, the form

[87] One may admit that the structure of Aquinas's metaphysics implies that whenever an agent is the ontological exemplar, that same agent is also the moral exemplar. One might even admit that God is the ontological exemplar of at least some virtue and that this implies his moral exemplarity. In the case of the divine nature, however, one could claim agnosticism about God's activity. How can we observe God's activity such that it may be imitated? What we observe is virtuous human activity; then we predicate a purified concept of it preeminently of the divine nature. It does not seem to work from the top down, given our epistemological situation. Though this objection is right to recommend caution about observing God's activity, it does not preclude imitation, according to Aquinas. First, he specifically calls God our moral *exemplum*. See, e.g., *Super Matt.*, c. 5: "Since all are sons, all ought to imitate the Father" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew Chapters 1-12,* vol. 33 Latin/English Edition of the Works of St. Thomas Aquinas, trans. Jeremy Holmes and Beth Mortensen, ed. The Aquinas Institute [Lander, Wy.: The Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2013], ll. 553-57). In other words, revelation certainly undercuts total agnosticism about God's moral exemplarity. Even philosophically, Aquinas seems to be committed to saying that God can be imitated morally. When Aquinas predicates goodness of God essentially in *STh* I, q. 6, a. 3, he seems to have in mind all the diverse and analogous ways goodness can be predicated. In his response to objection 3, he says that the goodness of creatures is superadded. This implicitly includes moral goodness, since the goodness superadded to creatures is moral goodness. In other words, what follows from Aquinas's argumentation for God's existence seems to be God's moral goodness. If this did not follow, *STh* I, q. 19, a. 9 makes no sense. Likewise, in *STh* I, qq. 20 and 21, Aquinas predicates both love and justice of God. Nevertheless, given the purification that has to happen for proper predication of these concepts and the infinite difference between humans and God, the amount of imitative content one could draw out philosophically might be minimal.

[88] *STh* I, q. 44, a. 1; see also *ScG* I, c. 92: "For it is necessary that, just as God's *esse* is universally perfect, comprehending the perfections of every being in its own way, so also his goodness contains all goodness in its own way. Virtue, however, is a certain goodness for the virtuous since it is according to the possession of virtue that both the person and the work are said to be good. It is necessary therefore that the divine goodness contain, in its own way, every virtue."

introduces into the patient a deficient likeness of the form of the agent, a proper participation. Metaphorical intellectual exemplarity, on the other hand, is a more difficult case. It seems to me that metaphorical intellectual exemplarity does not imply moral exemplarity. The form introduced into the patient does not participate in the form of the agent, but only exists in the agent's mind. In this case, there is no deficiency of likeness of the patient to the agent and the patient should not look to the agent for the fullness of this form.[89] Certainly, the form introduced into the patient, having only a metaphorical likeness to the agent, could be the cause of an action which does imitate the form of the agent. To anticipate the next section, this is true in the case of the theological virtues.[90] In this case, metaphorical intellectual exemplarity implies that God measures the flourishing of the patient but is not the moral exemplar.

In other words, true ontological exemplarity of the agent (natural or analogous intellectual) must imply that the agent measures the being and flourishing of the patient, but even the weaker sense of exemplarity (metaphorical intellectual) could still imply that the agent measures the effects of this form. This makes perfect sense, since the analogy of proportion grounds the analogy of proportionality. God measures the effects of these forms since the effects are a proper participation in God himself. That is why the cause of these effects can be metaphorically predicated of God.

[89] This has interesting implications for the question of whether one can be said to participate in the divine ideas. For those forms exemplified by metaphorical intellectual exemplarity, one does not participate in the divine ideas. There is a perfect likeness to them. On the other hand, in those cases of analogous intellectual exemplarity, one has a deficient likeness to the divine idea. Hence, participation would seem to be the right term. More properly speaking though, since these forms are a proper participation in the form of the agent, one can be said to participate in the agent and not in the idea. Put differently, it seems right to say that one cannot participate in the divine ideas, but only in God. For a discussion of this issue, see Doolan, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas*, 211ff.

[90] *STh* I-II, q. 64, a. 4.

III. The Ontological Status of Virtue and Its Implications for God's Exemplarity

The central question thus arises: how does virtue fit into the threefold schema of divine ontological exemplarity presented above? To answer this question, one must assess virtue's ontological status. All virtues are separable accidents. Separable accidents are those which do not flow from the essence of their created subjects. By nature, humans are inclined to virtue but do not have it in act.[91] As Aquinas says, activity does not have its permanent principle in human nature and is therefore a separable accident.[92] Hence, all virtues, inasmuch as they are caused by activity, whether of God or of humans, are separable accidents.[93] Furthermore, according to Aquinas, God has distinct divine ideas of all separable accidents.[94]

This may seem to lean in Davies' favor. None of the virtues is a transcendental and so God does not exemplify them by natural exemplarity. In addition, there seems to be good reason to think that virtue itself is essentially tied to a creaturely mode of existing, and thus God would only exemplify it by metaphorical intellectual exemplarity. "Virtue is a good quality of the mind by which we live rightly, which cannot used wrongly, which God operates in us, without us."[95] How can an accidental perfection of a potency retain anything after the way of negation? Accidents and potencies cannot be predicated of God. Rather, what is predicated commonly of God and creatures seems to be the good operation (beatitude) virtue produces, not the virtues themselves. This would make the predication of virtue itself metaphorical by way of an analogy of proportionality and, as long as being the ultimate measure of virtue does not imply moral agency, would support Davies'

[91] *STh* I-II, q. 85, a. 1.

[92] *Q. D. De Anima*, a. 12, ad 7 (*Quaestio disputata de anima* [Rome and Turin: Marietti, 1953]).

[93] The distinction here is between the infused virtues and the acquired virtues.

[94] *STh* I, q. 15, a. 3, ad 4.

[95] *STh* I-II, q. 55, a. 4, obj. 1.

claim that moral exemplarity and moral agency do not follow from God's ontological exemplarity.[96]

It does not follow, however, that because God has divine ideas of each virtue his exemplarity in relation to virtue is necessarily metaphorical intellectual exemplarity. The virtues could be exemplified by analogous intellectual exemplarity, which clearly does imply moral exemplarity. Nor does the definition of virtue necessarily push it into the metaphorical category of exemplarity. When Aquinas explains the definition of virtue, he divides it according to the four causes. Certainly, any possible analogous likeness concerning material, efficient, or final causality is beside the point in a treatment of exemplarity.[97] Yet Aquinas says explicitly that formally virtue is a good quality,[98] a perfection of a human power.[99] It makes both the possessor of this habit and his activity good.[100] Aquinas holds that all goodness and perfection exist preeminently in God. "Everything is called good from the divine goodness, just as from the first exemplary, effective, and final cause of

[96] The heart of this debate is exemplarity and not whether God is the measure/rule for virtue. If God exemplified all virtue metaphorically, that would truly undercut any claims of God's moral agency, goodness, and moral exemplarity. It does seem possible, however, to move the debate somewhat. One could admit that all virtue is metaphorically predicated, but still claim that God is a moral exemplar because he measures the effects of these virtues (beatitude, knowledge, happiness, etc.). I do not think that measuring or being the ultimate rule of virtue implies moral exemplarity or moral goodness, but a case could be made for this.

[97] The likeness of final causality is an analogy of proportion in beatitude, a formal likeness within a difference of species. The perfect acts of virtue by which we achieve a participation in this beatitude thus look as though they should be predicated metaphorically of God by an analogy of proportionality; their effects are a proper participation in God (but not the virtue itself). While this may be true when thinking of likeness in final causality, it does not follow that because something is a part of an analogy of proportionality as the metaphorical term it cannot be predicated analogously in its own right. Charity or wisdom are a case in point. These virtues produce acts which are participations in the divine beatitude but are themselves also participations in God's supereminent perfection in the formal order.

[98] *STh* I-II, q. 55, a. 3.

[99] *STh* I-II, q. 56, a. 1.

[100] *STh* I-II, q. 56, a. 3.

goodness."[101] This is why goodness is predicated commonly of God and creatures.[102] The supereminent and undivided perfection of God is received by creatures in a divided way.[103] If virtue makes humans good and perfects them, then according to Aquinas this perfection must preexist preeminently in God. In fact, this is exactly what we see Aquinas doing when he treats the issue of predicating virtue of God.[104] Any treatment of this issue must take seriously that Aquinas predicates virtue of God many times and clearly does not think of all predication of virtue as metaphorical.

This is clearest when Aquinas himself treats the issue of how to predicate virtue, and distinguishes between analogous and metaphorical predication. In book 1, chapters 92-94 of the *Summa contra gentiles* one can see that at least some virtues fall into analogous intellectual exemplarity, with the necessary caveat that these perfections are not habitual in God, but identical with the divine essence.[105] God's perfection is absolutely simple, but it is received and imitated in diverse ways by created beings.[106]

Infused and acquired temperance and fortitude are exemplified by God in a metaphorical way.[107] Infused and acquired

[101] *STh* I, q. 6, a. 4: "Sic ergo unumquodque dicitur bonum bonitate divina, sicut primo principio exemplari, effectivo et finali totius bonitatis."

[102] *De Pot.,* q. 7, a. 7, ad 6.

[103] Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God*, 276-78.

[104] *STh* I-II q. 62, a. 1, ad 1: "Some nature is able to be attributed to another in two ways. In one way it is attributed essentially, and so the theological virtues exceed the nature of man. In another way it is attributed by participation, just as burning wood participates in the nature of fire. And so in a certain way man is made a partaker in the divine nature, as was said above. And so those virtues are fittingly ascribed to man inasmuch as he participates in the divine nature."

[105] *ScG* I, c. 92: "None of them is said to be in God habitually, as they are in us."

[106] *STh* I, q. 47, a. 1: "For goodness, which is in God simply and uniformly, is in creatures in a multiple and divisible way."

[107] Aquinas's thought develops on the question of whether one can predicate fortitude and temperance of God, from *ScG* I c. 92 to *STh* I-II, q. 61, a. 5, where he says, "So the very mind of God is said to be prudence. Temperance, truly, is the turning of the divine mind toward itself, just as in us it is that which conforms the appetite to reason. Fortitude, however, is God's own immutability. The justice of God is his observation of the eternal law in his actions." This raises a good question: Is God the

justice, taken as commutative, are not exemplified by God even in a metaphorical way. These virtues render two things equal according to arithmetic equality, but God is in no way equal to creatures.[108] Infused and acquired justice, as distributive, as well as the subvirtues of truthfulness, liberality, and magnificence, are exemplified by God in an analogous intellectual way. They are predicated literally, though analogously, of God's essence. Prudence (in its act of command and judgment) is likewise exemplified in an analogous intellectual way. So too are the intellectual virtues. Indeed, God is wisdom. The gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are supernatural principles, are not exemplified by God in even a metaphorical way. They exist to proportion the human subject to God as efficient cause. To be moved by another shares no likeness to God.[109] As for the theological virtues, faith and hope are exemplified by metaphorical intellectual exemplarity. The effects of faith and hope in creatures are knowledge and happiness. God contains both substantially. Thus, God is the measure, but only as metaphorical intellectual exemplar. Finally, God exemplifies the virtue of charity in an analogous intellectual way, since "in God there is not only true love, but there it is firmest and most enduring."[110]

Davies is certainly right with respect to those virtues which share no analogous effect with God. In this sense, as Aquinas conceives of the issue, God does not properly have the perfections of those virtues. God is not the moral exemplar. These habits and virtues are in no way descriptive of God or his activity. The divine nature is not the proper exemplar for

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ultimate measure of these virtues as he is of faith and hope, even though he is not the exemplar? God is the measure of the theological virtues because their direct effect is to attain something proper to the divine nature (knowledge, happiness). Is that true also of fortitude and temperance? It seems as though one could make the case that it is—God is the true measure of immutable commitment to the good and hence the ultimate measure of fortitude, for example.

[108] *STh* I, q. 21, a. 1.

[109] *STh* I-II, q. 68, aa. 1-2.

[110] *ScG* I, c. 91 : "Est igitur in Deo amor non solum verus, sed etiam perfectissimus et firmissimus."

commutative justice or the gifts of the Holy Spirit, for example. Likewise, Davies seems to be right about those virtues which fall into metaphorical intellectual exemplarity but whose effects do share an analogous likeness to the divine nature. For these virtues, such as faith, hope, and (likely) temperance and fortitude, God is only the metaphorical intellectual exemplar but still serves as the ultimate measure. This is why faith and hope have no mean according to their *ratio*.[111] On the other hand, this does imply that God is the moral exemplar for faith and hope; he is not imitated by faith and hope.[112] These virtues cause an act which has a likeness to God but are not themselves alike to him. God has no faith or hope. The causing of an analogous effect does not change this. Hence, Davies is right to claim that Aquinas's affirmation that virtue preexists in God (at least for some virtues) does not directly describe God. God does not seem to be the moral exemplar in these cases.

Nevertheless, not all virtue is essentially tied to a creaturely mode of existing. The existence of analogous intellectual exemplarity and its intrinsic connection to moral exemplarity requires one to make Davies' analysis more precise vis-à-vis Aquinas. Since the perfections of these virtues are a proper participation in the divine essence, God is the primary analogue. God is wisdom, understanding, justice, charity, and so on. More precisely, the perfections of wisdom, charity, and the other virtues falling into this category share a proper likeness to the supereminent perfection of God himself. Hence, since this implies moral agency and moral exemplarity (of an analogous—not univocal—kind), God is the prime analogue for moral agency and for the perfections of these virtues.

What allows Davies to admit ontological exemplarity but deny moral exemplarity is his lack of attention to the different types of ontological exemplarity (some of which imply moral exemplarity). Certainly, if moral goodness requires that one conform to an external law or be measured by something else,

[111] *STh* I-II, q. 64, a. 4.

[112] The very reason Aquinas gives for denying faith of Christ is its defect regarding its matter. See *STh* III, q. 7, aa. 3-4.

then God is not a moral agent. Such a conception of moral agency would impugn God's status as first cause and creator. Davies is correct to claim that God's activity is not measured by or subject to anything outside of himself. But affirming God's moral agency and moral goodness does not require this on Aquinas's analysis (at least for those virtues without intrinsic imperfections).

On the other hand, one should not say that God has no standard. Following Aquinas, one should rather say (using a logical distinction between God's essence and activity) that God's free activity does conform to his essence.[113] God's essence is the standard of all his activity. Put differently, although God can act other than he does,[114] he cannot act in a way divergent from his own goodness (a goodness that contains the perfections of certain virtues supereminently);[115] he cannot will what is totally incompatible with his goodness.[116] This is probably what Aquinas means when he says, in passing, that God's activity conforms to the eternal law.[117]

In other words, God exemplifies virtue and moral goodness in a stronger sense than Davies allows when he says that God is the provider of the moral law.[118] Rather, according to Aquinas, God is the ultimate object of imitation (for those virtues without intrinsic imperfections) because God's essence is the

[113] *STh* I-II, q. 93, a. 4, ad 1: "In another way, it is possible to speak about the divine will inasmuch as God wills things concerning creatures, which are indeed subject to the eternal law: their *rationes* are in divine wisdom. In reference to these things, the will of God is said to be reasonable, though in itself it should more be called their very *ratio*." See also *STh* I, q. 3, a. 7; q. 19, a. 1.

[114] *De Pot.,* q. 1, a. 5.

[115] *STh* I, q. 19, a. 10.

[116] *STh* I, q. 19, a. 9: "Hence, the evil of fault, which lacks order to the divine goodness, God in no way wills. But the evil of natural defect, or of punishment, he does will by willing the good to which such evils are joined. He wills justice, and so wills punishment and wills to preserve the natural order, and so wills some things to corrupt naturally."

[117] *STh* I-II, q. 61, a. 5: "truly, the justice of God is the observation of the eternal law in his operations."

[118] Davies, *Reality of God,* 101.

moral law (in an eminent way).[119] God does not look outside of himself to discover a moral law. Nor does he simply invent the moral law in a voluntaristic way.[120] Rather, the moral law is grounded in the perfection of God's essence (ultimately) and creature's essences proximately (as participations in the divine essence). It is no mistake that Aquinas conceives of the eternal law as the exemplar of good actions and identifies it with the divine ideas.[121] Thus, the eternal law ("the *ratio* of divine wisdom whereby it directs all acts and motions")[122] is itself the diverse ways creatures can participate in God's own goodness, including by their virtues and activity. To deny this is tantamount to denying God's ontological exemplarity. That is something Aquinas would never do.

IV. DOES GOD NEED JUSTIFICATION?

Does this mean that God needs justification in the face of evil? Is Davies right that defending God's moral goodness and moral exemplarity would require such a justification? Shanley seems to think it might.[123] This misses the point of exemplarity, however. If one holds to Aquinas's doctrine of exemplarity and analogical predication, then what modern philosophers of religion think follows from God's moral goodness does not follow. The fact that God exemplifies certain virtues by analogous intellectual exemplarity and is thus the prime analogue for those moral perfections does not give the creature

[119] *STh* I-II, q. 93, a. 4; *STh* I-II, q. 61, a. 5.

[120] Davies, *Reality of God,* 102.

[121] *STh* I-II, q. 93, a. 1: "Just as the *ratio* of divine wisdom, inasmuch as through it all things are created, has the *rationem* of art, exemplar, or idea." See also *STh* I-II, q. 93, a. 6.

[122] *STh* I-II, q. 93, a. 1: "Et secundum hoc, lex aeterna nihil aliud est quam ratio divinae sapientiae, secundum quod est directiva omnium actuum et motionum."

[123] From the position that one can ascribe moral virtue to God, Shanley argues that "there is a significant sense in which God is bound in justice to give what is due to a creature." He qualifies this by noting that it is God who establishes these debts, so God is in no way dependent. Yet it would seem to follow, for Shanley, that if we know what distributive justice requires, we could intelligibly accuse God of having not acted justly—and so God would need justification. See Shanley, *Thomist Tradition,* 116.

any way to judge God. The relation between exemplar and exemplified precludes this. Since God as *exemplar* (and *exemplum*) is identical with the perfection of any virtue, his being is the perfection of that virtue in an eminent way.[124] He is wisdom. He is justice. He is love. Those who merely participate in God's wisdom and love have no ground on which to judge the exemplar. The exemplar is that which measures the exemplified, not the other way around.[125] In both the ontological and moral spheres (at least for certain virtues), God is the exemplar.[126] Thus, he is immune from moral judgment and needs no justification in the face of evil.[127] Arguing for this conclusion, as Davies does, does not require one to see all virtue as predicated metaphorically or to deny the intrinsic connection between ontological and moral exemplarity. Rather, it requires that we see ourselves participating analogously in God's perfection, moral exemplarity, and moral goodness, and that God's moral exemplarity is the source and standard of our own.[128] In other words, it requires that one attend to Aquinas's doctrine of exemplarity.

[124] *STh* I, q. 13, a. 6: "For when it is said that God is good or wise, this does not only signify that God himself is the cause of wisdom or goodness, but that these preexist in him in a more eminent way."

[125] *STh* I, q. 44, a. 3, ad 1.

[126] *STh* I, q. 44, a. 3.

[127] This would dodge the problem of evil in a flippant way, if it implied that God can do whatever he wants without any constraint. However, this is not Aquinas's conception. God is constrained both logically and ontologically, logically by the impossibility of contradiction and ontologically by the goodness of his own essence.

