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AQUINAS'S TWO CONCEPTS OF ANALOGY AND A COMPLEX SEMANTICS FOR NAMING THE SIMPLE GOD

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THE TOPIC OF "divine names" as treated by Aquinas can be traced back to pagan Greek thinkers, Aristotle and earlier. More proximately, it can be traced to a Christian heavily influenced by that Greek tradition, (Pseudo-)Dionysius. At the beginning of his commentary on Dionysius's *Divine Names*, Aquinas describes it and three other works of Dionysius in terms of their relation to human reason.

Features of God that pertain to the three divine persons and their essential unity "find no adequate likeness" in creatures; these are mysteries "exceeding the whole faculty of natural reason," treated in *De divinis hypotyposibus*. There are other truths about God revealed in Scripture that "our intellect cannot conceive" and that "exceed all that which can be apprehended by us"; these are treated in a work on *Mystical Theology*.

There are other divine features that can be investigated by human reason, insofar as "some likeness in creatures is found"; in that case, it is possible for our intellect to be led to conceive of God from creatures. Some of these are merely metaphorical similitudes, as when God is said to be a lion, a stone, or the sun. Such "likenesses" obtain "according to something transferred from creatures to God." These characteristics, truly in creatures and not properly in God, are treated in a work on *Symbolic Theology*. But some likenesses obtain because of "something that in creatures is derived from God." Such divine characteristics—

expressed in words like "good," "just," "wise," and "powerful"—are treated in the work *On Divine Names*.[1]

Thus, according to Aquinas, Dionysius's *Divine Names* treats what can be understood of the proper attributes of the one God that are knowable by reason. Though the work clearly draws inspiration from faith, we could anachronistically say that it functions very much as an exercise in "natural theology." In particular it reflects on how our concepts and language can be extended to God precisely because they are derived from likenesses that emanate from and participate in their preeminent, perfect source. Words express—even if in a very exceptional way—what we know about divine reality. For Dionysius, reflecting on these words and the ways that they express divine realities is a matter not just of theological language, but of theological epistemology and metaphysics: the divine names are an occasion to contemplate divinity and its attributes.

[1] Thomas Aquinas, *In librum beati Dionsii De divinis nominibus expositio*, proem: "Ad intellectum librorum beati Dionysii considerandum est quod ea quae de Deo in sacris Scripturis continentur, artificialiter quadrifariam divisit: nam in libro quodam, qui apud nos non habetur, qui intitulatur de divinis hypotyposibus idest characteribus, ea de Deo tradidit quae ad unitatem divinae essentiae et distinctionem personarum pertinent. Cuius unitatis et distinctionis sufficiens similitudo in rebus creatis non invenitur, sed hoc mysterium omnem naturalis rationis facultatem excedit. Quae vero dicuntur de Deo in Scripturis, quarum aliqua similitudo in creaturis invenitur, dupliciter se habent. Nam huiusmodi similitudo in quibusdam quidem attenditur secundum aliquid quod a Deo in creaturas derivatur. Sicut a primo bono sunt omnia bona et a primo vivo sunt omnia viventia et sic de aliis similibus. Et talia pertractat Dionysius in libro de divinis nominibus, quem prae manibus habemus. In quibusdam vero similitudo attenditur secundum aliquid a creaturis in Deum translatum. Sicut Deus dicitur leo, petra, sol vel aliquid huiusmodi; sic enim Deus symbolice vel metaphorice nominatur. Et de huiusmodi tractavit Dionysius in quodam suo libro quem de symbolica theologia intitulavit. Sed quia omnis similitudo creaturae ad Deum deficiens est et hoc ipsum quod Deus est omne id quod in creaturis invenitur excedit, quicquid in creaturis a nobis cognoscitur a Deo removetur, secundum quod in creaturis est; ut sic, post omne illud quod intellectus noster ex creaturis manuductus de Deo concipere potest, hoc ipsum quod Deus est remaneat occultum et ignotum. Non solum enim Deus non est lapis aut sol, qualia sensu apprehenduntur, sed nec est talis vita aut essentia qualis ab intellectu nostro concipi potest et sic hoc ipsum quod Deus est, cum excedat omne illud quod a nobis apprehenditur, nobis remanet ignotum. De huiusmodi autem remotionibus quibus Deus remanet nobis ignotus et occultus fecit alium librum quem intitulavit de mystica idest occulta theologia."

Although Aquinas is deeply informed by this work, when he writes his own theological treatises the topic of "divine names" becomes more circumscribed. In the *Summa theologiae*, question 13 of the *Prima pars* addresses divine naming, but quite a lot is said about God, and about our knowledge of God, in questions 2 through 12. (A comparable structure is evident in the *Summa contra Gentiles*.) We could say that Aquinas is content to engage in divine naming before making it an object of reflection in its own right, but it is clear that, for Aquinas, the topic of divine naming is a more circumscribed part of theology. Rather than encompassing the investigations of natural theology, it is about how, as Lawrence Dewan has described, certain words as applied to God have "a distinctive meaning . . . and a distinctive way of meaning what they mean."[2] For Aquinas, as for Dionysius, the "names" in question are not *proper* names, but any true predicates of God. At issue are words like "good," "just," "wise," and "powerful"—even the very word "God" (which is not really a proper name, for Aquinas, but functions more like a common term, albeit a very unique common term). The presumption is that these words can be truly predicated of God. However, given God's otherness from the creaturely context in which such words are learned, how do these words function when they are predicated of God? In short, rather than encompassing natural theology *tout court*, Aquinas's own doctrine of divine names is what we might call a theological semantics.

Aquinas's doctrine of analogy is sometimes taken to be almost coincident with the topic of divine names, or at least the most important element in understanding his answer to the question of divine naming. Thus analogy occupies the largest and central part of Gregory Rocca's book about Aquinas's theological language.[3] Rudi te Velde expresses a common view, in his chapter on divine names in *Aquinas on God*, that: "The question of divine

[2] Lawrence Dewan, "St. Thomas and the Divine Names," *Science et esprit* 32 (1980): 19-33, at 32-33.

[3] Gregory P. Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God*: *Thomas Aquinas on the Interplay of Positive and Negative Theology* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), esp. part 2, "Analogy and the Web of Judgment," 77-195.

names is, for [Aquinas], first and foremost a question of how names can be common to God and creatures . . . [and] [w]henever he treats this question his answer is that names . . . are said *analogously*."[4] Te Velde does not say—but the reader could easily have the impression[5]—that analogy is the answer to the question of divine naming.

I offer here a corrective to this impression. It is a mistake to treat analogy as the whole of, or even the most important part of, Aquinas's solution to the problem of divine naming; and it is a mistake to treat divine naming as a single problem and not a set of related questions. These mistakes involve misunderstandings about analogy in general, about the topic of divine naming, and about the role of analogy in addressing the topic of divine names. In fact, Aquinas has much to say about divine naming apart from and without referring to analogy (it is worth noting that in his commentary on the *Divine Names* the word "analogy" [*analogia*] and its cognates do not even appear). By clarifying Aquinas's understanding of analogy, I want to show its very specific and limited application in his treatment of theological language, and I therefore hope to clarify other linguistic or semantic insights of Aquinas, often neglected or conflated with analogy, that play a more central role in his doctrine of divine names.

In what follows, I will first try to clarify what analogy means for Aquinas. Here I will explain something that is well established but rarely expressed this way, namely, that Aquinas actually has two concepts of analogy. I do not mean that he has two types or classes or modes of analogy, nor two stages in his thought about analogy, but that he has two logically separate concepts of analogy. He learned both of these concepts from Aristotle, and

[4] Rudi Te Velde, *Aquinas on God: The "Divine Science" of the "Summa Theologiae"* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2006), 109.

[5] The impression that analogy is the answer to the question of divine naming is also given by Brian Davies, *Thomas Aquinas's "Summa Theologiae": A Guide and Commentary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 63-67, which aptly describes question 13 as a question "discussing 'God talk' in general" (62), explained in terms of the question, "how can we think of [words] as truly telling us about God?" (64). Davies then promptly says, "Aquinas's answer . . . is that some words . . . are to be understood as to be employed analogically" (ibid.).

they deserve to be treated separately, even though they can be, and sometimes are, related. Second, I will show that both concepts of analogy are relevant to Aquinas's treatment of divine naming, and that both are also relevant to other areas of Aquinas's thought which have nothing to do with divine naming. Finally, then, I will argue that to appreciate Aquinas's treatment of divine names we have to distinguish different senses of the question, "How can names be predicated of God?", and see that to answer these questions Aquinas appeals to other semantic concepts and distinctions, quite apart from either of the two notions of analogy. Only by attending to these other concepts can we understand how what is special about God is reflected in what is special about the way human language functions when applied to God, and how general assumptions about how language functions can determine what sort of divinity we are capable of conceiving.

I. Two Concepts of Analogy

It is commonly said that Aquinas did not have a developed doctrine of analogy, and certainly no systematic treatment of the same. His mentions of analogy are always occasional—he invokes it to solve particular problems—and because of this commentators hoping to formulate the Thomistic doctrine on the subject have had plenty to argue about. Is there a theory that could be explicitly stated, or did Aquinas have principled reasons for not developing a systematic theory of analogy? Did his views on analogy develop over his career? Is analogy primarily a metaphysical or a logical teaching for Aquinas? Is there a consistent, or at least most mature, account of different modes or types of analogy in Aquinas? Which later commentator best interprets and systematizes Aquinas? Anyone who ventures into the vast literature on Aquinas on analogy will find that these are the questions that dominate.[6] Even commentators striving to return

[6] Many of these conversations take place around evaluation of the Thomism of Cajetan's *De nominum analogia* (1498), a text which haunts modern interpreters of

to a strict exegesis of Aquinas's texts find themselves lost in the thickets of these later interpretive questions.[7]

We can avoid, or at least reframe, many of these questions by observing that there are two very different concepts of analogy in Aquinas. One of them, the more commonly invoked and recognized, conceives of analogy as a kind of relationship between different applications of a word. In this case, analogy is a *linguistic phenomenon*, located between two other linguistic phenomena, univocation and equivocation. This will be familiar to many, and easy for others to learn. In univocation, a term signifies the same content across multiple uses: the dog, the fish, and the bird can each be called "animal" in exactly the same sense. In equivocation, a term signifies very different content in different uses: what I hit the baseball with is not a "bat" in the same sense that the nocturnal flying mammal is a "bat." In between is analogical predication, which involves some degree of difference, but also some degree of sameness. To take the most common example in the Aristotelian tradition, the meaning of "healthy" as predicated of food is related to—but clearly not exactly the same as—the meaning of "healthy" as predicated of a urine sample. I will call this widely recognized concept of

Aquinas. For discussion and citations see Joshua P. Hochschild, *The Semantics of Analogy: Rereading Cajetan's "De nominum analogia"* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 17-32.

[7] These preoccupations can be found in most of the major works on analogy in Aquinas from the second half of the twentieth century, including: Hampus Lyttkens, *The Analogy between God and the World: An Investigation of Its Background and Interpretation of Its Use by Thomas of Aquino* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells Boktrycheri AB, 1952); George Klubertanz, *St. Thomas Aquinas on Analogy: A Textual Analysis and Systematic Synthesis* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1960); Ralph McInerny, *The Logic of Analogy: An Interpretation of St. Thomas* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961); Jacobus M. Ramirez, *De analogia*, 4 vols. (Madrid: Instituto De Filosofia Luis Vives, 1970). Perhaps the most influential is Bernard Montagnes, *La doctrine de l'analogie de l'être d'après saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires; Paris: Béatrice-Nauwelaerts, 1963), for discussion of which see Joshua P. Hochschild, "Proportionality and Divine Naming: Did St. Thomas Change his Mind about Analogy?" *The Thomist* 77 (2013): 531-58; and Joshua P. Hochschild, review of Bernard Montagnes, *The Doctrine of the Analogy of Being according to Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. E. M. Macierowski (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2004), *The Thomist* 72 (2008): 336-39.

analogy, describing a relationship between linguistic functions, *associated meaning*.

There is another sense of analogy in Aquinas that is not a category of linguistic relation but a category of likeness, similitude, or unity. It is compared with, and differentiated from, not univocation or equivocation, but other metaphysical categories of likeness or unity: specific and generic. As this context implies, and other contexts make clear, this nongeneric or supergeneric likeness does not involve the sharing of a common form or characteristic (as specific or generic likeness do), but instead must be conceived in terms of a relation of relations: we say that "A" is nongenerically like "X" if "A is to B as X is to Y." Due to this four-term structure, I call this sense of analogy, a metaphysical category of unity or likeness that does not imply sharing a common quality or form, *proportional likeness*.

On the face of it, associated meaning and proportional likeness are not the same concept. One is linguistic (about the relation of words), the other metaphysical (about a kind of unity). It is possible to imagine how they can be connected, to be sure: generic likeness implies that a genus term can be used, and genus terms are univocal; proportional likeness implies that, at least under the concept of proportional likeness, the common term is not strictly univocal but a case of associated meaning, linguistically analogical. On the other hand, not every case where things are in fact related by proportional likeness requires that there be a common term predicated of each; one can notice a similarity of relationship between things that do not share a common name (which is why there is always room for poetic insight to coin a new metaphor). Moreover, proportional likeness is not the only kind of relationship that must hold between two things that receive an analogical predication. Nobody in the tradition says that the food and the urine sample are both "healthy" because they have a proportional likeness to each other or to the health of the animal; they are each called healthy because they have a relation (other than proportionality) to the health of the animal, respectively *cause* and *sign*.

This much is obvious from reflection on the concepts themselves, but it is even clearer when we look at the way they are articulated by Aquinas's source for these ideas, Aristotle. For Aristotle, the Greek term "*analogia*" was used to describe what I am calling proportional likeness: the nongeneric similarity conceived on a four-term schema, extended from mathematical to other contexts. Aristotle also had a notion of associated meaning, but he never referred to this as *analogia*; rather, it was equivocation "*pros hen*," toward one. The very few occasions on which Aquinas brings the two concepts together only serves to emphasize that they are distinct. It is thanks to later history—especially Neoplatonic commentary on Aristotle, Boethius's handling of translation challenges from Greek to Latin, and the Arabic commentary tradition—that these notions came to be more closely related, so that by the time of Aquinas the term *analogia* had migrated from proportional likeness in Greek to cover also (and even primarily) associated meaning in Latin.[8]

Aquinas inherited both concepts of analogy and, depending on the context, uses the term "analogy" for both of them. Associated meaning—analogy as a mean between univocation and equivocation—is the sense of the word "analogy" at work in article 5 of the question on divine naming ("Whether what is said of God and of creatures is univocally predicated of them?"), where analogy is introduced as a way of ensuring that words as said of God have something in common with the way they are said of creatures, but not said univocally. However, the very first sense of "analogy" to appear in the *Summa theologiae* is the other concept, proportional likeness.[9] In question 4, article 3, addressing whether creatures can be like God, Aquinas distinguishes different senses of likeness, and argues that not every kind of likeness implies membership in a common genus. Both in the body of the response, and in the reply to the third objection, Aquinas invokes analogy as an alternative to specific or generic likeness, a likeness (or sameness or unity) "according

[8] For more on this, and references, see Hochschild, *Semantics of Analogy*, 4-10.

[9] I am ignoring a different, nonphilosophical use of "analogy" pertinent to biblical hermeneutics, in *STh* I, q. 1, a. 10.

to analogy." This passage is not atypical of those in which Aquinas treats analogy as proportional likeness.

A) Analogy as Proportional Likeness in Aquinas

It is undeniable that Aquinas recognized both concepts of analogy throughout his career. Regarding *proportional likeness*, there are several texts that explicitly describe analogy as a kind of unity or likeness characterized in terms of the four-term schema. These texts span Aquinas's works and they include not only theological works but philosophical commentaries and treatises. Commentators who want to focus on analogy as associated meaning cannot ignore the concept of proportional likeness, even if they find reason to marginalize it.[10]

In many passages that describe proportional likeness Aquinas uses the word "analogy" as the name for this relationship; very often, he refers to the relationship with the alternative "analogy or proportion," as if the two words are synonymous (e.g., *STh* I, q. 93, a. 1, ad 3; *In Boeth. De Trin.*, q. 4, a. 2; I *Phys.*, lect. 10; II *Gen. et Corr.*, lect. 9); and sometimes he does not use the word "analogy" and only calls the relationship "proportion." To make matters confusing, he sometimes uses "proportion" as the name for any relation at all, in which case when he wants to refer to the proportional likeness of the four-termed schema he will call it "proportionality"—a terminological solution he inherited from Boethius. Aquinas's language for *naming* this relationship is inconsistent, then, but the *relationship itself* is consistently recognized, across a variety of works throughout his career, and while it does have theological application it also appears in nontheological contexts—for instance in his analysis of cognition, how we learn about prime matter, and other cases.

[10] Klubertanz, *St. Thomas Aquinas on Analogy*, treats proportional likeness in a chapter called, "Problem Areas." Ramirez, *De Analogia*, examines proportional likeness in the historical section of vol. 1, but the bulk of his more analytical study in vols. 2-4 is focused on analogy as associated meaning.

There are also certain concepts that Aquinas takes to be implied by the nongeneric relation of proportionality. This relation is therefore often associated with particular words: "likeness," "image," "imitation," "representation," and "participation." For all of these, Aquinas seems to recognize that the commonality they suggest is not generic or specific (implying a common form received in the same way in different individuals) but proportional, implying a four-term schema or relation of proportions between different domains—such as the way the parts of a map are like the terrain they map, not because of a common form, but because the relationships of parts of the map represent (because they are proportional to) relationships in the mapped terrain. Aquinas makes this explicit, for instance, in commenting on "image," in this passage from his *Sentences* commentary:

> In response it must be said that the *ratio* of an image consists in imitation, whence its name is taken; for *imago* is said like *imitago*. But in the *ratio* of imitation there are two things to be considered; namely that in which there is imitation, and that which is imitated. Now that in respect of which there is imitation, is some quality, or form signified by the mode of a quality. Whence the *ratio* of image is *similitude*. But this isn't enough, but it must be that there is some adequation in that quality, either according to quality or according to proportion. As it is clear that, in a small image, there is an equal proportion of parts to each other as in the large thing of which it is an image; and therefore *adequation* is posited in its definition.[11]

Although he does not call it "analogy" in this passage, this is the relationship of proportionality that is called analogy in the passage mentioned above as the first use of analogy in the *Summa* (*STh* I, q. 4, a. 3). The question is "whether any creature can be like God," and here instead of "image" Aquinas talks about an effect as "participating" in a "likeness" of the cause irreducible to generic likeness:

[11] I *Sent*., d. 28, q. 2, a. 1. Cf. II *Sent*., d. 16, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4: "It must be said that the *ratio* of image is not expounded as *equality of equal parts*, since a large man can be expressed in a small image; but it is expounded as *equality of proportion*, namely as there is between each part of the image a proportion with what is imaged."

if there is an agent not contained in any genus, its effects will still more distantly reproduce the form of the agent, not, that is, so as to participate in the likeness of the agent's form according to the same specific or generic formality, but only according to some sort of analogy.

In the replies to objections, Aquinas describes this as a kind of "imitation" (ad 2) and "participation" (ad 3), and the function of an "image" which proportionally represents what is imaged is reprised here by the example of a statue, which is proportionally like that thing of which it is a statue (ad 4).

B) Analogy as Associated Meaning in Aquinas

Most commentators have focused on the way Aquinas uses analogy as associated meaning, that is, the linguistic phenomenon that is a mean between univocation and equivocation, such that a word expresses meanings partly the same and partly different, with a primary meaning to which secondary meanings are somehow related. It is uncontroversial to say that we can find this throughout Aquinas's career. Certainly in different contexts, Aquinas describes different ways of characterizing this kind of analogy, and different ways of distinguishing its subclasses or modes. This is what most commentators have argued about, and this is really what most scholars have in mind when they say that Aquinas has no systematic theory of analogy: they mean he has no consistent, systematic theory of how to distinguish different kinds of associated meaning, nor any account of how analogy can preserve syllogistic reasoning.[12] But it is undeniable that analogy as associated meaning is a consistent concept throughout his writings. Like proportionality, it appears in crucial theological contexts, but in plenty of nontheological contexts as well. Aquinas describes it as involving signification that is partly the same and partly different, where the "partly the same" is understood in terms of the different meanings having an order of

[12] See Hochschild, *Semantics of Analogy*, chap. 4; and Domenic D'Ettore, *Analogy after Aquinas: Logical Problems, Thomistic Answers* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2018).

priority (*per prius et posterius*), such that secondary significations make reference to a primary signification, or (as he sometimes puts it) some significations are qualified or modified (*secundum quid*), dependent on an unqualified or absolute (*simpliciter*) signification.

The fact that the two concepts are distinct is only reinforced by those few occasions where Aquinas uses both together. There is a much-discussed text from the disputed questions *De veritate* (*De Verit*, q. 2, a. 11) where proportional likeness is invoked to characterize a particular type of associated meaning.[13] But there is a much earlier, and nontheological, work, *On the Principles of Nature*, in which we can find the same thing. In the last chapter, Aquinas first introduces analogy as a category of likeness or unity beyond specific and generic unity.[14] Eventually, as we will see, Aquinas characterizes this explicitly in terms of the fourfold schema of proportional likeness. But first he discusses its implications for predication, shifting to the notion of analogy as a linguistic relationship, a mean between univocation and equivocation: *associated meaning*.[15] He then elaborates on analogy as associated meaning, to describe the different ways "being" is predicated of substance and accidents. But at the very end he returns to the other concept of analogy (or proportion) as a kind of agreement or likeness, in order to describe not only how "being" is linguis-tically analogical, but also how "principle" and "nature" are linguistically analogical. He explains this using the metaphysical relationship of proportional likeness, even explicitly employing the four-term schema:

> But the matter of substance and of quantity, and likewise their form and privation, differ in genus, but agree only according to proportion, so that, in the notion of matter, *just as matter of substance is related to substance, so the matter of quantity is related to quantity*. (Emphasis added)[16]

[13] On the interpretation of this contested text, see Hochschild, "Proportionality and Divine Naming."

[14] *De principiis naturae*, c. 6.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.: "Tamen materia substantiae et quantitatis, et similiter forma et privatio differunt genere, sed conveniunt solum secundum proportionem in hoc quod, sicut se

It is illuminating to compare *On the Principles of Nature*, which uses the word "analogy" for each of the two concepts of analogy, with another early work, *De ente et essentia*. Here again, Aquinas employs both concepts, which we might expect given that this is a more explicitly metaphysical and theological context. Regarding associated meaning, Aquinas explores different senses of "being," describing the linguistic relationship of a term said in a primary or absolute way of one thing and in a secondary or qualified sense of something else: he twice describes "being" and "essence" as said primarily of substance and secondarily or *secundum quid* of accidents; and once he describes a word predicated *per prius* of one, *per posterius* of the other.[17] Regarding proportional likeness, the logic of *De ente et essentia*'s main argument implies that we can learn about separate created substances, and even about God, from composite substances, by analogical reasoning (such as Aristotle described in *Metaphys*. 9.6). Aquinas depends on human inquiry following the four-term schema of the relationship of proportionality to make inferences from the nature of composite beings more knowable to us to the nature of simple beings, reflecting on how distinctions applicable to and learned from composite beings (between being, essence, and particular individual) are the same or different in simple beings. Notably, however, while he exercises both concepts of analogy, the linguistic and metaphysical, Aquinas never uses the term "analogy" in this work.

Thus far we have established three points. (1) There are two concepts of analogy, a linguistic one (associated meaning, a mean between univocation and equivocation) and a metaphysical one (proportional likeness, a kind of sameness or unity beyond

habet materia substantiae ad substantiam in ratione materiae, ita se habet materia quantitatis ad quantitatem."

[17] *De ente et essentia*, c. 1: "Sed quia ens absolute et per prius dicitur de substantiis et per posterius et quasi secundum quid de accidentibus, inde est quod essentia proprie et vere est in substantiis, sed in accidentibus est quodammodo et secundum quid." C. 5: "ideo substantia quae est primum in genere entis, verissime et maxime essentiam habens, oportet quod sit causa accidentium, quae secundario et quasi secundum quid rationem entis participant."

specific and generic sameness and unity). (2) Aquinas employs both concepts of analogy, and is aware that the two concepts can be related but do not have to be related; he can employ either concept with or without using the term "analogy." (3) Both senses of analogy have metaphysical and theological applications, but they are also relevant to issues other than the signification of "being" or of divine attributes. All of this is important for interpreting the relationship between analogy and divine naming, and is illustrated in the chart on the following page. This chart lists texts from Aquinas, some of which concern divine names, and indicates which concept of analogy is employed in each, and according to which explicit characteristics.