[128] How then, given Aquinas's doctrine of exemplarity, does one explain the seeming need to justify God? It seems to me that it could arise in three ways. First, there might be a problem in our knowledge of what God did or omitted. If we are not certain that God did act or omit an action in a certain case, then we are simply chasing a figment of our imagination. One must be particularly sensitive to this in cases of biblical interpretation, where nonliteral (though not false) speech is sometimes used. Second, if we are correct in knowing what God did or did not do, and it is out of keeping with what we think of justice, then the problem is with what we think of as justice. For example, if we think of distributive justice as distributing common goods in arithmetic equality to all subjects, we would think of God as unjust. That is clearly not how God governs the world. However, if God's essence is identical to the perfection of distributive justice, then we have no grounds to judge that he is not in keeping with

This may seem to beg the question. This is not the case, however. The structure of exemplarity follows directly from Aquinas's metaphysics of creation. In other words, that God is immune from reproach seems to follow from his doctrine of creation in a non-question-begging way. Aquinas does not assume God that is perfect and the exemplar of all virtue. Rather, this follows from God's status as creator and first cause.[129] It is not my purpose to rehearse those arguments or the connection of exemplarity to creation. Both have received ample attention.[130] I simply want to point out that if Aquinas and subsequent defenders of the Five Ways are successful in their argumentation, then Aquinas's doctrine of exemplarity follows. From that doctrine further follow both God's moral exemplarity (Shanley) and his unimpeachability (Davies).

In this sense, it certainly seems that Davies is correct that no problem of evil (in the sense that God needs justification) would follow from Aquinas's metaphysics. Yet in distinction from Davies and in agreement with Shanley, Aquinas claims that one can properly, that is, analogously, predicate virtue, moral goodness, and moral exemplarity of God (God is the moral law itself).[131] In fact, that God is the moral law itself in an eminent way is the very reason he needs no justification. This only

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distributive justice. Third, one might be making the mistake of thinking of the virtues as univocal instead of analogical. We must remember that the virtues are analogical terms when applied to God. It may be the case that what we think of as justice, for example, is indeed justice, but partly different from the way it is realized in God, given the chasm of ontological difference between creatures and their creator. One must sort out in what sense it is the same and what sense it is different before one can make some kind of moral evaluation of the situation in question. This is imperative when speaking about issues like taking life. One has only to think of God's justice vis-à-vis the sacrifice of Isaac to see how damaging the claim of univocal moral exemplarity could be. Nevertheless, this would not seem to preclude analogous moral exemplarity, as Aquinas seems to imply in other cases.

[129] *STh* I, q. 2, a. 3; *STh* I, q. 4, a. 2; *ScG* I, c. 92.

[130] For two very good treatments of the connection between exemplarity and creation see Vivian Boland, *Ideas in God according to Saint Thomas Aquinas* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1996), chap. 6; Doolan, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas*, chap. 5.

[131] *STh* I, q. 21, a. 1, ad 2.

comes to light when Aquinas's thought on exemplarity is understood and applied.

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MAGNANIMITY AND HUMILITY ACCORDING TO ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

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IN RECENT YEARS, scholars have expressed a renewed interest both in the passions and in the virtues which heal, inform, and perfect them. As we will see, magnanimity and humility are found in the irascible power, the seat of passions attendant upon some apprehended difficulty. In contemporary literature, there is some debate as to whether the passions of the irascible power are suitably enumerated. While some defend the Thomistic taxonomy and exposit it according to the criteria employed by St. Thomas,[1] others question whether the Angelic Doctor—in his reception and elaboration of the antique tradition—may have unwittingly included some redundancy in his system.[2]

The charge of redundancy concerns especially the vexed contrariety of hope, daring, fear, and despair.[3] The passions of the concupiscible power have one and only one contrary based on their objects according as they are good and evil (love/hate, desire/aversion, delight/sorrow).[4] By contrast, the passions of the irascible power have a twofold contrariety. One is based on their respective objects according as they are good and evil; the

[1] See Robert Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions: A Study of "Summa Theologiae" 1a2ae 22-48*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[2] See Nicholas Lombardo, O.P., *The Logic of Desire: Aquinas on Emotion* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010).

[3] *STh* I-II, q. 23, a. 2 (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Opera Omnia,* vol. 6, *Pars prima secundae Summae theologiae*, *a quaestione I ad quaestionem LXX* [Rome: Typographia Polyglotta, 1891]). For an exposition of this text and the discussion of contrariety in the passions, see Miner, *Passions*, 54-56.

[4] *STh* I-II, q. 23, a. 2: "secundum contrarietatem obiectorum, scilicet boni et mali."

other is based on their respective movements according as one approaches or withdraws from the same term.[5] Saint Thomas describes how the former mode accounts for the contrariety of hope and fear, while the latter mode accounts for the contrariety of daring and fear.[6] The subtlety of this latter mode of contrariety (and the sense in which it appears to contravene more basic metaphysical principles) has attracted scrutiny in recent years, raising questions as to whether certain passions are not really, but only logically, distinct.[7]

The question of contrariety has been addressed in excellent fashion in recent studies dedicated to passions *in se*, but in order to bring these distinctions more sharply into focus it may prove fruitful to consider the passions as permanently and stably disposed to perfect operation, that is to say, as informed by virtues. Magnanimity and humility—the objects of this present study—concern hope and despair as contrary responses to an arduous good. Admittedly, the contrariety of hope and despair is not nearly the most vexing of those described in the treatise on the passions, and yet the contrariety and complementarity of the pertinent virtues—magnanimity and humility—is illustrative for our present purposes. I will endeavor principally to exposit the peculiar dynamism of magnanimity and humility, each in turn and then by comparison. Though I do not intend to revisit directly the question of the passions and their contrariety, I am attempting to engage the real distinction of the passions of the irascible power by attending to the context in which those passions come to most perfect expression and thus appear in their most manifest contours.

In the Christian life, there are perhaps no two virtues so paradoxically aligned as magnanimity and humility. The former marks the great man, setting him above his peers. By Aristotle's reckoning, the magnanimous man contemns praise from lower men and balks at receiving a favor for shame of being indebted.

[5] Ibid.: "secundum accessum et recessum ab eodem termino"

[6] See ibid.

[7] See Lombardo, *Logic of Desire*, 68-74. Lombardo is especially concerned with the distinctions between hope and daring on the one hand and despair and fear on the other.

Though undeniably praiseworthy, he showcases his excellence by a slow gait, a deep and steady voice, and a generally unperturbed sensibility. He is ironic and cares little for the affairs of others, seeming to his critics more than a shade haughty and inflated. And yet he is the object of both Aristotle's and St. Thomas's commendation, possessing as he does what Aristotle refers to as the crown of the virtues.[8]

Humility, in contrast, is practically absent from the writings of Aristotle. Though he mentions undue humility as a vice opposed to magnanimity, humility in the Christian sense barely features in his moral edifice. It was abhorrent to the great minds of antiquity that a habit akin to dejection should be esteemed as virtuous. But, with the Christian revelation and the resultant revolution in the hierarchy of virtues, humility attained newfound heights in the subsequent tradition.[9] Nevertheless, humility does not run roughshod over the particular contribution of the virtue of magnanimity.

In the Christian tradition, both magnanimity and humility are upheld as perfections proper to the virtuous man, as means of access to God and beatitude. Each is uniquely suited to the perfection of a certain aspect of man's life. To illustrate this apparent paradox, the following endeavors to compare their respective dynamisms, distinguishing the two so as to unite them.

I. MAGNANIMITY *IN SE*

Magnanimity is a perfection of man's soul, making him both good and able to act well. The magnanimous (great-souled) man rightly thinks himself worthy of great things which do not exceed his capacity or just deserts.[10] As St. Thomas notes, he is so named (*magnanimus*) because he possesses a great spirit or drive; the magnanimous man is a veritable dynamo of virtuous

[8] Aristotle, *Nic. Ethic.* 4.3.1123a34-1125a35 (in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon [New York: The Modern Library, 2001]).

[9] See Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 155ff.

[10] Aristotle, *Nic. Ethic.* 4.3.1123a34-1123b14.

action—a fact of which he is well aware.[11] To think less of himself would be unduly humble, what St. Thomas terms pusillanimous; to think more of himself would be presumptuous.[12] Magnanimity establishes a mean between esteeming oneself worthy of honors in a manner disproportionately excessive and doing so in a manner disproportionately defective. Aristotle notes that the mean concerns not the honors themselves, as if one were magnanimous by claiming only a modicum of honors. Rather, the rule is established by proportion to right reason, and the mean of magnanimity is in fact an extreme of sorts: "The proud [magnanimous] man, then, is an extreme in respect of the greatness of his claims, but a mean in respect of the rightness of them; for he claims what is in accordance with his merits."[13] This qualifies magnanimity in the most basic sense as a virtue: it establishes some mean in a matter.

Ordinarily, when trying to determine the comparative excellence of a virtue, one looks to the object of a virtue and the relative dignity of the power it informs. Another criterion (advanced less frequently) for establishing the relative worth of a virtue is its matter. In ranking magnanimity, Aristotle and St. Thomas choose this latter course. Honors, the matter of magnanimity, fall in the category of external things. Aristotle claims that among external things honor is the greatest.[14] This is not to say that honors are most necessary for human life, a distinction reserved for food, drink, and sexual intercourse. Rather, honors betoken the presence of what is most necessary to human happiness on earth: virtue. One is magnanimous in deeming

[11] *STh* II-II, q. 129, a. 1 (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Opera omnia,* vol. 10, *Pars secunda secundae Summae theologiae*, *a quaestione CXXIII ad quaestionem CLXXXIX* [Rome: Typographia Polyglotta, 1899]).

[12] IV *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 8 (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Opera omnia,* vol. 47/2, *Sententia libri Ethicorum, libri IV-X* [Rome: Ad sanctae sabinae, 1969]): "Ille qui aestimat seipsum dignum magnis cum sit indignus, vocatur chaymus, idest fumosus; quem possumus dicere ventosum, vel praesumptuosum. . . . ille qui aestimat seipsum dignum minoribus quam sit dignus, vocatur pusillanimus."

[13] Aristotle, *Nic. Ethic.* 4.3.1123b12-13.

[14] Aristotle, *Nic. Ethic.* 4.3.1123b15-20.

himself worthy of great honors. Now, great honors are attendant upon great acts of virtue. It follows that great honors are rightly due to a man truly excelling in virtue, and thus that magnanimity in a sense *presupposes* the presence of excellence in the man. Saint Thomas summarizes the argument in the following way:

> Aristotle says first that when the magnanimous [man] deems himself worthy of the greatest goods and is really worthy of them, it follows that he is best. The better man is always deserving of greater things, and consequently he who is deserving of the greatest must be best. Therefore, the magnanimous man must be truly good, otherwise he would not be deserving of the highest honors.[15]

Thus, to be truly worthy of honors, which is presupposed by a magnanimous action, one must in fact be virtuous. As Josef Pieper puts it, "A person is magnanimous if he has the courage to seek what is great and becomes worthy of it."[16] Magnanimity can therefore be said to have a logical or metaphysical posteriority to the perfections of the other virtues. Aristotle calls it the "crown of the virtues," in that it is impossible without the established presence of prior perfections, the virtuous deeds and dispositions which magnanimity emboldens and embellishes.[17]

Having considered the matter of magnanimity, we proceed to its proper object. Aristotle makes the observation that what is great in every virtue pertains to magnanimity. Saint Thomas makes this notion the centerpiece of his understanding:

> Magnanimity is a special virtue when it accompanies other virtues . . . what is great in any virtue seems to pertain to magnanimity because one who does not

[15] IV *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 8: "Dicit ergo primo, quod cum magnanimus dignificet seipsum maximis bonis, et eis dignus existat, consequens est ut sit optimus. Maiori enim bono semper melior est dignus; et per consequens ille qui est maximis dignus oportet quod sit optimus. Oportet ergo, quod magnanimus vere sit bonus; alioquin non esset dignus maximis honoribus." All translations of the *Sententia Libri Ethicorum* are taken from St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, vol. 1, trans. C. I. Litzinger, O.P. (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1964).

[16] Josef Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 101.

[17] Aristotle, *Ethics* 4.3.1224a1-2.

perform a great act of virtue is not worthy of great honor. So, when that virtue strives for what is proper to itself, it performs an act of another virtue.[18]

Magnanimity seeks to perform great acts (which merit great honors) in the matter of every virtue. Francis J. Connell notes, "Hence, it is the excellence, the nobility, the ardor of a great deed of virtue that prompts magnanimity to act."[19] The acts are posited under the aspect of being worthy of honor (*dignus honore*) but not precisely for the attendant honor (*propter honorem*). René-Antoine Gauthier has noted the importance of this point and illustrated how this synthesis of matter and object represents a significant historical and systematic achievement in the thought of St. Thomas.[20] Tomasso de Vio Cajetan summarizes the synthesis pithily:

Whereby great honor is not the object, but the matter of magnanimity: but the object is the great deeds themselves in each virtue. Nevertheless magnanimity is named from both: indeed from the object, because its formal object is the great in the work of each virtue; and from the matter, because great honor, among all exterior goods, is the greatest good.[21]

[18] IV *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 8: "Ostendit per quid magnanimitas sit specialis virtus, cum concomitetur alias virtutes. Et dicit quod ad magnanimitatem videtur pertinere id quod est magnum in unaquaque virtute, propter hoc, quod non est dignus magno honore, qui non operatur magnum virtutis actum. Sic igitur circa actum alicuius alterius virtutis operatur illa virtus attendens id quod est proprium sibi."

[19] Francis J. Connell, C.Ss.R., "Magnanimity: A Priestly Virtue," in *From an Abundant Spring* (New York: P. J. Kenedy and Sons, 1952), 28-38, at 32.

[20] Gauthier emphasizes that St. Thomas displayed novelty and genius in the subtle balance of matter and object. In the *Summa theologiae*, St. Thomas unites the Abelardian conception of magnanimity with its object of grandeur, greatness, or excellence and the Aristotelian conception of magnanimity with its object of honor, both as conveyed and interpreted by his master, St. Albert the Great. See René-Antoine Gauthier, O.P., *Magnanimité: L'idéal de la grandeur dans la philosophie païenne et dans la théologie chrétienne* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1951), 314: "Il s'agit pour saint Thomas de concilier la conception 'abélardo-albertinienne' de la magnanimité, entreprise et achèvement des grandes oeuvres, et la conception 'aristotélico-albertinienne' de la magnanimité, vertu de l'honneur. Saint Albert avait professé, tour à tour, ces deux doctrines; saint Thomas a cru pouvoir les unir."

[21] Thomas de Vio Cardinal Cajetan, *Commentaria in secunda secundae Summae theologiae a quaestione CXXIII ad quaestionem CLXXXIX* (Rome: Typographia Polyglotta, 1899), q. 129, a. 1: "Unde magnus honor non est obiectum, sed materia magnanimitatis: obiectum autem est magnum in cuiusvis virtutis opere. Ex utroque

In reading Cajetan on this point, Henri-Dominique Noble elucidates the intrinsic connection between object and matter which St. Thomas refined:

The magnanimous man is not one who seeks out great honors, but one who seeks out the great goods of the soul, great virtues, or, even better, one who accomplishes great virtuous acts. He tends to the great in every category of virtue. And thus, he must be rectified vis-à-vis great honors, because honor attends virtue, and great honors attend great virtuous acts.[22]

Noble makes it clear how the one virtue simultaneously accounts for man's appetite for the great virtuous deed under the aspect of excellence or grandeur (formal object) and for the honors that accompany it (material object).

Both formal object and material object entail some difficulties. It is not easy, and thus it is not simply and immediately desirable (concupiscible), to make a steady habit of excellence. Magnanimity perfects man's appetite for great virtuous deeds and honors by the pursuance of right reason when faced with concomitant difficulty. Marie-Michel Labourdette explains that, in the exercise of each virtue, magnanimity imparts a special motivation or animation in the face of difficulties that stretch the eliciting virtue beyond its normal limits:

Every virtuous act has its difficulty and the virtue is there for that: but it [the particular virtue] does not consider it [the difficulty] under the aspect of difficult. In places where this difficulty becomes considerable, as soon as it is a special obstacle unto itself, one needs in the soul a special enlivening in order

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tamen magnanimitas dicitur: ex obiecto quidem, quia formale obiectum eius est magnum in cuiusque virtutis opere; ex materia vero, quia magnus honor, inter omnia exteriora bona, bonum maximum est." Translations of Latin and French, unless otherwise noted, are mine.

[22] Henri-Dominique Noble, O.P. in Saint Thomas d'Aquin, *Somme théologique: La force 2a-2ae, Questions 123-140,* Éditions de la Revue des Jeunes, French trans. J.-D. Folghera, O.P., notes by Henri-Dominique Noble, O.P. (Paris: Desclée & Cie, 1926), 293: "Lire, sur cet article, le très lumineaux commentaire de Cajetan. Ne prenons pas le change, dit-il: le magnanime n'est pas celui qui vise aux grands honneurs, mais celui qui vise aux grands biens de l'âme, aux grandes vertus, ou mieux encore, celui qui accomplit des grands actes vertueux. Il tend au grand dans tous les genres de vertu. Mais alors il doit être rectifié vis-à-vis des grands honneurs, car l'honneur suit à la vertu, les grands honneurs aux grands actes vertueux."

to intend it [its overcoming] habitually, in order not to content oneself with modest realizations, but not too costly. In a great work of justice or of beneficence, the virtues of justice or beneficence directly realize it, but not without being animated and sustained by a certain general disposition which always carries them to their maximum.[23]

This general disposition to which Labourdette refers, this special enlivening (*animation spéciale*) which habitually overcomes difficulty, is simply magnanimity's modal augmentation of the eliciting virtue operating by the impulse of hope. It is in this crucial role of pushing man to the limit of his virtuous capacity that it makes him to be good and to act well. Thus, magnanimity exercises a kind of augmentative causality which stretches the acts of other virtues to their fullest perfection: "Every virtue derives from its species a certain luster or adornment which is proper to each virtue, but further adornment results from the very greatness of a virtuous deed, through magnanimity which makes all virtues greater."[24] Magnanimity does not principally consider the proper object of the eliciting virtue. Rather, it is occupied with the greatness attendant upon an excellent act thereof. Gauthier writes: "The magnanimous man seeks in [the acts of] all the virtues, not their proper nature, but what they possess of greatness and grandeur, the perfection they entail, the fulfillment of his personality

[23] Marie-Michel Labourdette, O.P., *Cours de theologie morale*, vol. 14: *Force et temperance (IIaIIae, 123-170)* (Toulouse: self published, 1962), 27-28: "Tout bien vertueux a sa difficulté et la vertu est là pour ça; mais elle ne le considère pas en tant que difficile. Là où cette difficulté devient considerable, au point d'être par elle-même un obstacle spécial, il faut dans l'âme une animation spéciale pour le viser habituellement, pour ne pas se contenter de réalisations modestes, pas trop coûteuses. Une grande oeuvre de justice ou de bienfaisance, ce sont les vertus de justice et de bienfaisance qui la réaliseront directement, mais non pas sans être animées et soutenues par une certaine disposition générale qui les portera toujours à leur maximum."