II. The Two Analogy Concepts and Divine Naming

To show the important, but very limited, applicability of both concepts of analogy to the topic of divine naming, I will focus on question 13 of the *Prima pars* of the *Summa theologiae*.[18] By this point, it has been established in many ways that God is unique, with many reasons to think it should be hard to speak meaningfully about God at all. Immediately after speaking about the existence of God (q. 2), Aquinas treats of divine simplicity (q. 3), with no distinction of matter and form (aa. 1 and 2), of nature and supposit (a. 3), of being and essence (a. 4) and substance and accident (a. 6). Of particular relevance is that there is not even composition of genus and difference: God cannot be defined, and is not contained in a genus (q. 3, a. 5). After and logically following divine simplicity, Aquinas covers divine perfection, goodness, infinity, immanence, immutability, eternity, and unity (qq. 4-11). Together with question 12, on our

[18] Effectively the same analysis would work for the comparable section of *Summa contra Gentiles*: *ScG* I, cc. 30-36.

TWO CONCEPTS OF ANALOGY	
ASSOCIATED MEANING – LINGUISTIC	***PROPORTIONAL LIKENESS*** – METAPHYSICAL
Aristotle: *pros hen* equivocation Boethius: *analogia*	Aristotle: *analogia* Boethius: *proportio*, *proportionalitas*
a. Between univocation and equivocation b. Signification partly same, partly different c. Signification with order of priority *i.* with reference to a primary *ii.* *per prius et posterius* *iii.* *simpliciter vs. secundum quid*	a. Beyond specific and generic likeness b. Similarity of relations c. 4-term schema – A:B::C:D *i.* "analogy" *ii.* "proportion" *iii.* "proportionality"

	Associated Meaning						*Proportional Likeness*					
Text*	a.	b.	c.	*i.*	*ii.*	*iii.*	a.	b.	c.	*i.*	*ii.*	*iii.*
I *Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 2		✓	✓		✓							
II *Sent.*, d. 42, q. 1, a. 3	✓	✓	✓			✓						
***De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 7**	✓	✓	✓	✓								
***ScG* I, c. 34**	✓	✓	✓	✓								
***STh* I, q. 13, a. 5**	✓	✓	✓	✓								
I *Peri herm.* lect. 5, n. 19		✓	✓		✓							
IV *Metaphys.*, lect. 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
***STh* I, q. 4, a. 3**							✓			✓		
***STh* I, q. 93, a. 1, ad 3**							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
III *Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 1							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
IV *Sent.*, d. 49, q. 2, a. 1							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
IV *Phys.*, lect. 12, n. 3							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
De Trin., 2.4.2.1								✓	✓	✓	✓	
V *Metaphys.*, lect. 8, nn.11-14							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
III *Metaphys.*, lect. 10, n. 10								✓		✓	✓	
IX *Metaphys.*, lect. 5, nn. 5-7								✓	✓		✓	✓
De unit. intel. 5								✓	✓		✓	
ScG II, c. 47								✓	✓		✓	
II *De Anima*, lect. 3, n. 6								✓	✓		✓	
I *Exp. Post.*, lect. 12, n. 8								✓	✓		✓	✓
***De Verit.*, q. 2, a. 3, ad 4**								✓	✓			✓
***De Verit.*, q. 2, a. 11**	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓		✓	✓
I *Sent.*, d. 35, q. 1, a. 4	✓	✓						✓				
De Ente					✓	✓			✓			
De Princip. Nat.	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
* **Bold = concerns divine names,** not bold = concerns topics other than divine names												

manner of knowing God the question on naming God helps to mark the methodological transition from the (supposedly more "negative") *via remotionis* to the (more positive?) *via similitudinis*. The unique character of God, lacking so many features of created being, together with our real but severely limited ability to know him, raises the question of how we can speak meaningfully about God.

This involves a number of related but separately articulated problems. Question 13 has twelve articles, and is one of the longest questions in the *Prima pars* (only qq. 12, 14, and 79 are longer). Of these twelve articles, only a few use the term "analogy." It is not mentioned in the answers to such questions as *whether* we can name God (a. 1), whether we can predicate words *substantially* (a. 2) or *literally* (a. 3) of God, or whether all terms said of God are *synonymous* (a. 4). Analogy (as associated meaning) seems specifically to be invoked only to answer the question of whether names are predicated of God *univocally* (a. 5).[19] Having introduced analogy to solve that problem, Aquinas also finds it useful to clarify the sense of priority in the order of naming (a. 6). But after that, analogy (as associated meaning) plays no role in addressing whether relations to creatures are predicated temporally of God (a. 7), and how the very word "God" functions as a special predicate (aa. 8-9). Article 10, which explicitly asks about different ways "God" can signify, invokes analogy; but analogy does not help address the question of God's most proper name (which God does not share with creatures), "He Who Is" (a. 11). Notably, Aquinas does not invoke analogy when answering the culminating article of question 13, which asks whether we can form affirmative propositions about God (a. 12).

All of the explicit references to analogy in question 13 (in aa. 5, 6, and 10) are to analogy as associated meaning—the linguistic phenomenon, which is fitting enough in a question about how we can name God. Analogy here primarily responds

[19] Lawrence Dewan describes the role of analogy in question 5 as relatively modest: helping to ensure that, while names said of God are distinct in their meaning from names said of creatures, they are not *entirely* distinct; there remains "a commerce" between the two sets of names ("St. Thomas and the Divine Names," 23).

to a question about what kind of commonality (univocal or otherwise) words have when predicated of creatures and God. In the context of divine naming, analogy as associated meaning is actually quite limited in its function. Analogy is not a general key to understanding how words can be truly applied to God, nor even to how words can be extended to God from creatures. That words can signify the divine substance, that they signify literally and not metaphorically, that we can make true affirmations, that different words signifying the same divine nature are not therefore synonymous—all of this is explained without reference to the linguistic notion of analogy.[20] That there are words common to God and creatures, and how they are common, turns out to be articulated with reference to a number of different semantic observations unrelated to analogy. Analogy, as associated meaning, addresses only the specific question of the kind of commonality exhibited: it is not the commonality of univocation, but the commonality of associated meaning, where a term has significations partly the same and partly different.

Despite the limited work done by analogy in this question, article 5 has received a disproportionate amount of attention especially because of a distinction in how analogous names are used: sometimes as "many having relation to one" (*multa habent proportionem ad unum*) and other times as "one having relation to another" (*unum habet proportionem ad alterum*). Many commentators have treated "many-to-one" and "one-to-another" as a distinction of modes of analogy with deep linguistic and metaphysical implications.[21] But the examples Aquinas uses, and

[20] Of course we need not rule out that linguistic analogy is being *exercised* in these explanations, but the point here is that Aquinas does not appeal to the concept of "analogy" as part of the explanations offered here.

[21] This over-reading is common in the literature, even and especially among very sound interpreters of Aquinas; three examples are John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 547, 565, 568; Reinhard Hütter, "Attending to the Wisdom of God—from Effect to Cause, from Creation to God: A *relecture* of the Analogy of Being according to Thomas Aquinas," in Thomas Joseph White, ed., *The Analogy of Being: Invention of the Antichrist or the Wisdom of God?* (Grand Rapids, Mich.:

his use of this same distinction elsewhere, make clear that what is at stake is no more than whether the primary analogate—that thing to which all the secondary meanings of the term as applied to secondary analogates is ordered—is included among a given set of things analogically named. So "healthy" said of both medicine and urine is a many-to-one application, since the primary sense of "healthy," by which it is predicated of an animal, is not included in the multiple items being considered, medicine and urine. But the same word, "healthy," said of medicine and animal, on the other hand, is a one-to-another application of analogy, because the one primary meaning is one of the two (the health of the animal) to which the other (the health of medicine) refers. All Aquinas wants to say with this distinction is that the primary or focal meaning in divine naming is God, not some third thing signified over and above God and creatures.

In fact, this consideration of the primary analogate leads to the clarification, in article 6, that in the case of divine names we have to distinguish between what is primary in the order of learning and what is primary in the metaphysical order. Even this distinction is formulated in terms of semantic categories: creatures are primary as that *from which* the analogous term is first *imposed* to signify, while God is primary as having or being primarily *what the name signifies*.

The only other explicit mention of analogy in question 13 is in article 10. The puzzle is about how the word "God" applies to things (such as idols, or allegedly multiple "gods") that are not truly God. The objections describe, in different ways, the same general concern: how can one who knows the one true God be said to be contradicted by someone who calls, say, an idol "God"? Such contradiction seems to require that the word is being used in the same sense, even though the idolater clearly has a different conception of God (obj. 3). Aquinas responds that the related meanings in analogy can be sufficiently similar—with the signification of one included in the signification of the other (*una illarum significationum clauditur in significationibus aliis*)—to

Eerdmans, 2011), 236-39; Thomas Joseph White, *Wisdom in the Face of Modernity: A Study in Thomistic Natural Theology*, 2d ed. (Naples, Fla.: Sapientia Press, 2016), 90-92.

serve as a foundation for contradiction and valid reasoning. Aquinas, like Aristotle, is convinced that analogy is, at least in some cases, sufficiently unified to preserve reasoning.

How this is possible, Aquinas, like Aristotle, does not further analyze.[22] The answer may have something to do with the other concept of analogy Aquinas learned from Aristotle. No explicit reference to analogy in question 13 invokes the metaphysical relationship of proportional likeness, but Aquinas does not and could not deny that such a relationship exists between creatures and God; such a relationship has been previously established and it is part of what gives rise to the question of how it is possible for language to apply to God. Analogy as the metaphysical relationship of proportional likeness certainly plays a role in question 13. The notion of proportional likeness is crucial in article 2 when Aquinas says that every creature "imperfectly represents" God—that is, the substance of God is genuinely represented in creatures, but in a manner that falls short. Here and in article 3 the relationship of representation, and the finite way in which a creature manifests what is preeminently in God, suggest a relation of likeness that is not the sharing of a common property, but a relation of proportions, according to the 4-term schema. While Aquinas does not use the word "analogy" in this context to describe this metaphysical relationship of proportional likeness, it is implied by his appeal to "representation" and "similitude."[23]

Moreover, since the emphasis here is on language, it presumes what was stated earlier about our cognition operating through likeness, image, or representation (in q. 12), summarized in terms of the so-called semantic triangle in Aquinas's response to article 1 of question 13: words are signs of understandings, and understandings are likenesses of things (*voces sunt signa intellectuum, et intellectus sunt rerum similitudines*). There is not

[22] This becomes a contested subject of much later commentary especially after Scotus's insistence that valid reasoning requires univocity. See Aquinas, IV *Metaphys.*, lect. 3; Hochschild, *Semantics of Analogy*, chap. 4; and D'Ettore, *Analogy after Aquinas*.

[23] Representation is linked to imitation in *STh* I, q. 3, a. 3, ad 2, and imitation to likeness, participation, and proportionality in *STh* I, q. 4, a. 3.

a proportional relationship between the *expressed* word (written or spoken) and its object, since that is an arbitrary relationship of conventional language,[24] but there is a proportional relationship between the cognitive act which mediates the signification of words (loosely, the "concept," or what later commentators will call the "formal concept") and that which the word signifies (the thing signified, what later commentators will call the "objective concept").

Apart from analogy as a linguistic phenomenon, then, much of what Aquinas tries to say about how language applies to God depends on this understanding of the relationship between language, mind, and reality, and in particular the idea that the human concept is a formal representation of the thing of which it is a concept, and that human truth involves a composition of formal representations in the mind that reflects a genuine, proportionate composition in things.

III. Divine Naming in Realist Semantics

The discussion of analogy in question 13 has forced us to consider some other semantic terminology beyond "analogy" as a mean between univocation and equivocation. The following chart summarizes the main issues in question 13, making clear both how isolated any reference to analogy is, and how many metaphysical and semantic considerations other than analogy are brought into play in the course of addressing divine names. (Dotted lines indicate attention to analogy as *proportional sameness*; double lines indicate attention to analogy as *associated meaning*; thick solid lines indicate both senses of analogy in play.)

[24] Onomatopoeiae being the exceptions that prove the rule—both in being words that represent sounds, and in being words that imperfectly represent sounds (as evident from the fact that names for animal sounds, for instance, vary across languages).

Summa theologiae, *Prima pars*, q. 13, "On the Divine Names"

A.	Problem	Solution	Metaphysical consideration	Semantic consideration
1	Can God be named by us?	We can grasp God by his relation to creatures; the mode of conception does not have to reflect the mode of being of what is conceived.	God is cause of creatures	**the semantic triangle: words signify realities by means of intellectual conceptions**
2	Can God be substantially named?	Words learned from creatures can signify something that we intend to predicate properly of God.	Creatures **represent** God (what they have in a creaturely way reproduces what God has in a pre-eminent way)	**imposition**
3	Whether names can be literally (as opposed to metaphorically) applied to God?	Words signify in a manner appropriate to creatures but what they signify is preeminently in God.	God has preeminently what is only in a secondary way **represented** in creatures.	**what the name signifies vs. mode of signification**
4	Whether names applied to God are synonymous?	The *ratio* of what is signified differs, so the names are not synonymous even though they signify the same simple perfection in God.	God is simple, creatures receive perfections in different modes.	***ratio* vs. what the name signifies**
5	Whether names are said univocally of God and creatures?	Words are predicated not univocally or equivocally but analogously or by proportion.	God as cause of creatures	**the *ratio* in analogy is partly the same, partly different**
6	Whether names predicated of God are primarily said of creatures?	The order of imposition differs from the order of what the name signifies.	God possesses the perfections, he is not only related to perfections as cause of them in creatures.	**imposition, mode of signification again**

7	Whether names which imply relation to creatures apply to God temporally?	Words like Creator, Lord, Savior, imply a relation to creatures, and can only be true of God after he creates, rules, saves, which are changes in creatures, not in God.	Real vs. rational relations, relatives *secundum esse* vs. relatives *secundum dici*	**signifying a relation, vs. signifying the foundation of a relation; extrinsic vs. intrinsic denomination**
8	Whether "God" is the name of a nature?	We name God from his operations; "God" is imposed from God's universal providence (one of his operations) but is imposed to signify his nature.	God's nature unknowable, except through his operations	**imposition**
9	Whether this name "God" is communicable?	God is a unique individual (supposit) identical with his nature, so while "God" signifies God's nature and is not a proper name, it is not communicable.	Identity of God and God's essence	**nature vs. supposit**
10	Whether "God" is univocal when it is predicated by nature, by participation, and according to opinion?	The term "God" signifies things other than God by reference to God; different meanings are analogically unified.	There is only one God, but other things can be somehow similar to God to improperly receive the name "God."	**analogy can be unified enough to cause contradiction or preserve valid reasoning**
11	Whether this name, 'He Who Is,' is the most proper name of God?	Yes, because of what it signifies, because of its universality, and because of its consignification (present tense).	God is existence itself; divine simplicity (no real distinction of essence and existence in God)	**consignification**
12	Whether affirmative propositions can be formed about God?	Affirmative propositions assert unity of subject and predicate.	Divine unity and simplicity	**inherence theory of predication**

It is instructive to survey the variety and extent of logical or semantic terminology deployed in the question on divine names. One may consider the various categories and distinctions of semantic functions Aquinas uses: the semantic triangle, and the distinction between abstract and concrete terms (a. 1); the notion of imposition (a. 2, and also aa. 6 and 8), and the distinction between mode of signification and what is signified (a. 3); the distinction between the thing signified and its *ratio* (a. 4; *ratio* is crucial also in aa. 5 and 6); the different ways of signifying a relation (a. 7),[25] the distinction between nature and supposit (a. 9, and again in a. 12), and the notion of consignification (a. 11); and finally the account of truth in predication (a. 12).

A more complete analysis of question 13 would further explicate each of these semantic notions in detail. For my purposes, it is enough to point out that taken together this represents the terminology of a particular conceptual framework, that of realist semantics. In fact one could almost reconstruct the realist semantic framework from the twelve articles in the question on divine names. Here I will only summarize realist semantics, as it is captured in its account of predication, suggested in article 12. According to this "inherence theory of predication," in an affirmative proposition, such as "Socrates is a man," the predicate term "man" signifies a form, humanity; and the predication is true, if and only if that form actually inheres in the thing designated by the subject term, namely, Socrates. So the proposition "Socrates is a man" is true if and only if the person Socrates is being actualized by the form of humanity signified by the term "man," and the mind thinking the truth of this proposition does so by mentally combining or uniting the form of humanity with Socrates.

Likewise, to affirm the truth of the proposition "Socrates is an animal," we must understand that animality, signified by the term

[25] This is an application of the Scholastic distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic denomination—the question of whether the *form signified* by a word is really in the *thing denominated* by the word. See Joshua P. Hochschild, "Logic or Metaphysics in Cajetan's Theory of Analogy: Can Extrinsic Denomination Be a Semantic Property?" *Proceedings of the Society for Medieval Logic and Metaphysics* 1 (2001): 45-69.

"animal," is actual in Socrates. We know that animality and humanity are logically different—something can be an animal without being a man—and so each has its own *ratio* or definition. On the other hand, in Socrates, the reality that is his humanity (Socrates' substantial form, which actualizes Socrates as the substance he is) is that by virtue of which Socrates is an animal; there does not need to be an additional substantial form, other than Socrates' humanity, by which Socrates is an animal. (This is the Thomistic doctrine of the unicity of substantial form.)[26] But other actualities of Socrates are not identical with his substantial form. For instance, if Socrates is wise, it is because he has the accident of wisdom, an accidental actuality, which is signified by the term "wisdom" in the true proposition "Socrates is wise." And assuming Socrates is also just, his wisdom is distinct from another accidental reality, justice, signified by the term "just" in the true proposition "Socrates is just." Finally, the forms or actualities required by a realist account of predication can always be further analyzed in a way that fits with what we learn about the actual states of affairs in reality, thus avoiding a simplistic (and unnecessary) correlation of semantic and metaphysical forms: for instance a relation predicated of one thing may reflect a reality in fact present in something else (e.g., the form of "being seen," as predicated of a visible object, in fact corresponds to some reality in the eye that sees it, not in the thing seen), and of course the intuitive account of privations (e.g., the form of "blindness" as predicated of something is nothing more than the *nonexistence* of actual sight in that thing).

This account of the truth of propositions seems to work well for the world of finite, composite objects. It reflects a composition of intellectual cognitions, which in turn reflects a composition of the things themselves, unities constituted by substantial forms actualizing matter, accidents inhering in substances,

[26] Such explanations would also typically invoke the language of "essence" and "soul." For clarification of the different roles played by these metaphysical principles, see Joshua P. Hochschild, "Form, Essence, Soul: Distinguishing Principles of Thomistic Metaphysics," in Nikolaj Zunic, ed., *Distinctions of Being: Philosophical Approaches to Reality* (Washington, D.C.: American Maritain Association/The Catholic University of America Press, 2013), 21-35.

different grammatical modes reflecting different ways of signifying these forms (abstract terms like "humanity" naming the forms themselves, concrete terms like "man" naming the things possessing those forms).

The special questions of divine names arise because we want to extend this account of how language works, compositionally, in order to explain how it is possible to speak of a simple substance.[27] In God, as he is conceived by Aquinas, there is no composition of matter and form, of accident and substance, of nature and its subject, nor even of being and essence—nor even any composition of different perfections or divine attributes since these are all the same in him. God does not *have* a nature, because he *is* a nature, and his nature is subsisting *esse*. Still, the nature that is God can be named, even though it is so remote from our understanding and known only through his effects, because a word which gets its signification from creatures can still signify something that is in God, insofar as the creature itself is a representation of God (aa. 1 and 2). Our words fall short of God in their mode of signification (abstract vs. concrete) but not in what they signify (a. 3).[28] The divine attributes are different in our understanding, and so have different *rationes* and are not synonymous, despite being verified by the same one simple actuality of God. "God," although grammatically a common name,

[27] This is the question Aristotle himself raises in the last chapter of *Metaphysics* IX. There, after having explained how we can learn about incomposite beings (actualities independent of matter) by reasoning analogically (by proportion [*Metaphys.* 9.6.1048a35-48b7) from composite things, he raises the question about how it is possible that our thinking (which takes place by composing and dividing) can apply truthfully to incomposite things (*Metaphys.* 9.10.1051b17ff.).

[28] Contrary to some interpreters, I maintain that the distinction between *res significata* and *modi significandi* should not be taken as an account of analogy as associated meaning. See E. J. Ashworth, "Signification and Modes of Signifying in Thirteenth-Century Logic: A Preface to Aquinas on Analogy," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 1 (1991): 39-67; E. J. Ashworth, "Analogy and Equivocation in Thirteenth-Century Logic: Aquinas in Context," *Mediaeval Studies* 54 (1992): 94-135; and Irène Rosier, "*Res significata* et *modus significandi*: Les implications d'une distinction médievale," *Sprachteorien in Spätantike und Mittelalter*, ed. Sten Ebbesen (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1995): 135-68.

signifies that in which there is no distinction between nature and supposit, and so it is incommunicable (and the abstract form "divinity" is as appropriate a name for God as "God") (a. 9). And since in God also the supposit/nature is identical with its being, the most proper name for God is one which suggests this ongoing activity of pure being with no distinction between what is and its being: "He Who Is" (a. 11).

The point of this summary is that the semantic framework to which Aquinas appeals in order to articulate how words apply to God is not an *ad hoc* invention, contrived to solve problems which arise independently of that framework; it is an extension and clarification of the framework within which the problems arise in the first place. Those with an alternative approach to language—medieval nominalists, say, or contemporary analytic philosophers of religion—not only would not solve the problems of divine naming in this way, they would not share the problems themselves. For instance, nominalists had little use for any notion of analogy (in theology or any other context), having done away with the formal principle by which words signify things.[29] And contemporary philosophers of religion often find no use for—indeed, they typically find completely incoherent—the notion that in God the nature and supposit are the same: translated (or rather, mis-translated) into a contemporary analytic framework, that sounds like calling God a property.[30]

But then, as this example shows, it is not only Aquinas's *semantic questions* about divine naming that would not arise from an alternative semantic framework, but the very *metaphysical theses* themselves which Aquinas wants to express within his semantic framework. Again, the problem of divine naming is the problem of how to extend our language, which is the language of composite rational beings making sense of a world of composite substances, to make true expressions about an absol-

[29] Gordan Leff, *William of Ockham: The Metamorphosis of Scholastic Discourse* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975), 159-62.

[30] William Lane Craig is one of many keeping alive this argument, usually traced to Alvin Plantinga, *Does God Have a Nature?* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1980). For a response from a Thomistic perspective see Lawrence Dewan, "Saint Thomas, Alvin Plantinga, and the Divine Simplicity," *Modern Schoolman* 66 (1989): 141-51.

utely incomposite being, a substance *par excellence*, subsistent being itself. How can we even conceive of God this way and why would we believe there is such a being? Within the conceptual framework implied by realist semantics, it necessarily follows from the existence of actual composite beings, which only have or participate in a share of being, that there is a first being, wholly actual, and so with no composition even of potency and actuality; it further necessarily follows that this purely subsistent being is wholly simple and fully perfect, since as fully actual there is no way in which it could be any better than it already is. But within an alternative conceptual framework—that of nominalism or contemporary analytic metaphysics, for instance—none of these steps retains its internal logic. Why must there be a first actuality just because there are some actual beings? How could God be an abstract entity like a nature or a property? How could the many divine attributes not be many properties of God? How could the notion of "pure being" be anything more than the most general, abstract, and conceptually empty notion?

It is very difficult to translate the traditional metaphysical claims of Thomistic-Aristotelian theology into an alternative semantic framework, one that does not analyze truth, signification and predication in terms of actualities or forms.[31] Thus contemporary philosophical literature on Thomistic metaphysics and natural theology is full of claims that it is incoherent,[32] and even thinkers quite sympathetic to Aquinas, attempting to

[31] One important effort of at least partially translating the work of Aristotelian form into analytic philosophy is as a "truth maker." See, e.g., Jeffrey Brower, "Making Sense of Divine Simplicity," *Faith and Philosophy* 25 (2008): 3-30.