[24] *STh* II-II, q. 129, a. 4, ad 3: "Quaelibet virtus habet quendam decorem sive ornatum ex sua specie, qui est proprius unicuique virtuti. Sed superadditur alius ornatus ex ipsa magnitudine operis virtuosi per magnanimitatem, quae omnes virtutes maiores facit." All translations of the *Summa theologiae* are taken from St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1948).

which they realize."[25] Herein lies the basis of its claim to a certain precedence *secundum quid*, what Gauthier refers to as its place of primacy:

> [Magnanimity] is not a cardinal virtue (*vertu-type*) or a fundamental virtue; it is not the greatest of the moral virtues, except in a secondary sense. But it is capable of orienting the whole of one's life, and impressing upon it its mark: it truly defines a style of life, a personalist style of life, placed wholly under the banner of the flourishing of the human personality. If then magnanimity only occupies a secondary place in a theology busied above all with classifying and analyzing, yet it can claim an honored place in a living spirituality looking to blaze the trails of man's progress to the highest perfection.[26]

This bespeaks the true grandeur of magnanimity and its potent force which suits it well to the promotion of human flourishing.

Having discussed the matter and object, it remains to treat the seat of the virtue. Magnanimity, St. Thomas argues, is annexed to a moral virtue, since it does not have God for its object. Justice properly moderates operations by correction of the will, which magnanimity does not do, so there remain, as generic candidates, the virtues of fortitude and temperance, which inform the passions. As magnanimity denotes a stretching forth of the mind to great things, we have seen that its act signals the presence of some difficulty, namely, the performance of great deeds which merit great honor. Thus, St. Thomas, following Aristotle's characterization, locates magnanimity under the virtue of fortitude, which informs the irascible power.

[25] Gauthier, *Magnanimité*, 369: "Mais comprenons bien: ce que le magnanime recherche, ce qu'il considère en toutes les vertus, ce n'est pas leur nature propre, c'est ce qu'il y a en elles de grand, c'est la grandeur, c'est la perfection qu'elles lui apportent, c'est l'épanouissement de sa personalité qu'elles réalisent."

[26] Ibid., 370: "Nous touchons ici à la vraie primauté de la magnanimité. Elle n'est pas une vertu-type, ni une vertu fondamentale; elle n'est pas la plus grande des vertus morales, sinon en un sens secondaire. Mais elle est capable d'orienter toute une vie, et de lui imprimer sa marque: elle définit vraiment un style de vie, un style de vie personnaliste, placé tout entier sous le signe de l'épanouissement de la personnalité humaine. Si donc la magnanimité n'occupe, dans une théologie préoccupée surtout de classer et d'analyser, qu'une place secondaire, elle peut revendiquer, dans une spiritualité vivante, soucieuse de marquer aux hommes les voies de leur progrès vers la perfection la plus haute, une place de choix." For a clarification of the notion of "vertu-type," see ibid., 361.

By way of summary, St. Thomas states: "Although honor is neither a passion nor an operation, yet it is the object of a passion, namely hope, which tends to a difficult good. Wherefore magnanimity is immediately about the passion of hope, and mediately about honor as the object of hope."[27] So while the difficulty attendant upon hope for honors is not as grave as that presented by fear of death in time of war (the proper object of the virtue of fortitude), magnanimity captures something of the same spirit and is thus annexed to fortitude as one of its potential parts.[28]

Thus, we can classify the elements of magnanimity in the following manner. It is annexed to fortitude as a potential part. Its proximate matter is the passion of hope, which concerns difficulty. Its remote matter is honor, particularly the honor proportionate to one's excellence as displayed in great acts of virtue. Finally, the formal object *quod* is great deeds of virtue, while the formal object *quo* is greatness or grandeur, namely, the very excellence of virtue itself which engages the movement of magnanimity modally beyond that of the eliciting virtue.[29]

II. DOES MAGNANIMITY SUFFICE?

Humility and magnanimity are often paired because they regard the possible arduous good and thus perfect the same proximate matter, namely, the passion of hope (and, as we will see, the associated passion of despair). In the understanding of both Aristotle and St. Thomas, it is often the case that one virtue informs two contrary movements (impulse and restraint in the present case) of a particular facet of a particular power. Such is the case with fortitude, which both moderates daring

[27] *STh* II-II, q. 129, a. 1, ad 2: "Honor, etsi non sit passio vel operatio, est tamen alicuius passionis obiectum, scilicet spei, quae tendit in bonum arduum. Et ideo magnanimitas est quidem immediate circa passionem spei, mediate autem circa honorem, sicut circa obiectum spei."

[28] See *STh* II-II, q. 128, a. 1.

[29] See Labourdette, *Force et temperance,* 29.

and curbs fear.[30] But, as appears in what follows, this pattern does not hold with magnanimity and humility. Here, the paired passions of hope and despair require two separate virtues to achieve integral perfection. Saint Thomas explains:

> The difficult good has something attractive to the appetite, namely the aspect of good, and likewise something repulsive to the appetite, namely the difficulty of obtaining it. In respect of the former there arises the movement of hope, and in respect of the latter, the movement of despair. . . . For those appetitive movements which are a kind of impulse towards an object, there is need of a moderating and restraining moral virtue, while for those which are a kind of recoil, there is need, on the part of the appetite, of a moral virtue to strengthen it and urge it on. Wherefore a twofold virtue is necessary with regard to the difficult good: one, to temper and restrain the mind, lest it tend to high things immoderately; and this belongs to the virtue of humility: and another to strengthen the mind against despair, and urge it on to the pursuit of great things according to right reason; and this is magnanimity.[31]

So, though it may initially appear that one virtue should suffice, St. Thomas ascertains the need for a second associated virtue. Cajetan, commenting upon the explanation of St. Thomas, contends that paired virtues of this sort are normative. In certain cases, the perfection of contrary movements may proceed from the same habit, but this does not obtain with hope and despair, which observe the norm:

> Formally speaking, passions differing in motions of impulse and restraint [*tractus*] have need of virtues of diverse notions, namely, under the notion of bridling and under the notion of strengthening. But, *per accidens*, namely if passions of this sort are determined to some matter in which from one and the

[30] *STh* II-II, q. 123, a. 3: "Et ideo fortitudo est circa timores et audacias, quasi cohibitiva timorum, et moderativa audaciarum."

[31] *STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 1: "Bonum arduum habet aliquid unde attrahit appetitum, scilicet ipsam rationem boni, et habet aliquid retrahens, scilicet ipsam difficultatem adipiscendi, secundum quorum primum insurgit motus spei, et secundum aliud motus desperationis. . . . circa motus appetitivos qui se habent per modum impulsionis, oportet esse virtutem moralem moderantem et refrenantem, circa illos autem qui se habent per modum retractionis, oportet esse virtutem moralem firmantem et impellentem. Et ideo circa appetitum boni ardui necessaria est duplex virtus. Una quidem quae temperet et refrenet animum, ne immoderate tendat in excelsa, et hoc pertinet ad virtutem humilitatis. Alia vero quae firmat animum contra desperationem, et impellit ipsum ad prosecutionem magnorum secundum rationem rectam, et haec est magnanimitas."

same habit originates the *ratio* of bridling and strengthening, it happens that different passions, one extending and the other contracting, may demand only one virtue in that matter: so that passions which *secundum se* require two virtues, as related to such matter, by reason of the matter, are contained under one virtue.[32]

Lacking this peculiar matter, humility and magnanimity exist in the normal fashion as separate *habitus* and thus merit separate consideration. And yet, given their identical proximate matter (hope primarily and despair secondarily) and similar remote matter (honor in the case of magnanimity and "things above" in the case of humility),[33] it should come as no surprise that the subtle distinction has received considerable attention.[34] Thus, in order to exposit this distinction more precisely, I will continue by describing the essential characteristics of the virtue

[32] Cajetan, *In STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 1. "Nam formaliter loquendo, passiones differentes in hoc quod altera consistit in pulsu, altera in tractu, egent, ut sic, virtutibus diversarum rationum, scilicet sub ratione refrenantis, et sub ratione firmantis. Per accidens autem, scilicet si huiusmodi passiones determinentur ad aliquam materiam in qua ex uno et eodem more provenit ratio frenandi et firmandi, contingit quod passiones differentes in hoc quod altera consistit in extensione et altera in contractione, unam tantum in illa materia exigant virtutem: ita quod passiones quae secundum se duas requirerent virtutues relatae ad talem materiam, ratione materiae, una sunt contentae virtute."

[33] A fuller discussion of humility follows. I introduce its matter here only to demonstrate how sensitive is the question of its existence (*an sit?*) before speaking directly to the nature of humility (*quid sit?*).

[34] As V. Vergriete notes, St. Thomas focuses explicitly upon the similitude of humility and magnanimity. *STh* II-II, q. 161 (*De humilitate*) begins by identifying humility vis-à-vis magnanimity. See Thomas d'Aquin, *Somme théologique: La tempérance: Tome second 2a-2ae, questions 155-170,* French trans., notes, and appendices by P. Vergriete, O.P. (Paris: Desclée & Cie, 1970), 395-96: "S. Thomas commence son étude de l'humilité en établissant, dès le départ, un rapprochement entre l'humilité et la magnanimité. . . . S. Thomas tient essentiellement à montrer qu'elles sont . . . solidaires l'une de l'autre, qu'elles se complètent et s'équilibrent, et qu'il ne faut pas les concevoir l'une sans l'autre. . . . il est notable que la première affirmation de S. Thomas sur l'humilité vise à la rapprocher de la magnanimité" ("St. Thomas begins his study of humility by establishing, from the outset, a rapprochement between humility and magnanimity. . . . St. Thomas holds essentially for showing that they are . . . associated, that they complete and balance each other, and that one ought not to conceive of the one without the other. . . . It is noteworthy that the first statement of St. Thomas on humility looks to reconciling it with magnanimity").

of humility, and then pass to a discussion of the salient differences between the two virtues.

III. HUMILITY *IN SE*

Humility is annexed to the virtue of temperance, an observation evident from its position in the *Summa theologiae*. This might lead the casual reader to believe that humility moderates the concupiscible appetite. Saint Thomas explains, however, that this is not the case. Virtues are specified not solely or principally by their proximate matter (be it the irascible or the concupiscible power in the present case); they may also be specified by their predominant tendency:

> In assigning parts to a virtue we consider chiefly the likeness that results from the mode of the virtue. Now the mode of temperance, whence it chiefly derives its praise, is the restraint or suppression of the impetuosity of a passion. Hence whatever virtues restrain or suppress, and the actions which moderate the impetuosity of the emotions, are reckoned parts of temperance.[35]

So even though humility moderates acts of the irascible power, it is annexed to temperance by virtue of its characteristic movement, that of restraint or bridling. Saint Thomas explains further that humility falls into a subcategory of temperance termed "modesty" (*modestia*), perhaps more appropriately rendered "moderation." Temperance and modesty differ in this: temperance restrains the more vehement appetites provoked by the most necessary objects of desire (food, drink, and sexual intercourse), whereas modesty restrains the less vehement movements.[36] The movement of the soul which humility concerns is classed among the less vehement.

[35] *STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 4: "in assignando partes virtutibus praecipue attenditur similitudo quantum ad modum virtutis. Modus autem temperantiae, ex quo maxime laudem habet, est refrenatio vel repressio impetus alicuius passionis. Et ideo omnes virtutes refrenantes sive reprimentes impetus aliquarum affectionum, vel actiones moderantes, ponuntur partes temperantiae."

[36] *STh* II-II, q. 160, aa. 1-2.

Saint Thomas goes on to specify how humility extends to the movement of hope the dominion of right reason. In the case of magnanimity the predominant movement was one of strengthening, firming, or emboldening; humility, by contrast, principally restrains. Saint Thomas writes that humility is needed to "temper and restrain the mind, lest it tend to high things immoderately."[37] Alternately, he states that, "It belongs properly to humility, that a man restrain himself from being borne towards that which is above him."[38] On this account, there is a certain standard to which humility compares the soul's impulses, which it then suffuses with the dictate of reason. In order to render this judgment effective in the order of appetite, one must have a knowledge of his own ability. Saint Thomas captures this intellectual component thus: "For this purpose he must know his disproportion to that which surpasses his capacity. Hence, knowledge of one's own deficiency belongs to humility, as a rule guiding the appetite."[39]

Up to this point, humility is virtually indistinguishable from a secondary or subordinated act of magnanimity. For, although magnanimity operates primarily by impulse or strengthening, it includes a component of restraint that mirrors humility in its essential contours. Cajetan notes this confusing state of affairs: "It is most false [to say that] humility is magnanimity. But the formal distinction of the bridling which arises from humility from the bridling which arises from magnanimity is very obscure."[40] So the question remains, what is to prevent magnanimity from assimilating the perfection proper to humility?

[37] *STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 1: "Temperet et refrenet animum, ne immoderate tendat in excelsa."

[38] *STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 2: "Ad humilitatem proprie pertinet ut aliquis reprimat seipsum, ne feratur in ea quae sunt supra se."

[39] *STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 3: "Ad hoc autem necessarium est ut aliquis cognoscat id in quo deficit a proportione eius quod suam virtutem excedit. Et ideo cognitio proprii defectus pertinet ad humilitatem sicut regula quaedam directiva appetitus."

[40] See Cajetan, *In STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 1: "Falsissimum ergo est humilitatem esse magnanimitatem. Sed quia obscurior apparet distinctio formalis refrenationis quae fit ab humilitate, et refrenationis quae fit a magnanimitate; et harum indistinctio est causa quaestionis."

Though humility and magnanimity are principally distinguished by their opposite tendencies, a further ground for discrete specification has to do with the source of the aforementioned judgment regarding man's deficiency. Saint Thomas writes:

> The chief reason for suppressing presumptuous hope [in the case of humility] is based on *divine reverence*, which shows that man ought not to ascribe to himself more than is competent to him according to the position in which God has placed him. Wherefore humility would seem to denote in the first place man's subjection to God.[41]

For the humble man, his abasement is attendant upon his status as a creature. This does not undermine a true knowledge of his own powers, but rather reveals his powers to be the gifts that they are—gifts to which he has no prior claim or antecedent merit.[42] Josef Pieper writes, "Humility is the knowledge and acceptance of the inexpressible distance between Creator and creature."[43] Humility lives in the ambience of gratuity and exorcises man's pretensions to self-made or merited excellence, healing this self-delusion by the more profound realization of the divine favor in light of human weakness and deficiency. Labourdette describes how humility is not contradictory to

[41] *STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 2, ad 3: "Sed in reprimendo praesumptionem spei, ratio praecipua sumitur ex reverentia divina, ex qua contingit ut homo non plus sibi attribuat quam sibi competat secundum gradum quem est a Deo sortitus. Unde humilitas praecipue videtur importare subiectionem hominis ad Deum."

[42] This notion of gift added to the prior notion of unworthiness involves a theological backdrop of great importance. Vergriete describes how the formal object evokes a theology of God who acts in creation and by providence to secure for man that which he needs, placing man in a state of habitual, perpetual receptivity of being and divine help, in an atmosphere of total dependence. This places us before what he calls, following St. John of the Cross, the two abysses: our nothing before the all of God. See Vergriete, *Temperance*, 476: "Nous prenons conscience de notre état de perpétuelle réception de l'être de du secours divin, de totale dépendance vis-à-vis de l'infinie perfection de Dieu. La connaissance intime de ces deux abîmes, de notre 'rien' en face du 'tout' de Dieu, est la raison première de l'humilité" ("We awake to our state of ongoing reception of being and of divine help, of total dependence vis-à-vis the infinite perfection of God. The intimate knowledge of the two abysses, of our 'nothing' before the 'all' of God, is the first rationale of humility").

[43] Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love*, 102.

magnanimity in this regard, but is rather paradoxically complementary:

The humble man does not contradict his awareness of human dignity or of personal worth, and, in so far as he is also magnanimous, he both possesses and cultivates this awareness. He will not take his motives from outside the truth; that would be opposed to a virtuous attitude. But, it is precisely that he seizes a truth far deeper, before which the first truth [of magnanimity] will appear poor and limited; and it is this deeper truth that will be the rule of his attitude. It takes refuge in the awareness of nothing short of his own nothingness. It is, for every intelligent creature, the complementary aspect of the awareness of his own worth, and it is an aspect even more fundamental.[44]

The realization of one's nothingness conveys the sense of deep unworthiness. In light of this, the humble man recoils from arrogating to himself things or excellences too great. Cajetan describes how this judgment effectively forms the whole man in the recognition of his primordial unworthiness before the divine majesty:

[By the virtue of humility] man should consider himself according to that which is his own, by referring it to God and that which is of God, and according to this regulate his own estimations and affections, inasmuch as there is nothing in him except defect, fault, and offense to God; and so he should esteem and judge himself to be subject to all that is of God, and likewise to judge himself unworthy and unuseful for all things which are of God, and form his affection to be subject to the Lord, as unworthy and unuseful.[45]

[44] Labourdette, *Force et temperance*, 88: "L'humble ne contredit pas cette conscience de la dignité humaine, de la valeur personelle, et lui-même, en tant qu'il est aussi magnanime, la possède et la cultive. Il ne prendra pas ses motifs en dehors de la vérité; ce serait tout l'opposé d'une attitude vertueuse. Mais précisement il saisit une vérité plus profonde, devant laquelle c'est la première qui paraîtra pauvre et limitée; et c'est cette vérité plus profonde qui va être la règle de son attitude. Il se réfugie dans la conscience non moins exacte de son néant. C'est, pour toute créature intelligente, l'aspect complémentaire de la conscience de sa valeur, et c'est un aspect plus fondamental."

[45] Cajetan, *In ST* II-II, q. 161, a. 1: "Si vero homo consideret se secundum id quod sui tantum est, referendo sic se ad Deum et id quod Dei est, et secundum hoc regulet aestimationem affectumque suum, puta quia sic nihil est nisi defectus, culpa offensaque Dei; et sic se aestimat, et iudicat se omni quod Dei est subiici, et similiter ad omnia quae Dei sunt indignum ac inutilem; et affectum suum format ut subditus ad Dominum, ut indignus et inutilis."

While St. Thomas is the consummate defender of the proper excellence of each created thing, here the recognition of the proper excellence of the human person must bow before the deeper recognition that God alone is good: "What have you that you have not received?"[46]

It may be noted that humility marshals the movement of impetus as well, though only in a secondary sense. Just as the humble man orders his appetite lest it strive after things too great, the same divine reverence animates his striving with the confidence born of a deeper truth. Saint Thomas notes:

> It is contrary to humility to aim at greater things through confiding in one's own powers: but to aim at greater things through confidence in God's help, is not contrary to humility; especially since the more one subjects oneself to God, the more is one exalted in God's sight.[47]

Thus, in humility one strives after those things to which he can lay claim solely by the gifts of God in him.

IV. Magnanimity and Humility Compared

Having outlined the basic contours of humility, it remains to compare it to magnanimity. First, and perhaps most fundamentally, magnanimity and humility operate by contrary primary movements. Magnanimity is primarily ordered to impulse while humility is primarily ordered to restraint. In commenting on St. Thomas, Cajetan notes:

> The principal act of humility is to bridle hope lest it be carried immoderately to the heights. But the principal act of magnanimity is to strengthen against despair and to impel the soul to the heights. And here appears their diversity: because the diversity of virtues is determined according to their principal acts.[48]

[46] 1 Cor 4:7.

[47] *STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 2, ad 2: "Quod tendere in aliqua maiora ex propriarum virium confidentia, humilitati contrariatur. Sed quod aliquis ex confidentia divini auxilii in maiora tendat, hoc non est contra humilitatem, praesertim cum ex hoc aliquis magis apud Deum exaltetur quod ei se magis per humilitatem subiicit."

[48] Cajetan, In *ST*, II-II, q. 161, a. 1: "Quia scilicet principalis actus humilitatis est frenare spem ne immoderate feratur in excelsa; principalis autem actus magnanimitatis

Some have gone so far as to suggest that the difference in primacy suggests a real and not merely a logical difference between the respective impulses and restraints operative in the two virtues. That is to say, the primary impulse operative in magnanimity and the subordinated impulse operative in humility are in fact two distinct movements; likewise of restraint, *mutatis mutandis*. Sebastian Carlson is an advocate of this position:

> On the one hand, in seeking the excellence proportionate to his talents, he ought not merely to advance firmly; he must at the same time refrain from advancing unduly. On the other hand, in fleeing the great, he should not only rein in his appetite for what is above measure, but encourage it to what is proportionate. Otherwise, he would still either seek in excess or seek too little. It is evident, then, that in the appetition of the great and difficult there exist: appetition which consists principally in aggression, but demands moderate abstention; and flight or aversion, *fuga*, which consists principally in retreat, but demands moderate aggression. Hence there are not merely two, but four motions of the irascible appetite in regard to the arduous, two courting it, two fleeing it.[49]

Carlson's position represents a certain extreme and is not widely corroborated in the Thomistic tradition, but it certainly brings the issue into focus. It suffices to say, regardless of the extent to which primacy is in fact determinative or even individuating, that the inverse hierarchy of movements serves as a kind of material element in the distinction of magnanimity and humility.

The other major distinction arises from a difference in their respective rules of moderation. The cardinal virtues never posit a mean in a void, but always according to some rule. For intelligent beings, right reason provides such a rule: informed by the virtues, it represents the interior standard of human flourishing in dialogue with an objective, perfecting term. The moral virtues orient man's inclinations in a stable manner to

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est firmare contra desperationem et impellere animum ad excelsa. Et hinc patet diversitas earum: quia penes actus principales diversitas virtutum attenditur."

[49] Sebastian Carlson, O.P., *The Virtue of Humility*, (Dubuque, Ia.: William C. Brown Company, 1952), 5-6.

their respective goods as ordered to his ultimate end.[50] Now, right reason does not function as a monolithic standard of rectitude. Given the range of subordinated ends presented by the virtuous inclinations which constitute right reason materially, man experiences myriad motivations which participate the eternal reason in varied ways. Such is the case with the different motivations (formal objects) of magnanimity and humility. By magnanimity, one considers himself with respect to his proper power as a virtuous agent, under the aspect of his own relative dignity or worthiness. As Cajetan summarizes, "Magnanimity binds hope lest it be carried above what is wholly deserving, and this according to the ratio of the arduous, and lest it be carried above what is possible *through one's own power*."[51] The magnanimous man compares his ability to the excellence on offer in order to determine whether or not it is within reach. A positive judgment deploys the virtue in pursuit of the end. A negative judgment reins in the impulse. Thus, Cajetan observes, "the magnanimous man represses himself from those things which are above him, for the reason that, having compared his resources to the deed, he discovers himself unequal to it."[52]

Magnanimity does not necessarily exclude the knowledge that these perfections are received. This sense of gratuity is inherent in St. Thomas's teaching. He states explicitly that magnanimity arises by a virtuous estimation of that of which

[50] See *STh* II-II, q. 47, a. 6 (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Opera omnia,* vol. 9, *Pars secunda secundae Summa theologiae*, *a quaestione XLVII ad quaestionem CXXII* [Rome: Typographia Polyglotta, 1897]): "Finis virtutum moralium est bonum humanum. Bonum autem humanae animae est secundum rationem esse. . . . Unde necesse est quod fines moralium virtutum praeexistant in ratione" ("The end of moral virtues is human good. Now the good of the human soul is to be in accord with reason. . . . Wherefore the ends of moral virtue must of necessity preexist in the reason"). See also *STh* I-II, q. 57, a. 5; and *STh* I-II, q. 65, a. 1.

[51] Cajetan, *In STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 1: "Magnanimitas tenet spem ne feratur supra condigna, et hoc quantum ad rationem ardui, et ne feratur supra possibile *per proprias vires*, est enim spes de arduo possibili" (emphasis added).

[52] Cajetan, *In STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 2: "Nam magnanimus reprimit se ab his quae sunt supra se, ea ratione quia, collatione facta totius quod in se est ad illud, invenit se imparem illi."

one is worthy "in consideration of the gifts he holds from God."[53] The comparison with humility is not intended to deprive magnanimity of its due theological context. Labourdette, for one, notes the transcendent horizon of magnanimity's motivation:

> The magnanimous man takes his motivation from the knowledge of his own worth and of the desire to reside at the level of greatness and of the dignity due to a human person who is responsible for his own destiny and called to the life eternal, graced with the highest of spiritual faculties such that they are *capaces Dei* which renders the occupation with "little things" pathetic and dishonoring.[54]

In fact, when seen within its context, one discovers the primordial motivation and destiny of the ordered desire for great things—what Labourdette describes as the recognition that "this received perfection makes him worthy of what this perfection extends and aspires to."[55] Magnanimity ensures that these perfections do not remain unfruitful, which amounts to the greatest of recognitions and thanksgivings.

Humility considers the gift of God from another, albeit equally true and complementary, vantage point. Humility, as

[53] *STh* II-II, q. 129, a. 3, ad 4: "Magnanimitas igitur facit quod homo se magnis dignificet secundum considerationem donorum quae possidet ex Deo." See also Gauthier, *Magnanimité*, 345: "La magnanimité, au sens propre du mot, n'espère rien que d'humain—*in ordine tamen ad Deum*—et elle n'espère rien que de soi—*tamen sub Deo*" ("Magnanimity, in the proper sense of the word, hopes only for what is human—still as ordered to God—and only for oneself—still as under God"). Gauthier is using a pastiche of passages from *STh* II-II, q. 128, a. 1, ad 2; and I-II, q. 63, a. 3, ad 2. In the passage from which the former line is taken, St. Thomas is describing confidence (*fiducia*), an integral part (in the case of grave peril) or potential part (in lesser difficulties) of fortitude. In the passage from which the latter line is taken, he is describing the end of the infused, nontheological virtues. Gauthier finds in these passages a transcendent horizon for the operation of magnanimity.

[54] Labourdette, *Force et temperance*, 88: "Le magnanime prend ses motifs de la conscience de sa valeur, du vouloir de rester sur le plan de grandeur et de dignité qui est celui d'une personne humaine, responsible de son destin et appelée à la vie éternelle, douée de facultés spirituelles si hautes qu'elles sont 'capables de Dieu' et qu'il est lamentable et déshonorant d'occuper de 'petites choses'."

[55] Ibid.: "Et il est vrai que cette perfection reçue le rend digne de ce à quoi cette perfection s'étend et aspire; et c'est là qu'il faut être magnanime."

mentioned above, restrains man's hope from great things beyond him in light of his sinfulness, deficiency, and weakness. Man has no claim by his own power to perfections, and humility directs his gaze to their ultimate source and universal destiny. Saint Thomas observes, in the just-quoted response to an objection, that in every man there is "something great which he possesses through the gift of God; and something defective which accrues to him through the weakness of nature."[56] This comparison begins to disclose just how humility moderates human striving, which can easily devolve into egotism or the self-assertion of one who reckons himself "wholly deserving" when in fact he can only attain to the desired end by the power of God at work in him.[57] Labourdette warns that the movement of magnanimity, if left unguarded, will "be easily concerned with personal affirmation and exaltation even more than the realization of a great good."[58] It pertains to humility to stem the tide of this tendency by a continual reminder of the foundation of man's true nobility. Labourdette describes this as

> a sort of transcendent regulation which will guard it from the far deeper and more pernicious extremes: not only ambition but pride, which is the emphasis of self in forgetting the dependence on God; no longer only the pusillanimity of the timid person, but the baseness of one who does not understand the gift of God, who makes for himself a shabby and degrading idea of that which God gives and of his help.[59]

[56] *STh* II-II, q. 129, a. 3, ad 4: "In homine invenitur aliquid magnum, quod ex dono Dei possidet; et aliquis defectus, qui competit ei ex infirmitate naturae."

[57] See Cajetan, *In STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 1: "Humilitas vero tenet spem ne feratur in aliquid ut condignum et ne feratur in aliquid ut possibile per proprias vires, sed tantum per potentiam eius quod Dei est."

[58] Labourdette, *Force et temperance*, 87: "Il sera aisément souci d'affirmation et d'exaltation personelles plus encore que de la réalisation d'un grand bien."

[59] Labourdette, *Force et temperance*, 90: "une sorte de régulation transcendante qui l'opposera à des extrêmes bien plus profonds et plus pernicieux: non seulement l'ambition, mais l'orgueil, qui est la mise en avant du moi dans l'oubli de la dépendance divine; non plus seulement la pusillanimité d'un timide, mais la bassesse de celui qui ne comprend pas le don de Dieu, qui se fait une idée mesquine et avilissante de ce que Dieu donne et de son secours."

Thus, rather than opposing magnanimity, humility grounds it within the edifice of greatness's source and destiny. By a new standard, humility perfects the same irascible power as magnanimity by means of a complementary virtue. Beyond discerning whether the act is proportioned to his own capacity, even understood as gift, the humble man evaluates whether the operation is congruent with "his subjection to God and that which is of God."[60] Cajetan, expanding on the thought of St. Thomas, explains further how these two movements are coordinated:

> So that if one and the same man, magnanimous and humble, tends unto something arduous, as in a great work of charity, justice, or fortitude; inasmuch as he is magnanimous, he will hope to perfect that which is commensurate to the work by his own powers, and so confidently equip himself for the work: inasmuch as he is humble, he hopes that that same thing equal in dignity may be possible, though he be unworthy, through that which is of God.[61]

This does not entail any contradiction. The conflict of different vantages does not descend into the incommensurable tension of perspectivalism. Rather, there is a hierarchy that obtains based upon the reality at stake in light of God's gift. As Cajetan writes, "Thus the humble magnanimous man proceeds to great acts: nevertheless always believing, knowing, and professing himself to be unworthy in relation to his own defects."[62] Humility in no way undermines the properly virtuous animation which magnanimity imparts to the soul. Rather, it places it within the broader context of the divine economy and human perfection.

[60] Cajetan, *In STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 2: "In illa adversatur subiectioni sui ad Deum et id quod Dei est."

[61] Cajetan, *In STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 1: "Ita quod si unus et isdem homo, magnanimus atque humilis, tendat in aliquod arduum, puta in magnum caritatis, iustitiae aut fortitudinis actum; inquantum magnanimus, commensurato opere viribus propriis sperabit illud perficere, et sic confidens accinget se ad opus : inquantum humilis, illudmet condignum sperat ut indignus, et ut per id quod Dei est possibile."

[62] Cajetan, *In STh* II-II, q. 129, a. 3: "Et similiter patet quod humilis magnanimus procedet ad actus magnos : semper tamen indignum se credens, cognoscens et dicens in relatione ad proprios defectus."

For St. Thomas, the harmony of the two virtues is evident from the fact that both apply the same rule: right reason.

> Humility restrains the appetite from aiming at great things against right reason: while magnanimity urges the mind to great things in accord with right reason. Hence it is clear that magnanimity is not opposed to humility: indeed they concur in this, that each is according to right reason.[63]

There can be no true opposition between two things founded on right reason.[64] Upon closer inspection, distinguishing the two virtues is indeed a matter of discerning the unique way in which each brings the rule of reason to bear on the relevant facet of man's interior life. With characteristic precision, Cajetan describes the internal dynamics of this harmonious collaboration:

> For humility does not retract one from works of virtue, but is the guardian of all, always inclining man to thinking nothing of himself, which he considers *secundum quid*; but magnanimity . . . values man as simply adequate to those goods of which he is worthy [*dignificat simpliciter hominem his bonis in quibus dignus est*]. And although the foundation of the dignity of good things is the gifts of God, this nevertheless does not make man worthy *secundum quid*; because whatsoever is man, of man, and in man, is the gift of God. . . . From this therefore it follows that the magnanimous man esteems himself

[63] *STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 1, ad 3: "Ad tertium dicendum quod humilitas reprimit appetitum, ne tendat in magna praeter rationem rectam. Magnanimitas autem animum ad magna impellit secundum rationem rectam. Unde patet quod magnanimitas non opponitur humilitati, sed conveniunt in hoc quod utraque est secundum rationem rectam."

[64] On this point see Henri-Dominique Noble, O.P., in Saint Thomas d'Aquin, *Somme théologique: La Temperance: Tome deuxième 2a-2ae, questions 155-170,* Éditions de la Revue des Jeunes, French trans. J.-D. Folghera, O.P., notes by Henri-Dominique Noble, O.P. (Paris: Desclée & Cie, 1928), 346: "Pas d'opposition entre ces deux vertus, fondées sur la rectitude rationelle. Le magnanime serait tout de suite le plus humble des hommes, s'il constatait, dans un cas donné, son insuffisance. Et celui qui est humble serait prêt aussitôt à agir grandement, s'il en découvrait en lui la capacité" ("There is no opposition between these two virtues founded on the rectitude of reason. The magnanimous man may be at once the humblest of men if he recognizes his insufficiency in a given case. And the humble may be ready at once to act nobly if he discovers in himself the capacity for it").

worthy *simply*, and the humble man only esteems himself unworthy *secundum quid*, that is, unworthy under the aspect of his defects.[65]

It follows that one can think himself worthy (*simply*) and unworthy (*secundum quid*) of the same thing. In this sense, humility emerges as the guardian and guide of magnanimity, providing a foundation and orientation for human striving, lest one be carried off into the unbridled pursuits of selfish self-affirmation. The virtues thus attain to a complementary dignity, contributing in a coordinated fashion to the integral perfection of the human person.

Conclusion

While at first magnanimity and humility may appear either to be redundant or to be in contradiction, this initial aspect of incongruity gives way to a symphonic harmony of human perfection. By moderating the same proximate matter and a similar remote matter, magnanimity and humility fortify the same faculty with the power of two virtues indispensable for attaining the heights of sanctity. With a subtle distinction between their formal objects, they complement each other, introducing distinct rules and movements whereby the passions of hope and despair can oscillate between the creative tension of impulse and restraint. The paradox is not abolished; a deeper intelligibility is made manifest.

[65] Cajetan, *In STh* II-II, q. 129, a. 3: "Quia humilitas non est retractiva a virtutum operibus, sed custos omnium, semper inclinans hominem ad nihil sui sapiendum, quod spectat ad secundum quid: magnanimitas autem, ad cuiusque virtutis magna tendens non secundum quid, sed omnibus consideratis, etiam eo quod ad humilitatem spectat, dignificat simpliciter hominem his bonis in quibus dignus est. Et licet fundamentum dignitatis bonorum sint dona Dei, hoc tamen non facit dignum secundum quid: quia quidquid est homo et hominis et in homine, est donum Dei. . . . Ex hoc igitur quod magnanimus se dignificat simpliciter, et humilis secundum quid tantum se indignificat, hoc est, indignum se aestimat in relatione ad suos defectus."

BOOK REVIEWS

Paul and the Gift. By JOHN M. G. BARCLAY. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2015. Pp. xvi + 656. $70.00 (cloth). ISBN: 978-0-8028-6889-3.

The publication of John Barclay's *Paul and the Gift* has already proven to be a major event in Pauline studies. A high-powered panel was promptly organized around the book at the 2015 annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, and since then it has continued to find an energetic and very positive reception. For many, this creative and clearly written study promises to break through a stubborn gridlock in the field, dating back to E. P. Sanders's publication of *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* forty years ago and opposing the "Old" and "New Perspective." The text certainly represents a major effort to re-center the academic discussion around Paul's theology of grace. To this extent, it is already pushing scholarship toward a different—and I believe—better agenda. This is not, however, to endorse the construction of grace that Barclay advances.

In the author's own estimation, "the reading of Paul offered in this book may be interpreted *either* as a re-contextualization of the Augustinian-Lutheran tradition, returning the dynamic of the incongruity of grace to its original mission environment where it accompanied the formation of new communities, *or* as a reconfiguration of the 'new perspective,' placing its best historical and exegetical insights within the frame of Paul's theology of grace" (573). This formulation is helpful yet hides somewhat the extent to which the book remains a hefty Lutheran counterpunch against Sanders—albeit more civil, supple, and clever than the hardline resistance heretofore, but standing within an unambiguous "Augustinian-Lutheran" pedigree. Barclay thus inscribes himself within a selective and revealing history of research dominated by Reformation voices: Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Barth, Bultmann, Ernst Käsemann, and J. Louis Martyn. Sanders and the New Perspective enter the picture principally as an obstacle for this tradition to overcome.

Barclay keenly appreciates that since "*Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, it has become problematic to identify 'grace' as a matter of dispute between Paul and any of his fellow Jews" (159). In response, Barclay makes two key moves. First, he differentiates a range of possible positions on grace unrecognized by Sanders's monochrome analysis (i.e., homogenized Jewish "covenantal

nomism" as uniformly a religion of "getting in" by grace), using these variegated perspectives as a grid against which Paul's specificity can better be seen. "Grace is everywhere but not everywhere the same" thus recurs as a major leitmotif of the book. Second, within this variety of perspectives Barclay traces a single, common construal of grace—its radical *incongruity*, the absolute disconnect between God's gift and the (un)worthiness of the receivers—across two massively divergent social locations: Paul's first-century missionary church and Luther's sixteenth-century, long-Christianized society. This hermeneutical alignment aims implicitly to answer the fundamental New Perspective charge of anachronism, by reinserting Luther's (purportedly fundamentally accurate) take on Paul within its original social frame, namely, the *ad extra* Gentile mission. In that setting, Barclay contends, the incongruity of God's grace upends the value systems of both Jews and Greeks, thereby forging countercultural, even "dissident" communities. The open connection that Barclay makes between such "innovative" and "boundary-erasing" first-century cells and present ecclesial experience "in cultures where what it means to be 'church' has become radically uncertain" (573-74) indicates that, in the end, the project's rendition of grace has a very ambiguous relation to classical (i.e., sacramental, magisterial) forms of Christian existence. It is Lutheran but not Missouri Synod.

In the process of his reappropriation of a particular Lutheran perspective, Barclay is careful to excise one major accretion from the Reformation view: the noncircularity of grace, that is, the modern, Western notion that grace is "pure gift," a no-strings-attached present that escapes the dynamic of an obliged return. This has nothing, in fact, to do with first-century ways of thinking, as he convincingly shows. "*Unconditioned* but not *unconditional*" is the tag Barclay uses to capture his conception. At work here is a major Protestant problematic that drives the whole enterprise and much of Barclay's previous work on Paul as well: how shall we reconcile God's amoral favor, given without any consideration of moral worth, with his exercise of judgment and the demand to lead a life worthy of a Christian?