[32] A much discussed example is Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Being* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). For Thomistic responses see Gyula Klima, "On Kenny on Aquinas on Being: A Critical Review of *Aquinas on Being* by Anthony Kenny," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 44 (2004): 567-80; Brian Davies, "Kenny on Aquinas on Being," *The Modern Schoolman* 82 (2005): 111-29; Steven A. Long, "*Aquinas on Being* and Logicism," *New Blackfriars* 86 (2005): 323-47; Joshua P. Hochschild, "Kenny and Aquinas on Individual Essences," *Proceedings of the Society for Medieval Logic and Metaphysics* 6 (2006): 45-56.

articulate and defend his views, find it challenging and end up expressing them in ways counter to his own logic.[33]

If we cannot think within the realist conceptual framework, we will not only fail to follow particular arguments or to understand particular theses, but we will miss what Timothy McDermott called the "seminal idea that unifies and animates the material of the *Summa* from start to last." McDermott, in the context of criticizing an analytic study of Aquinas, explained:

> That seminal idea . . . has as its base the understanding of the onward flowing existence of the temporal universe as owned and selved and circulated in various modes by agent substances; at its middle it has that mode of substance that we call "human being," a prudence which not only occupies existence but is alive to existence (in the way animals not only occupy space but are alive to it, taking it in with intelligence and giving it out with loving care; and at its top it has that creative providence of which human prudence is to be an instrument, and in which the circle operates in reverse, creation starting with the giving out and ending with the taking in. This is the seminal idea which orders the *Summa*: actuality as doing and being displayed in various modes—and which generates the multiplicity of theses with which any student of Aquinas is initially faced.

This seminal idea, McDermott concludes, "if once caught, could properly be called the voice of Aquinas."[34] This seminal idea is not about linguistic analogy or divine naming; it is more fundamental than that. To invoke it, Thomists are used to invoking "the analogy of being," as well as such ideas as participation,

[33] As evidence of just how hard it is to enter the framework of realist semantics, consider that even Rudi Te Velde's excellent book *Aquinas on God* is not immune from confusion: it describes divine perfection as logically unrelated to and corrective of divine simplicity (77-83), in part because it finds ambiguity between *ens commune* (the most general notion of being) and *ipsum esse* (pure being) (79-80); and this may be partly rooted in lack of clarity that the *res significata* of a word is not a composite individual or its species (e.g., "man") but a form (e.g., "humanity") (84, 99-100). Getting the semantics right is necessary for comprehending doctrines and arguments in revealed theology as well. For correctives to misreadings of Thomistic approaches to the Trinity and the Eucharist, see respectively Joshua P. Hochschild, "A Note on Cajetan's Theological Semantics: In Response to Timothy L. Smith's Criticisms of Cajetan," *Sapientia* 54 (1999): 367-76; and Joshua P. Hochschild, "Substance Made Manifest: Metaphysical and Semantic Implications of the Doctrine of Transubstantiation," *Saint Anselm Journal* 9.2 (2014).

[34] Timothy McDermott, "Everything Flows," in *Times Literary Supplement* (April 29, 2005).

actuality, formal or exemplar causality, and other concepts. What I have been arguing is that, outside the framework of realist semantics, such ideas will remain empty mantras. What is needed is no more and no less than a thorough articulation of how Aquinas talked about *being*, how he understood the signification of "being"—a surprisingly demanding task.[35]

Conclusion

Analogy, for Aquinas, is not one topic but two. These topics can be related, but they cannot be understood in relation unless they are first distinguished: one is a metaphysical concept, the other a linguistic one. The topic of divine naming, for Aquinas, is not synonymous with "analogy" (in either of its senses) but it fully displays the significant theological stakes, and the complex semantic framework, of Aquinas's "seminal idea." Alternatives to the realist semantic framework may seem appealing as more simple and straightforward, but ironically they obscure key metaphysical claims, including especially the doctrine of divine simplicity—not only what it means, but how it is derived from other metaphysical truths, and what further theological truths follow from it. To make Aquinas's doctrine of divine names, the doctrine of divine simplicity, the relevance of associated meaning and proportional likeness, and the very signification of "being" intelligible to those operating within a different conceptual framework is not a simple matter of translation; it is more a matter of helping those not versed in Aquinas's language to learn it for themselves.[36] From any perspective, the stakes are the standard ones always implicated in philosophical conversation: whether we can achieve mutual understanding. But from a

[35] Contemporary analytic philosophers can do no better than to start with Gyula Klima, "The Semantic Principles Underlying Saint Thomas Aquinas's Metaphysics of Being," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 5 (1996): 87-141.

[36] Gyula Klima, "The 'Grammar' of 'God' and 'Being': Making Sense of Talking about the One True God in Different Metaphysical Traditions," in D. Z. Phillips, ed., *Whose God? Which Tradition? The Nature of Belief in God* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008; New York: Routledge, 2016), 53-77.

Thomistic perspective, the stakes are that much higher: whether we can even share a conception of the one true God, and of ourselves as having received our being from him.

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OPERATION AND ACTUALITY IN ST. THOMAS AQUINAS'S ARGUMENT FOR THE SUBSISTENCE OF THE RATIONAL SOUL[1]

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THE HUMAN SOUL is something of an ontological anomaly for St. Thomas Aquinas. It is the substantial form of the human being and so serves as her principle of existence and organization.[2] But it is also a subsistent part of the human being—specifically, the part with which she understands. As subsistent, it is not merely the formal principle by which she exists; it exists in its own right, *per se*, akin, in this respect, to body parts like the hand or eye.[3] Yet unlike these body parts, it is a subsistent *substantial form*, and Aquinas argues that this

[1] Special thanks to Therese Cory, Kara Richardson, participants at the Workshop in Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy, April 22, 2017 at Fordham University, and anonymous referees for comments on and discussion of previous versions of this article. Translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

[2] For discussion of Aquinas's hylomorphism, see Donald C. Abel, "Intellectual Substance as Form of the Body in Aquinas," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 69 (1995): 227-36; B. C. Bazan, "The Human Soul: Form and Substance? Thomas Aquinas' Critique of Eclectic Aristotelianism," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen-âge* 64 (1997): 95-126; Gregory Coulter, "Aquinas on the Identity of Mind and Substantial Form," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 64 (1991): 161-79; J. Eberl, "Aquinas on the Nature of Human Beings," *The Review of Metaphysics* 58 (2004): 333-65; Gyula Klima, "Aquinas on the Materiality of the Human Soul and the Immateriality of the Human Intellect," *Philosophical Investigations* 32 (2009): 163-82; Eleonore Stump, "Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism and Materialism Without Reductionism," *Faith and Philosophy* 12 (1995): 505-31.

[3] Aquinas recognizes strict and loose notions of *per se* existence. Incomplete parts, including the soul, only loosely subsist (*STh* I, q. 75, a. 2, ad 1 and 2).

ontological status renders it incorruptible. Consequently, it survives death to exist in a disembodied state. Such implications render Aquinas's commitment to the soul's subsistence—and his argument to that end—central to his philosophy of the human person.[4]

For Aquinas, the soul owes its subsistence to its rational nature. He argues that our intellective acts, unlike sensitive or nutritive ones, cannot be performed by something corporeal, like a bodily organ. Instead, they must be performed by something incorporeal. Aquinas locates these operations in the soul, apart from the body.[5] In his view, this renders the soul a *per se* operator, which in turn entails its subsistence, that is, its existence *per se*. He holds that "[i] "nothing operates *per se* unless it exists *per se*, [ii] for, indeed, nothing operates except a

[4] *STh* I, q. 75, a. 6; *D. Q. De Anima*, a. 14. For more on the soul's incorruptibility, see B. C. Bazan, "On Angels and Human Beings: Did Thomas Aquinas Succeed in Demonstrating the Existence of Angels?," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen-âge* 77 (2010): 47-85; Richard Cross, "Is Aquinas's Proof for the Indestructibility of the Soul Successful?" *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 5 (1997): 1-20; Eberl, "Aquinas on the Nature of Human Beings," 335-65; Joseph Novak, "Aquinas and the Incorruptibility of the Soul," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 4 (1987): 405-21; Joseph Owens, "Aquinas on the Inseparability of Soul from Existence," *The New Scholasticism* 61 (1987): 249-70; Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: A Philosophical Study of Summa Theologiae, 1a 75-89* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Patrick Toner, "St. Thomas Aquinas on Death and the Separated Soul," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 91 (2010): 587-99. For personal survival of death, see Eleonore Stump, "Resurrection, Reassembly, and Reconstitution: Aquinas on the Soul," in *Die Menschliche Seele: Brauchen Wir Den Dualismus?*, ed. Bruno Niederberger and Edmund Runggaldier (Ontos Verlag, 2006); Christopher Brown, "Aquinas and the Ship of Theseus," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 81 (2007): 655; Christopher Conn, "Aquinas on Human Nature and the Possibility of Bodiless Existence," *New Blackfriars* 93 (2012): 324-38. For human persistence conditions and the separated soul, see Marilyn McCord Adams, "The Resurrection of the Body according to Three Medieval Aristotelians: Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus, William Ockham," *Philosophical Topics* 20, no. 2 (1992): 1-33; Christopher Hughes, "Aquinas on Continuity and Identity," *Medieval Philosophy & Theology* 6 (1997): 93-108; Silas Langley, "Aquinas, Resurrection, and Material Continuity," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 75 (2001): 135-47; Christina Van Dyke, "Human Identity, Immanent Causal Relations, and the Principle of Non-Repeatability: Thomas Aquinas on the Bodily Resurrection," *Religious Studies* 43 (2007): 373–94.

[5] *STh* I, q. 75, a. 2. See note 52 for bodily involvement in intellective cognition.

being in act, [iii] whence a thing operates in the way it exists."[6] Since the soul operates *per se*, it must exist *per se*.

Aquinas's argument rests on the correspondence between a thing's mode of operation and its mode of existence. This is explicit in [i] and [iii]. Yet he does not take this correspondence as primitive. Instead, he justifies it with [ii], *nothing operates except a being in act*. This requirement that agents be "in act" in order to operate underlies the correspondence between operating and existing *per se*. Aquinas makes similar moves in other contexts, appealing to variations of [ii] to support correspondence claims regarding operation and existence.[7] In fact, [ii] is an instance of a pervasive principle in Aquinas's thought, which frequently appears as "nothing acts except insofar as it is in act" or, "each thing acts insofar as it is in act."[8] He employs this principle, which I will call the *in-act* principle, in myriad contexts. It features in his arguments that God alone creates,[9] that all creatures produce their like,[10] that incorporeal creatures are incorruptible,[11] that the intellective powers are formally in us,[12] and others.[13]

Yet what the principle means and how it serves its justificatory role in the subsistence argument are not immediately clear. Indeed, despite the *in-act* principle's prominence in Aquinas's thought, it has received relatively little attention in the literature. Perhaps this is because it has sometimes been taken as the truism that agents must exist *simpliciter*. John

[6] *STh* I, q. 75, a. 2 (Leonine ed., 5:196): "Nihil autem potest per se operari, nisi quod per se subsistit. Non enim est operari nisi entis in actu, unde eo modo aliquid operatur, quo est."

[7] *STh* III, q. 77, a. 3; *ScG* II, c. 21.

[8] The inferences Aquinas makes from the latter formulation indicate that he intends the "insofar as" to lend a bi-conditional character to the principle: Things act if and only if they are in act. Many of his inferences would be blatantly invalid if we did not read the principle in this way.

[9] *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 4; *ScG* II, c. 21.

[10] *Q. D. De Anima*, a. 12; *STh* I, q. 115, a. 1; *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 8.

[11] *ScG* II, c. 55.

[12] *ScG* II, cc. 59 and 76; *STh* I, q. 79, a. 4.

[13] *STh* I, q. 5, a. 5; q. 19, a. 2; q. 76, a. 1; *ScG* II, cc. 41 and 77; *De Pot.*, q. 8, a. 1; *De Verit.*, q. 11, a. 2; q. 10, a. 6.

Wippel, for instance, explains the principle by noting that "nonexisting agents do not actually produce effects."[14] And, while discussing its role in the subsistence argument, Robert Pasnau explains that what does not exist independently cannot operate independently because "existence is a pre-requisite for operation."[15] While true, this reading of the principle is unhelpful for understanding it within the context of Aquinas's subsistence argument. His aim is not simply to establish that the soul exists *simpliciter*, but to establish that it exists *per se* and not as a mere formal principle.

Other interpreters have taken the principle to be little more than a restatement of one of the correspondence claims regarding mode of operation and mode of existence.[16] Norman Kretzmann notes that things that depend on matter (i.e., nonsubsistent forms) cannot act on their own.[17] But again, this does little to explain why something nonsubsistent cannot operate *per se*, and leaves the *in-act* principle's role in the argument largely obscure. If we can illuminate the principle in a way that clarifies the argument for subsistence and does more justice to the variety of contexts in which it is employed, we ought to do so.

In this article, I take up the task. I argue that by drawing out the implications of the *in-act* principle for Aquinas's metaphysical account of creaturely operation, we can provide a metaphysical explanation of why anything that operates *per se* must exist *per se*. In particular, I argue that, according to the *in-act* principle, all created agents must operate by means of inherent accidental forms which serve as their operative powers.

[14] John Wippel, "Thomas Aquinas on Our Knowledge of God and the Axiom that Every Agent Produces Something Like Itself," in *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 74 (2000b): 81-101. Wippel's gloss appears in connection with a different argument.

[15] Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 50.

[16] Ibid.; James P. Etzwiler, "Man as Embodied Spirit," *New Scholasticism* 54 (1980): 358-77, at 368-69.

[17] Norman Kretzmann, "Aquinas's Philosophy of Mind," *Philosophical Topics* 20, no. 2 (1992): 77-101, at 80. Kretzmann's remark concerns forms that depend on matter, but Aquinas's statements rule out *per se* operations for all nonsubsistent forms, including immaterial accidental ones (*Q. D. De Anima*, aa. 1 and 19).

Thus, any created agent must be the subject of a form and, accordingly, it must be the sort of thing that can serve as a subject. I contend that in Aquinas's metaphysics only something subsistent is ontologically fit for the task. To serve as a subject, a thing must be a composite of potency and act. For Aquinas, things are so composed either hylomorphically or insofar as their natures are related to being as potency to act. I argue that while nonsubsistent things are principles involved in potency-act composition, only subsistent things are requisitely composite. Accordingly, only subsistent things are capable of serving as the subjects of the formal principles of operation required for creaturely action. Together, then, Aquinas's *in-act* principle and his potency-act ontology yield the crucial premise that nothing operates *per se* unless it exists *per se*.

Examining the *in-act* principle in this context helps to close an explanatory gap in Aquinas's subsistence argument. But because the principle represents a fundamental link between his metaphysics of being and his metaphysics of operation, its investigation here also sheds light on the intimate connections between subsistence, creaturely operation, form, and subjecthood in his metaphysics more generally. The examination of the *in-act* principle here will advance our understanding of its significance and role in Aquinas's thought more broadly.

This article has five sections. Part I introduces Aquinas's notions of subsistence and existence *per se* and clarifies his account of the soul as a subsistent part of the human being. Part II presents his argument for subsistence and his commitment to the soul's *per se* operation. Part III turns to Aquinas's inference from *per se* operation to *per se* existence and appeal to the *in-act* principle. I argue that, according to the *in-act* principle, created agents operate insofar as they are the subjects of forms. Part IV discusses the metaphysical requirements for serving as the subject of forms and accidents, using Aquinas's account of angels as a paradigm for incorporeal subjects. Lastly, part V argues that only subsistent things have the ontological structure to serve as a subject for forms and accidents. Accordingly, any created agent, including the human soul, must exist *per se*.

I. SUBSISTENCE AND EXISTENCE *PER SE*

Aquinas admits of multiple modes of existence, each related to a primary mode of being, that of substance.[18] Substance, according to Aquinas, is that to whose nature it belongs to exist through itself, that is, *per se*.[19] *Per se* existents, he explains, do not depend on an "outside foundation"[20] or support in which they inhere for their being. In this regard they differ from things to whose nature it belongs to exist *in alio*, in another, for example, accidents and accidental forms.[21] Accidental forms inhere in their subjects and give rise to the accidents that modify their subjects. In this way, they are the principles by which their subject exists in a certain sort of way.[22] As modifications of a subject, accidents and accidental forms depend on their subject and cannot naturally exist apart from it. Aquinas considers them to be *of* beings rather than to be beings in their own right.[23]

Likewise, for Aquinas material substantial forms exist *in alio* insofar as they exist in prime matter to constitute a material substance.[24] Strictly speaking, substantial form is not in a *subject* since there is no substantial subject prior to its advent. But because material substantial forms cannot exist apart from the

[18] IV *Metaphys.*, lect. 1.

[19] IV *Metaphys.*, lect. 1 (Marietti ed., 543); *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 1. Aquinas offers this as a quasi-definition of substance. Substance cannot be properly defined because being is not a genus (it is predicated of things analogically). Moreover, following Avicenna he argues that substance cannot be even quasi-defined as that which exists *per se*, because this concerns the being rather than the essence of the thing. Hence it should be considered as that to whose nature it belongs to exist *per se* and not *in alio* (*De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 3, ad 4). See John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being*, Monographs of the Society for Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy, no. 1 (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 229-37 for helpful discussion.

[20] Consider *De Pot.*, q. 9, a. 1 (Marietti ed, 226): "quorum primum est quod non indiget extrinseco fundamento in quo sustentetur, sed sustentatur in seipso; et ideo dicitur subsistere, quasi per se et non in alio existens."

[21] Likewise, an accident is not that which exists *in alio*, but that to whose nature it belongs to exist *in alio*. See note 19.

[22] VII *Metaphys.*, lect. 1 (Marietti ed., 1253-54).

[23] *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 8.

[24] *STh* I, q. 75, a. 2. The human soul is not a "material form" (*Q. D. De Anima,* a. 1).

matter they inform, Aquinas frequently refers to them as "in a subject" in a loose or improper sense.[25] As the principles that account for matter existing as a substance, such forms are, according to Aquinas, *that by which* a composite exists (*quo est*), rather than *that which is* (*quod est*).[26]

Lastly, Aquinas describes integral parts of substances as beings *in alio*.[27] Integral parts are those parts into which we could imagine a substance being conceptually chopped—for instance, the hand, heart, liver, etc. of a human body.[28] Although integral parts exist *in alio*, they do not do so by inhering. They are not formal principles that actualize matter or a subject (like accidental or material substantial forms). Instead, as portions of a hylomorphically composed whole, integral parts share in this hylomorphic composition. Although they do not exist by means of their own unique substantial forms, they share in the matter-form composition of the whole, just as a slice of cake, like the whole, is composed of flour, sugar, and butter. And while not inhering in a subject, integral parts can serve as subjects for accidents, as the eye serves as the subject of both the power of sight and the sensible species of colors.[29]

Since integral parts do not exist by inherence but share in the existence of the whole, Aquinas considers their being to be closer to that of complete substances than that of accidental or material substantial forms.[30] They are not primary subjects of being in the strict sense, however. As noted, they do not have their own substantial forms, but instead exist by means of the

[25] II *De Anima*, lect. 1 (Marietti ed., 220).

[26] *STh* I, q. 118, a. 1; *De Virt*., a. 11; *De Ente*, c. 5.

[27] *STh* III, q. 2, a. 2, ad 3; IX *Quodl*., q. 2, a. 2.

[28] In this regard, they differ from prime matter and substantial form. We cannot imagine cutting apart a substance's matter and form the way we could imagine cutting off its left hand. N.B.: parts actually cut off from their substantial whole undergo a complete change in identity when severed (*Q. D. De Anima*, a. 10). For discussion of integral parts see, Christopher Brown, *Aquinas and the Ship of Theseus: Solving Puzzles about Material Objects* (London: A&C Black, 2005), 87-94.

[29] For the organs as subjects of vital powers see, *Q. D. De Anima,* a. 10, ad 13; *ScG* II, c. 69. For the eye as subject of sensible species, see III *De Anima*, lect. 7 (Marietti ed., 686).

[30] III *Sent*., d. 6, q. 1, a. 1, qcla. 1, ad 1.

form of the whole.[31] Accordingly, the existence of a part depends on that of the whole. Complete substances, therefore, are primary subjects of *esse* in a way that their parts are not. Nevertheless, insofar as a part shares in the *esse* of the whole, Aquinas maintains that we can think of it loosely as a subject of *esse*—that is, as a subsistent thing or *hoc aliquid*.[32] He writes,

> But something can sometimes be called subsistent *per se* if it is not inherent like an accident or a material form even if it is a part. But what is said to subsist properly and *per se* is neither inherent in the aforementioned way nor a part.[33]

And,

> "*Hoc aliquid*" can be taken two ways. In one way, for anything subsistent. In another, for something subsistent and complete in the nature of a species. The first excludes the inherence of accidents and material forms. The second also excludes the imperfection of a part. Whence the hand can be called "*hoc aliquid*" in the first way but not the second. So, therefore, since the human soul is part of the human species, it can be called "*hoc aliquid*" in the first way, as it were, subsistent, but not in the second way.[34]

Although strictly speaking only complete substances subsist or exist *per se*, since incomplete parts do not exist by inhering in a subject, Aquinas considers the latter loosely or improperly subsistent.

[31] *STh* I, q. 76, a. 8.

[32] *Q. D. De Anima,* a. 10; *STh* I, q. 76, a. 8.

[33] *STh* I, q. 75, a. 2, ad 2 (Leonine ed., 5:197): "Sed per se existens quandoque potest dici aliquid si non sit inhaerens ut accidens vel ut forma materialis, etiam si sit pars. Sed proprie et per se subsistens dicitur quod neque est praedicto modo inhaerens, neque est pars."

[34] *STh* I, q. 75, a. 2, ad 1 (Leonine ed., 5:196): "Ad primum ergo dicendum quod hoc aliquid potest accipi dupliciter, uno modo, pro quocumque subsistente, alio modo, pro subsistente completo in natura alicuius speciei. Primo modo, excludit inhaerentiam accidentis et formae materialis, secundo modo, excludit etiam imperfectionem partis. Unde manus posset dici hoc aliquid primo modo, sed non secundo modo. Sic igitur, cum anima humana sit pars speciei humanae, potest dici hoc aliquid primo modo, quasi subsistens, sed non secundo modo."

See also *Q. D. De Anima,* a.1. Bazan also discusses the soul as *hoc aliquid*; see Bazan, "Human Soul," 95-126.

Likewise, although strictly speaking only complete substances operate,[35] Aquinas often attributes operations to incomplete parts in a loose, improper way. For instance, because one sees with one's eyes, hears with one's ears, and so on, Aquinas considers these parts, loosely speaking, *per se* operators of vision and hearing respectively, since they are the parts of the person that serve as the seats of her operations.[36] Yet, because parts owe their existence and capacity for operation to the substantial form of the whole, the substance as a whole is ontologically privileged. Strictly speaking, then, only complete substances operate or exist *per se*.

In the passages above, Aquinas affirms that the soul subsists, but clarifies that it does so only improperly, as a part.[37] It is not complete in human nature, so its subsistence is like that of an integral body part—it subsists as part of a larger whole. Still, the soul differs from body parts because it is both a subsistent part *and* substantial form. In this regard, the soul is ontologically unique.[38] Moreover, for Aquinas, this combination renders the soul incorruptible.[39] As substantial form, it is the principle by which the human being has *esse*. But as a subsistent part, it is also a subject of that very *esse*. As both principle and subject of the *esse* by which it subsists, the soul cannot be separated from existence any more than it can be separated from itself (i.e., not at all). Consequently, the soul cannot cease to be, even at death. After the corruption of the body, it continues to exist in a separated state.

Aquinas's argument for the incorruptibility of the soul depends on its subsistence, so his argument for its subsistence is integral for establishing the soul's survival of death and its capacity for separate existence. That said, the soul's incorruptibility depends as much on its status as substantial form as it does on its subsistence. Indeed, the loose sense of

[35] *STh* I, q. 75, a. 5, ad 2; *STh* II-II, q. 58.

[36] *STh* I, q. 75, a. 2, ad 2; *De Spir. Creat.*, a. 2, ad 2.

[37] *STh* I, q. 75, a. 2, ad 1 and 2; *Q. D. De Anima,* a. 1.

[38] Angels are subsistent forms, but the human soul is the only subsistent substantial form of a material composite.

[39] *STh* I, q. 75, a. 6; *Q. D. De Anima,* a. 14.

subsistence Aquinas grants the soul does not typically render parts incorruptible or capable of existing apart from the larger whole (e.g., the hand loosely subsists but cannot exist separated from the whole). Because the soul differs metaphysically from other subsistent parts, we cannot always generalize from the implications of its subsistence. Moreover, as we will see, Aquinas's argument for the subsistence of the soul is specific to the soul. We cannot substitute any subsistent part whatsoever and use the same argument to establish its subsistence. Understanding how the argument for the soul's subsistence is specific to the soul is important for understanding the argument itself.

II. The Argument for Subsistence (I): The Soul as *per se* Operator[40]

Aquinas argues that the soul subsists on the grounds that (a) it operates *per se* and (b) whatever operates *per se* exists *per se*.[41] Claim (a) depends on his view that intellective operations require an incorporeal principle and cannot be carried out in or by a body or bodily organ. He has various arguments for this, but because our interest concerns the inference from the soul's *per se* operation to its *per se* existence, let us provisionally grant it.[42] In Aquinas's view, since intellective acts cannot be carried out in or by a body part, they must be carried out by something that does not share this operation with the body. For instance, in the *Summa theologiae* he writes,

[40] Hereafter I use the terms "subsists," "exists *per se*," and "operates *per se*," according to their loose senses.