To address this problem and to advance his broad position, Barclay divides his text into three basic movements, each book-length in its own right. He begins with a discussion of "the multiple meanings of grace," in which he offers a 75-page treatment of anthropological perspectives and 100 pages on the history of reception. Part 2 contains a 140-page analysis entitled "Divine Gift in Second Temple Judaism." Finally, he devotes 230 pages to Paul's concept of grace in Galatians and Romans. Despite the imposing scale, selective decisions inevitably appear at each step, which raise questions about the balance of the project.

Certainly, Barclay's engagement with the anthropology of gift-giving is the most innovative and captivating element of the work. An interesting exposition of the discussion from Marcel Mauss to Jacques Derrida provides two key theoretical orientations for the whole study: (1) a recognition of the

way gifts create and foster social bonds, and (2) a related suspicion of the modern idealization of a noncircular exchange. Investigation of Greco-Roman sources, both pagan and Jewish, further grounds these principles in the New Testament world. Ultimately, by thus expanding the sense of χάρις beyond the theologically overdetermined language of "grace" in order to embrace its earlier and wider meaning of "gift," Barclay very effectively recaptures the social dimension of the idea and opens up a promising space in which to explore its Pauline significance.

To pursue this exploration more carefully, Barclay next introduces a series of what he calls (borrowing from Kenneth Burke) six "perfections" of grace: superabundance, singularity, priority, incongruity, efficacy, and noncircularity. These formulations are employed either "for definitional clarity or for rhetorical or ideological advantage" (67), and they program the rest of the study. Margaret M. Mitchell has rightly asked whether behind this taxonomy a series of dogmatic constructs is not transparently at work. Priority, for example, is what the tradition calls "prevenience," as Barclay himself acknowledges; efficacy is seemingly *gratia efficax*; and so on. While Mitchell is alarmed at such borrowing from systematic theology, my concern is rather that Barclay has not borrowed nearly enough. The whole apparatus does supply exegetes with a much-needed language to differentiate ways of speaking about grace. Still, it remains rudimentary and reductionist in the extreme, lacking a huge measure of nuance available in the tradition—which has given no little consideration to this topic. How in Barclay's system shall one differentiate, for example, *gratia sanans* from *elevans, gratia operans* from *cooperans*, *gratia creata* from *increata,* or any of the various senses of *gratia sacramentalis*, and so on? The ultimate failure to name these different types of gifts severely impairs the ultimate results. Here, indiscriminately lumping "definitional clarity" together with "rhetorical or ideological advantage" not only reduces the former to the latter, but it inevitably blurs a great many lines that took centuries to draw with precision.

The history of interpretation that follows is mainly interesting for the cast of characters represented and excluded, all labeled as champions of one or more of the six available perfections. The decision to include and begin with Marcion is revealing, for instance. It hints at the degree to which the classic Lutheran struggle to manage a harsh dialectic of Law and Gospel is at work behind Barclay's preoccupation with the problem of God's justice. The absence of a figure like Aquinas, on the other hand, whose prologue to his *Commentary on Romans* claims that Paul's entire doctrine in all the letters concerns the manifold configurations of grace ("est enim haec doctrina tota de gratia Christi"), robs the story of a major and articulate voice. In a word, the focus on Reformation heroes and modern exegetes is normal and expected, but still preprograms the game. One wonders how the picture might be different if even Lutheran Scholasticism had made the cut.

Much might be said about the discussion of Second Temple sources. Again, the exercise is to identify the characteristic perfections of grace represented in specific works. Five texts or authors are chosen for examination: the Wisdom of Solomon, Philo, the Qumran *Hodayot*, Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatem Biblicarum*, and 4 Ezra. Perhaps the most interesting result here is the identification of the *Hodayot* as in many ways Paul's nearest neighbor in the theology of grace, particularly for a shared "juxtaposition of human worthlessness (material, social, and moral) with the glory and righteousness of God" (324), that is, a focus on the perfection of incongruity. Given the penchant of these hymns to speak of humanity as a "corpse-infesting maggot," Barclay is wise to take some distance. Indeed, "Paul does not wallow in the worthlessness of the human in quite the same terms" (325). It remains a little astonishing, nevertheless, that a collection of self-flagellating, pre-Christian hymns should provide the nearest analogy for Paul's central message.

Here the question might be posed whether it might not have been useful to consider another *Christian* text to gain greater perspective on this very diverse world of Second Temple Judaism and its manifold views of grace. I know this is simply not done, but I fail to see any good reason. The Gospel of John, for instance, speaks quite remarkably about "receiving" from the fullness of the Son "grace in place of grace" (ἐλάβομεν καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος, John 1:16). It seems to me that here, if anything, the *superabundance* of the gift comes into high profile along with what we might call grace's gemination or doubling. Not simply that. This same language of "receiving from his fullness" is explicated as conferring "power to become children of God" (ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, John 1:12), a gift of "grace and truth" made in Jesus Christ that somehow surpasses the gift of Torah made to Moses (see John 1:17). In turning to Paul's thought in Galatians and Romans, this perspective—divine adoption through reception of the Son (dare I say *gratia elevans*?) surpassing the prior Mosaic dispensation—appears to me to provide an incalculably better theological point of reference for finding *die Mitte* of Paul's Christian soteriology than the negative anthropology of a group of desert ascetics ultimately disappointed in their eschatological expectations.

It is impossible in a review, naturally, to do justice to Barclay's detailed reading of these two letters. I will mention only one large point in regard to each. In Galatians, Barclay appears so to radicalize Paul's view of Torah and all else that I wonder if it is still possible to hold the argument together: "Paul's target is neither ethnocentrism nor the false opinion that good works can gain benefit from God" (393). Against what, then, is the Apostle fighting? What point is Paul straining to make? "There is no element of value locatable in the human being" (384). In this, frankly, I hear Luther's voice much more convincingly than Paul's—albeit a Luther who has read (and rejected) Sanders and James Dunn.

As for Romans, I would just register a question. Speaking of Romans 5:12-21, Barclay is entirely correct to say that "divine gift is the focus of this

paragraph like nowhere else in Paul's letters" (495). In view of this, can relentless appeal to "incongruity" or even Käsemann's dialectical *Gnadenherrschaft* do justice to the fantastic density and range of Paul's thought? "The language of 'abundance' is very prominent here," Barclay admits, "in the verb περισσεύω (5:15), the noun περισσεία (5:17), and the striking, rare verb ὑπερπερισσεύω (5:20; cf. 2 Cor 7:4)." He continues:

> We are reminded of the language of abundance in Philo's descriptions of the overflowing bounties of creation, but the rhetorical context in Romans 5 gives this perfection of grace a different function. Whereas Philo celebrates the hyper-generosity of the divine Giver who showers good things on all his creatures (cf. 2 Cor 9:8-10), Paul's focus in Romans 5 is on the overcoming of a negative condition by the more-than-matching surplus of its opposite: "where sin increased, grace hyper-abounded" (5:20). In other words, the perfection of abundance is here at the service of another perfection, the one we have already noted as the Pauline hallmark: God's grace through Christ is marked as extravagant precisely in its *incongruity* with the human condition. (495)

This quotation is representative of a categorical reductionism that characterizes the entire study and quickly ceases to become convincing. Without discounting the motif of incongruity (which can hardly be avoided where *gratia increata* is in view), why not give equal attention to the climatic rhetoric of victory and glory toward which the whole argument of Romans 5-8 is moving (see Rom 8:18-39)? Why not simply observe and affirm that Paul's thought is bound up with a circular narrative of gift and response and additional gift that moves well beyond Philo's discourse of creation, for Paul apprehends in God's overflowing charity an order of divine gift giving beyond the original (failed) exchange made with Adam, a "hyper-abundant" gift: "The love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Rom 5:5)?

The inability, ultimately, to make this most basic distinction between orders of giftedness is perhaps an accustomed part of theological life after Henri de Lubac's *Surnaturel*, even in many Catholic circles, but this does not change the confusion it introduces into the work of exegesis. Barclay's in many ways impressive and very useful tome has happily put the agenda of describing grace front and center in the study of Pauline soteriology, and he has equipped scholars to develop this line of research. He misleads us, however, in failing to see where Paul's vision marks its greatest distance from Jewish perspectives. Grace is indeed everywhere in the letters of Paul—not simply Galatians and Romans—but it is not everywhere the same. Incongruity does not and must not eclipse the superabundant and efficacious benevolence by which God's uncreated glory is communicated to his adopted children in the Holy Spirit of his Son. In the end, the *congruity* of merit and the drama of

judgment, which so unsettle and preoccupy Barclay, are only explicable in light of this eschatological gift of supernatural life.

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Human Action in Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus, & William of Ockham. By THOMAS M. OSBORNE JR. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014. Pp. xxv + 250. $59.95 (cloth), $34.95 (paper). ISBN: 978-0-8132-2178-6 (cloth), 978-0-8132-2874-7 (paper).

The editors at The Catholic University of America Press chose the cover art for this book with real insight. A painting (circa 1500) shows several dozen clearly rendered men and women engaged in the business of living. Among them are a dentist pulling teeth, a nun praying while another gathers hay, two men in a brawl, and a lady reading, while Christ looks down from heaven upon them all. It is this collection of actions—the good, the bad, and the possibly indifferent—that Thomas Aquinas, Scotus, and Ockham, each in his own way, worked to systematize. These three diverse efforts at systematization are the subject of Osborne's book on human action. Just as the painter was careful to draw each small character in detail, so too Osborne is careful with all the relevant details of the five areas of action theory he chooses to elaborate: the causes of human action, the role of practical reasoning in choice, the stages of action, the specification of moral action, and the supernatural and moral worth of action.

The first (and longest) chapter, on the causes of human acts, reflects upon how the three figures differ regarding the root of freedom, whether the known object is the cause of the human act, and the relationship between freedom and the good. Aquinas sees reason as the root of freedom, while Scotus and Ockham do not. Aquinas sees the known object as a final cause, while for Scotus and Ockham it is a partial efficient cause. The chapter ends with a short disquisition on the inadequacy of characterizing the contrast as simply that between intellectualism and voluntarism.

The second chapter, on practical reason and the practical syllogism, is largely a presentation of three elaborations of Aristotle's account of the practical syllogism in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. As Osborne notes, Aristotle's account gave rise to a number of questions, such as whether the conclusion of such reasoning was the action itself, and whether the premises for such

reasoning were of a different character than theoretical premises. The chapter presents a number of rather technical attempts to resolve these and other questions. Osborne is to be praised for pointing out in medieval action theory the role of Aristotle's ideas and the overall importance of prudence and practical reasoning. At the same time, though, this chapter is less interesting than the previous one, since it is more difficult to see how any of these theories leads to any significant difference for humans who are thinking about their own actions. Different theories about the root of freedom will lead to very different overall views of human life. But is distinguishing—or not distinguishing—different degrees of practical reason going to have a wider impact? Osborne himself is largely interested in how these theories about practical reasoning are the result of the causal theories he discussed in the first chapter: he identifies a trend of separating nature from will and an increasing emphasis on the will's activity.

The third chapter, on the stages of the act, involves a similar mass of detail. Osborne threads his way through the multitudinous stages of the act in Aquinas (including remarks on the historical background of stages such as "consent") and the much simpler versions provided by Scotus and Ockham. As with the previous chapter, to Osborne the significance of this complex maze lies in the fact that it reflects the causal theories elaborated in chapter 1: Scotus and Ockham do not incorporate natural inclination into their understanding of the will's stages, and for them intellect and will act in separate stages, while for Aquinas they cannot be separated.

Chapter 4, on the evaluation and specification of the human act, presents a topic that is perhaps more intrinsically interesting, though hardly less technical. Osborne deals carefully with Aquinas's account of the object, end, and circumstances of the act. He then gives Scotus's account, in which the "object" is generic and the action is specified by circumstances, and Ockham's version, in which the interior act of the will carries all the moral weight. The account here is faithful and thorough, yet I felt that the differences would have been illuminated if the theories had been applied more actively. The chapter would be much improved by an analysis, from the three perspectives, of some single instance of action, such as a case of self-defense.

The fifth chapter discusses the various views of how acts should be characterized. As Osborne has been careful to do throughout, he includes here the supernatural dimension with which these three thinkers were constantly concerned, and so he discusses the natural goodness, the moral goodness, and the supernatural merit of an act. Overall, Osborne sees a shift to the interior act taking place, such that eventually "Ockham describes the exterior act as a physical act that has no intrinsic moral worth" (220).

The book ends with an excellent seven-page summary and conclusion, in which Osborne draws out the points that have become most clear to him in the comparison—though with due emphasis on the need for subtlety. Osborne makes the point that "the importance of nature and natural inclination is

behind each feature of Thomas's action theory," while Scotus "sharply separates human action from the nonrational world," and Ockham, taking things further, "seems to separate the moral from the natural" (224-25). After pointing out Scotus's and Ockham's emphasis on will, Osborne adds a third theme, already largely present in the first chapter: Scotus and Ockham describe will and the known object as operating in the same order of causality—they are both efficient causes—while Aquinas describes human action using the additional orders of final and formal causality. Osborne thinks that a focus only on efficient causality denotes a "tendency . . . according to which the mind's causal structure can be described in terms that also apply to mechanistic causality in the physical world" (227).

Osborne's writing is admirably clear, and there are frequent, lucid summaries as well as examples (such as "walking to church") strategically placed where they are most needed. The book is bound to be useful, particularly to students—the author's quality as a teacher shows through on most pages. Osborne is also noteworthy for his extreme care and fidelity to the texts he discusses: this particular, fussy Thomist found nothing to complain of, which is a rare experience. The treatment of Scotus is especially thorough, as Osborne traces text after text as well as the arguments—such as those of Henry of Ghent—to which Scotus is responding. Familiarity with the scholarship on these issues is also evident. The highlight of the book is the summary at the end, which is philosophically masterful and makes a number of thoughtful and profound points drawn from the debate.

Contrasting medieval authors with one another is one of the pleasures of scholarship; such study brings details in each author into greater significance, and highlights questions and objections that should be the natural response to these theories. Osborne's book is a strong participant in this enjoyable and fruitful activity. One obvious area in which it will be helpful is voluntarism. One cannot just say that Aquinas is an intellectualist and Scotus and Ockham are voluntarists, throw in a pull quote, and get on with the criticisms or the simplistic historical narrative. The scholarly response must be that medieval theories of reason, will, and choice are more complicated than this, and that no comparison can be made without acknowledging the complications. To those attempting to convince students and young scholars of this fact, Osborne's book will probably become the resource of choice.

In reflecting on the overall meaning of this book, I found myself comparing it with a classic source, Odon Lottin's six-volume *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles.* Lottin's work is a magnificent mid-twentieth-century effort to explain and compare the medieval thinkers on the issues that mattered most to the medievals themselves. Osborne is one of Lottin's heirs, and a worthy one. And yet, Osborne's book will also become a partial replacement—it seems unlikely that many young scholars will be beating their way through Lottin's twenty-page chapter, largely in Latin, on "l'indifférence des actes humains" when they can read three pages in Osborne instead. What

will these young scholars gain, besides brevity, from the newer work? First of all, they will gain focus: Osborne picked the three medieval authors whose views were most influential, not a laundry list of every medieval he could find. Second, they will gain access to scholarly debate: Osborne has extensive notes to famous Scotistic scholars (like Allan B. Wolter and Marilyn McCord Adams), vibrant Thomists (like Daniel Westberg and Michael Sherwin), and intellectual historians of all kinds. Third, I would imagine that almost every reader will benefit from the presence of a clear outline in which the carefully chosen points of contrast show up. Will there be any losses for those who stop at Osborne? Perhaps so. One of them is the loss of context. Action theory, to the medievals, was not its own area of study: instead, it either helps us understand human nature, as part of psychology, or helps us understand how to make decisions about life, as part of morals. Osborne is aware of this, but in narrowing his focus, he could not avoid narrowing its interest. For instance, reading chapter 4 may help a reader understand medieval philosophy a little better, but I am not sure it will help her understand her own, or anyone else's, moral life any better; there is a bit too much emphasis on the distinctions and not quite enough on the actual judgments each author would make. Students may also lose context in another respect: Lottin's work is largely composed of page-long passages from his authors, while Osborne, from concerns of brevity, has very few block quotations. Students will get an account of Ockham that they can trust, but they will not get his *ipsissima verba*. Thus, while they will be helped to understand what Osborne sees in the texts, they will have less opportunity to see anything new for themselves. Those who will be best served, of course, are those who can read the fine new scholarship Osborne provides, read for themselves the texts of the medievals to which he points, and take the crucial step of meditating on where the truth lies amidst the contrasts, distinctions, and trends.

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The Trinitarian Christology of St. Thomas Aquinas. By DOMINIC LEGGE, O.P. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. xvii + 261. $95.00 (cloth). ISBN: 978-0-19-879419-6.

The author's main ambition is to show the profoundly Trinitarian cast of Aquinas's presentation of Christ; the title, then, is nicely descriptive of the contents of the book. A secondary purpose is to call into question a modern

assessment, as in Karl Rahner (on the Catholic side), that Aquinas has separated talk of Christ from Trinitarian discourse, driven a wedge between the economic and the immanent Trinity—as if one could know the latter apart from the former—and failed to do justice to the Incarnation of, precisely, the second divine person.

The book is divided into three main parts. The first is given over to Aquinas's Trinitarian teaching, focusing on the missions. The missions are patterned on the eternal processions and manifest them, extending them, as it were, into time and the created world. By mission, a divine person who is eternally from another (the second person from the first) or from others (the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Word) is sent and becomes present in a new way, in a temporal effect. Thus the Word, who is eternally spoken by the Father, becomes incarnate as sent by the Father and is the term of the taking up of human nature (the second person's visible mission). The Holy Spirit, the Love eternally breathed forth by the Father and the Word, is present to those who are marked by God's love, imparting the grace and infused virtues and gifts that make possible the return of rational creatures to God as their end (the Spirit's invisible mission). The second person also has an invisible mission, being present to the intellect in wisdom. The third person also has a visible mission, as in the appearance in the form of a dove at Jesus' baptism (see too the transfiguration). Here, and elsewhere in the book, Legge insists on the inseparability of the missions, mirroring the eternal generation and procession: the sending forth of the Word into the world is accompanied by the breathing forth of the Spirit into the world.

Part 2 is on the Incarnation of the second divine person, who as incarnate is fully and truly human. Legge is adept in presenting Aquinas's version of the hypostatic union and is especially good at explaining why for Aquinas it was most fitting that the second person be the term of the assumption of human nature (when it could have been one of the other divine persons).

The book's final part examines what Aquinas has to say about the incarnate Word in relation to the third person, the Holy Spirit. It looks at Christ as under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and as endowed with the Spirit's spiritual aids, which are essential to the salvific work of the Word become incarnate. Legge in this connection can legitimately refer—and does so repeatedly—to Aquinas's Christology as a "Spirit Christology." Indeed, part 3 of the book looks at Christ as the giver of the Spirit in the application of his spiritual benefits to those for whom the Word came, lived, suffered, died, and was raised. Legge is consistent and resolute in showing as the book proceeds how what is said of the Word incarnate vis-à-vis the Spirit echoes and is rooted in the inner life of the triune God and is patterned on the generation of the second divine person and the procession of the Holy Spirit from both the Father and the Son.