[41] *STh* I, q. 75, a. 2; *Q. D. De Anima*, aa. 1 and 14; *De Spir. Creat.*, a. 2; *ScG* II, c. 51; I *De Anima*, lect. 2 (Marietti ed., 5). See Etzwiler, "Man as Embodied Spirit," 358-77; Kretzmann, "Aquinas' Philosophy of Mind," 77-101; and Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 48-57, for further discussions of the argument.

[42] For detailed discussion of the incorporeity argument see, D. R. Foster, "Aquinas on the Immateriality of the Intellect," *The Thomist* 55 (1991): 415-38; Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 48-57; David P. Lang, "Aquinas's Impediment Argument for the Spirituality of the Human Intellect," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 11 (2003): 107-24.

This intellective principle cannot be a body, and similarly it cannot understand through a bodily organ. . . . Therefore this intellective principle, which is called mind or intellect, has a *per se* operation which it does not share with the body.[43]

But for Aquinas, humans are hylomorphic composites of prime matter and substantial form (soul). If intellective operations cannot be carried out in or through something corporeal, they must be carried out by the soul alone.[44] Thus the soul must be the seat of intellective cognition, the part of the human being that performs the intellective acts, the *per se* operator. He writes,

But nothing can operate *per se* unless it subsists *per se*, for nothing operates except a being in act, so a thing exists in the way it operates. Accordingly, we do not say that it is heat that heats, but the hot thing. It remains, therefore, that the human soul, which is called intellect or mind, is something incorporeal and subsistent.[45]

From Aquinas's conclusion we can see that the incorporeal intellective principle is the human soul. The soul is the *per se* operator with respect to our intellective acts and this entails its subsistence.

When Aquinas claims that the soul has an operation *per se* not shared with the body, he is not referring to its capacity for post-mortem separate existence and operation.[46] Instead, he is distinguishing its role in intellective cognition from the

[43] *STh* I, q. 75, a. 2 (Leonine ed., 5:196): "impossibile est igitur quod principium intellectus sit corpus. Et similiter impossibile est quod intelligat per organum corporeum… Ipsum igitur intellectuale principium, quod dicitur mens vel intellectus, habet operationem per se, cui non communicat corpus."

[44] Aquinas rejects spiritual matter (*De Spir. Creat.*, a. 1; *Q. D. De Anima,* a. 6), so no candidate for operator remains except the soul.

[45] *STh* I, q. 75, a. 2 (Leonine ed., 5:196): "Nihil autem potest per se operari, nisi quod per se subsistit. Non enim est operari nisi entis in actu, unde eo modo aliquid operatur, quo est. Propter quod non dicimus quod calor calefacit, sed calidum. Relinquitur igitur animam humanam, quae dicitur intellectus vel mens, esse aliquid incorporeum et subsistens."

[46] Aquinas's argument for the soul's incorruptibility (*STh* I, q. 75, a. 6) relies on the claim that the soul subsists. It would be problematically circular for the latter to depend on the former as well.

operative role typical of nonsubsistent forms. This is stated explicitly in numerous versions of the argument. For example, he writes,

> Therefore, forms that have no operations that are not shared with their matter do not operate, but the composite operates through the form.[47]

> For forms that have an act of existing that depends on matter or on a subject do not possess *per se* operations.[48]

> So other forms do not operate, but the composite operates through them.[49]

Accidental and material substantial forms are typically principles *by which* their subjects or composites operate and not themselves *that which* operates *per se*. Indeed, when we consider the soul's role in our sensitive and nutritive operations, Aquinas maintains that it is a formal principle by which we see, hear, and digest, but it is not *that which* sees, hears, and digests.[50] Instead, the relevant bodily organs (eyes, ears, and intestines) serve as the seats of our seeing, hearing, and digesting. Moreover, Aquinas maintains that if intellective operations were performed in a bodily organ, the soul would be involved only as a formal principle *quo*.[51] The relevant bodily organ would be the seat of operation.

Thus, as the substantial form of the body, the only way for the soul to have a *per se* operation is for there to be a human operation that cannot be performed in a bodily organ. Any body-based operation involves the soul only formally. So while operating apart from the body, or apart from the whole, is not generally required for operating *per se* (as a part) in Aquinas's

[47] *De Unitate Intellectus*, c.1 (Leonine ed., 43:298): "Formae igitur quae nullam operationem habent sine communicatione suae materiae, ipsae non operantur, sed compositum est quod operatur per formam."

[48] *Q. D. De Anima,* a. 1 (Marietti ed., 283): "Formae enim quae habent esse dependens a materia vel subiecto, non habent per se operationem"

[49] X *Quodl.*, q. 3, a. 2: "unde etiam aliae formae non operantur, sed composita per formas." Also *Q. D. De Anima,* a. 19.

[50] *Q. D. De Anima,* a. 19, ad 15.

[51] *ScG* II, q. 69; *Q. D. De Anima,* a. 2, ad 18.

view, in order to count as a *per se* operator the soul must have an operation in which the body does not share. Only this is sufficient to render the soul the seat of operation. By holding that the soul operates apart from the body, Aquinas shows that the soul, like the eyes or intestines, is a part that *does* something. It is not merely a formal principle *by which something* is done.[52] It operates *per se*.

III. The Argument for Subsistence (II): *Per se* Operation and *per se* Existence

Having established the soul's *per se* operation, Aquinas forges a connection between its mode of existence and its mode of operation. He writes, "But nothing can operate *per se* unless it subsists *per se*, for nothing operates except a being in act, so a thing exists in the way it operates."[53] Here Aquinas appeals to a version of the *in-act* principle to support the correspondence between operation and existence, and specifically between *per se* operation and *per se* existence. Since nothing operates unless it is a being in act, things exist in the way they operate. Things that operate *per se* exist *per se*, and things that do not exist *per se* do not operate *per se*. Likewise, in the *Quaestio Disputata De Anima* he writes,

> So the intellective soul must act *per se* inasmuch as it has a proper operation not shared by the body. Because each thing acts insofar as it is in act, it is necessary for the intellective soul to have existence *per se* absolutely, not depending on the body. Forms, indeed, which have being dependent on

[52] The body still plays an important role in intellective cognition. It provides images from which the soul produces intelligible forms (*Q. D. De Anima*, a. 1, ad 11). Whenever we grasp or reconsider a universal, the soul must return to these images (*STh* I, q. 84, a. 7). All embodied acts of understanding depend on the body (*ScG* II, c. 68). For discussion see James Robb, "The Unity of Adequate Knowing in St. Thomas Aquinas," *The Monist* 69 3 (1986): 447-57; Anton Pegis, "St. Thomas and the Unity of Man," in idem, *Progress in Philosophy* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Bruce Pub. Co., 1955), 153-73. Nevertheless, the body is not the operator. (*STh* I, q. 75, a. 2, ad 3; I *De Anima*, lect. 2; I *De Anima*, lect. 10.)

[53] *STh* I, q. 75, a. 2: "Nihil autem potest per se operari, nisi quod per se subsistit. Non enim est operari nisi entis in actu, unde eo modo aliquid operatur, quo est."

matter or a subject do not have *per se* operations; heat does not act, but the hot thing.[54]

Here again Aquinas appeals to a version of the *in-act* principle, "*each thing acts insofar as it is in act*," to justify the inference from the soul's *per se* operation to its *per se* existence and to distinguish its mode of operation and existence from that typical of (nonsubsistent) forms.[55] By requiring that agents be "in act," Aquinas again rejects the notion that a nonsubsistent form could operate *per se*. To understand how this works metaphysically, we must understand the *in-act* principle and its implications for operation and existence.

The *in-act* principle states that agents must be in act in order to operate. As we have seen, this has sometimes been taken to mean simply that agents must exist *simpliciter*. To make sense of the *in-act* principle's role in this argument, however, it must mean more. First, as mentioned above, the question at issue for Aquinas is not whether a nonexistent soul could operate *per se*, but whether a nonsubsistent soul could operate *per se*. Second, Aquinas employs the *in-act* principle in a variety of contexts where neither the "agents must exist *simpliciter*" reading nor a reading on which the principle merely restates the correspondence of operation and existence makes sense.[56] For instance, he often writes that agents act insofar as they are in act, and are acted on insofar as they are in potency.[57] But a thing must exist *simpliciter* either to act or to be acted on. Likewise, while agents act according to how they exist, they also are acted on according to how they exist. Neither interpretation preserves the relevant contrast.

[54] *Q. D. De Anima*, a. 1 (Marietti ed., 283): "Et sic oportet quod anima intellectiva per se agat, utpote propriam operationem habens absque corporis communione. Et quia unumquodque agit secundum quod est actu, oportet quod anima intellectiva habeat esse per se absolutum non dependens a corpore. Formae enim quae habent esse dependens a materia vel subiecto, non habent per se operationem: non enim calor agit, sed calidum."

[55] When Aquinas says "each thing operates . . ." or "nothing acts unless . . ." he has in mind *per se* operation/action.

[56] *ScG* I, c. 16; *STh* I, q. 25, a. 1, ad 1; *De Pot.*, q. 8, a. 1; *De Verit.*, q. 10, a. 6.

[57] *STh* I, q. 25, a. 1; *ScG* I, c. 16; *ScG* III, c. 23.

For Aquinas, being "in act" is intimately connected with existing, but it extends beyond existing *simpliciter* to existing in certain ways. He writes, "Each thing acts insofar as it is in act, namely as it is that which it does. Indeed fire heats not insofar as it is actually bright, but insofar as it is actually hot."[58] Things must exist *simpliciter* to operate, but they must also exist in a way that corresponds to their operation. In order to heat, a thing must be actually hot. This is so because, according to Aquinas, agents act through the parts of themselves that correspond to actuality. He writes,

> Each thing acts insofar as it is in act. Therefore, what is not wholly act does not act with its whole self but with some part of itself. But that which does not act with its whole self is not the first agent, for it acts by the participation of something, not through its own essence. Therefore, the first agent, which is God, has no mixture of potency, but is pure act.[59]

God is wholly actual and, acting insofar as God is in act, acts through God's whole self or essence. Created things, however, are not wholly actual, but composed of potency and act.[60] Accordingly, they do not act with their whole selves, but with the parts of themselves that correspond to actuality. They must be in act to operate precisely because they operate *through* their actualities. Being actually hot is a prerequisite for heating because a hot thing heats by means of its heat.

In Aquinas's metaphysics, form is the principle of actuality in created things: "That by which something operates must be its form; for nothing acts except insofar as it is in act. But nothing

[58] *Q. D. De Anima*, a. 12 (Marietti ed., 326): "Primo quidem, quia unumquodque agit secundum quod actu est, illud scilicet quod agit; ignis enim calefacit non in quantum actu est lucidum, sed in quantum est actu calidum."

[59] *ScG* I, c. 16 (Leonine ed., 13:117): "Unumquodque agit secundum quod est actu. Quod igitur non est totus actus, non toto se agit, sed aliquo sui. Quod autem non toto se agit, non est primum agens: agit enim alicuius participatione, non per essentiam suam. Primum igitur agens, quod Deus est, nullam habet potentiam admixtam, sed est actus purus."

[60] *STh* I, q. 50, a. 2, ad 3. For helpful discussion of Aquinas's notions of act and potency, see Jan Aertsen, *Nature and Creature: Thomas Aquinas's Way of Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 1988); Leo Elders, *The Metaphysics of Being of St. Thomas Aquinas in a Historical Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 1993).

is in act except through its form."[61] Since agents act only through their actualities and owe these actualities to their forms (either substantial or accidental), forms are required to serve as the principles by which created agents operate. In other words, forms serve as operative powers. Aquinas writes,

> No operation belongs to something except through some form (either substantial or accidental) existing in it, since nothing acts or operates except insofar as it is in act. But each thing is in act through some form, either substantial or accidental, since form is an act; just as fire is actually fire through "fireness" and actually hot through heat.[62]

So the *in-act* principle tells us that agents must have a principle of actuality through which they operate. In created agents, this principle is a form.

Yet while Aquinas considers both accidental and substantial forms principles of operation,[63] he argues that creatures (corporeal and incorporeal alike) do not operate directly by means of their substantial forms.[64] If they did, their operation would *be* their existence, but this is only true of God. Instead, when creatures perform essential operations, they do so by means of formal powers that flow from their substantial forms.[65] Aquinas considers these powers proper accidents. They are not accidental in the sense that water may be accidentally hot, but insofar as they are distinct from and follow on the

[61] *ScG* II, c. 59 (Leonine ed., 8:415): "Id quo aliquid operatur, oportet esse formam eius: nihil enim agit nisi secundum quod est actu; actu autem non est aliquid nisi per id quod est forma eius." Also *ScG* II, c. 47; *STh* I, q. 76, a. 1.

[62] *De Spir. Creat.*, a. 2 (Marietti ed., 375): "Nulla autem operatio convenit alicui nisi per aliquam formam in ipso existentem, vel substantialem vel accidentalem; quia nihil agit aut operatur nisi secundum quod est actu. Est autem unumquodque actu per formam aliquam vel substantialem vel accidentalem, cum forma sit actus; sicut ignis est actu ignis per igneitatem, act calidus per calorem." See also *ScG* II, c. 16; *ScG* II, c. 59; *ScG* II, c. 98; *Q. D. De Anima*, a. 9; *De Pot*., q. 3, a. 1. For further discussion of form and the *in-act* principle see Marianne Therese Miller, "The Problem of Action in the Commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas on the Physics of Aristotle," *The Modern Schoolman* 23, no. 3 (1946): 135-67.

[63] *Q. D. De Anima*, a. 9.

[64] *STh* I, q. 77, a. 1; regarding angels, *STh* I, q. 54, a. 3.

[65] *STh* I, q. 77, a. 1; *De Spir. Creat.*, a. 11; *STh* I, q. 54, a. 3.

substantial form. Proper accidents serve as the immediate principles of a creature's essential operation—its powers—while substantial form, as the source of these powers, is the remote, originating, principle of operation.

Aquinas, therefore, distinguishes the essence of the human soul from its powers (i.e., the formal principles of sensation, nutrition, and intellective cognition that serve as our immediate principles of operation).[66] While the soul is our substantial form, the powers of the soul inhere in our various sensitive, nutritive, and intellective faculties as the actualities of those faculties.[67] As formal principles, the powers render these faculties relevantly in act so that, through them, we can operate.[68]

Aquinas insists that, to render an agent actual, an operative power must inhere in the agent. In his disputes with Averroës and Avicenna regarding the human intellective powers, he argues that nothing is appropriately in act through something separate from it in existence.[69] To be "in act" by means of a power, the power must inhere in the operator *formally*.[70] Accordingly, operations belong to the subject of inherence of the power through which the action is performed.[71] This has significant metaphysical implications for the kinds of things that can operate *per se* in Aquinas's ontology. Since created agents—including incorporeal ones—are relevantly in act to operate insofar as they are subjects of forms, any created *per se* operator must be the sort of thing, ontologically speaking, that can serve as the subject of such a form. But not just anything has the

[66] *STh* I, q. 77, a. 1, ad 3-5; *STh* I, q. 77, a. 6.

[67] *Q. D. De Anima*, a. 10.

[68] With respect to passive operations like sensation and intellective cognition, the power renders its subject actually disposed to receive a further form (i.e., a sensitive or intellective *species*). This *species* is required to actualize the potency actually present as a result of the power. For further discussion see, Kendall A. Fisher, "Thomas Aquinas on Hylomorphism and the In-Act Principle," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 25 (2017): 1053-72.

[69] III *De Anima*, lect. 7.

[70] *STh* I, q. 79, a. 4; *Q. D. De Anima,* a. 5; *De Verit.*, q. 10, a. 8, ad 13; *De Spir. Creat.*, a. 2; *ScG* II, c. 76.

[71] *STh* I, q. 77, a. 5; *STh* I, q. 40, a. 1, ad 3.

appropriate metaphysical structure to serve as the subject of a form or accident. In what follows, I argue that the capacity to substand accidents requires a certain relationship to *esse*—one that amounts to subsisting. Accordingly, anything that operates *per se*, must exist *per se*.

IV. Subjecthood and Potency

In Aquinas's metaphysics, subjects stand to their accidental forms as potency to act. Forms are the actuality or perfection of a potency in a subject. So, every subject of inherence must have an element of potency to be further actualized.[72] This is why, for Aquinas, God cannot be the subject of forms or accidents. God is pure actuality and cannot be further actualized in any way. In material composites the requisite element of potency is provided by matter.[73] But, as we have seen, to be intellective, the human soul must be incorporeal. Accordingly, matter cannot provide it with the requisite element of potency to substand the intellective powers.

Angels pose the same problem. As creatures, they must operate by means of proper accidents, yet, as intellective, they must be immaterial.[74] Without the potency provided by matter, we may worry that they are incapable of supporting the requisite operative powers. Aquinas considers this worry, citing Boethius's claim that a simple form cannot be a subject. Since Aquinas frequently uses "simple form" in contrast with a form-matter composite, Boethius's claim suggests that angels and human souls, as simple forms, cannot serve as the subjects of accidents, such as the intellective powers.[75] In *De spiritualibus creaturis* Aquinas responds:

> The nature of a form is opposed to that of a subject. For every form, as such, is an act. But every subject compares to that of which it is a subject as potency to act. If therefore, there were a form which is only act, as the divine essence,

[72] *ScG* I, c. 23; *ScG* II, c. 73; *STh* I, q. 3, a. 6; *De Pot*., q. 7, a. 4.
[73] *STh* I, q. 29, a. 2, ad 5; *De Verit*., q. 9, a. 1, ad 12.
[74] *STh* I, q. 50, a. 1; *De Spir. Creat*., a. 1; *ScG* II, cc. 49-51.
[75] Boethius, *De Trinitate* II.

it could in no way be a subject, and of this Boethius speaks. If, however, some form were in act in one respect and in potency in another, it could be a subject insofar as it is in potency. Spiritual substances, although they are subsistent forms, are in potency inasmuch as they have finite and limited being.[76]

Aquinas admits that form, as actuality, seems incompatible with subjecthood, and he acknowledges that forms with no element of potency (e.g., God) cannot serve as subjects. Nevertheless, he maintains that if there were a form with an element of potency, it could be a subject. Angels, he explains, are forms of this kind. Their element of potency results from their finite and limited being.

For Aquinas, all creatures have finite and limited being. All are specific kinds of things existing in specific ways. By contrast, God is unlimited pure subsisting being itself, *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*. God does not exist as a certain kind of thing; instead, God is existence itself. Accordingly, there is no distinction in God between the divine essence and existence. But the essences of creatures are not—and do not include—their existence. Instead, they exist insofar as their natures or essences participate in *esse*. Their essences receive *esse* and contract it in accordance with their essential natures.[77] This reception and contraction on the part of essence restricts and limits their *esse* so that they exist as specific kinds of things.

The notion of participated being allows Aquinas to distinguish a creature's essence from the act of being by which it exists. Moreover, because the essence exists, or is actual through its *esse*, a creature's essence or nature is related to its *esse* as potency to act. Aquinas writes,

[76] *De Spir. Creat*., a. 1 ad 1 (Marietti ed., 371): "Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod ratio formae opponitur rationi subiecti. Nam omnis forma, in quantum *huiusmodi*, est actus; omne autem subiectum comparatur ad id cuius est subiectum, ut potentia ad actum. Si quae ergo forma est quae sit actus tantum, ut divina essentia, illa nullo modo potest esse subiectum; et de hac Boetius loquitur. Si autem aliqua forma sit quae secundum aliquid sit in actu, et secundum aliquid in potentia; secundum hoc tantum erit subiectum, secundum quod est in potentia. Substantiae autem spirituales, licet sint formae subsistentes, sunt tamen in potentia, in quantum habent esse finitum et limitatum." See also *ScG* II, c. 8; *De Spir. Creat*., a. 1, ad 22.

[77] *De Spir. Creat*., a. 1; *ScG* I, c. 22.

Although there is no composition of form and matter in an angel, nevertheless, there is in it act and potency. This is evident from the consideration of material things in which we find twofold composition, first of form and matter, from which some nature is constituted. But the nature so composed is not its own being but being is its actuality. Whence the nature itself stands to its being as potency to act. Therefore, if we subtract the matter and posit a form which itself subsists without matter, there remains the relation of the form to its being as potency to act. And such is the composition understood to exist in angels. This is what some say, that an angel is composed of that by which it is and that which is, or of being and that which is, as Boethius says.[78]

In material beings there is a twofold division of act and potency: As hylomorphic composites, form is the actuality of matter. But together, form and matter constitute a nature which exists by means of its *esse*. The nature or essence—"that which is"—is a potency for the being by which it is.[79] Since angels have no matter, their forms alone constitute their natures and are related to *esse* as potency to act. Hence, they are composites of potency and act, of *quod est* and *esse*.

Unlike God, therefore, angels and all other creatures participate in being and, insofar as they do, they are related to their *esse* as potency to act. Since they are not wholly act, they cannot operate by means of their whole selves, but in accordance with the *in-act* principle must operate by means of forms. Nevertheless, the very fact that they are not wholly act allows them to serve as the subjects of accidental forms. Their *esse–quod est* composition provides the requisite element of potency to serve as the subjects of accidents and powers.[80]

[78] *STh* I, q. 50, a. 2, ad 3: "Ad tertium dicendum quod, licet in Angelo non sit compositio formae et materiae, est tamen in eo actus et potentia. Quod quidem manifestum potest esse ex consideratione rerum materialium, in quibus invenitur duplex compositio. Prima quidem formae et materiae, ex quibus constituitur natura aliqua. Natura autem sic composita non est suum esse, sed esse est actus eius. Unde ipsa natura comparatur ad suum esse sicut potentia ad actum. Subtracta ergo materia, et posito quod ipsa forma subsistat non in materia, adhuc remanet comparatio formae ad ipsum esse ut potentiae ad actum. Et talis compositio intelligenda est in Angelis. Et hoc est quod a quibusdam dicitur, quod Angelus est compositus ex quo est et quod est, vel ex esse et quod est, ut Boetius dicit."

[79] *De Spir. Creat.*, a. 1, ad 3; *Q. D. De Anima,* a. 6.

[80] *STh* I, q. 54, a. 3, ad 2.

Aquinas's discussion of angels clarifies what it takes for something to be the subject of a form or power and, more particularly, what it takes for an incorporeal form to be the subject of a form or power. Like an angel, the human soul is an incorporeal operator. To operate, it must be appropriately in act. As something created, this consists in its being the incorporeal subject of intellective powers. But to be the subject of such powers, the soul must be composed of potency and act. And like an angel, it cannot be so on account of matter. Instead it must be related to *esse* as *quod est*. In what follows, I argue that anything related to *esse* in this way subsists. Indeed, to subsist means simply to stand to *esse* in this way. Given that form-matter composites are, for Aquinas, also *esse–quod est* composites, anything that has the potency-act composition to substand accidents and powers subsists. If correct, this metaphysical constraint on created agents secures the crucial premise in Aquinas's argument for the subsistence of the soul: Whatever operates *per se* exists *per se*.

V. Subsistence and the Potency for *Esse*

The success of Aquinas's argument depends on his ability to establish that whatever operates *per se* exists *per se,* or, put another way, that nonsubsistent things (e.g., nonsubsistent forms) cannot operate *per se.* Through our discussion of the *in-act* principle, we have also seen that created *per se* operators must be composites of potency and act in order to substand the powers and accidents by which they perform their operations. This occurs through form-matter composition or *esse–quod est* composition alone. Nonsubsistent forms, however, are not composites in either of these ways, and this, I contend, entails that they cannot operate *per se*.

Nonsubsistent substantial forms, for instance, are the actualities of material composites. But they are not themselves form-matter composites. (This would lead to infinite regress.) Nor are they composites of *esse* and *quod est*. Together with their matter, material substantial forms compose the essence or nature that receives *esse*, but the form on its own is not related

to *esse* as *quod est*. Aquinas specifically distinguishes them from the human soul in this regard:

> But since the soul is an absolute form, not dependent on matter, which befits it because of its assimilation and proximity to God, it itself has *esse per se*, which other corporeal forms do not have. Whence in the soul there is composition of *esse* and *quod est* but there is not in other forms. For being itself does not belong to the corporeal forms absolutely, as it does to those things that are, but to the composite.[81]

Although the human soul is related to *esse* as *quod est*, a material substantial form is not. Here Aquinas explains that such forms lack *esse–quod est* composition precisely because they do not have *esse per se*. While created subsistent things are composites of the act of being, *esse*, and the subject of being, *quod est*, nonsubsistent things are not.