The teaching on the Trinity and Christ as found in Aquinas's masterwork, the *Summa theologiae* (in the *Prima* and the *Tertia pars*), is highlighted and is

the consistent point of reference in the book. Question 43 of the *Prima pars* (on the missions); question 3, article 8 of the *Tertia pars* (on the especial fittingness of the second person as the term of the assumption of human nature); and question 7 of the *Tertia pars* (on Christ's personal grace) enjoy a certain prominence. But, the author displays a familiarity with the full range of the Thomistic corpus, bringing in other writings to good effect. Thus, he makes considerable use of the early commentary on the *Sentences* and draws repeatedly on the biblical commentaries, not least the late commentary on John. The quoting is copious and adroit, and gives the analysis a nice credibility.

The book originated as a doctoral dissertation at Fribourg, Switzerland, directed by Gilles Emery, and it has all the characteristics of a Fribourg study. To me, this is a good thing. It is based on a close acquaintance with the pertinent primary texts and shows an acute awareness of the main features of Aquinas's own theology treated for its own sake. It is solid and substantial, expository and descriptive in the best sense, rooting all assertions in the texts of Aquinas himself. It foregoes flights of speculation that would be less plainly rooted in the texts. That Legge is a student of Emery, who has established himself as the foremost scholar of Aquinas's Trinitarian discourse, is also evident. Legge has a nuanced understanding of Aquinas's Trinitarian teaching, knows the intimate link between the immanent and economic Trinity for Thomas, and plays up the significance of the missions of the Son and the Spirit in establishing that link. Emery has provided a foreword to the book that underscores Legge's principal advances and that expresses his appreciation of Legge's achievement.

While this is a work in the style of the Fribourg school, Legge has, in at least one instance, taken a somewhat independent stand, namely, in disagreeing (as on 143ff.) with Emery's teacher, the great Jean-Pierre Torrell, who still exercises an enormous influence on the historical-theological study of Aquinas performed at Fribourg. For Aquinas, does habitual grace follow inevitably on the grace of union? Torrell had denied the inevitability, preferring to speak here, as Aquinas does on occasion, of the *fittingness* of the infusion of habitual grace in the incarnate Word. Legge, for his part, is convinced of the inevitability, the strict necessity of habitual grace being infused in the Incarnation of the Word, here invoking the inseparability of the missions of the Word and the Spirit. In becoming human, the Word breathes forth the Spirit, perfecting (by grace and the adjacent virtues imparted by the Spirit) the Word in the Word's assumed humanity. By that grace and as prompted by the Spirit, the salvific human acts of the Word incarnate are possible.

The missions, in their inseparability and in their apparent simultaneity in temporal effect when it comes to Jesus, also figure in Legge's handling of an issue that has proved controversial among more recent students of Aquinas: Christ's beatific vision from the moment of his conception (173-82). Was this

a misstep on Aquinas's part, an arguably exuberant ascription of a perfection to the earthly Jesus that should be reserved to the next life? Or was the beatific vision throughout Christ's earthly sojourn indispensable for his work, providing, for instance, for his indefectibility and so his steadfastness in his work for others? So goes the debate. In Legge's telling, the missions need be given their due. In the Word's breathing forth of the Spirit that is perfective of the Word in the Word's assumed humanity, the full range of perfections, glory as well as grace, has been imparted to Christ. This makes the affirmation of the vision more understandable, without, I think, making the beatific vision of the earthly Jesus necessary for his saving acts in the way that grace, virtue, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are.

I have only a few criticisms of the analysis. I think that the predestination of Christ should have figured more prominently. Legge does not completely ignore the predestination of Christ, bringing that in briefly to supplement Torrell's position on the simple fittingness, not inevitability, of the infusion of habitual grace in tandem with the grace of union (see 144): even if not inevitably linked to the grace of union, God would have willed such habitual grace to Christ as the effect of God's predestining will, to allow the predestined Christ to fulfill his mission. Christ's predestination, however, deserves a more sustained treatment. The discussion of the predestination of Christ toward the end of the first main section of the treatise on Christ in the *Summa* (III, q. 24) anchors the earlier discussion of Christ's coassumed perfections, not least his grace, virtue, and gifts (in *STh* III, q. 7), discussed in part 3 of this book.

Second, the discussion of grace, the effect of predestination, might have been more robust and extensive, rendering more fully the lessons of the treatise on grace in the *Prima secundae*. Although there are some mentions of *auxilium* (e.g., 204), Legge is much more interested in habitual grace (and indeed in other habits—the infused virtues, the gifts of the Holy Spirit—that are important for the movement to God as end and, here, for the human salvific activity of Christ). For Aquinas, the grace of the Holy Spirit falls into two main kinds: the grace of *auxilium* and habitual grace. The latter provides potential, moral and supernatural; *auxilium* refers to the reduction of the human by God to act, to act well. Each grace exhibits God's causal love in the way apt to it. For its part, *auxilium* speaks nicely to God's loving, dynamic involvement in the life and activity of the just (including Jesus). Aquinas further distinguishes each of these graces into operative and cooperative (as at *STh* I-II, q. 111, a. 2), and that further distinction is pertinent to the account of humans acting before God with God's aid. That too holds for the human acting of the Word as incarnate.

My criticisms, however, do not take away from the author's achievement in this book. Legge has made his case. The book is an impressive debut by a younger scholar and marks an advance on the scholarship on Aquinas. The learning is deep and extensive. The book is well-enough written, and the tone

is always measured and civil, never incendiary, even when the author is explaining where and how a critic of Aquinas has erred and might be corrected. The appeal of the book will be broad enough. Scholars of Aquinas and of medieval theology will receive it warmly. And, I would hope, working theologians will want to take advantage of it as they themselves seek to promote their own Trinitarian Christology in a modern key.

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Scripture as Real Presence: Sacramental Exegesis in the Early Church. By HANS BOERSMA. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2017. Pp. xix + 316. $39.99 (cloth). ISBN: 978-0-8010-1703-2.

For some time now, scholars across the theological spectrum have raised their voices in defense of a theological reading of Scripture. Often included in this defense is a renewed appreciation for ancient, and specifically patristic, modes of biblical exegesis. In *Scripture as Real Presence*, however, Hans Boersma offers much more than simply another account of how Scripture can be read theologically. With the Church Fathers as his primary exemplars, Boersma illustrates and argues for what he calls a "sacramental" reading of Scripture that relies upon a metaphysical understanding of God's action in history.

Acknowledging the major shift that has occurred in his own thinking on biblical exegesis, he takes aim not just at nontheological readings of Scripture governed by the historical-critical method, but also at a historically grounded theological reading of Scripture as practiced, for example, by N. T. Wright. While admitting that Wright and other scholars of the new perspective on Paul have given us many valuable insights, Boersma judges that their historical exegesis, which eschews metaphysics, ultimately leaves the Old Testament behind: "For Wright—and for an increasingly large number of evangelical biblical scholars—exegesis is primarily a historical discipline, one that escapes the 'abstract' and 'timeless' theology of Western, Platonized Christianity" (xiv). The result, according to Boersma, is a distancing of the reader from the Old Testament text itself: "Strictly historical readings of Scripture separate the reader from the original event described in the biblical text" (xv). In contrast, Boersma recommends reappropriating a sacramental reading of the Old Testament whereby the text *already* contains Christ and does not simply point to him externally. On this model, if Christ is already present in the Old

Testament, then believers who are in Christ are also "present" in the text and can find themselves in the text, precisely because this sacramental hermeneutic already places them there.

In defense of these claims, Boersma opens with a general study of how the Church Fathers practiced a sacramental reading of Scripture and follows with nine chapters that illustrate this sacramental reading. Following the canonical order, he walks the reader through various themes, beginning with Genesis, moving through Exodus, the historical books, the Psalms, Proverbs, and Song of Songs, and ending with a study of the beatitudes. In these nine sketches, Boersma shows an admirable mastery of the patristic writings—with Origen occupying center stage—and indicates the diversity and complexity of readings found in the Fathers within a common sacramental hermeneutic. He takes pains throughout to assure his readers that he is not simply recommending that we adopt the particular readings of the Church Fathers, which, in any case, are often contrary to one another. Rather, through the variety of patristic readings, he hopes to illustrate the *kind* of sacramental, participatory hermeneutic that he believes can and should be reappropriated today.

Much of Boersma's argument for a sacramental reading of Scripture appears in the opening chapter. A comparison between Origen, Hobbes, and Spinoza sets the stage for his broad claims. From Origen, we learn that attention to metaphysics pays dividends in terms of scriptural interpretation: "good metaphysics leads to good hermeneutics" (5). The point is that the way we understand the relationship between God and the world (and history) is closely linked to the way we read and interpret Scripture. Origen—and the Fathers more generally—saw the world in participatory terms: visible things participate in and are revelations of invisible things. The world itself is sacramental. Boersma locates the crucial shift in biblical interpretation in the Enlightenment's rejection of metaphysics, and specifically with its rejection of a broadly Platonist view of the world. Hobbes and Spinoza both follow Ockham by rejecting the idea that visible things have a real and participatory relationship to invisible things (7). Through fear of an overly dualist view of the world, these Enlightenment thinkers—and with them many thinkers today—reject a sacramental view of the world, and so reject a sacramental view of Scripture. Boersma seeks to reclaim this rejected territory by showing how the concept of participation, far from introducing a dualism, allows things to be what they are while still showing relation and establishing purpose between what is seen and what is unseen.

Recommending what he calls a "sacramental ontology," Boersma argues that the types and allegories found in the Fathers are reflective of this sacramental view of the world. Specifically, the Fathers "were convinced that the reality of the Christ event was already present (sacramentally) within the history described within the Old Testament narrative" (12). Boersma then turns to Irenaeus to illustrate this Christocentric sacramental understanding of

both history and Scripture. If Christ is the proper interpretive lens for reading the Old Testament—as he is for Irenaeus—then a "hermeneutic of recapitulation [sacramentality] is not something that follows *after* the meaning has already been ascertained, whether by means of a grammatical-historical or a historical-critical method" (17). To the contrary, this sacramental reading "is instrumental in ascertaining the actual, divinely intended meaning" (ibid.). With this in view, Boersma commends a retrieval of this sacramental sensibility for how we read and interpret Scripture today: "Over against the dualistic metaphysic of modernity, a sacramental reading of Scripture helps us recover an integrated vision of reality, one that is centered on Jesus Christ as the true reality (*res*), in which all created things (*sacramenta*) hold together" (ibid.). For Boersma, this also means reclaiming a full-bodied understanding of divine providence in history and in the composition of Scripture, such that Christ and the Church are genuinely present within the types of the Old Testament. Only this kind of sacramental reading, argues Boersma, enables the contemporary reader genuinely to inhabit the text of the Old Testament.

The nine patristic sketches Boersma offers in explication of his thesis not only serve to illustrate his general theme but brim over with insights about the Bible and its interpretation. In chapter 2, on the interpretation of the literal sense, Boersma shows how Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine always interpret the literal sense within a theological understanding of the faith—the literal sense is never pretheological (28). In chapter 3, when considering the diverse interpretations by Origen and John Chrysostom of Abraham's welcome of the angels, Boersma illustrates how the Alexandrian and Antiochene exegetical traditions are distinctive, though not as dichotomous as is often claimed, and he proposes that we need both approaches (contemplative and active) for a full and balanced interpretation (80). In chapter 6, on the harmonious reading of the Psalms, the author unveils a fascinating account of how the Fathers understood music and harmony as contributing to the formation of a virtuous and Christlike life. For the Fathers, the Psalter (and especially the singing of it) was meant to reshape us into the divine likeness: "The very purpose of Bible reading was to foster virtue, that is to say, to yield harmony for the soul" (158).

In chapter 7, Boersma investigates different strategies for responding to an Arian reading of Proverbs 8 and concludes that a Nicene exegesis of this text (in Athanasius and Gregory of Nyssa) proves to be more complicated than the "simple" Arian rendering, but this complexity enables the full reality of the divine and human in Christ to find their proper expression. The lesson he draws is that Ockham's razor is a dangerous tool in exegesis: the simple, uncomplicated reading (in this case the Arian one) proves *not* to be the one that best displays the biblical narrative in its fullness (186). In chapter 8, when considering nuptial readings of the Song of Songs, Boersma disputes the claim that the allegorical reading of the Song disparages human sexuality. On the contrary, he argues that the majority of patristic commentators build on the

distinctive sexual imagery to indicate the even higher love and desire that exist between Christ and the Church (217-18). A sacramental reading of the Song enables the reader to move from the sexual imagery to the nuptial love of Christ and his people.

Scripture as Real Presence presents an impressive and persuasive account of a sacramental, participatory reading of the Bible, while at the same time illuminating, and so recovering, many facets of patristic interpretation. While highly commending this study to readers, I would offer one modest objection and would point to another curious deficit. The objection arises in connection with Boersma's discussion of Origen's Incarnational reading of the Book of Joshua in chapter 5. He identifies "three incarnations" of the Logos in Origen: in Christ, in the Scriptures, and in the soul of the believer (see the diagram on 114), and then extends and amplifies this by pointing to a fourfold Incarnation, with the Logos variously "incarnated" in Christ, Scripture, the soul, and the Church (see the diagram on 119). While this accurately sums up Origen's position, Boersma appears to welcome and recommend this picture of the Logos variously incarnated in these four elements. The problem with this model is that the Incarnation is not a genus with several species; it is not a *kind* of thing that has various instantiations. There is one unique Incarnation of the Word made flesh, and the Church understands the Logos now to be forever bound to the flesh that he assumed. The Incarnation can properly be understood as *extended* in the Church and the sacraments, and we can conceive of the Logos's dwelling in Scripture by *analogy* to the Incarnation. But the diagram would better represent the Incarnation if it were the *Logos incarnate* that stood as the primary term from which the other extensions or analogues of the Incarnation follow. This is not a minor point: Origen famously did not really know what to make of Christ's resurrected flesh. He acknowledged it as taught by the faith, but it did not seem to play much of a role in his theology. In this case, Origen needs modification: it is the Word-made-flesh that stands as the source of all participation—whether in Scripture, the individual believer, or the Church.

The "deficit" I find in Boersma's excellent presentation of a sacramental, Christological reading of Scripture is the lack of a full consideration of the Spirit's distinctive role. Certainly the Spirit is mentioned, and Boersma clearly recognizes that it is the Holy Spirit who inspires the text and the reader. But there is almost no development of the Spirit's unique role in a book dedicated to a spiritual reading of Scripture. The Christological element is prominent; the pneumatological aspect is notably underdeveloped. The index bears this out: there are multiple references to Christology and the Logos, but only one reference to the Holy Spirit (and this treats the gifts of the Spirit). Patristic authors (Cyril of Alexandria in particular) often underline the distinctive role of the Spirit both in revelation and in sanctification. Greater attention to the Spirit's distinctive role in the providential ordering of history and Scripture

and in the believer's growth in virtue would strengthen this fine re-appropriation of a sacramental reading of the Bible.

Boersma concludes by wondering whether his recommendation for recovering a sacramental reading of the Bible has any chance of success in our day. He recognizes that not all will agree with the benefits of this retrieval of a sacramental sensibility. Others may judge that this mode of reading Scripture has little chance of succeeding in a culture that has grown tone-deaf to a sacramental view of the world. The author frankly acknowledges that "the cultural moment that we face in North America is not conducive to sacramental interpretation" (276). Despite this, Boersma is persuaded that a *ressourcement* of this sacramental interpretation is both possible and necessary (274). He sees signs among dogmatic theologians and biblical scholars of an openness to a theological reading of Scripture and expresses the hope that a specifically sacramental theological reading has the capability and vitality to contribute to the renewal of the Church today (279). We can be grateful to Boersma for helping us see with much greater clarity the benefits of a sacramental, participatory exegesis of the Bible. And along with him we can hope for its flourishing today. But, as Boersma observes, the test is not whether we can illustrate this kind of reading in the Church Fathers; the true test will be whether we can practice this sacramental biblical hermeneutic in our sermons and commentaries for the building up of the people of God.

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Embracing Wisdom: The "Summa theologiae" as Spiritual Pedagogy. By GILLES MONGEAU, S.J. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2015. Pp. xi + 221. $30.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-0-88844-422-6.

Gilles Mongeau has written an illuminating book with many enjoyable insights. This is no small praise for a book that adds to the innumerable discussions of the structure and aims of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*. According to the introduction, Mongeau's work draws upon various streams of Thomistic and medieval studies: Thomas Hibbs's attention to dialectic and narrative in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, Jean-Pierre Torrell's treatment of the spiritual theology of the *Summa theologiae*, and Mary Carruthers's retrieval of the rhetorical shape of medieval and Dominican life. Mongeau thus offers a reading of the *Summa theologiae* as rhetorically constructed to lead its reader into deeper conformity with the wisdom it seeks to communicate.

He formulates the purpose of his work in his first chapter, "A Wisdom that Makes One Holy." The theme of wisdom as transformative plays a central role in this book. Mongeau thus seeks to overcome some of the separations that have occurred in scholarship on Aquinas. He helpfully summarizes the work of Mark Jordan, Guy-H. Allard, Peter Candler, and Fáinche Ryan and their distinct approaches to viewing the *Summa* through the respective lenses of wisdom, rhetoric, deification, and sanctification. He seeks to add to their various emphases a more historical focus on thirteenth-century rhetorical practices. He then turns to a presentation of *sacra doctrina* as both *scientia* (knowledge) and *sapientia* (wisdom). As *scientia*, *sacra doctrina* conforms the mind to reality. As *sapientia*, *sacra doctrina* helps the wise person order all things both theoretically and practically. Drawing upon the work of Pierre Hadot, Mongeau discerns in such wisdom a way of life, in particular, the way of life embodied in the Dominican friars whom Aquinas sought to instruct. Mongeau summarizes the goal of his book as follows: "I hope that my readers, having become aware of and open to the rhetorical dynamics present in the text, might allow the spiritual pedagogy of the *Summa theologiae* to work in them as it did in Thomas' students, leading them to Wisdom's embrace" (17).

The book has two major parts. The first part (chapters 2-4) examines the rhetorical order of the *Summa theologiae* and presents the work as a *ductus*—a directed motion or a leading—into divine wisdom. Here the emphasis is on "the historical and methodological context for reading the *Summa theologiae* as *sacra doctrina*" (16). The remainder of the book (chaps. 5-9) deploys that same context in the service of close readings of various parts of the *Summa*. In each instance, Aquinas's presentation of Christ as the Incarnate Word is revealed as the pattern for contemplating such divine wisdom and handing it on to others. Mongeau, in analyzing many sections of the *Summa*, "[brings] to the fore the rhetorical *ductus* that unites Aquinas' systematic and spiritual concerns" (17).

Chapters 2-4 present the heart of the book's thesis, namely, that the often-overlooked rhetorical element of the *Summa* is easily demonstrated when Aquinas's writings and life are placed within their thirteenth-century Dominican context. Mongeau considers the interplay of meaning and culture as found in ancients such as Aristotle and Cicero as well as Philo, Augustine, and Boethius, along with their shared attention to rhetoric within philosophy and theology. Following Marshall McLuhan, Mongeau observes that the rhetorical dimension of meaning has been radically diminished in the post-Cartesian streams of philosophy and theology in the West. In contrast, he avers that rhetoric should be seen as "the art and science which allowed Christian thinkers, pastors, and poets to mediate the intersubjective, aesthetic, and dramatic power of meaning during the patristic and early-medieval period" (38). The recognition of the indispensable role of rhetoric and meaning within the search for truth as opposed to a sterile rationalism is certainly sound and welcome. Furthermore, Mongeau implicitly avoids any

reduction of rhetoric to sophistry by situating rhetoric as a means to the proper ordering of all things under divine wisdom.