To exist *per se* is to be the primary subject of being, the thing that is itself a potency for being, the *quod est* receptive of *esse*. When we say that something created exists *per se* we make a metaphysical claim about its relationship to being, *esse*. What exists *per se*, has *esse* in its own right. It is, therefore, a composite of *esse* and *quod est*. Whatever is related to *esse* as potency to act subsists in that *esse*. Since nonsubsistent forms are not subjects of *esse* but principles *quo,* they are not related to *esse* as *quod est*. Since neither are they hylomorphic composites, nonsubsistent substantial forms lack potency-act composition.

Accordingly, as we would expect on the current proposal, Aquinas denies that nonsubsistent material substantial forms can serve as subjects.[82] Replying once more to the Boethian simple-subject concern, he writes,

[81] I *Sent*., d. 8, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1: "Sed quia anima est forma absoluta, non dependens a materia, quod convenit sibi propter assimilationem et propinquitatem ad Deum, ipsa habet esse per se, quod non habent aliae formae corporales. Unde in anima invenitur compositio esse et quod est, et non in aliis formis: quia ipsum esse non est formarum corporalium absolute, sicut eorum quae sunt, sed compositi." See also *De Verit*., q. 27, a. 1, ad 8.

[82] Even in the Eucharist, the accident of quantity, which exists supernaturally without a subject and serves as a subject for further accidents of bread and wine, does so

A simple form that does not subsist, or, if it does subsist, is pure act, cannot be the subject of an accident. But the human soul is a subsisting form and is not pure act. Accordingly, it can be the subject of certain powers, namely, the intellect and will.[83]

Here Aquinas familiarly denies that a wholly actual subsistent form (God) can serve as a subject, but he extends this denial to nonsubsistent forms as well. Given the context, the rationale seems to be that such forms are not composites in the requisite way. He makes a similar move in his discussion of the Eucharistic accidents, ruling out material substantial forms as subjects using Boethius's claim.[84] In fact, Aquinas's discussion of the Eucharistic accidents is illuminating for the present discussion because it speaks directly to the question of whether a nonsubsistent accidental form could serve as the subject of a further form. For this reason, it is well worth examining.

Aquinas maintains that at the consecration of the Eucharist the substances of bread and wine are transubstantiated into the body and blood of Christ, but the accidents of the bread and wine (e.g., the color, flavor, scent, etc.) remain. As accidents, they are the sorts of things to whose nature it belongs to inhere *in alio*; nevertheless, they cannot inhere in the body and blood of Christ.[85] Nor can they remain in the bread and wine, nor in the substantial forms of bread and wine. Aquinas writes,

The accidents of the bread and wine which are perceived by sense to remain in the sacrament after consecration are not in the substances of bread and wine as in a subject, for that does not remain, as stated above. Nor are they in the substantial form, for that does not remain, and if it did remain, "it could not be a subject," as Boethius declares in *De Trinitate*.[86]

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insofar as it receives *esse per se* from God (*STh* III, q. 77, a. 2, ad 1). So it is not a nonsubsistent accidental form.

[83] *Q. D. De Anima*, a. 12, ad 16 (Marietti ed., 327): "forma simplex quae non est subsistens, vel si subsistit, quae est actus purus, non potest esse subiectum accidentis. Anima autem est forma subsistens et non est actus purus, loquendo de anima humana; et ideo potest esse subiectum potentiarum quarumdam, scilicet intellectus et voluntatis." See also *Q. D. De Anima,* a. 6, ad 1.

[84] *STh* III, q. 77, a. 1.

[85] *ScG* IV, c. 65; IV *Sent*., d. 12, q. 1, a. 1, qcla. 3.

[86] *STh* III, q. 77, a. 1: "Respondeo dicendum quod accidentia panis et vini, quae

Even if the substantial forms of bread and wine did remain, they could not be subjects. The reference to Boethius suggests that this is because, as nonsubsistent substantial forms, they lack the requisite composition.

Aquinas concludes that through divine power, the accidents of quantity of the bread and wine, which previously mediated between the substances and their further accidents, now substand those accidents and have no substantial subject of their own.[87] This may seem to contradict the current proposal that nonsubsistent forms cannot support accidents. However, as we will see, Aquinas's discussion in fact confirms it.

First, as we would expect on the present proposal, Aquinas maintains that accidental forms cannot naturally serve as subjects of further accidents or forms. One accident may naturally mediate between a subject and further accidents by disposing its subject for another accident—for example, as a surface mediates between color and the colored object—but even in these cases, properly speaking, all accidents inhere in the substantial subject.[88] The Eucharistic accidents, however, present a supernatural exception: one accident does indeed serve as the subject of others. Aquinas writes,

> One accident cannot be the subject of another in its own right, because it does not exist *per se*. But insofar as it is in something else, one accident is called the subject of another inasmuch as one accident is received in a subject through the mediation of another, as surface is called the subject of color. Hence, when God grants that an accident exists *per se*, it can also be the subject of another in its own right.[89]

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sensu deprehenduntur in hoc sacramento remanere post consecrationem, non sunt sicut in subiecto in substantia panis et vini, quae non remanet, ut supra habitum est. Neque etiam in forma substantiali, quae non manet; et, si remaneret, subiectum esse non posset, ut patet per Boetium, in libro de Trin."

[87] For discussion of the Eucharistic accidents *sine subiecto* in Aquinas, see Jörgen Vijgen, *The Status of Eucharistic Accidents "sine subiecto": An Historical Survey up to Thomas Aquinas and Selected Reactions* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), chap. 4.

[88] Mediating accidents are metaphysically prior to subsequent accidents, not necessarily temporally prior.

[89] *STh* III, q. 77, a. 2, ad 1: "accidens per se non potest esse subiectum alterius accidentis, quia non per se est. Secundum vero quod est in alio, unum accidens dicitur esse subiectum alterius, inquantum unum accidens recipitur in subiecto alio mediante,

Normally accidents cannot be the subjects of others, precisely because they do not exist *per se*. Yet Aquinas explains that if God were to grant an accident *per se* existence, then it *could* serve as the subject of others. God does this in the Eucharist. He grants *per se* existence to quantity which, in turn, serves as a subject to further accidents.[90]

Moreover, as we should expect on the present proposal, Aquinas maintains that the accidents that exist *per se* after consecration possess *esse–quod est* composition.

> While the substance of bread and wine remained, these accidents did not have their own being or other accidents. Rather, their substance had this kind of being through them, just as snow is white through whiteness. But after consecration the accidents which remain have *esse*. Whence they are composed of *esse* and *quod est*, as was said in the first part of angels.[91]

This reinforces the notion that to possess *esse–quod est* composition just is to exist *per se* as a created thing and coheres with the metaphysical requirements for substanding: the accident that substands further accidents possesses potency-act composition. As a subject of *esse*, it has become a potency-act composite in its own right.

While the Eucharist is exceptional insofar as it involves one accident serving as the subject of others, it does not involve a nonsubsistent form serving as the subject of others. Instead, what allows one accident to serve as the subject of others is

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sicut superficies dicitur esse subiectum coloris. Unde, quando accidenti datur divinitus ut per se sit, potest etiam per se alterius accidentis esse subiectum." See also IV *Sent*., d. 12, q. 1, a. 1, qcla. 3.

[90] *STh* III, q. 77, a. 2; IV *Sent*., d. 12, q. 1, a. 1, qcla. 3. Although quantity exists *per se*, it does not become a substance. Quantity is still the sort of thing to whose quiddity it belongs to exist *in alio*, even though, as a matter of fact, it does not (*STh* III, q. 77, a. 1, ad 2). See Vijgen, *Status of Eucharistic Accidents*, 181-84; Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought*, 234-37 for further discussion.

[91] *STh* III, q. 77, a. 1, ad 4: "accidentia huiusmodi, manente substantia panis et vini, non habebant ipsa esse nec alia accidentia, sed substantia eorum habebat huiusmodi esse per ea; sicut nix est alba per albedinem. Sed post consecrationem ipsa accidentia quae remanent, habent esse. Unde sunt composita ex esse et quod est, sicut in prima parte de Angelis dictum est."

precisely God's granting it *esse per se*.[92] Quantity becomes a subject of *esse* and, thereby, a composite of potency and act. However, nonsubsistent forms, whether accidental or substantial, miracle or no, cannot serve as subjects.

We have seen that in order to serve as a subject a thing must possess an element of potency, either as a composite of *esse* and *quod est* alone (e.g., the angels) or as a composite of *esse* and *quod est* and of form and matter (e.g., a material substance). Since anything that stands to *esse* as *quod est* has *esse* in its own right (i.e., exists *per se*), anything with the element of potency required to substand accidental forms and operative powers has *esse* in its own right. While subsisting and serving as a subject differ in *ratio*,[93] anything that serves as a subject subsists.

By tracing out the implications of the *in-act* principle for created agents, we can see why anything that operates *per se* must exist *per se*: Agents act only insofar as they are in act. Created agents are in act by means of forms, substantial and accidental. These forms serve as the formal principles of operation—substantial forms as remote, originating principles of operation, accidental forms as immediate principles of operation. Thus, to operate *per se*, created agents must be the sorts of things that can serve as the subjects of inherence of accidental forms. To this end, they must possess an element of potency, that is, they must be composed of potency and act. Things that are composed of potency and act (and not just principles involved in potency-act composition) are related to *esse* as *quod est*. Anything related to *esse* as *quod est* has *esse* in its own right and, thus, exists *per se*. As a result, only things that exist *per se* can operate *per se*.

[92] See also IV *Sent*., d. 12, q. 1, a. 1, qcla. 3; *ScG* IV, c. 63; *ScG* IV, c. 65 for Aquinas's commitment to the subsistence of the Eucharistic accidents (quantity, in particular). This commitment raises the concern that, as a subsistent (accidental) form, quantity is incorruptible like subsistent (substantial) forms. Aquinas considers this objection and responds that, as an accident, quantity can still be corrupted through division (*STh* III, q. 77, a. 4, obj. 2 and ad 2; IV *Sent*., d. 12, q. 1, a. 1). It is beyond the scope of the present project to evaluate the success of his response.

[93] God, e.g., subsists as *ipsum esse subsistens,* but does not substand accidents.

Conclusion

In this article I have examined Aquinas's inference from the soul's *per se* operation to its subsistence and offered an account of how his appeal to the *in-act* principle supports the correspondence between operation and existence *per se*. Since created agents require formal principles of operation, any created *per se* operator must be capable of serving as the subject of such a form. Since only things that exist *per se* possess the act-potency composition to support such a form, only *per se* existents can operate *per se*. Thus, if the human soul operates *per se*, it cannot be a nonsubsistent form, a mere formal principle *quo*. It must also be a subsistent part of the human being. It must be ontologically capable of substanding the operative powers that render it appropriately *in act* with respect to intellective operation. Only then can it operate *per se*.

This clarifies a central inference in Aquinas's argument for the subsistence of the soul by showing how, metaphysically speaking, something nonsubsistent is incapable of operating in its own right. Furthermore, it illustrates how the *in-act* principle grounds his metaphysical account of creaturely operation within his hylomorphism and potency-act ontology more broadly. In this regard, it advances our understanding of the connections between his metaphysics of existence and of operation.

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THE "COINCIDENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN AND THE REASONABLE": BARTH'S READING OF KANT'S RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

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REFERRING TO KARL BARTH, venerable Kant scholar and translator Heinz Cassirer once remarked: "Why is it that this Swiss theologian understands Kant far better than any philosopher I have come across?"[1] The great irony conveyed by Cassirer's question of course arises from the fact that Barth and Kant are traditionally viewed as standing at opposite ends of what we might call the spectrum of theological mediation. This spectrum tracks the broadly liberal element in modern Protestant thought, involving the degree to which a Protestant thinker understands Christian faith to be something that can be apprehended, recognized, or otherwise mediated through an underlying feature of human nature or self-awareness. The mature Barth's position is normally depicted at the revelation-centered end of this spectrum, a position deeply suspicious of mediation as invariably a slippery slope to an anthropological captivity of theology. Indeed, in an effort years ago to save Barth from unfair caricature in his introduction of Barth to an American audience, Robert McAfee Brown still

[1] Quoted by Colin Gunton in his "Introduction" to Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Brian Cozens and John Bowden (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002), xvi.

conceded that it "is true that Barth feels that the path from human knowledge to knowledge of God is a *cul de sac*."[2]

By contrast, Kant's position on the spectrum can be viewed as the very model of mediation, both for himself and, subsequently, for a long line of post-Kantian successors seeking a modern framework for the Christian message. In Kant's own case mediation between the human and the divine is of course driven by the cardinal features of human reason, with particular emphasis on universality and necessity. His explicitly religious thought emerges, after all, from reflection on the rational character of morality. Kant unfolds his account of the moral life in a way that necessarily leads to the disclosure that awareness of God's reality as the moral governor of the world is embedded in the apodictic awareness I have of *myself* as a rational being living under moral obligation. The note of "necessity" here reflects the genuinely rational character of the argument. Indeed, upon examination, moral awareness as what Kant tellingly calls a "fact of reason"[3] turns out to be inseparable from awareness of God's reality. "Agreement with the mere idea of a moral lawgiver for all human beings is indeed identical with the moral concept of duty in general," Kant tells us.[4]

Accordingly, awareness of God as moral governor commingles with awareness of myself as a moral agent, thereby giving me the rational "hope" that my moral strivings are both reasonable and ultimately meaningful and not simply futile. Kant will proceed to render many of the chief themes associated with Christian faith—such as Christology[5]—in terms of this antecedent mediating point of contact associated with a secure

[2] Robert McAfee Brown, "Introduction," in Georges Casalis, *Portrait of Karl Barth*, trans. Robert McAfee Brown (New York: Anchor Doubleday, 1963), xviii.

[3] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, German Academy Edition, vol. 5 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1900-), 31; trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 28.

[4] Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, German Academy Edition, vol. 6 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1900-), 6n; trans. Allen Wood and George Di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 35n. References to this work will give volume and pages from the German Academy edition followed by pages in the English translation.

[5] Kant, *Religion*, 6:60-66 (79-84).

and rationally grounded sense of moral obligation. Rationally interpreted, Christianity thus turns out to be compatible in principle with "moral faith."[6]

We know in retrospect that much liberal-minded Protestant thought after Kant carried forward this mediating framework while frequently distancing itself from Kant's specifically ethical interest. We know, in other words, that the Kantian mediating framework had tremendous staying power even when Kant's characteristically ethical content was superseded by an alternative point of contact; the moral emphasis does not exhaust the possible points of mediation.

> Maybe moral seriousness, maybe a distinctive experience of "depth" in human life—usually some appeal to a basic incompleteness, basic need, a primordial relation to divine transcendence, or some combination of these—is made in order to persuade us that in our hearts we knew all along what we weren't willing to admit, namely, that we cannot get along without divine succor.[7]

In other words, the key element provided to theology by Kant's Copernican Revolution was not so much the moral element as the reflexive or self-involving one, made inevitable by the very idea of a "critique." Consequently, the capacity of the Kantian framework to adapt itself to theological interests of multiple sorts "reflected a Socratic turn to the role of the subject in faith and knowledge, a turn which had its epistemological expression in Kant's analysis in the *Critique of Pure Reason*."[8]

In surveys of modern Protestant thought, we generally think of Barth as the strongest and most consistent voice of protest against this Kantian program. Across the arc of his own long career, he stood out as the sometimes harsh critic of all such mediating strategies, often with the aim of showing Protestant theology the many different ways the specter of Feuerbach could appear. Barth's famous "Nein!" in response to Emil

[6] For a recent overview of the relation between Christianity and Kant's moral faith, see Onora O'Neill, *Constructing Authorities: Reason, Politics, and Interpretation in Kant's Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), chaps. 13-14.

[7] Hans Frei, *The Identity of Jesus Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), xi.

[8] Claude Welch, *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 1 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 48.

Brunner was, after all, specifically a loud "No!" to the very *idea* of a "point of contact" between revelation and any natural human capacity rather than to the choice of one point of contact over another.[9] At the same time, however, Barth's relationship to Kant is considerably more subtle and complex than the spectrum imagery by itself may convey. When Bruce McCormack suggests that "all of [Barth's] efforts in theology may be considered, from one point of view, as an attempt to overcome Kant *by means of Kant*," we find a provocative hint of these complexities.[10]

Even so, to the extent that the standard picture contrasting Kant and Barth captures something important, Barth's own most extended single piece of writing on Kant comes as something of a surprise. As a long chapter in his *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, Barth's account conveys a viewpoint closer to warm engagement than to censure and repudiation.[11] In part, the positive aspect of Barth's approach reflects his explicitly stated effort to view *all* of his Protestant predecessors with a generous interpretive spirit. He signals his interpretive approach in the form of advice:

> We need openness towards and interest in particular figures with their individual characteristics, an understanding of the circumstances in which they worked, much patience and also much humour in the face of their obvious limitations and weaknesses, a little grace in expressing even the most profound criticism and finally, even in the worst cases, a certain tranquil delight that they were as they were. (vi [xii])

[9] In John Baillie, ed., *Natural Theology* (London: Geoffrey Bles, Ltd., 1946).

[10] Bruce L. McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 465; emphasis added. Regarding the theological complexities embedded in McCormack's comment, see also Timothy Stanley, "Barth after Kant?," *Modern Theology* 28 (2012): 423-45.

[11] *Die Protestantische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert* (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1946), 237-78; English trans., *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 252-98. Page references will be given following quotations within the text, with pages in Barth's original followed by pages in the English translation. Although published in 1946, Barth's Kant chapter originated in the 1920s in his classroom lectures on the history of Protestant theology, the "last form" of which, Barth tells us, goes back to 1932-33 in Bonn. "When the Hitler régime dawned, I happened to be occupied with Rousseau!" (Barth, "Foreword," v [xi]).

Barth's description of his interpretive approach conveys more than a note of condescension, and there is surely something rather disingenuous—perhaps even rather sly—about his positive treatment of Kant in particular. For in the course of Barth's account, it gradually becomes clear that the overall interpretive effect is to bring into view what he calls a theological "possibility" that looks remarkably like Barth's own position, where theology stands "on its own feet" in relation to philosophy with a little help from Kant (274 [293])—a good example, no doubt, of McCormack's suggestion that Barth will "overcome" Kant "by means of Kant." Such a possibility, Barth claims, "becomes visible on the *borders* [*Grenzen*] of the Kantian philosophy of religion" and may well "present itself even from Kant's own standpoint" (274 [293]; emphasis added). Indeed, in his allusion to the possibility that Kant himself might have been laughing "up his sleeve" in his depiction of the proper task of biblical theology in his *The Conflict of the Faculties* (278 [298]),[12] Barth perhaps betrays his own approach to Kant—his apparently positive engagement with a natural opponent could mask what turns out upon inspection to be a rather bold coopting move.[13] The implication is that, correctly interpreted, "Kant's own standpoint" gestures across a certain "border" where theology resides with no philosophical mediation or conceptual support. Obsessed all along with "autonomy," the Kantian standpoint in this case points toward a region across this border where theology is *itself* autonomous.

Tellingly, Barth goes so far at one point as to propose what he calls the "coincidence of the Christian and the reasonable" ("Koinzidenz zwischen dem Christlichen und dem Vernünftigen") residing deep within Kant's position, a

[12] On this point, see Gary Dorrien, *Kantian Reason and Hegelian Spirit* (Malden, Mass., and Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 499-500.

[13] According to McCormack, Barth's career-long engagement with Kant was closely related to his effort to think through the implications for theology of the Marburg neo-Kantianism of Cohen and Natorp (McCormack, *Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*, 42ff.).

juxtaposition that Barth may have framed as an indirect way to promote a powerful irony. Though Kant is often considered the "philosopher of Protestantism," Barth overtly hints at a Kant who, in managing his self-chosen theme of "limits," may in fact create a space for a theological position that is potentially more Roman Catholic than classically Protestant in nature. The very notion of a "*coincidence* of the Christian and the reasonable" conveys something more like a Thomistic complementarity of faith and reason than a compartmentalized liberal Protestant strategy offering epistemologically separate safe havens for each of them. Such a suggestion is not at all to say that this is the direction in which Kant himself might be headed, but simply to say that Barth's reading of him generates provocative and fresh hints concerning the complexity of Kant's full position. Barth candidly makes the point explicit in his specific account of Kant's view of "justification" in the recovery from sin (or, in Kant's terms, radical evil), where he flatly describes Kant's position as "decidedly non-reformatory" and asks, "where else could [Kant's teaching] end, but in the twofold possibility of the Roman Catholic doctrine of salvation?" (270 [289]).[14]

For my more immediate purposes, what stands out is the fact that these and other provocative remarks about Kant's religious thought invariably emerge from Barth's sustained references to the motif of *die Grenze*—variously translated as "limit," "border," or "boundary," or perhaps even "frontier." Barth's entire account is thus driven by exploiting the very issue at stake in the title of Kant's key writing on religion, *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*—with the varied and debated translations of what Stephen Palmquist has aptly labeled this "enigmatic title"[15] confirming the importance of Barth's preoccupation. Upon examination, the theme of limits or boundaries is not only the object of Barth's central interest: it is

[14] Kenneth Oakes, *Karl Barth on Theology and Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 142-43.

[15] Stephen Palmquist, "Introduction," in Kant, *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 2009), xv.

also the underlying source of his suggestion of the coincidence of the Christian and the reasonable.

In pursuit of his interpretive strategy, Barth handles the issue of "boundaries" with aggressive confidence. A further irony here is that Barth's assured handling of Kant's metaphor stands in sharp contrast to long-standing debates about what exactly Kant meant to convey by the title of his book—Barth's interpretive confidence contrasts strikingly with the competing points of view running through these debates. We know from Kant's own comments in his Preface to the second edition of *Religion*, published just a year after the first edition, that his title originally met with some misgivings. The Preface to the second edition begins: "Regarding the title of this work (since doubts have been expressed also regarding the intention hidden behind it). . . ."[16] Kant proceeds to address these "doubts" through his famous example of "concentric circles" representing the interests of rational religion as the narrower circle contained within the wider circle of revealed religion—an image that will of course guarantee an area of overlap or "coincidence."[17] In other words, Kant's response to the original "doubts" about the "intention hidden behind" the title of his book zeros in on the very issue of "boundaries." Addressing the *Grenze* issue at the very outset of his new edition is thus a revealing prioritizing gesture, especially in light of the controversies triggered in Kant's day by other features of the book, particularly in connection with Kant's theory of radical evil.

In what follows, I want to develop the point that Barth's fixation on the issue of limits or boundaries sheds considerable light on how this very metaphor functions in Kant's religious thought. The fact that Barth clearly has an overriding theological agenda in his discussion of Kant does not in itself diminish the interpretive help we might glean from that account along the way. Indeed, it may be that Barth's theological self-interest incidentally drives sophisticated clarification of Kant's

[16] *Religion*, 6:12 (40).
[17] Ibid.

use of "boundary talk" precisely because the boundaries in question involve human reason.

I

While Barth's references to limits or boundaries run like a leitmotif throughout his long chapter on Kant, they assume a focused interpretive function at several key points.

Barth's most comprehensive allusion occurs in his portrayal of Kant's conception of *reason itself* as having boundaries. In a general sense, of course, this aspect of Kant's thought goes back to the very idea of a "critique" of pure reason, the central aim of which is the resolution of the chronic problems of metaphysics by means of a recognition of reason's proper scope. For Barth, these boundaries or limits provocatively produce moments of a kind of Kantian agnosticism—moments, that is, where Kant finds himself needing to *refer* to "both sides" of a particular boundary but without claiming genuine knowledge of what lies on the "other side." As we shall see, Barth puts considerable weight on this boundary-crossing move.

Accordingly, Barth's opening account of Kant's view of the "bounded" nature of reason itself effectively draws a connecting line between the first *Critique* and the strategy of *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. Barth in fact depicts the Critical philosophy's characteristic limitations on reason in starkly flattering terms, setting Kant apart from thinkers Barth obviously considers to be Kant's less perceptive Enlightenment contemporaries. He describes Kant as someone so clear-headed about his own position that with "such a man a conversation from the other point of view, from the point of view of a completely different theology, is possible" (238 [253]). Indeed, from the standpoint of Barth's personal pantheon of champions, he pays Kant the ultimate compliment: he compares him to Mozart (239 [255]). The comparison stems from Barth's rather paradoxical juxtaposition of what he refers to as Kant's "humility," on the one hand, and on the other, to a "spirit" that is "beyond self-satisfaction and rebellion in being what it is." This spirit is

distinct, existing in history as it does, keeping within its confines, being completely itself and completely self-conscious, and in its limits. In its limits, as they are understood by Kant, something of humanity's limits in general, and at this something of wisdom seems to become visible. (239 [255])

Whereas the more Promethean strands of Enlightenment thought posit the "absolute and *boundless* [*uferlose*] self-affirmation of reason" (242 [258]; emphasis added), Kant conveys an underlying humility as he seeks "an enlightenment of the Enlightenment about itself" (240 [256]). Barth both grasps and appreciates what is frequently referred to as the ambiguity in the very title of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where reason "is viewed as at once the subject and the object of critique."[18] Barth thus extends what Onora O'Neill has characterized as the *disciplining* function of reason that is at the center of the *Critique*. In O'Neill's characterization, Kant argues that reason's "proper duty is to prescribe a discipline for all other endeavors." It is entitled to perform this task precisely because, by way of "critique," it has done so for itself.[19] Boundary or limit talk will naturally accompany such disciplining activity. In thus arriving at "an understanding of itself," reason discovers its own limits—it has clear boundaries (241 [256]).

Barth's subsequent pursuit of Kantian limits on reason in religious matters becomes something of a balancing act. On the one hand, he concedes that "Kant personally never considered passing these limits for one moment" (238 [253]); in this sense, the limits *function* as boundaries. On the other hand, however, Barth claims that the title of Kant's *Religion* "does not at all imply that religion exists solely *within* the limits of reason" (249 [266]; emphasis added). By Barth's reading, Kant's unwillingness to pass the boundary lines is not simultaneously a dismissal of the possibility of anything lying beyond them.

[18] Paul Connerton, *The Tragedy of Enlightenment: An Essay on the Frankfurt School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 22.

[19] O'Neill, *Constructing Authorities*, 221-22.

Barth amplifies this latter point through frequent references to Kant's *The Conflict of the Faculties*, which he characterizes as a kind of "rider" to *Religion* (248 [264]). Published five years after the first edition of *Religion*,[20] *The Conflict of the Faculties* sorts out the competing prerogatives of the university faculties of theology and philosophy in such matters as the interpretation of Scripture. In full context, Barth's running allusions to *Conflict* in the course of highlighting the theme of "limits" implicitly create a natural means of comparing a purely philosophical rendering of Christianity—a major part of what is at stake in Kant's *Religion*—with the Christian theologian's traditional sense of the "office" of the theologian. The prerogatives and limitations of each need to be identified in order to avoid "conflict." Consequently, the overall effect of Barth's allusions to *Conflict* is to clarify Kant's rationalist approach to Christianity while insisting that, for Kant, Christian *theology* enjoys its own domain even if it is not where Kant himself chooses to live.

II

As I previously indicated, this initial portrayal of Kantian limits on reason leads Barth to highlight a curiously agnostic strand in Kant's approach to religious matters, once again a clear indicator for Barth of "limits" doing their job. The agnostic element is most evident in Kant's account of "radical evil" and the accompanying account of our recovery from it, themes Barth variously characterizes as a great "riddle" (262 [280]) and as a "'foreign body' in the Kantian teaching" (264 [282]). Kant depicts an evil that is "radical" due to an underlying moral "disposition" (*Gesinnung*) that, through a free act by the moral agent, has become evil, meaning it regularly subordinates the incentive of moral duty to the incentive of self-

[20] Though published in 1798—the last book Kant published—the three parts of *Conflict* were actually written earlier in the 1790s. See Mary Gregor, "Translator's Introduction" in *The Conflict of the Faculties* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), viiff.

love.[21] By sometimes referring to this underlying disposition as the "supreme maxim,"[22] Kant conveys the idea that an evil disposition warrants its depiction as the seat of an evil that is "radical," since all individual acts of maxim-making arise out this supreme maxim. In other words, the very *source* of all maxims has, through an inscrutable free choice, become evil. Consequently, the moral agent in the grip of radical evil regularly subordinates the rational or moral incentive to the sensuous incentive of self-love in individual acts of maxim-making.

What fascinates Barth is the fact that Kant is openly agnostic on the issue of the source of evil. For example, Kant states at one point that it is "absolutely incomprehensible how the senses could have the ability to become master over a reason which commands with such authority on its side."[23] Within the context of his Newtonian conception of what counts as an "explanation," Kant's point is that a genuine explanation of evil would take the form of a causal account, thus eliminating the role of freedom that gives the very notion of *moral* evil its point. Kant makes it clear that his agnosticism on this issue is simply the reverse side of a parallel agnosticism about the source of virtue:

> It is a very common presupposition of moral philosophy that the presence in the human being of moral evil can be very easily explained, namely by the power of the incentives of sensibility, on the one hand, and the impotence of the incentive of reason (respect for the law) on the other, i.e., by *weakness*. But then the moral good in him (in his moral predisposition) would have to be even more easily explainable, for to comprehend the one without comprehending the other is quite unthinkable.[24]

Consequently, Kant insists, the origin of evil "remains inexplicable to us": there is simply "no conceivable ground for us, therefore, from which moral evil could first have come in

[21] *Religion*, 6:25 (50).
[22] Ibid. 6:31 (55).
[23] Ibid. 6:59n. (78-79n.).
[24] Ibid. (78n.).

us."[25] Within the full context of Kant's thought, not being able to conceive or "think" the ground of moral evil means that there is no "concept" for it.

For Barth, the most urgent issue associated with Kant's agnosticism emerges from the fact that, despite the "radical" nature of an evil lodged in the agent's underlying disposition, the moral agent remains obligated to become good again.

> However evil a human being has been right up to the moment of an impending free action (evil even habitually, as second nature), his duty to better himself was not just in the past: it is still his duty *now*; he must therefore be capable of it.[26]

The sheer fact of radical evil eliminates neither the obligation to perform morally good acts nor the freedom to do so. Yet Kant himself frames the obvious question that so fascinates Barth: "How it is possible that a naturally evil human being should make himself into a good human being surpasses every concept of ours [*übersteigt alle unsere Begriffe*]."[27]

Barth zeros in on Kant's own question that arises from this seemingly impossible situation, suggesting that Kant makes no "attempt to disguise the mystery" implied in moral recovery (265 [283]). Kant's handling of this border territory suggests to Barth that the agnostic element implies that there is "another side" to the border or limit in question—something the philosopher needs yet cannot access through reason "alone" and for which, as Kant openly admits, there are no "concepts." For Barth, the signature moment in Kant's agnostic account of moral regeneration is the open admission that we cannot rationally resolve the conflict between our duty and our incapacity to fulfill it. In addressing human efforts to grasp the recovery from radical evil, Kant bluntly states that "here there opens up before him the abyss [*Abgrund*] of a mystery regarding what God may do, whether *anything* at all is to be attributed to him and *what* this something might be in particular" that would

[25] Ibid., 6:43 (64).
[26] Ibid., 6:41 (63).
[27] Ibid., 6:44-45 (66).

lead to a "fulfillment, of which he has no cognition or at least no possibility of comprehension" (268 [286]).[28] The agnostic strand in Kant's thinking might be viewed as the epistemological accompaniment to this "abyss."

Kant's account of the limits on reason's ability to track the recovery from radical evil thus brings into view the latent connection between boundary talk and a genuinely agnostic element in his thinking. What is notable here is that the limit or boundary in question is not dismissive of what lies on the "other side." Quite the contrary, Kant's admission of reason's limits in explaining moral regeneration is a kind of entailment following from his insistence that moral regeneration must be possible. His argument does not take the form, "Since we cannot rationally explain or even 'think' how moral regeneration occurs, we must stop talking about it." Rather, his argument takes the form, "Since moral regeneration is always a rationally driven obligation, we must posit its possibility even though we have no concepts for understanding it."[29] In Barth's view, the agnostic element in Kant's thinking quite understandably enhances the importance of what lies on the "other side" of the limits in question. Kant's "limits" talk does not function to reduce the contents of religious thinking but, rather, to imply the importance of a religious content that thought cannot think.

[28] Ibid., 6:139 (141). A striking aspect of Barth's account of the idea of "justification" embedded in Kant's effort to resolve the problem of an "impossible duty" is Barth's previously noted suggestion that Kant's position seems to be Roman Catholic in nature, a "decidedly non-reformatory doctrine of grace which emerges" from Kant's reflections on duty and which "doubtless accords with the true line of Kant's philosophy of religion" (270 [289]). One is reminded of Michel Despland's remark that "nowhere are Luther and Calvin quoted in *Religion* and neither is the Protestant Reformation presented as a turning point in Kant's history of progress. As a matter of fact, it is completely ignored. The next important turning point in the history of religious progress after Jesus is the Enlightenment" (Michel Despland, *Kant on History and Religion* [Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973], 181).

[29] Note the relevance here of my account of how Kant sometimes appeals to biblical narratives as a substitute for conceptual explanations when "we have no concepts for understanding" a certain issue: "Kant, the Bible, and the Recovery from Radical Evil," in Sharon Anderson-Gold and Pablo Muchnik, eds., *Kant's Anatomy of Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 57-73.

Barth goes so far as to suggest that Kant himself could have provided a clearer picture of this "other side"—including the "foreign body" of radical evil and the recovery from it (264 [282])—if he had only provided what Barth calls a "total survey." Border imagery runs through Barth's concession that Kant does not—and, on Kant's own grounds, *could* not—offer a total survey that would presumably include the revealed as well as the rational side of the border. Barth admits that Kant was

> bound to refrain from giving a total survey embracing not only the truly wide *horizon* of the field he in fact chose as presenting his problem, but also the *horizon* of the *neighboring fields upon its borders*, and not merely regarding these as marking its *limits*. (264 [282])

In light of Kant's understandable unwillingness to provide this total survey, Barth acknowledges Kant's rational intentions but insists that the "closed and rounded quality of the Kantian conception of reason and of the religion of reason . . . is *disturbed* [*gestört wird*]" or somehow destabilized (264 [283]; emphasis added). Ultimately summing up Kant's philosophy of religion as filled with "inconsistencies," Barth claims that these inconsistencies "speak for themselves . . . in their unmistakable equivocality" (274 [293]). This equivocal feature, Barth makes clear, comes to light because of Kant's very real need to appeal to what is on the "other side" from rational religion, while simultaneously being saddled with his ultimate inability to do so.

III

An additional way in which Barth draws attention to Kant's boundary language is through reference to the curious issue of the "visible church," a topic Kant develops as a means of promoting his concept of an ethical community. Originally implicit in the depiction of a "kingdom of ends" in the third

version of the Categorical Imperative,[30] Kant's ethical community is a rationally-driven vision of moral agents freely willing to bring about a community in which all are treated as ends in themselves and never as a means only—a "kingdom of ends" in themselves through their status as autonomous agents. An important feature of *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* is its extended reflection on this topic in fresh form, framed now in terms of what might ideally—or even actually—be occurring in history. Taking on the task of becoming the ethical community, the church is for Kant the locus of moral progress in worldly form.

In pursuit of this task, Kant does not suddenly repudiate the strong anti-ecclesiastical hints otherwise readily apparent in his thought, such as in the fourth part of *Religion* itself. Instead, he is reflecting on a community not ethically compromised by the heteronomous influences that permeate civil and political arrangements. Kant points out that, in pursuit of the idea of a truly ethical community, we appreciate that the visible church provides in principle a voluntary form of association, in contrast to the implicitly coercive features embedded in a political or "juridical" community. At least potentially, then, the church always enjoys the capacity to be governed by a system of laws enforced by a sense of personal autonomy rather than by a morally corrosive fear of punishment, as we find in the civic arena.[31] Authentic moral motivation thus enjoys the space in which to flourish, unthreatened by heteronomy.

Not surprisingly, these Kantian allusions to the church, visible or otherwise, clearly fascinate Barth. In fact, it is precisely in the context of his discussion of Kant's view of the church that Barth deploys his arresting idea of the "coincidence of the Christian and the reasonable," suggesting that, in the church, this coincidence "must have met [Kant] in a quite particularly pregnant fashion" (260 [278]).

[30] Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, German Academy Edition, vol. 4 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1900-), 433-36; trans. Mary Gregor and Jens Timmermann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 45-47.

[31] *Religion*, 6:100-102 (111-12).

Consequently—and whether or not he is overstating his case—Barth aggressively exploits the fact that "Kant takes a quite strikingly systematic interest in the notion of the Church," claiming that it "is here for the first time that something becomes visible of the *borders* of the conception of the problem peculiar to him" (257-58 [27]; emphasis added). It is precisely because the visible church is reconceived by Kant as the proper locus of a growing ethical community that Kant

> suddenly speaks of the Church in its visible form in quite different tones and with a quite different emphasis . . . from that with which we heard him speak of the parallel notions of positive religion, the Bible and the historical Christ. (259 [277])

Barth is suggesting that there is something privileged about the church within the full context of the issues arising for Kant from a philosophical consideration of the main themes associated with revealed religion. Referring to Kant's conception of the church as "the human organization of the kingdom of God," Barth adds that "for the first time unequivocally" in his philosophy Kant treats a topic associated with revealed religion, not "with suspicion or as a mere *adiaphoron*," but as something that "is on principle necessary" (259 [277]). The relevant sense of "necessity" here is of course *rational* necessity, meaning that—in effect—the visible church is the embodiment of the "coincidence of the Christian and the reasonable."[32]

Noteworthy here is the way Barth frames Kant's account of the church in terms of the metaphor of "borders," suggesting Kant's effort to navigate the border line between the rational and revealed—or between the natural and the positive—in order to promote his ultimately rational religious aims. It is as though the third version of Kant's Categorical Imperative, involving the coincidence of moral duty and the promotion of an ethical commonwealth,[33] is now enjoying a description in

[32] See the fuller account of Barth's reaction to Kant's view of the church in Oakes, *Karl Barth on Theology and Philosophy*, 140-49.

[33] Kant, *Groundwork*, 4:433 (Gregor and Timmermann, trans., 45).

genuinely historical terms. The main point for Barth thus seems to be that Kant apparently cannot realize his rational ends without appeal to something from the "other side": Kant explores the "borders" between rational and revealed in order to mediate his way to the desired result, this time in institutional terms.

IV

Finally, Barth alludes to the importance of the boundary issue in grasping the rather odd role played by what Kant calls the "*parerga* to religion within the boundaries of pure reason." Kant identifies the *parerga* as themes or issues that supplement or "abut" the religion of pure reason but are not contained within it.[34] In literal terms, *parergon* means "accessory" or "embellishment," a "supplementary" by-product of something else; the emphasis is on the idea that whatever falls into the category of the *parerga* is secondary to the real issue at stake. In what Barth refers to as a "methodically very illuminating expression" (268 [287]), Kant indicates that, in relation to the religion of pure reason, the *parerga* "do not belong within it yet border on it" ("sie gehören nicht innerhalb [der Grenzen], aber stossen doch an sie an").[35] Discussed in what Kant calls the "General Remarks" that he rather curiously adds to each of the four separate parts of *Religion*, the *parerga* are the strikingly un-Kantian topics of "effects of grace," "miracles," "mysteries," and "means of grace."[36] To underscore the oddity of Kant's discussing such themes at all, Barth describes the *parerga* as appearing in Kant's work like "visitors from another world" (265 [283]).

While the *parerga* have been characterized quite reasonably by James DiCenso as "secondary or peripheral religious conceptions and preoccupations that have no intrinsic ethical

[34] *Religion*, 6:52 (96).
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.

significance,"[37] Barth's approach suggests a more complex and nuanced understanding of them in relation to metaphors of boundaries and limits. Kant acknowledges that reason "does not contest the possibility or actuality of the objects of these ideas" but simply "cannot incorporate them into its maxims of thought and action."[38] In effect, Kant creates here the small opening that offers him the room he needs to discuss such otherwise un-Kantian notions as grace and miracles.[39] By making a connection between this small opening and the agnostic strand in Kant's religious thought, Barth redescribes the *parerga* as involving themes Kant *must* turn to because of the very issues that Kant has admitted he cannot explain conceptually, such as the recovery from radical evil (269 [287]). In effect, the *parerga* provide Kant with the means to pursue a kind of extended thought experiment that has been necessitated by reason but that reason cannot fully complete on its own. In the terms of the first *Critique*, the *parerga* function very much like Kant's "ideas of reason" that are "regulative" (i.e., noncognitive) and not "constitutive" in nature yet remain genuinely fruitful for their capacity to guide rational inquiry toward its proper end.[40]

Barth himself stops short of a full co-opting move: he does not pursue this redescription of the *parerga* in order to claim that Kant turns to revealed religion to solve his conceptual problems. Far from it. Instead, Barth claims that, at just the point where the *parerga*—in particular, the theme of grace in the face of radical evil—would appear to supply Kant with a

[37] James DiCenso, *Kant's Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason: A Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 87.

[38] *Religion*, 6:52 (72).

[39] A more aggressive reading of the role of the *parerga* has recently been offered by Pablo Muchnik, who suggests they "be taken as an ineliminable part of moral religion: their function is to mark its limits (*Grenzen*), the point beyond which the images we form of the divine become dogmatic, as they begin to lose their symbolic status and start to pass themselves as cognitions" (Pablo Muchnik, "Clipping Our Dogmatic Wings: The Role of *Religion's* Parerga in Our Moral Education," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 50 (October 2018; Taylor and Francis on-line).

[40] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, German Academy Edition, vols. 3-4 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1900-), A179-80 B221-23; trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 297-98.

needed solution, "Kant resolutely turns back" (268 [287]). In other words, Kant's commitment to rational faith does not waver even as rational concepts appear to fall short of grasping the apparent needs of reason. Indeed, in his canvassing of varied conceptions of grace within Christian thought, Barth boldly aligns Kant with what he calls "the Roman Catholic, the non-reformatory doctrine of grace" emphasizing that "each one of us must *do as much as is in his power* . . . to become a better man," with the right course proceeding from virtue to the receiving of grace, rather than the other way around (270 [288-89]).

With respect to the theme of "limits," Barth's discussion of Kant's handling of the *parerga* could be read as suggesting that Kant wants to have it both ways: the *parerga* function in a manner that allows Kant to talk about the "other side" of his self-imposed limits, yet they do not thereby gain the cognitive status that this heavy lifting would seem to entail. It is difficult to pinpoint just what we may be learning here about the issue of limits, though a helpful and suggestive parallel to Barth's account lies in the remarks on the same issue by Jacques Derrida, who took a great interest in Kant's notion of the *parerga*. In his pursuit of the theme in both *Religion* and the *Critique of Judgment*, Derrida amplifies the basic definition by acknowledging that, as "accessory, foreign, or secondary object" or as a kind of "aside," *parerga* "should not be allowed to take precedence over the essential."[41] To illustrate his point, Derrida alludes to Kant's own example in the third *Critique* of the "frame" for a beautiful painting, an "ornamentation" meant to enhance and not replace the painting itself.[42] That is, the frame remains "outside" the actual work of art, serving as an accessory or enhancement and not as the focal point of the eye's attention. Understood within the context of *Religion*, Derrida's account would so far appear to underscore Kant's insistence on

[41] Jacques Derrida, "The Parergon," trans. Craig Owens, *October* 9 (Summer, 1979): 20.

[42] Ibid., 18.

the centrality of the rational side of faith and, thus, to minimize the impact of Barth's more aggressive reading of the *parerga*.

Yet Derrida adds that, in *Religion*, Kant's use of *parerga* shifts from the motif of "ornamentation" to "the notion of hors d'oeuvre," producing a more organic relationship with what is most central. In *Religion*

> Kant explains the necessity of his recourse to archaic, scholarly languages. Here Greek confers something approximating conceptual dignity on the notion of the hors d'oeuvre which does not remain simply outside of the work, acting from the sidelines, next to the work (*ergon*). . . . Philosophical discourse is always *against* the *parergon*. But what is it *against*. A *parergon* is against, beside, and above and beyond the *ergon*, the work accomplished, the accomplishment of the work. But it is not incidental; it is connected to and cooperates in its operation from the outside. . . . [T]he *parergon*, this supplementary hors d'oeuvre, has something like the status of a philosophical concept.[43]

Applying this view of the matter directly to Kant's *Religion*, Derrida suggests the *parerga* to religion within the boundaries of mere reason are "neither part of it *nor absolutely extrinsic to it*."[44] They are "adjuncts" to a religion of reason that are "neither internal nor external"—they "effectively frame the work, but also square it."[45] Derrida appears to be implying that the *parerga* somehow do indeed work "both sides" of the fence (or border), as it were. No longer merely an "ornamentation," the *parergon* "*has something like the status of a philosophical concept*," the very thing Kant needs—but otherwise lacks—when trying to account for the recovery from radical evil. After all, Kant introduces the idea of the *parerga* in his initial "General Remark" in response to the tension created by our *inability* to lift ourselves out of radical evil despite our continuing *obligation* to do so. Derrida is telling us that, in the face of this profound dilemma, the *parerga* are not "simply outside . . . acting from the sidelines" but, rather, "connected" and "cooperating" from the "outside." While the sheer

[43] Ibid., 18-20.

[44] Ibid., 20; emphasis added.

[45] Ibid.

"geometry" of this viewpoint may not be immediately transparent, the aggressive effort to appreciate Kant's need to work both sides of his self-created limits is clearly evident.

V

Derrida's suggestion of a more robust sense of *parerga* in Kant's *Religion* implies something like a theological hybrid that succeeds in filling the space created by the agnostic element in Kant's religious thought. There is here more than a mere hint of "crossing over" a limit or boundary, with the oddity of the entire process necessitated by Kant's apparent need for divine aid while being burdened by his inability to appeal directly for such aid without transgressing his own epistemological strictures or undermining the interests of autonomy. Where concepts ultimately fail Kant in resolving this issue, the *parerga* evidently succeed. At the very least, the *parerga* seem to function that way in *Religion*.

It is tempting to view Derrida's position as suggestive of a provocative alliance with Barth's theme of "the coincidence of the Christian and the reasonable." With both thinkers, Kant's *parerga* receive what amounts to something like a promotion, assigning greater importance to themes traditionally associated only with revealed religion, particularly the theme of grace. As conveyed especially by Derrida's tracing of the *parerga* from serving as "ornamentation" in the third *Critique* to "something like the status of a philosophical concept" in *Religion*, the implication seems to be that Kant is making more substantive use of the *parerga* than his cautionary language would suggest.

Yet here we should recall that Barth himself stops well short of a triumphal declaration that Kant's rational faith has a latent dependence on revealed religion. The force of Barth's claim that "Kant resolutely turns back" is that, at the crucial moment, Kant's "boundaries" truly function as boundaries. In the full context of his reading of Kant, Barth's chief interest is not a triumph over liberal theology but what he takes to be Kant's depiction of what lies on the "other side" of these boundaries as

enjoying full autonomy, unconstrained by intrusive philosophical or other conceptual presuppositions.

At the same time, however, Barth's approach elevates our sense of the significance of boundary imagery in Kant. Barth's central interest may be to promote his own theological outlook, but this priority hardly diminishes the light he sheds on Kant along the way. Most of all, his multiple ways of depicting Kant's appeal to boundary imagery suggest that the theme of *die Grenzen* is hardly a fixed ground rule offering Kant a means of clearly sorting out rational and revealed themes. Instead, boundary imagery turns out to be a shorthand way of conveying the balancing act descriptive of *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* as a whole, in which Kant attempts to promote his rational interest while respecting the interests of revealed religion. Kant's boundaries function both *as* boundaries, insuring that we cannot explicitly incorporate appeals to divine grace into our maxims, *and also* as a means of creating a space for talking about such themes as grace in a philosophically acceptable manner.

Not surprisingly, Barth's particular preoccupation with the recovery from radical evil remains the paradigmatic instance of this conceptual chain, condensed by Kant in the arresting terms of his question, "how can an evil tree bear fruit?"[46] Kant cannot answer this question in his own terms, but he can invoke boundary talk as a means of opening up a space that allows the possibility of an answer. That is, he openly admits that divine grace "cannot be incorporated into the maxims of reason, *if the latter keeps to its boundaries*."[47] At the same time, however, Kant's final word on the subject is not to jettison the very notion of grace, but to state that "we can admit an effect of grace as something *incomprehensible*."[48] The appeal to boundaries functions not as a conversation-stopper but as the occasion for gesturing toward this "other side," though framed in the most austere epistemological terms.

[46] *Religion*, 6:44 (66).

[47] Ibid., 6:53 (72); emphasis added.

[48] Ibid., 6:53 (73); emphasis added.

Consequently, we see that what fascinates Barth is also what sheds valuable light on Kant. "Boundary talk" does not result in utter silence about what lies on the other side. Instead, boundary talk results in a regulative gesture driven by certain needs of reason requiring satisfaction if the interests of rational faith are to be met in terms that are epistemologically acceptable. Boundary imagery implicitly serves as the signal for when such moments arise—it provides rational cover for introducing needed considerations that are not strictly rational. Such a result is no doubt less systematic than it is provocative, and perhaps that is the very source of Barth's preoccupation with the issue. At the same time, Barth's preoccupation fortifies the otherwise odd claim that the relationship between the *parerga* and the rest of *Religion* is not only the "major problem of the book" but "its major achievement" as well.[49] Although suggestive of a certain instability running through a religion "within the boundaries of mere reason," Kant's position is ultimately more suggestive of a philosophical outlook always pressing against certain limits on itself—always, that is, raising questions that it cannot fully answer, yet still finding ways to keep the conversation going.[50]

[49] Despland, *Kant on History and Religion*, 184.