Drawing upon the work of Mary Carruthers, Mongeau recovers the ways in which rhetorical modes were employed in medieval monastic and school settings as the *ars memoriae*. According to Carruthers, the Dominican friars became especially adept in these "techniques of *memoria*" as they sought to spread a correct understanding of the Christian faith through preaching and teaching (42). Mongeau helps the reader to see that this period's interest in the proper ordering of things served the dual purpose of aiding memory and understanding. Developing this historical analysis, Mongeau claims that popular religiosity in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries suffered from an overly materialistic determination that lacked a sufficient understanding of *nous*, or the intelligible causes within the orders of creation and redemption. Addressing these deformations, the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) sought to clarify the profession of faith, the sacraments, and the formation of clergy and preachers, and to instigate a recovery of holiness (65). In response to the council's call for pastoral reform, Aquinas's work in the *Summa* should thus be recognized as his attempt to form young Dominicans who could promote a renewed reception of the concrete intelligibility of Christian beliefs and practices (53). Aquinas's own work was frequently in response to ecclesiastical requests and so evidences a pastoral concern. Mongeau follows Olivier-Thomas Venard's presentation of the poetics of the *Summa theologiae* according to the rhetorical principles of *determinatio*, *clarificatio*, and *causalitas* (*representatio* and *inventio*): "working together, these three principles shape the *ductus* of the *Summa*" (87). Ordered teaching orders ordered learning. In this instance, the ordered presentation of *sacra doctrina* in the *Summa* serves the indispensable role of ordering the memory and the understanding of the young friars so they could reliably recall authentic teaching.

In the fifth chapter, "The Spiritual Pedagogy of the *Summa theologiae*," Mongeau presents his interpretation of the ordered wisdom of the *Summa* and adds helpful insights into long-enduring discussions surrounding the structure of the work. He highlights two interrelated ways of understanding this structure. First, he deploys the prologue to question 2 of the *Prima pars* to suggest that the *Summa* has a grand tripartite division according to the way in which it treats God: *in se* (I, qq. 2-43), as *principium rerum* (I, qq. 44-119, for creatures in general), and as *finis earum* (the *Secunda pars*, for rational creatures in general, and the *Tertia pars*, for Christ in particular). Second, Mongeau considers the structure of the *Summa* through the lens of exemplar and image. In this manner, Aquinas begins with God (I, qq. 2-43) and then examines how God is imaged in creatures in more intensive realities: as *vestigiae Dei* (I, qq. 44-119, for creatures in general), as *imago ad imaginem* (the *Prima secundae*, for rational creatures in general), as *similitudo* (the *Secunda secundae*, for rational creatures participating in grace), and as *Imago* (the *Tertia pars*, for the act of the Incarnation and for Jesus Christ). After

presenting careful readings of the various prologues that link together the various sections and ordered parts, Mongeau offers his conclusion: "We participate most in Divine Wisdom when we have traveled the entire path of the *Summa*, such that we know God *in se*, then as first principle, then as final end, and then in Christ" (116). Mongeau expands the significance of the placement of Christ: "the consideration of Christ is the climax of a narrative of progress into God whereby the student of theology is transformed by Divine Wisdom and is thus enabled to preach and hear confessions as one of the wise who participate in *sacra doctrina*" (ibid.). Mongeau draws the reader's attention to the manner in which the *Summa*'s rhetorical progression conforms the student to the reality studied. Thus, Aquinas becomes a spiritual pedagogue, leading students on a procession from the Trinitarian God in their creation to their redemption through the humanity of Christ and their final return to the eternal Trinitarian God.

Mongeau sharply affirms the centrality of the Word as the structuring principle of the *Summa*: "Without God's *doctrina*, we could not learn the end to which we are ordered, and without knowledge of that end, we could not achieve it. This *sacra doctrina* is anchored in the person of the Word, God's Wisdom Incarnate. The Word, therefore, is not merely the content of *sacra doctrina* but also its structuring principle" (117). Mongeau develops this claim in his sixth chapter when he presents an outline summary of the various parts of the *Summa* according to this principle of the Word. To give one example from Mongeau's analyses, even the treatment of the unity of the divine essence (I, qq. 1-26) reveals the centrality of the Word. Mongeau pays close attention to the *sed contra* citations, since, as he previously observed, they serve as anchors for the memory. For instance, Mongeau points out that in question 1, article 2, which presents *sacra doctrina* as a subalternate *scientia*, Aquinas cites Augustine's *De Trinitate* 14: "to this *scientia* alone belongs that whereby saving faith is begotten, nourished, protected, and strengthened." In this section of *De Trinitate*, Augustine has identified *scientia* with the incarnate Word and *sapientia* with the Word himself. Mongeau quotes Augustine, "Through him we go straight toward him, through knowledge [*scientia*] toward wisdom [*sapientia*], without ever turning aside from one and the same Christ" (123). Mongeau proceeds to offer numerous examples from the first twenty-six questions of the *Summa* in which Aquinas treats the unity of the divine essence through the lens of the Word or the Word incarnate. To take two instances: Aquinas cites John 14:6 ("I am the way, the truth, and the life") to affirm that God is truth (q. 16, a. 5); in addition, he cites Matt 26:53 ("Do you not think that I could call on my Father, and he would send twelve legions of angels?") to argue that God can do what he does not in fact do (q. 25, a. 5). Here, so Mongeau argues, Aquinas reminds the reader that the incarnate Word is the way (*via*) to think about the divine essence: "Rhetorically, the Incarnate Word himself speaks directly to the student in the first person and teaches a truth about God" (124). In a later instance in the

Prima pars, Mongeau notes how Aquinas cites Heb 1:3, “upholding all things by the Word of his power,” to argue that creatures need to be held in existence by God (q. 104, a. 1). Mongeau then shows how Aquinas, in his commentary on Heb 1:3, first identifies Christ as Power itself and as Wisdom itself and, second, concludes that since God made all things through the Word, he also conserves all things through his Word (130). Mongeau presents a convincing case that Aquinas regularly draws the reader of the *Summa* to consider the divine nature as it has been revealed through the incarnate Word.

The final section of the book witnesses Mongeau’s offering of close readings of various sections that highlight the *Summa*’s Christological pedagogy at work. Chapter 7 considers Christ as presented in questions 1-6 of the *Tertia pars*, concerning the fundamental principles of Christ. Chapter 8 considers Christ in questions 40-45, concerning the mysteries of Christ’s public life. Chapter 9 considers Christ in questions 46-59, concerning the mysteries of his passion and resurrection.

One of Mongeau’s most illuminating discussions in this final section is his robust retrieval and defense of fittingness (*convenientia*). Fittingness, instead of being arbitrary, describes the sphere of God’s action that is not determined by the necessity of his Trinitarian being. Thus, fittingness safeguards the understanding of God’s creation as free. All of the created order—in its natural, fallen, graced, and glorified manifestations—belongs to the realm of fittingness since nothing created was necessary. God in his wisdom, knowledge, and power acts to bring into existence beings that participate in his very own existence. Thus, far from being a quirky medieval Scholastic device, fittingness is shown by Mongeau to play an integral role within Christian theology. Fittingness not only defends God’s power and freedom but also eschews voluntarism, since every action of God also expresses God’s wisdom and goodness. The language of fittingness is a strategy for discerning the wisdom and *ratio* of God’s free actions in creating and redeeming.

The recovery of the importance of fittingness further displays the centrality of the Incarnation in Aquinas’s theology. Mongeau connects fittingness especially to Christ: “the role of *convenientia* in Thomas’ theology is rooted in the importance of the humanity of Christ” (161). All of God’s contingent actions, the greatest of which is the Incarnation, become necessary once they are brought into being, and yet they are still only contingently necessary since they belong to the created order. By employing fittingness, as Mongeau shows, Aquinas constantly attends to the distinction between the Creator and the creature, between God’s necessary existence and the contingently necessary existence of all that participates in God’s necessary existence. Mongeau reviews the use of fittingness in Aquinas’s treatment of the passion and exaltation of Christ: “Many of the reasons of fittingness offered in these questions are expressions of aesthetic *convenientia*: Aquinas wants his students to dwell upon the beauty of God’s wise dispositions whereby we are saved” (204). Mongeau summarizes his conclusion: “Aquinas considers that these

mysteries are effective in their concrete particularity, that the student grows in grace and wisdom by contemplating them as expressions of God's art" (204-5). When viewed by the properly trained student as God's artwork, the materiality of the Christian faith is not an obstacle to its intelligibility; rather, the materiality discloses the truth, beauty, and goodness of the Creator's plan for the salvation of the human race.

Mongeau concludes his work by grounding his rhetorical analysis within a metaphysical realism: "From our study of the *ductus* of the *Summa*'s text, it has emerged that a key mechanism of its pedagogy is an *adequatio mentis ad rem*, making the mind or spirit of the student equal to the real and conforming the student to the mysteries of faith by means of spiritual exercises" (207). Mongeau considers that the *Summa*'s orientation *ad rem* will serve to foster a greater unity of the spiritual and the intellectual life. The unity he proposes might benefit from a more explicit consideration of how philosophical concerns are integrated within the *Summa*'s overarching Christological structure so that the metaphysics of creation may underlie the graced and glorified manner of our return to the Trinitarian God. The *ad Deum per Verbum incarnatum* of the *Summa* requires careful attention *ad naturam*. Fortunately, this is implicit within Mongeau's theology of the Word as Creator with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

There have been many explanations of the ordering of the *Summa theologiae*. Perhaps we might say that many of these are true in a certain way. The ultimate order of the *Summa* is metaphysical as the *ordo doctrinae*. As such, the order of the *scientia* itself moves from the perfectly existing Triune God to all created realities. The order of reality as causal and teleological includes within itself innumerable *rationes* that are all borne within the Word of God. Each *ratio* may be attended to and shown to be an ordering *ratio* of the created and redeemed order; likewise each divinely revealed *ratio* may be attended to and shown to be an ordering *ratio* of the *Summa*. Thus, the many attempts to disclose the structure of the *Summa theologiae*—insofar as these are faithful to the underlying metaphysical ordering—may be understood as complementary views of a whole that exceeds any one exhaustive account.

Through his extensive engagement with the art of rhetoric, Mongeau presents the Word as the integrating principle and telos of *sacra doctrina* in a persuasive and enlightening manner. The reader of this book will read the *Summa* with greater attention to its ordering structure and rhetorical devices. Mongeau's *Embracing Wisdom* merits study not only by students of Aquinas but by all who study Christian theology who wish to conform themselves more deeply to Jesus Christ, incarnate Wisdom.

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Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union. By MICHAEL GORMAN. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. xi + 177. $99.99 (cloth). ISBN: 978-1-107-15532-9.

This volume explores Thomas Aquinas's metaphysical account of the Incarnation, in which Jesus Christ is understood to be one person with two distinct natures. Gorman helpfully begins with an overview of the dogmatic determinations established by the early Church's ecumenical councils; these framed the parameters (and limits) within which theologians could develop their metaphysical accounts of the hypostatic union and remain orthodox. Coupled with this dogmatic framework is the more proximate tradition of Christology articulated in the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, wherein three Christological "tendencies" are advanced: *assumptus homo*, subsistence, and *habitus*. Without addressing the particulars of each tendency, Gorman notes that Thomas, like most of his contemporaries, prefers the second (subsistence theory) over the others, and it is the task of Thomas's metaphysics of the Incarnation to explain what is involved in that approach. The success of Thomas's project is not always clear insofar as he leaves undeveloped or opaque what some would desire to be clearer or more definitive. Gorman's project, then, attempts to be both historically accurate and speculative and, in both cases, as intellectually honest as possible.

The first chapter addresses Thomas's understanding of "person" and "nature." The usual catalog of associated metaphysical terms (e.g., "hypostasis," "suppositum," "*res naturae*," "substance") emerging from the classical Boethian definition of "person" comes to the fore. Here, Gorman makes a rather peculiar claim regarding Aristotle's notion of "second substance": "'second substance' means approximately the same thing as 'nature' (this is the sense of substance that is at work in a phrase like 'consubstantial with the Father')" (15). It is far from evident, however, that the ὁμοουσιος is the same as Aristotelian "second substance," for the reason that the latter relates to first substance as a species or a genus (i.e., a universal) does to a particular subject (i.e., ὑποκείμενον). But what sense does it make to say that the "nature" of God is a universal or a species? Would that be to imply that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit stand as individuals (first substances?) within the same species, or even species within the same genus of deity? The first option would result in polytheism, the second in absurdity.

Be that as it may, the remainder of the chapter elucidates Thomas's account of substance, which has four determining features—the most important of which is "subsistence," followed by "individuality," "substanding," and "unity." Accordingly, if a person is a special kind of substance, persons too will enjoy these same four characteristic marks of substance. Given that a "person" is a substance of a peculiar kind of nature, Gorman treats what "nature" means for Thomas. Though said in many ways, the relevant form of "nature" in discussions of personhood is "substantial nature," which functions

as a supposit-grounder: that in virtue of which something subsists as a suppositum. Moreover, a substantial nature makes something subsist by making it to be a subsisting thing of a certain *kind*.

Chapter 2 relates Thomas's metaphysical understanding of (personal) substances to the dynamics involved in the Incarnation itself. As a nature is that whereby something subsists as a certain kind of thing, to say that Christ has two natures is to say that Christ subsists as both divine and human. Moreover, as natures are principles of operations, insofar as Christ acts through his human nature (e.g., healing, suffering), the divine person himself undertakes these actions. Gorman helpfully draws attention to a special sense in which it is said that Christ assumes a "human nature." "Human nature" as such only pertains to that which is proper to being a human, namely, a "rational animal." Yet, within a human being there is more than just "rational animal," since human beings enjoy a variety of accidental features and particular determinations that emerge from their human nature. This latter, broader category is what Gorman calls "human reality" (45). He suggests that, for Thomas, Christ not only assumes a "human nature" but also a "human reality," although Thomas himself never describes "human nature" after the manner of "human reality." Finally, Gorman explains what is involved in Thomas's claim that the union of the two natures occurs "in person," which is to say, hypostatically.

The third chapter discusses how Thomas defends, on the one hand, divine simplicity, and, on the other, divine immutability and impassibility. Thomas stands in broad agreement with the metaphysico-theological tradition that preceded him in maintaining a form of divine simplicity. That simplicity seems to be compromised insofar as Christ is a composite being. Gorman marks a helpful distinction between "substantial composition" and "non-substantial composition" (53). Whereas the latter would involve a composition within the substance itself, the former is such that both substantial natures retain their own distinct integrities. Divine simplicity is not necessarily at odds with "substantial composition." In other words, it is Christ—the union of divine and human natures—who is composite through the union of two (substantial) natures, not the divine nature itself, which remains simple. The more challenging difficulty is reconciling the claim that "God became man" with divine immutability. This challenge is resolved by Thomas's doctrine of mixed relations. Gorman points out that some relations are "real," meaning that the accident of relation really inheres in both terms of the relation. Others are only "logical," in the sense that the relation is extrinsic to one of the terms, for example, being to the left or right of a column. Finally, some relations are "mixed," such that the relation is "really" in one term but only "logically" in the other. "Being-known" would be an example of such a relation, for the object known is (cognitively) in the knower as an accident, but "being-known" is only attributed to the known object extrinsically—not as an intrinsic part of its being. For Thomas, the Incarnation can rightly be understood as a mixed

relation in such a way that, while there is a legitimate sense in which God becomes (*fieri*) man, the divine nature itself does not undergo change (*mutatio*). Rather, it is human nature that undergoes the change. Here, however, Gorman is right to note a certain "looseness" in Thomas's maintaining that human nature undergoes change when, prior to the Incarnation, there is no subject term "human nature" to undergo any change in the first place (69).

The fourth chapter begins Gorman's reconstruction of Thomas's Christology and attempts to make explicit what Thomas leaves vague. It is here and in the succeeding chapters that Gorman's contribution to the scholarly debate truly emerges. He treats philosophical difficulties that confront Thomas regarding Christ's human nature. Given that a substantial nature is a "supposit-grounder," how can it fail to be the case that Christ's human nature gives rise to a human supposit? But if Christ has a human supposit, he would then be a human person (in addition to a divine person), which is just Nestorianism. Yet, Gorman argues, "It might or might not be the case that every substantial nature *does* ground a supposit, but at least every substantial nature *can*" (79). This same distinction between "must" and "can" is analogous to Thomas's view of accidents relative to the Eucharist. Ordinarily, accidents (must) have the character of inhering within a substance, but in his Eucharistic theology Thomas holds that they do not. Accordingly, the Aristotelian doctrine of accidents is retooled such that they are now not understood as that which *must* inhere but as that which *can* or are "apt" to inhere (84). Gorman suggests the same can be said of human nature with respect to the Incarnation. Human nature can be supposit-grounding, but it does not necessarily have to be. Accordingly, Christ's human nature does not lack some positive perfection on account of which it fails to be a person, rather it is because of the hypostatic union itself that a human person is "blocked," as it were (98). Gorman thus departs from a common interpretive strategy of both recent scholars (e.g., Richard Cross) and Renaissance Thomists (e.g., Capreolus and Cajetan), who maintain that Christ's human nature is not a person because it lacks its own "*esse*." Nevertheless, the question remains for Gorman: what is it about the "union" that impedes human nature's supposit-grounding character? He does not exactly offer a clear reason.

Chapter 5 wades into the vexing scholarly debate regarding the number of *esse* within Christ. The locus classicus of the debate is *De unione Verbi*, article 4, wherein Thomas adverts to a secondary, human *esse*, which appears to run contrary to all other parallel treatments that maintain only one *esse*. Before addressing the matter, Gorman determines just what question is being asked and what meaning of *esse* is at stake. Here, he notes a distinction between *esse* taken as "act" and as "fact." The latter pertains to the brute reality of something's actual existence in the world, but the former is the underlying and primordial metaphysical principle for something's factual existence (109).

Gorman then argues that in the parallel Christological passages pertaining to the number of *esse* in Christ, what Thomas has in mind is *esse* as a fact, which he thinks is "tolerably clear" from the fact that the *esse* in question "results from the principles of the thing" (110). Moreover, as factual *esse* can be either unqualified (i.e., the factual existence of a supposit) or qualified (i.e., the existence of accidents), there need not be an opposition between maintaining one unqualified factual *esse* and a multiplicity of qualified factual *esse*s. The difficulty with this last move, as Gorman points out, is that in his other Christological treatments, Thomas identifies qualified existence as accidental existence. But, as he states clearly in *De unione*, human nature is not said accidentally of the Word. But if not accidental and if not substantial, then how are we to understand this secondary *esse*? In the end, Gorman is left—as have been so many others—with a seeming aporia of inconsistency on Thomas's part (123). Finally, Gorman concludes, "it makes more sense to suppose that . . . the principle actuating Christ's human nature . . . is not the divine *esse* but instead a created *esse*" (125). I agree, but at this point, this is not so much the opinion of Thomas Aquinas as it is that of Francisco Suárez!

Before considering the final chapter, two things must be said about Gorman's reconstruction of Thomas's account of existence. First, it is not clear that there is really such a hard distinction between "actual" and "factual" existence, as Gorman himself admits (109); the same referent's having a multiplicity of senses could be at issue here. Certainly, Thomas himself is not explicit about such a distinction. Second, much less is it "tolerably clear" that the *esse* in question within the Christological passages is factual rather than actual given that it "results from" a being's constitutive principles. Other scholars (e.g., Étienne Gilson, Joseph Owens, and John Wippel) have explained the "resulting" as a consequence of diverse orders of causality (*esse*: efficient—essence: formal) intersecting to produce a unified being (*ens*). Again, this suggests that the distinction between actual and factual existence is less robust than Gorman construes it.

In his final chapter, Gorman explores various strategies that would allow Thomas to overcome problems of consistency in his Christology, for instance, maintaining that Christ is impassible and passible with a contradiction resulting. One avenue is the "mereological replacement strategy," wherein problematic statements are replaced with nonproblematic claims. Ultimately, Gorman finds this strategy unsatisfactory since, at times, it seems incapable of offering a principled way of determining whether the problematic statements belong to parts or to the wholes of which they are predicated. Rather, Gorman suggests that Thomas's theory is such that a mereological strategy is "pragmatic," that is, used only when a misunderstanding would otherwise result, and not a blanket approach (138). Nevertheless, as Gorman notes, this pragmatic approach does not really express what Thomas's own view is, because, once again, he is not really forthcoming with one or, at the very least, offers a very "under-described" account (157).

This excellent volume is thought provoking and makes a definitive contribution to the vast literature on the subject. Its limitations are the limitations of Thomas's theory itself, which Gorman faithfully and rigorously explores and communicates honestly to his readers.

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The Sermon on the Mount and Moral Theology: A Virtue Perspective. By WILLIAM C. MATTISON III. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. xiii + 279. $99.99 (cloth). ISBN: 978-1-107-17148-0.

In this interesting and helpful book, Mattison throws himself, workman-like, into the many puzzles and perfections of the Sermon on the Mount. Readers of this book can never lose track of where they are; Mattison takes us point by point through the Sermon and, in an equally ordered fashion, displays for us the long Christian tradition of reflection about the virtues. He uses the latter to interpret the former. "The pattern of this book" he tells us, is to "[suggest] a virtue or virtues in light of which each section of the Sermon might be fruitfully understood" (63).

Mattison divides the Sermon in six segments, treating each in its turn in the book's six chapters. He follows Matthew's sequence, with one deviation: he separates the Lord's Prayer, treating it in the final (sixth) chapter, as "the perfect conclusion to this book on the convergences between the Sermon on the Mount and a virtue-centered approach to morality" (269). The book is therefore a commentary of sorts: each chapter opens with a section of text from Matthew in italics, taken from the revised edition of the New American Bible. Mattison then refers repeatedly back to this text, following its sequence. (One minor inconvenience is that the italicized sections from the NAB are not marked by verse, although the commentary refers to verses by number.)

The book's chapters are also arranged clearly. Each begins with a detailed chapter plan, ends with a recapitulation of the chapter's themes, and is divided into aptly named sections. Throughout, Mattison guides us along by questions (such as, "What contribution if any does a virtue-centered approach to morality offer for interpretation of these passages?" [187]), which he then proceeds to answer. This style can sometimes seem predictable or ponderous, but its perspicuity is nevertheless something to admire. Mattison has asked himself at every turn how he can make his points clear—and worked like a soldier to do so.

At one juncture, Mattison refers to what he is doing in the book as a "research project" (102). Sometimes it feels this way: as if he is experimenting with something, seeing how he might match the virtues creatively to this most famous text. But the description obscures the significance of what he has done. It seems to me that the central point of the whole book has to do with the fact that the Sermon on the Mount is perhaps the key biblical text for understanding what Aquinas called the "new law."

When discussing Jesus's many statements following the form of "you have heard it said . . . but I say to you," Mattison takes note of Pope Benedict XVI's discussion of a passage from Rabbi Jacob Neusner.

> "What did he [Jesus] leave out [of the law]?" to which Neusner replies, "Nothing." When asked "Then what did he add?" Neusner replies "Himself." Jesus is what is new about the new law. Jesus is the authoritative interpreter of the material content of the new law, in a manner whereby it fulfills the old. He makes possible the living of the law in a way not possible without him. And He Himself is the *telos* of the law, the very union of God and humanity toward which the old law orients humanity. (116, quoting Benedict, *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*)

To grasp the full significance of this book, we should remember that Mattison was a student of Fr. Servais Pinckaers, O.P., who, he tells us, was the book's inspiration. For Mattison (and this reviewer agrees), Pinckaers "is the most impactful post-Vatican II Catholic moral theologian" (xi). Pinckaers, of course, was a Thomist who urged Catholic moral theology to overcome its fascination with the "morality of obligation" (72) and to return rather to the virtue tradition, which is truly its heart. Pinckaers followed Aquinas in accenting the significance of the new law (or the "law of Christ"), which he took as pointing directly to the virtues. Since the new law is perhaps best displayed in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, Pinckaers treats it in his magisterial *The Sources of Christian Ethics*—which treatment Mattison means to renew: "The present book can be rightly understood as an attempted expansion of Pinckaers's brief chapter there on the morality of the Sermon" (5).

It is in this context that the quotation from Benedict (and Neusner) gains traction. First, Mattison's work is fundamentally Christological—and therefore also fundamentally Christian theological. The question asked frequently in the previous generation, "Can ethics be Christian?" is equivalent to asking if there is any such thing as Christian theology. Ethics is not something added to theology, but is rather a constitutive part of it. Second, Mattison understands the Sermon to be essentially about Christian moral formation; Christians read it for nourishment and growth toward full human life, which is also "the joyous and communal contemplation of God that constitutes eternal happiness" (15). Since the moral and theological virtues are the capacities we need to live well, we should not be surprised—indeed, we

should expect—that these virtues will be latent (if not explicit) in the key biblical text in which Jesus articulates the new law.

Mattison is therefore not attempting to patch together two disparate and unrelated traditions, the Bible and the virtues, but rather he is bringing the virtue tradition to bear on a text that is already about its central subject matter: happiness or beatitude. (It is not lost on Mattison that beatitude is precisely where the Sermon begins, as he explains in his first chapter.) If this is so, one might ask, why does the work need to be done; that is, should not the convergences already be apparent? While Mattison does not explicitly address this question, his work implies some answers. First, following Pinckaers, he believes that the "morality of obligation" has in recent centuries shouldered out the "morality of happiness" (in Christian terms, the understanding of the moral life in relation to our last end in God). The Sermon has therefore often been read in other terms that lack the unity the virtue tradition offers. The recovery of virtue will allow us to read the Sermon in a more consistent and unified way.

Second, today we read the Bible informed by the work of Scripture scholars. This is proper, of course, but it also means that the concerns of theology and ethics are sometimes left aside. For Mattison, this means that certain dominant interpretations need to be challenged—for instance, he notes how Scripture scholars' uneasiness with reward is based on a misunderstanding (129-37). But generally in this book, Mattison thinks *with* Scripture scholarship, referring to it often in his text and copious footnotes. (He consistently engages the work of New Testament scholars Hans Dieter Betz, Robert Guelich, and Ulrich Luz.) His habit throughout is to look for ways the virtue tradition can fill out insights from New Testament scholars, giving them a more secure and structured context provided by the virtue tradition. For instance, in Walter Wilson's discussion of the practices Jesus recommends in Matthew 6, such as anointing one's face during fasting so as not to make a display of it, he speaks of how these develop "a resistant self, an alternative subjectivity that is 'rehearsed' in an alternative performance space" (153, quoting Wilson, "Seen in Secret"). Mattison connects these insights to moral formation, understood in the virtue tradition in terms of the way in which repeated acts deepen our intentionality.

Third, Mattison clearly means to reinvigorate discussion of the Sermon on the Mount with the commentary of the ancients. He has carefully read Augustine, Chrysostom, Aquinas, and Luther on the Sermon, and brings their comments frequently to bear. De facto, this approach involves virtue thinking, since these older thinkers, much more than scholars today, were informed by it.

Mattison's project succeeds best when the terms of the Sermon mesh smoothly and naturally with terms and concepts operative in the ancient and contemporary discussion of virtue. For instance, his second chapter covers those early passages in the Sermon about Jesus fulfilling the law, which, as we

have already noted, connect to Aquinas's treatment of the "new law." In his third chapter, Mattison relates passages in Matthew 6 to discussions in the virtue tradition of act and intention, a highly illuminating move since Jesus is clearly concerned in these passages about the *real* reasons why someone does "righteous deeds" such as almsgiving, praying, and fasting. In chapter 4, Mattison reflects, often trenchantly, on how Jesus' utterance about "seeking first the kingdom of God" provides unity to the series of many statements in Matthew 6:19-7:12. This connects with the long discussion in the virtue tradition of the last end and also with the virtue of infused prudence (prudence transformed by charity) that radicalizes how we see and act rightly in our relationships with others.

One of the most interesting discussions in the book comes in its fifth chapter, where Mattison reflects on the last section of the Sermon in which Jesus offers some stern statements about false prophets and rotten fruit. Key here is the statement "Not everyone who says to me 'Lord, Lord' will enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 7:21). Mattison helpfully reads the condemnation of these persons in terms of the vice of presumption, which contravenes the theological virtue of hope. "Presumption as depicted in these verses is a failure of hope and a prideful attempt to have eternal happiness on one's own terms" (226).

Thoughtful discussions like these can be found in every chapter; they display Mattison's thinking at its best. However, his attempts to connect the traditions of Scripture and virtue are not always so successful. In particular, Mattison is the least convincing when he pushes for a correspondence between sequences in the Sermon and the seven virtues (the cardinal: temperance, fortitude, justice, and prudence; and the theological: faith, hope, and love). He does this twice, once with the beatitudes (47) and again with the petitions of the Lord's Prayer (249). Mattison is aware that such alignments are speculative, and it is easy for them to "[appear] 'forced' and driven by the effort to align" (47)—implying that this is something to avoid. But he does not always heed his own advice. For instance, in the alignment of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, an ordering discrepancy arises since, in the sequence of the four cardinal virtues, temperance traditionally comes before fortitude; however, in the way Mattison treats the seven petitions, fortitude comes before temperance. Revealingly, he argues (rather weakly) for the interchangeability of the ordering of temperance and fortitude in the virtue tradition (264). But this exposes the artificiality of the alignment project. Why does it matter that the sequence in which Jesus (or Matthew) put the petitions correspond to the traditional sequence of the virtues? How does this help us understand them (which, if we are interested principally in living the Sermon in our moral lives, is what we should be focusing on)?

We can perhaps pass over these and other places where one feels something of a strain in the connections or alignments Mattison suggests between the passages of the Sermon and the virtue tradition. The liability, however, is that

when the connections are strained, the interpretive work seems more like an exercise or research project rather than a serious proposal about what the Sermon is really all about. Alignments and numberings may be suggestive, but they are also dispensable. Mattison, it seems to me, in most of the book is actually venturing more. He is implying that the "new law" of Christ, which infuses the Sermon, is essentially the life of Christian virtue. Taken as such, virtue is not just helpful in the interpretation of the Sermon but indispensable. And this means, in turn, that the connection between Christian virtue tradition, and Scripture is neither forced nor inventive; rather, neither can be understood without the other.

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Justice as a Virtue: A Thomistic Perspective. By JEAN PORTER. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2016. Pp. xiii + 286. $40.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-0-8028-7325-5.

Porter describes her book as "a study of the virtue of justice as Aquinas presents it in the *Summa theologiae,* developed in such a way as to bring out the contemporary significance of his account" (x). Porter does not attempt to summarize in any way what Aquinas says about justice in his other extensive writings. She thinks "that Aquinas's overall account of justice and the virtues is the true theory of morality" but will not attempt to prove this statement conclusively in her book (ibid.). She does make clear that she "will offer a constructive expansion of Aquinas's views on justice . . . developing Aquinas's theory in some way, rather than simply interpreting what he says" (6). In other words, readers should be aware that she may depart from Aquinas's account of justice or add new things to it.

The remaining parts of chapter 1 focus on the basics of the Thomistic presentation of justice. Justice is a personal virtue of individuals rather than a characteristic of society's basic institutions. It is a perfection of the will, the most excellent of the moral virtues, but inferior to the supernatural virtue of charity. For Aquinas, "the will is perfected through right relations to others" (27). In order to understand justice as a virtue, we need to understand the fundamentals of Aquinas's understanding of virtue. Porter notes that Aquinas begins his analysis with Peter Lombard's definition of virtue, which was, in turn, drawn from Augustine's writings: "Virtue is a good quality of the mind, by which we live righteously, of which no one can make bad use, which God

brings about in us, without us" (18, quoting *STh* I-II, q. 55, a. 4, which is quoting II *Sent*., d. 27, q. 5). The last part of the definition only applies to the infused virtues. The word "quality" in the definition refers to a habit or stable disposition inclining a person to do the right thing. Porter also makes her readers aware of the complexity of justice by distinguishing different kinds of justice: general, or legal, justice and particular justice, which is subdivided into distributive and commutative justice. To put justice into practice, a person will always need prudence, she adds with emphasis. More examples of these three kinds of justice and a more discernible order of the book's five chapters in relation to each other would have helped Porter's readers.

Already in the second paragraph of chapter 1, Porter notes correctly that Aquinas's treatment of justice as a virtue and a perfection of the will is totally foreign to the theories of justice expounded by John Rawls and his interlocutors. Porter rightly sees that Rawls's "theory of justice . . . proposes an account of the ways in which institutions ought to operate, which kinds of structural arrangements are acceptable, and which kinds of outcomes are acceptable, given basic criteria of fairness and respect" (2). Although Porter says that "Aquinas gets justice right," she immediately adds that "he does not raise, much less address, questions pertaining to social and institutional structures that are central to most contemporary theories of justice" (5). Despite her great appreciation of Aquinas's thought on the virtue of justice, she never says that Rawls and his interlocutors should draw upon Aquinas in order to raise questions pertaining to the practice of the virtues by individuals responsible for the reform of institutions and structures.

The constraints of a short review will not allow me to deal thoroughly with the main points of chapters 2 through 5. In the remainder of this review, after briefly mentioning a few insightful points made in these four chapters, I will focus on Porter's nonacceptance of Aquinas's way of evaluating the morality of the human act. In sum, she thinks that his analysis leads to more prohibitions than are acceptable today.

In chapter 2, Porter directs attention to Aquinas's point that simple knowledge of what is good is not sufficient to cause the will to make the right choice. "The volition of the will . . . depends on habits of the will, that is to say, stable dispositions to desire and choose in consistent ways" (94). In chapter 3, "Justice as a Moral Ideal," Porter nicely explains why for Aquinas the commandments to love God and neighbor are not included in the Ten Commandments and why "restitution is the characteristic act of commutative justice" (126). In chapter 5, "The Perfections of the Will," Porter explains Aquinas's contention "that the virtues perfect the soul by disposing it to exist in accordance with reason" (231).

Let us now turn to chapter 4, "From Ideal to Law," where we find a very problematic interpretation or development of Aquinas's thought on human action. Porter gives a clear, accurate presentation of Aquinas's own thought on human action. There are three aspects of the human act: the object, the

circumstances, and the agent's intention or end. Porter nicely explains how Aquinas looks at these three determinants: "if any of the components of a particular act is morally problematic, the action taken as a whole is morally evil. In particular, an action that is bad in kind cannot be morally justified by a praiseworthy aim. . . . Aquinas is thus committed to the view that some kinds of actions are never morally justified, whatever the agent's motivations" (179 and 183). Otherwise stated, a good intention cannot make good an action that is objectively disordered by reason of its object, such as physician-assisted suicide. Murder remains murder even if doctors are trying to relieve the suffering of their patients.

At this point, Porter reports that philosophers and moral theologians known as proportionalists believe that Aquinas's approach is too strict, calling it "an extreme position" (183). In her own name, Porter says that "we may be tempted to reject Aquinas's arguments out of hand as being too deeply at odds with our moral intuitions to be credible. We value sincerity and general good will more than good conduct, or at least we are quick to excuse those whose bad behavior does not seem to reflect a bad heart" (185). For example, doctors who put their patients to death to relieve their suffering may simply be making a good-faith moral mistake. Porter thinks that "most of us would probably say that in such cases, the mistaken agent is not subjectively guilty or open to reproach" (ibid.) Porter then adds, "we may well want to say that, even though the doctor did something wrong, he acted well in the sense that he did what he thought was right" (ibid.). This is a far cry from what Aquinas would say. In a Thomistic perspective, one does not act well when one mistakenly does something wrong, thinking that one is doing what is right. Doctors who put their patients to death are acting badly even though they are not guilty of sin if their ignorance is invincible. Invincibly ignorant physicians can still do a lot of harm to their patients and to the profession of medicine if they engage in physician-assisted suicide or euthanasia. The experience of the Netherlands shows that once doctors start killing their patients who have requested physician-assisted suicide or euthanasia, the practice of *non*-voluntary euthanasia will soon become a regular practice. The acceptance of the Thomistic analysis of human action would give physicians some protection from being tempted to kill their patients with or without their consent.

According to John Paul II's 1993 encyclical, *Veritatis Splendor*, the proportionalist theologians are really offering a new description of the moral act. The proportionalist theory, the pontiff says, "holds that it is impossible to qualify as morally evil according to its species—its 'object'—the deliberate choice of certain kinds of behavior or specific acts, apart from a consideration of the intention for which the choice is made or the totality of the foreseeable consequences of that act for all persons concerned" (*VS* 79). In this perspective, an umpire could not evaluate a pitcher's act of throwing a baseball at a batter until he ascertained his intention. This way of looking at things would attribute to the pitcher's will an enormous capacity to modify

the nature of the disordered situation created by throwing the ball at the batter. For example, if a pitcher throws a baseball at a batter—the object of the act—he cannot overcome the disorder in the act's object by intending some good to come out of it. The umpire does not have to ask the pitcher to reveal his intention before deciding to warn both teams that the next pitcher who throws at a batter will be ejected from the game.

Let us listen to St. Augustine in his *Contra mendacium*, as quoted by John Paul II: "As for acts which are themselves sins like theft, fornication, blasphemy, who would dare affirm that, by doing them for good motives, they would no longer be sins, or, what is even more absurd, that they would be sins that are justified?" (*VS* 81). Otherwise stated, "no evil done with a good intention can be excused" (*VS* 78). John Paul does add, "If acts are intrinsically evil [by their object], a good intention or particular circumstances can diminish their evil, but they cannot remove it. They remain 'irremediably' evil acts; *per se* and in themselves they are not capable of being ordered to God and to the good of the person" (*VS* 81). People still hurt themselves and others if they do an evil act, without being guilty of sin because of invincible ignorance.

In sum, according to Aquinas, the moral act is constituted by the object, intention, and circumstances. For a human act to be good, all three of its elements must be in order (*bonum ex integra causa*). If any part of the act is disordered, then the act itself is bad (*malum ex quocumque defectu*). In this Thomistic view of the human act, the object is the crucial element because it establishes whether the act as a whole "is capable of being ordered to the good and to the ultimate end, which is God" (*VS* 79). If the object of the act is bad, the intention, no matter how well-meaning, cannot overcome the disorder in the act's object.

We need to recover the Thomistic analysis of the human act so that we will be less tempted to change acts evil by their object into "good" acts by our good intention. The end result of failing to recover the Thomistic approach will be more injustice, especially by violation of commandments five through ten.

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