[50] My thanks to Pablo Muchnik for his close reading of an earlier version of this essay.

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NATURAL LAW AND FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

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This is the Law commanding all: "If anyone wishes to be the friend of God, let him be a friend of me, the Law," for the friend of the Law is certainly a friend of God.

St. Gregory of Nyssa

NEAR THE BEGINNING of book VII of the *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle says that the function (*ergon*) of the political art (*politikēs*) is the making of friendship (*poiēsai philian*).[1] Near the start of book VIII of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he says, "It seems too that friendship holds cities together and that lawgivers (*nomothetai*) are more serious about it than about justice. For oneness of mind (*homonoia*) seems to resemble friendship, and lawgivers aim at this especially."[2] The legislator possessed of the political art and prudence to legislate well for the common good has the natural end, as legislator, of forming friendships amongst his citizens by ordering the polity in such a way as to make it fertile soil for the growth of oneness of mind and life characteristic of friends.

Saint Thomas Aquinas, devoted student of Aristotle that he was, argues that "every law aims [*tendit*] at establishing the friendship either of men with one another or of man with God."[3]

[1] *Eudemian Ethics* 7.1234b23-25.

[2] *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.1.1155a20-24 (trans. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011]).

[3] *STh* I-II, q. 99, a. 1, ad 2: "For every law aims at establishing the friendship either of men with one another or of man with God. And so the whole of the Law is fulfilled in the single commandment, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' taken as the goal of

Aquinas articulates the end (*finis*) of law in various ways: the common good, communal happiness, virtue, and, as we have just seen, friendship.[4] These various descriptions of the end of law add nuance to his treatment of law, and they are not unrelated to each other. I wish to suggest that friendship has a kind of governing role over the other descriptions of the end of law. The common good of a polity, its communal happiness in the life of virtue, is founded upon and culminates in the various forms of familial, utilitarian, civic, and virtuous friendships that excellent law makes possible and encourages.

Near the beginning of book I of *De libero arbitrio*, St. Augustine (through Evodius) distinguishes between the temporal, man-made law of a given polity and the eternal law upon which it is based.[5] Aquinas, devoted student of St. Augustine that he was, clearly distinguishes human and divine law, and he correlates friendship amongst men with human law and friendship between man and God with divine law. "For just as the main intention [*intentio principalis*] of human law is to establish friendship of men with one another, so too the intention of divine law is mainly to establish man's friendship with God."[6] Human law aims at the constitution of human friendship, and divine law aims at the constitution of friendship between human beings and God.

With this framework in place, we raise the question that we wish to discuss in this paper: In light of what has been said about human law and divine law, what can be said about the natural law? Does the natural law aim at friendship amongst men themselves or friendship between men and God?[7] Developing an

all the commandments. For the love of God is also included in the love of neighbor when the neighbor is loved because of God." I quote from Alfred Fredosso's translation of the *Summa theologiae* (https://www3.nd.edu/~afreddos/summa-translation/ TOC.htm).

[4] See *STh* I-II, q. 90, a. 2; q. 94, a. 3; q. 95, a. 1.

[5] See St. Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will, On Grace and Free Choice, and Other Writings*, trans. Peter King (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 11-28 (1.5.12-1.15.33).

[6] *STh* I-II, q. 99, a. 2.

[7] Unfortunately, this important question is often neglected in the vast secondary literature on Thomistic natural law theory, perhaps because Aquinas himself does not

adequate answer to this question will require us to raise and respond to related philosophical questions and, in the final section of this paper, to go beyond philosophical thinking by reflecting theologically on human friendship with God in light of God's revelation.[8]

I. Natural Law as Divine Law

The first step in answering our question is to determine whether the natural law is a human law or a divine law. To this end, it is important to recall Aristotle's distinction between immanent and transitive actions and to see that legislating is a transitive action. Immanent actions, such as seeing and thinking, remain "within" the agent, while transitive actions, such as building and cutting, "stretch out" from the agent and terminate in something external to him. The activity of legislating originates with the active thinking and directing decisions of the legislator and terminates in the shaped thinking and directed actions of the citizens subject to him. As Aquinas says, law can exist in two ways: "In one way, as in the measurer and ruler. And since this is proper to reason, law in this sense is in reason alone. In another way, as in the ruled and measured. And this is how law exists in

explicitly raise it. There are, of course, natural-law debates that concentrate on the role of God as legislator, that is, God understood as giver of the law of nature. We will deal briefly with the topic of God as legislator in the first section, but we are more concerned with friendship of man and God understood as end or final cause of the natural law, an issue less-often noticed or discussed. Stanley Hauerwas mentions very briefly the connection between natural law and friendship with God, saying that "Aquinas's account of the Decalogue as natural law . . . [is] Aquinas's way of showing what our lives should look like as people created for friendship with God" (Stanley Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them in the Truth: Holiness Exemplified* [London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016], 47).

[8] Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger argues that philosophical questions enable us to understand better the truths of Catholic faith in part because such philosophical questions enable us to see revelation *as an answer* to perennial questions, especially those concerning death. See Joseph Ratzinger, *The Nature and Mission of Theology: Approaches to Understanding Its Role in the Light of Present Controversy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 1-29.

all the things that are inclined in any way by any kind of law."[9] Although it originates with the legislator(s), law has the terminus of shaping the polity and the thinking of its citizens.

In terms of the metaphysics of law, the transitive nature of the act of legislating recalls Aristotle's understanding of teaching.[10] According to Aristotle, the act of the teacher, the agent of education, is "in" the student, the patient. There is only one act involved in the teaching-learning pair; it is a hendiadys, a one through two, with the two aspects "teaching" and "learning" being two profiles or two faces of the one act between teacher and student. Seeing them as a "two" requires seeing the one act (teach-learn) now from the side of the teacher, now from the side of the student. Analogous to teaching, legislating is one activity that originates with the legislator and reaches out to the citizens, and therefore it is one activity that can be seen from two perspectives. When Aquinas distinguishes between human and divine law, he makes this distinction based upon the legislative origin of the law; the pedigree of the agent of law (the legislator) provides the first criterion for distinguishing different kinds of law. The mode of being of the legislator (human or divine), takes priority because law is most properly found "in" the mind of the lawgiver. If the legislator is divine, then so too is the law; if the legislator is human, then the law is human.

Concerning the natural law, Aquinas says that it is "nothing other than the rational creature's participation in eternal law."[11] Thus, the natural law is not other than the eternal law but is rather the rational creature's natural knowledge of it and therefore his being directed by it (i.e., his participation in it). As for the eternal law, Aquinas says,

[9] *STh* I-II, q. 90, a. 1, ad 1.

[10] For the distinction between immanent and transitive actions, see Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 9.8.1050a1-b25. See also *Physics* 3.3.202a10-b25. For an excellent discussion of transitive action as it applies to moral philosophy, see Kevin Flannery, *Action and Character according to Aristotle: The Logic of the Moral Life* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013), 39-70.

[11] *STh* I-II, q. 91, a. 2.

Divine wisdom's conception [*ratio divinae sapientiae*] has the character of law insofar as it moves all things to their appropriate ends. Accordingly, the eternal law is nothing other than the divine wisdom's conception [*ratio divinae sapientiae*] insofar as it directs all acts and movements.[12]

The natural law is the eternal law, which is the divine wisdom insofar as it moves all things to their fitting ends in a mode fitting for them. The natural law is precisely the rational creature's mode of naturally participating in the eternal law, which is of course divine. The natural law is therefore a divine law because its legislator is God himself, who promulgates it in the act of creation.[13] As both Stephen Brock and Russell Hittinger have

[12] *STh* I-II, q. 93, a. 1.

[13] See the *prooemium* to the *Collationes in decem praeceptis,* where Aquinas says that the natural law is "nothing other than the light of the intellect implanted in us by God, by which we know what should be done and what should be avoided. God gave this light and this law to man in creation" (my translation). After law is distinguished into divine and human based on its legislative origin, it can be further subdivided according to its mode of promulgation. The natural law is divine law promulgated "naturally" through creation and the natural activities of human reason, the Old Law is divine law promulgated to Moses and through him to the Jews (and through them to all the nations), and the New Law is divine law promulgated through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the subsequent work of his Church. These three species of divine law (natural, Old, and New), are not other than the eternal law but rather are three gradually fuller manifestations of and participations in it. As Aquinas says, "The Old Law is distinguished from the law of nature not in the sense of being altogether different from it, but in the sense of adding something to it" (*STh* I-II, q. 99, a. 2, ad 1). It is also clear that the New Law is the fulfillment and not the abolition of the Old Law. On this point, see *STh* I-II, q. 100, a. 12; q. 102, a. 2; q. 104, a. 2. On the promulgation of the Old Law, see *STh* I-II, q. 98, aa. 2-3; *Super Hebr.*, c. 3, lect. 1; c. 9, lect. 4. On the promulgation of the New Law, see *STh* I-II, q. 108, a. 1 and 3. Thus, the relevant distinction between the natural law, on the one hand, and the Old and New Laws, on the other hand, is between natural "content" legislated and promulgated naturally by God and (natural and) supernatural "content" legislated and promulgated supernaturally, or between that "part" of the eternal law naturally given and those larger "parts" of the eternal law "divinely given" (*divinitus data)*. Aquinas identifies the natural law as a kind of divine law at *STh* I-II, q. 91, a. 4, ad 1, and he identifies the eternal law as divine law at *STh* I-II, q. 91, a. 1; and q. 91, a. 4, ad 1. Thus, when he calls the Old and New Law divine, one should not conclude that the natural law is not a divine law but rather that, as Aquinas says, the supernatural end of human persons "requires" divine laws that give their subjects a fuller participation in the eternal law. See *STh* I-II, q. 91, a. 4.

shown, the "natural" in "natural law" refers to its mode of promulgation and reception, not to its legislative origin.[14] Human beings are the subjects who are naturally perfected by this divine/eternal law; our thinking is a measured measure of our actions.[15]

With this point in place, it would seem that our initial question has been answered. Because the natural law is a divine law given by God in the act of creation, it tends principally toward the establishment of friendship between man and God. However, the conclusion that natural law tends principally toward the establishment of friendship between man and God raises two interrelated issues that should be further explored. First, to say that the natural law, as a species of divine law, tends *principally* toward the establishment of friendship between man and God is not to say that the natural law tends *only* toward such friendship. Indeed, Aquinas's texts seem to indicate that he sees friendship among men themselves and friendship between man and God as distinct but ultimately inseparable kinds of perfected sociability. In the following sections, we will see that being a friend of God is possible in and through human friendships, and conversely human friendships themselves depend upon a kind of loving union with God.

Second (and more fundamentally), the claim that the natural law tends principally toward friendship between man and God, coupled with the claim that such friendship incorporates and does not exclude the friendship of human beings amongst themselves, invites us to consider the question: Is there some natural evidencing open to philosophical reflection that can serve as a basis for the claim that human agents can be friends of God and

[14] For this interpretation of Aquinas, namely, that the natural law is a divine law promulgated in the act of creation and known naturally by the human agent, see Stephen Brock, "The Legal Character of Natural Law according to St. Thomas Aquinas" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1988), 60-94; and Russell Hittinger, *The First Grace: Rediscovering the Natural Law in a Post-Christian World* (Wilmington: ISI Books, 2002), 8-12.

[15] On the human person as a measured measure, see *De Verit.*, q. 1, aa. 1-2.

that such friendship is the culmination of the law of nature? It is to this question that we now turn.

II. Can We Be Friends with God?

In order to grasp this issue, it is helpful to highlight three aspects of Aristotle's account of friendship: (1) equality, (2) commonality of life, and (3) oneness of mind.[16]

A significant level of equality with each other, a commonality in the things and habits of living, and a shared vision of being and truth are necessary for friendship to take root and to be enjoyed. Friends are similar to each other in terms of their native abilities and their acquired excellences, and they live in community with each other, formed by the decent habits of their time, place, family, and polity, and forming themselves and others similarly. As Aristotle says,

> [The friendship] of good people is good, and increases through their association. And they seem to become better through being active and correcting one another. For each molds the other in what they approve of—hence the saying, "From excellent people, excellent things come."[17]

Thus, the equality necessary for friendship, at least in its paradigmatic form, includes the human, moral, and intellectual likeness of the friends formed by and enjoyed in the sharing of the common things of life.

[16] For an overview of the features of friendship, see *Nic. Ethic.* 9.4.1166a1-1166b30. On friendship as requiring equality, see *Nic. Ethic.* 8.4.1156b7-35; 8.5.1157b30-37; 8.7.1158b29-1159a15; 8.8.1159b1-8. On friendship as requiring a common life, see *Nic. Ethic.* 8.9.1159b25-1160a30. On friendship as oneness of mind, see *Nic. Ethic.* 8.1.1155a20-24; 9.6.1167a20-1167b15. In the final section of this essay, we will discuss the importance of reciprocity in friendship, which is discussed at *Nic. Ethic.* 8.2.1155b30-1156a5. In this section, we will take Aristotle as "the philosopher," that is, as the representative of what natural thinking can achieve by its native exigencies.

[17] *Nic. Ethic.* IX.12, 1172a12-14. The saying quoted by Aristotle comes from Theognis. See Theognis, *Elegiac Poems*, Book I, verse 30-35 in *Greek Elegiac Poetry: From the Seventh to the Fifth Centuries BC*, ed. and trans. Douglas E. Gerber, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

These natural necessities of friendship cause one to be dubious that human beings can be friends with God—unless of course God comes to call human beings his friends. In fact, Aristotle uses the impossibility of being friends with God to highlight the fact that parity is essential for friendship. He says that the necessity of equality between friends

> becomes clear if there is a great interval in respect of excellence or vice or wealth or anything else between the parties; for then they are no longer friends, and do not even expect to be so. And this is most manifest in the case of the gods; for they surpass us most decisively in all good things. But it is clear also in the case of kings; for with them, too, men who are much their inferiors do not expect to be friends; nor do men of no account expect to be friends with the best or wisest men. In such cases it is not possible to define exactly up to what point friends can remain friends; for much can be taken away and friendship remain, but when one party is removed to a great distance, as God is, the possibility of friendship ceases.[18]

Even though "much can be taken away" from the intimacy and equality of human beings without destroying their friendship, and even though one cannot identify the exact line of inequality beyond which friendship cannot pass, it is absolutely clear that the distance between man and God is too great for humans to be friends with God. Wherever the line of inequality lies, God is well beyond it. Thus, the ontological separation between God and man—the radical inequality between the human and divine—leads Aristotle to say that we cannot be friends with God, and in turn the impossibility of man's being a friend of God serves to manifest the natural necessity of a significant level of equality between human friends.

The radical inequality between man and God and the texts in which Aristotle explicitly denies that humans can be friends with God lead many scholars to conclude—not unreasonably—that for a pagan like Aristotle there can be no friendship between man and God.[19] If we are so radically unequal to God, then we cannot

[18] *Nic. Ethic.* 8.7.1158a33-1159a5.

[19] This interpretation is common among contemporary Aristotelians. See, *inter alia*, Matthew D. Walker, *Aristotle on the Uses of Contemplation* (Cambridge: Cambridge

share the things of life with him (even the gods do not need justice, or courage, or moderation, or liberality), nor can we be of one mind with him, and therefore we cannot be friends with God.[20] It seems, therefore, that the Thomistic claim that the natural law tends principally toward friendship with God is in jeopardy precisely because we cannot speak philosophically of the requisite equality, commonality of life, and oneness of mind shared between human beings and God such that we might be able to be friends of God.

There is, however, another interpretation of Aristotle that holds some promise for our topic. Kevin Flannery says that we must take note of two important and interlaced distinctions made by Aristotle in order to understand his position on friendship between human beings and the divine. First, Aristotle distinguishes between friendship according to equality and friendship according to preeminence, and, second, he distinguishes between "being friends" and having friendship. As Aristotle says, "Both [friendship according to equality and according to preeminence] are friendships; those who are friends, however, are friends according to equality."[21] According to Flannery, "there can be *philia* where there are no *philoi*."[22] Being friends is only possible among equals, but having friendship is compatible with radical inequalities, perhaps even the inequality between man and God. On Flannery's reading, these distinctions allow us to see that while we cannot be friends with God according to the full sense of *being friends* that obtains in friendships according to equality, there can be *friendship* between man and God according to a friendship of preeminence.

University Press, 2018), 163-78; Lorraine Smith Pangle, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 79-104; C. D. C. Reeve, *Action, Contemplation, and Happiness: An Essay on Aristotle* (London: Harvard University Press, 2012), 195-222.

[20] On the gods as being beyond practical activity, see *Nic. Ethic.* 10.8.1178b7-20.

[21] *Eudemian Ethics* 7.4.1239a4-5.

[22] Kevin Flannery, "Can an Aristotelian Consider Himself a Friend of God?" in *Virtue's End: God in the Moral Philosophy of Aristotle and Aquinas*, ed. Fulvio Di Blasi, Joshua P. Hochschild, and Jeffrey Langan (South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2008), 5.

Flannery's perceptive interpretation of Aristotle seems to open the door to the Thomistic claim that the end of natural law is friendship with God. It seems that we must either take the path opened by Flannery's insightful reading of Aristotle or reject the Thomistic idea that the natural law tends toward friendship with God. I wish, however, to offer something of a third option. Instead of facing head-on the philosophical question of whether or not humans can be friends with God, let us begin again by approaching it from the side, as it were. We should observe that equality is very near to likeness, or rather there are grades of likeness that culminate in equality, and it is precisely the phenomenon of *likeness to God through imitation of the divine* that can help us untie the knot we have tied for ourselves. As we will see in the following section, Aristotle discusses various ways in which human beings imitate God and thereby participate more fully in immortality, so the Aristotelian understanding of immortality will become paramount in our reflections on human likeness to God.

We will therefore shift our questions in the following two sections. In the next section (section III) we will ask, "How is human happiness connected to the phenomenon of becoming like to God through imitating the divine and thereby participating in immortality?" In the final section (section IV), we will turn to the question, "How does natural law direct us toward happiness so understood?" It is in this final section that we will go beyond philosophy and introduce theological themes. Bracketing the question of whether or not humans can be friends with God (or have friendship with him) and instead focusing on human happiness as imitating and thereby becoming like to God will enable us to see better the way in which the natural law serves to relate man to the divine.

III. Aristotle on Happiness as Likeness to God through Participating in Immortality

In numerous passages, Plato identifies our highest good as likeness to God, arguing that happiness in the life of virtue

consists in making oneself like God in whatever ways human beings can.[23] While many would oppose Aristotle to his teacher on this point, I wish to suggest that Aristotle agrees with Plato concerning the human *telos*, even if he reformulates how it is achieved.[24] In order to articulate an Aristotelian notion of human happiness as likeness to God, it is important to see that Aristotle lays out a hierarchy of happiness in which the moral virtues and excellences of familial and political life are ingredient in *eudaimonia* but transcended by contemplative activity.[25]

In his "ladder of happiness," Aristotle's conception of *eudaimonia* is linked with his understanding of the connections

[23] We should note that likeness to God is the *telos* of human life, but Plato qualifies the possibility of becoming like God by adding "in so far as human beings can." Plato's phrase is "*homoiōsis theōi kata to dunaton*"; see *Thaeatetus* 176a-c; *Timaeus* 90b-c; *Republic* 10.613a-b; *Symposium* 207d-212d; *Laws* 4.716b-d. For a discussion of some of these texts, see David Sedley, "Becoming Godlike," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Ethics*, ed. Christopher Bobonich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 319-37.

[24] For a detailed discussion of the close connection between Plato and Aristotle as a corrective to the all-too-common view that pits Aristotle against his teacher, see Lloyd P. Gerson, *Aristotle and Other Platonists* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005). Gerson discusses the deep similarities between Plato and Aristotle on ethics and happiness in ibid., 242-74.

[25] There is disagreement concerning whether Aristotle holds an "inclusivist" or "exclusivist" view of happiness, that is, whether he thinks happiness includes goods (like moral virtues) other than contemplation or whether contemplation is the sole component of happiness. For an overview of the debate, see Walker, *Aristotle on the Uses of Contemplation*, 9-41. Although he does not directly address this debate, Russell Hittinger formulates the principle that underlies classical approaches to happiness understood as "inclusivist." Hittinger says, "Modern theorists reject [dominant end schemes or 'exclusivist' views of happiness] because, as John Rawls has put it, the aims of the human self are 'heterogeneous.' A dominant end [and thus an 'exclusivist' view of happiness], therefore, is not adequate for practical reasons because it suffocates what is most distinctive about a human self—namely, the pluralism and heterogeneity of its desires, interests, and goals. But ancient and medieval theorists rejected the dominant end model for precisely the opposite reason. For Aristotle, Augustine, or Aquinas, a dominant end fails with regard to inclusivity, for anything less than a truly inclusive end will not meet the unity of the human self. The question of the hierarchy of the virtues thus leads irrevocably to the question of the unity of man" (Russell Hittinger, "After MacIntyre: Natural Law Theory, Virtue Ethics, and Eudaimonia," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 29 [1989]: 455).

between (1) activity, (2) fecundity, and (3) immortality. Highlighting three dimensions of human life—each of which interlaces activity, fecundity, and immortality—will show how happiness for human beings consists in likeness to God through fecund activities that enable human agents to imitate the divine and thereby participate in immortality. These three dimensions of being human are (a) reproduction, (b) political life, and (c) contemplation.

First, some clarification is necessary, as the word "immortality" may conjure up images of ghostly spirits or mystical visions. In an Aristotelian sense, however, immortality is simply the negation of mortality; to be immortal is to be not subject to death, and to participate in (or approximate) immortality is to overcome in various ways the limits of mortal nature. Aristotle says that God is a living, immortal being who necessarily exists; in God's immortal, intellectual, eternal life, he "thinks himself, since he is the most powerful: that is, his thinking is thinking on thinking."[26] Thus, that which is immortal is "imperishable, incorruptible, which cannot possibly not be."[27] For a human agent, to be immortal is to be and to produce something that transcends, that goes beyond, the limits marked by one's own bodily death, so participating in the immortal is to be something and to be the source of some activity that goes beyond the restrictions of time and space and the kind of causality proper to material existence.[28]

One may be tempted to think of immortality as an "all or nothing" affair; either one (or one's soul or some "part" of one's soul) is immortal or one is not. However, immortality, according to both Plato and Aristotle, is not only an endowment but also an

[26] *Metaphys.* 12.9.1074b34. For God as an immortal living being, see *De Anima* 1.1.402b7; *Topics* 4.2.122b12-14; and *Topics* 5.1.128b19-20.

[27] Aquinas, X *Metaphys.*, lect. 12.

[28] Walker says that for a mortal being "to approximate the divine is for that entity to take on aspects of [God's] eternally active, stable, indestructible way of being, so far as possible within the constraints of that entity's nature" (*Aristotle on the Uses of Contemplation*, 73). Considerations of Aquinas's view of the heavenly bodies, though pertinent, would take us beyond the scope of this article.

achievement. Immortality is not only a metaphysical mode of being given by nature but also an accomplishment that admits of degrees, and therefore we can speak of grades of immortality that are in some way within an individual's power to attain.[29] Further, the grades of im*mortality* track the degrees of im*materiality*, and the grades of im*materiality* are manifest by specific activities of beings in the natural world that transcend the restrictions of merely material causality.[30]

A) Three Texts on Immortality

An immortal being, therefore, has a spiritual dimension and is the cause of spiritual activities that lift it and the "offspring" of its actions beyond the limits of time, space, and the bodily death that is the common lot of material entities. In doing so, such a being makes itself to be like the immortal God.[31] Spiritual activity is present whenever we do things that escape the confinements of time, space, and matter, and as Robert Sokolowski says, "We do this all the time."[32] Such spiritual activity as the manifestation of

[29] For a discussion of immortality as both endowment and achievement in the writings of Plato and Aristotle, see Gerson, *Aristotle and Other Platonists*, 244-58. Sedley also speaks of immortality as an achievement that enables humans (and other animals) to become Godlike; see Sedley, "Becoming Godlike," 331-34.

[30] Aquinas links intellectual cognition to immateriality/perfection of form, and immateriality/perfection of form to incorruptibility/immortality. That is, a being is intellectual insofar as its form is immaterial/perfect, and insofar as its form is immaterial/perfect and intellectual it has an operation that transcends the body and is therefore incorruptible/immortal. For the link between form, immateriality, and knowledge, see *STh*, I, q. 14, a. 1; q. 75, a. 2. For the link between immateriality/perfection of form and incorruptibility/immortality, see *STh* I, q. 75, aa. 5-6.

[31] Aristotle speaks of form itself as divine at *Physics* 1.9.192a15-25. Aquinas says form is divine because "every form is something of a participation by likeness of the divine act of being [*quaedam participatio similitudinis divini esse*], which [divine act of being] is pure act: for, each thing just to this extent is actually [*est in actu*], that is, inasmuch as it has form" (I *Phys.*, lect. 15).

[32] Robert Sokolowski, "Soul and the Transcendence of the Human Person," in *Christian Faith and Human Understanding: Studies on the Eucharist, Trinity, and the Human Person* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 157.

the various grades of immaterial nature gives us a glimpse of what immortality is and of what it is to be immortal in some way. For our purposes, the question is, how do human agents, as embodied rational beings, transcend the restrictions of time, space, and matter?

1. Participating in Immortality through Reproduction

In *De Anima*, Aristotle distinguishes the various kinds of souls into nutritive, sentient, and intellectual, forming a hierarchy in which the higher kind of soul incorporates the abilities and functions of the lower into a superior mode of life and activity. When discussing the nutritive soul, he says that its work is twofold: (1) the self-maintenance of a living organism and (2) that organism's reproduction of another entity like itself. The nutritive soul's function is therefore both

> to beget offspring as well as to use food, since the most natural thing for a living thing to do, if it is full-grown and not defective . . . is to make another like itself, for an animal to make an animal and a plant to make a plant, in order to have a share in what always is and what is divine, in the way that it is able. For all things yearn for that, and for the sake of it do everything that they do by nature. . . . So since it is impossible for them to share continuously in what always is and is divine, since no destructible thing admits of remaining one and the same in number, each of them does share in it in whatever way it can have a share, one sort more and another less, enduring not as itself but as one like itself, that is one with it not in number but in kind.[33]

Nature has taught all living things, plants and animals, not merely reproduction but participation in the immortal life of the divine by leaving behind oneself another like oneself.

When we move to the level of animal life, we should recall that, as Aristotle says, "No part of an animal is purely material or

My understanding of immortality and its link to immateriality is indebted to Sokolowski's distinction between "soul" and "spirit."

[33] *De Anima* 2.4.415a25-b9 (trans. Joe Sachs [Santa Fe: Green Lion Press, 2004]).

purely immaterial."[34] Even "brute" animals have a touch of spirituality manifest in their natural desire to procreate and therefore to participate in immortality, in whatever way they are able. We see a hint of spirituality in their natural desire to be like the immortal God through reproduction, through which the mortality of the individual is partially overcome by the fecundity of reproducing, thus enabling a mortal animal to approximate the immortal God. The echoes of Diotima's teaching on *eros* in the *Symposium* are unmistakable.[35] We can conclude that, for Plato and Aristotle, intentionally to shut off the natural fecundity of sexuality is to block oneself from an avenue of participating in the immortal life of God.

For human beings, in whom the nutritive functions of taking food and reproducing both provide a foundation for a rational life and are directed by intellectual abilities, the life of the family is more immortal than that of the individual. The activities of creating and rearing children enable parents to participate in the everlasting happiness of God insofar as they are able, poor mortals that they are. A human being who is "solitary and childless cannot really be characterized as happy."[36] Therefore, "underneath," "behind," and "in" the desire for sexual union and procreation within family life is the desire to be like to God through immortality, through transcending the limits of space, time, and bodily existence by leaving something of oneself as a kind of extension of one's own life. This is a quite bodily—though not merely bodily—way of transcending the limits of the body, one shared by all living beings in their own way. Bodily though it is, reproduction is the necessary and good foundation for the higher kinds of spiritual activities manifest in human life, since "in the household first we have the sources and springs of

[34] Aristotle, *Parts of Animals* 643a23-24, as it appears in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

[35] See *Symposium* 205a-209e.

[36] *Nic. Ethic.* 1.8.1099b4-5.

friendship, of political organization, and of justice."[37] It is therefore to the political life that we turn next.

2. Participating in Immortality through Political Life

Although Aristotle argues that human beings are more fundamentally coupling and reproducing animals than they are political animals, he says repeatedly that human beings are political animals by nature.[38] He also says that it is *logos*, the eponymous use of human reason, that lifts human beings beyond merely animal associations and into political life.[39] When we enter into the life of reason with others through the use of syntax and the thoughtful deployment of a lexicon,

> we carry on a spiritual activity, because we share a meaning or a thought or a truth with other people at other places and times. The same meaning, the same thought, the same intellectual identity, can be shared by many people, and it can continue as the same truth over centuries of time.[40]

Truth, as Augustine so often said, is one, and not lessened in the sharing of it, therefore "truth transcends both space and time, and it transcends material causality as well, because it is the kind of thing that matter alone does not generate."[41] The life of thinking in the medium of words is a spiritual, immaterial life. Reason and the use of language open the door to our familial and political life, therefore our familial and political activities are rooted in our spiritual nature, which is itself shaped by and directive of our more bodily needs.

The activities expressed in speech "produce" understanding and give us access to truth, thus enabling us to transcend the

[37] *Eudemian Ethics* 7.10.1242b1-2. See also *Nic. Ethic.* 8.10-12.

[38] Aristotle says, "For a human being is by nature more a coupling being than a political one, inasmuch as a household is earlier and more necessary than a city" (*Nic. Ethic.* 8.12.1162a15-20). For the claim that human beings are political animals by nature, see *Polit.* 1.1.1253a2-4; *Nic. Ethic.* 9.9.1169b16-23.

[39] See *Polit.* 1.2.1253a6-20.

[40] Sokolowski, "Soul and the Transcendence," 157.

[41] Ibid.

limits of time, space, and matter, and such activities are also at the root of political society. We form political societies not just because we are herd animals, but because

> [we] share an understanding of the good, the noble, and the just, and this common understanding is the basis for a life in which people can pursue goods that are common to the entire community, not just individual goods.[42]

The common goods of truth, law, justice, and the friendships in which they culminate are not lessened but intensified when shared, and they are made possible through the use of language, which helps us to see our immaterial souls at work in our material bodies.

When Aristotle discusses these common goods of political life, he claims that the common good of the polity is more divine than the good of the individual or the good of the family:

> For even if [the human good] is the same thing for an individual and a city, to secure and preserve the good of the city appears to be something greater and more complete; the good of the individual by himself is certainly desirable enough, but that of a group and of cities is nobler and more divine.[43]

Commenting on this text, Aquinas says that protecting and promoting the good of the polity "is said to be more divine because it shows greater likeness to God, who is the universal cause of all goods."[44] The spiritual activities at the foundation of a polity unite human agents in their shared pursuit of happiness in a way of life that enables them to imitate the divine more fully than they could individually or as members of families.[45]

As Plato reminds us, Solon and other wise legislators are to be honored because they have engendered innumerable virtues and human excellences by crafting intelligent laws. In the last century

[42] Ibid., 161.

[43] *Nic. Ethic.* 1.2.1094b7-10.

[44] I *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 2: "Dicit autem hoc esse divinius, eo quod magis pertinet ad Dei similitudinem, qui est universalis causa omnium bonorum."

[45] As Aristotle says, "He who by nature and not by mere accident is without a polity, is either a bad man or above humanity" (*Polit.* 1.2.1253a3-4).

too, Yves Simon argued that the polity is more immortal than the family and the individual. Simon speaks of the "virtual immortal life of the community" and shows that participation in political life renders human agents "virtually immortal." He says, "Beyond the satisfaction of individual needs the association of men serves a good unique in plenitude and duration, the common good of the human community."[46] In comparison to the individual and the family, the common good of political life is more immortal and divine both in plenitude and duration. In terms of plenitude, the polity and the laws that shape it are more fecund than the life of the individual or family because they engender goods—such as political life itself and the virtues and friendships that structure it—that are greater and more divine. In terms of duration, the polity is more immortal because the *polis* outlasts the family, just as the family survives the individual. The spiritual activities of politics contribute to the common good of a people, and such contribution to and enjoyment of common goods manifest a higher form of the human likeness to God through participation in the immortal. The fecundity of the life of a virtuous citizen in a decent polity—the fecund life of ruling and being ruled—is an expression of and preparation for the myriad friendships that texture the social life of rational animals. Such a political arrangement also makes the contemplative life possible, and it is to an analysis of contemplation that we now turn.

3. Participating in Immortality through Contemplation

In book X of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, after acknowledging the necessity and nobility of political virtues, Aristotle says that human happiness reaches its apex in contemplative activity, especially the contemplation of the best thing: God. Such activity is the exercise of our highest capacity in relation to the highest being. However, Aristotle immediately adds that the life of contemplative happiness seems too high for human beings; it is

[46] Yves Simon, *A General Theory of Authority* (South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980), 29.

rather the life of a divine being. He resolves this apparent dilemma by arguing that a human agent can achieve the heights of happiness in contemplation not "insofar as he is a human being . . . but insofar as there is something divine present in him."[47] He identifies this divine element present in human beings as intellect (*nous*), and he concludes that activity in accordance with contemplative intellect is divine in comparison to the activities of moral virtue. He concludes,

> One ought not—as some recommend—to think only about human things because one is a human being, nor only about mortal things because one is mortal, but rather to make oneself immortal [*athanatizein*], insofar as possible, and to do all that bears on living in accord with what is the most excellent of the things in oneself.[48]

Our sporadic activities of contemplation are the apex of happiness and immortality precisely insofar as they are akin to God's unceasing contemplative activity.[49] Such human activities transcend the necessities and excellences of familial and political life by enabling one to live fully in accordance with the immortal, divine element of *nous*. While there is no part of an animal that is purely material or purely immaterial, *nous* or understanding "alone enters additionally from outside and alone is divine."[50] Aristotle argues that, among the parts of the human soul, the "agent intellect" (*nous poiētikos*) is always active and therefore immortal and eternal.[51] However, even though our "agent intellect" is always active, "we are not always actively understanding." The agent intellect is, as C. D. C. Reeve says, "always active and immortal, but we are actively immortal*izing*—actively living our immortal life—only when accessing our ever active understanding."[52] Therefore, Aristotle gives us a rare injunction when he says that we must "immortalize ourselves" by actively

[47] See *Nic. Ethic.* 10.7.1177b27-35.
[48] *Nic. Ethic.* 10.7.1177b31-35.
[49] See *Nic. Ethic.* 10.8.1178b.
[50] *GA* 2.3.736b27-28.
[51] See *De Anima* 3.5.430a17-25.
[52] Reeve, *Action, Contemplation, and Happiness*, 215.

understanding being and the principles of being. We again see his understanding of immortality as both endowment and achievement: *nous* is immortal, but we are told to achieve a fuller participation in immortality by "actively living our immortal life" in the use of intellect.

In contemplative activities, especially those of philosophy, we complete and perfect the spiritual life that enables us to form human families and political societies and we become, in some way, of one mind with the divine. As Aristotle says, the culmination of philosophy is metaphysics, and metaphysics is a divine science because it is about God and because it is the kind of wisdom that God himself has.[53] The activities of philosophical contemplation are therefore like what God does, and they have the divine for their chief object. When we contemplate God philosophically, "our active understanding, to which we are most of all identical, becomes temporarily identical to God (*DA,* III.4, 430a3-4)."[54] But such "identification" is only temporary. "For God is always in the good state of actively contemplating himself, whereas we are in it only sometimes, and he is also in it to 'a higher degree,' since his contemplation of himself is prior to ours and presupposed by it (*Met*., XII.7, 1072b24-26)."[55] When we enter into philosophy and metaphysics, we not only live a spiritual life, but we reflect on what a spiritual life is and on what its sources are, and in so doing we complete our happiness by making ourselves like God in the best way we are able. We become, in some small way, of one mind with God because we study him contemplatively and therefore catch some glimpse of his own knowledge (of himself).

B) Three Objections and Three Replies

With this framework in place, let us consider and respond to three objections to Aristotle's claim that contemplation is the

[53] See *Metaphys.* 1.2.983a1-10.

[54] Reeve, *Action, Contemplation, and Happiness*, 215.

[55] Ibid.

apex of human happiness. First, one may object that contemplation, of its very nature, is not productive; the activities of contemplation do not produce anything, and it is this feature of contemplation that separates it from the active and productive life. If the activities of contemplation are not productive, then it is difficult to see how they can be fecund, and therefore our argument would fail. If true, this objection would break the link between activity and fecundity and would therefore call into question the notion of immortality that is central to our discussion.

Second, one may object that contemplation is solipsistic, perhaps even selfish, and therefore at odds with Aristotle's insistence that human beings are political animals by nature who perfect themselves by participating in common goods; this objection could be used to denigrate the contemplative life. This second objection leads to a third, according to which one may argue that Aristotle degrades the life of politics by situating the apex of happiness in contemplative life. This objection would see a radical break between the active and contemplative life. The second and third objections, if correct, would vitiate our claim that the three aspects of human life—family, polity, and contemplation—are unified in a hierarchy of happiness. If true, these objections would break the link between the three activities themselves (family, polity, and contemplation) that constitute human happiness understood as ways of participating in immortality.

To the first objection one may respond by distinguishing, with Aristotle, two senses of production. We have already noted the distinction between immanent and transitive actions, and to this we may add the dimension of a stable, acquired ability, or *hexis*, that is the source of these actions. Transitive actions, even if they proceed from a *hexis* within the human agent, terminate in objects external to the agent and produce things outside himself, like a skilled doctor, who from his medical art produces health in a body, or an excellent carpenter, who makes a table from his art of carpentry. Immanent actions may also flow from a *hexis*, but they will remain "within" the agent, that is, they will perfect the

agent himself. Thus, a virtue such as wisdom does "produce" something, namely, the activities that are the activation of the agent's abilities to perform the activity, and therefore such activities achieve the completion of his nature.[56]

It is not production or the lack thereof that principally distinguishes transitive and immanent activities, but rather what is produced and the manner of its production. On the one hand, the medical art of a doctor produces transitive activities that in turn produce health in a body, the art of a carpenter produces skilled activities that in turn produce a table, and the legislative art and political prudence of a politician produce the transitive actions of legislating that in turn build the social structures which protect and promote the common good of a polity. On the other hand, the virtue of wisdom produces the immanent activities of contemplation that make one to be like God and therefore produce happiness within intellectual friendships. As Aristotle says, *sophia* does

> make or produce something, not as the art of medicine produces health, but, rather, just as health produces health, so wisdom [*sophia*] produces happiness. For wisdom, being a part of the whole of virtue, makes one happy by being possessed and by being active.[57]

Happiness is not a native human power, nor is it an acquired but inactive ability. Further, happiness is not produced the way that health is produced by the doctor's artful cutting and burning. Rather, happiness is attendant upon activity according to virtue—especially the highest virtue of *sophia*—in a complete life, and therefore the virtues that lead to the activities of contemplative friendship, as imitations of God's activity, produce the most

[56] Aquinas says that a *habitus* is "midway" between potency and full actuality (*habitus medio modo se habet inter potentiam et actum* [*STh* I-II, q. 71, a. 3]) A *habitus*, such as a virtue, is the perfection of an ability and is geared to a certain kind of action, like a coiled spring. One should also keep in mind that, properly speaking, it is not the *habitus* that acts but the person through his *habitus*. See Aristotle, *De Anima* 1.4.408b10-18.

[57] *Nic. Ethic.* 6.12.1144a4-6. Note that one philosopher can, through a kind of overflow of his intellectual life, produce happiness, or some share in it, in others through teaching and intellectual friendships.

fecund kind of activities. The theoretic virtues as possessed and as active "produce" happiness by perfecting human beings and thereby enabling them to participate more fully in the immortal and intellectual life of God.

To the second objection, concerning the charge of solipsism, one may note Aristotle's claim that, strictly speaking, the theoretic life is the most self-sufficient because the "wise person is able . . . to contemplate even by himself." However, Aristotle immediately adds that such contemplative activity is best done with friends; with friends, one is more able to think and to act well.[58] On this point, Thomas Prufer says,

> Contemplative friendship or the sharing of speech in the knowledge of what is primary . . . is the highest form of the specifically human imitation of separate entity: science is of the necessary and eternal; and because the friend is another self, contemplation of a friend's contemplation is self-contemplation.[59]

Even though contemplative activities can be done by oneself, the theoretic achievement of universal, necessary, and perennial truth is the paradigmatic instance of a common good enjoyed with others, as truth is not lessened but intensified as it is discovered and shared in conversation with friends. As second selves, friends enable each other to enjoy more objects for contemplation and to enjoy them more fully.

To the third objection, concerning the possible degradation of the active life, we should begin by observing that a decent polity provides the necessary setting for the theoretic life, which culminates in knowledge of the divine. One need only to recall the life and death of Socrates to understand that the leisure of the philosopher depends upon myriad social and political factors. However, it is equally important to observe that the activities of contemplation also provide a kind of foundation for the life of moral and political virtues. In book VII of the *Politics*, Aristotle suggests that if human beings fail to acknowledge the superiority

[58] See *Nic. Ethic.* 10.7.1177a30-b2.

[59] Thomas Prufer, *Recapitulations: Essays in Philosophy* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993), 9.

of the life of thinking over the practical life, they will attempt to satiate their natural desire for the infinite and immortal by ruling over and dominating others. If they fail to see the excellence of the theoretic life, they will conclude that the practical life of ruling is best, and they will attempt to extend their domination over as many people as possible and as completely as possible.[60]

Aristotle says that one who makes this mistake will think that

> supreme power is the best of all things, because the possessors of it are able to perform the greatest number of noble actions. If so, the man who is able to rule, instead of giving up anything to his neighbor, ought rather to take away his power; and the father should care nothing for his son, nor the son for his father, *nor friend for friend*.[61]

Failure to recognize and respect the superiority of the life of thinking, a life that culminates in the knowledge of God enjoyed in intellectual friendships, leads to a tyrannical lifestyle that destroys the very possibility of friendship. Moral and political friendships must be safeguarded by recognizing that human beings are not the best thing in the cosmos, and therefore relationships amongst human beings themselves must be open to the transcendence of the life of thinking. As Sokolowski says, "There is something in us that transcends political life, and only when political life acknowledges such transcendence can it find its proper place in human affairs."[62] Love of truth and respect for human persons as those who can know and pursue truth provide the bipartite foundation for civic friendship.

This life of thinking and the pursuit of truth for its own sake is not limited to metaphysics; it includes arts, music, literature, and the nobler expressions of human culture. In its various manifestations, the contemplative life allows the natural human thirst for the infinite and immortal to be properly channeled, and thus it enables the citizens and their polity to be active and at

[60] See *Polit.* 7.2-3. See also Robert Sokolowski, "The Human Person and Political Life," *The Thomist* 65 (2001): 505-27.

[61] *Polit.* 7.3.1325a34-39.

[62] Sokolowski, "Human Person and Political Life," 518-19.

peace. Truth and the theoretic life nourish the capacity for political friendship, and therefore legislators must acknowledge this dimension of human nature in order to fulfill their function. We can conclude that the theoretic life is not only the apex of friendship but also a necessary part of its foundation, and therefore in our desire to understand the nature of human happiness we should distinguish but not oppose practical and theoretic activities.

C) Recapitulation

Before moving to the final section, it will be helpful to recapitulate our discussion of Aristotle by recalling the three components of friendship we have highlighted: (1) equality, (2) commonality of life, and (3) oneness of mind. As we move from friendships between human beings themselves to the prospect of human beings enjoying friendship with God, these three aspects are possible only in a greatly diminished form. (1a) Human beings cannot reach the equality with God requisite for friendship, but they can enjoy an increasing likeness to the divine through imitating God in the activities of virtue. (2a) Mortal human agents do not have the natural ability to share a common life with the immortal God, but human beings can share something of a divine way of life by participating more fully in immortality through fecund activities. (3a) Human beings cannot achieve oneness of mind with God, but through contemplative human friendships they can penetrate more deeply the wonder of being and acquire the divine knowledge of metaphysics, a wisdom that is most like God's own wisdom because it is about him and because it is the wisdom he himself has. Thus, even if Aristotle does not give us the resources to speak of human beings as friends of God, he does discuss the fecund activities ingredient in happiness that enable human beings to approach equality, commonality of life, and oneness of mind with God by becoming

like him through participating in an immortality that culminates in the contemplation of the truth about God himself.[63]

If only the intellect (or even if only the agent intellect) is naturally endowed with immortality, then we can achieve immortality through living in accord with the divine element of *nous*. As intelligence penetrates the various dimensions of human life, and as we live more completely in accordance with truth, we more fully achieve immortality. For Aristotle, therefore, becoming like to God by "making ourselves immortal" means living more fully in accordance with *nous*, and *nous* is that which we are most of all.[64] The life of the mind is that which is most ours; understanding is divine and as such it makes us most human by making us like God.

As coupling-political animals by nature, living a Godlike life in accordance with mind demands living by decent law, which directs us toward virtue and the common good and prepares for the intellectual life.[65] As Aristotle says,

> One who asks law to rule, therefore, seems to be asking god and intellect alone to rule, while one who asks man adds the beast. Desire is a thing of this sort; and spiritedness perverts rulers and the best men. Hence law is intellect without appetite.[66]

[63] According to Flannery, Aristotle can be understood as arguing that we cannot be friends with God, but that there can be a kind of friendship according to preeminence between man and God. By appealing to the ways in which the human being participates in immortality, my approach could be understood as a specification and development of Flannery's thesis.

[64] "And it would seem that each person even *is* this thing [his intellect], if in fact it is what is authoritative and better in him. It would be strange, then, if a person should not choose the life that is his own but rather that of something else. What was said before fits well now too, for what is proper to each is by nature most excellent and most pleasant for each. And so for a human being, this is the life that accords with the intellect, if in fact this especially *is* a human being. This life, therefore, is also the happiest" (*Nic. Ethic.* 10.7.1178a2-8). For the connection between (1) correctly understanding that intellect is most of all what we are as human beings, (2) proper self-love (as distinct from selfishness), and (3) friendship with others, see *Nic. Ethic.* 9.4 and 9.8.

[65] See *Nic. Ethic.* 5.1.1129b10-1130a14.

[66] *Polit.* 3.16.1287a28-32.

Introducing intelligence into the reproductive life of the family, living by decent law (*nous* without appetite), and contemplating truth are activities of beholding and living by truth in which we render ourselves more fully what we are and therefore more fully like God.[67] Thus, becoming like to God is not other than perfecting our nature as human beings. Rather, Aristotle understands likeness to God as being actively, that is, being most fully, what we are by nature: intellectual animals who pursue happiness in families embedded in political societies that facilitate the enjoyment of intellectual friendships.[68]

IV. Aquinas on Natural Law, Happiness, and Friendship with God

Having shown the ways in which Aristotle sees happiness as a life structured around fecund activities in which human beings become like God by participating more fully in immortality, we turn to the question of how the natural law directs us to happiness so understood. In Aquinas's treatment of the precepts of the natural law, he distinguishes three kinds of natural inclinations that belong to human beings: (1) to the conservation of one's being according to one's nature, (2) to spousal union and the rearing of children, and (3) to knowledge of the truth about God and to social and political life.[69] The precepts of the natural law are distinct from these inclinations but flow from them, so

[67] We could say they are activities of "truthing." For Aristotle's use of the verb "truthing [*alētheuei*]," see *Metaphys.* 9.10.1051b1-35.

[68] Walker says, "Approximating the divine . . . is not some separate goal for, e.g., plants and animals, that somehow stands over and above, or in tension with, their living as such organisms. Instead, it just is their living as plants and animals—in a maximally complete, stable, self-maintaining way" (Walker, *Aristotle on the Uses of Contemplation*, 75). Aquinas says, "The soul united with the body is more like God than the soul separated from the body, because it possesses its nature more perfectly [*perfectius habet suam naturam*]. For a thing is like God insofar as it is perfect, although God's perfection is not of the same kind as the creature's perfection" (*De Pot.*, q. 5, a. 10, ad 5).

[69] *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 2. For an overview of various interpretations and an insightful reading of Aquinas on the natural inclinations, see Stephen L. Brock, "Natural Inclination and the Intelligibility of the Good in Thomistic Natural Law," *Vera Lex* 6 (2005): 57-78.

these precepts protect and promote those goods the knowledge of which gives birth to the natural inclinations. The natural-law precepts demand that one avoid ignorance (especially about God's existence and nature), that one avoid offending those with whom one lives, that one avoid adultery and those activities destructive of family life, and that one take reasonable care for the continuance of one's life.[70]

These dimensions of human life directed by the natural law—personal, familial, political, and contemplative—are recognizable from our discussion of Aristotle. While we cannot identify a one-to-one correspondence between the texts we discussed from Aristotle and the inclinations enumerated by Aquinas, there is significant and illuminating overlap. Aristotle, a pagan philosopher, sees the *energeia* that is form itself, the activities of self-maintenance and reproduction manifest by the nutritive dimension of the human soul, and the activities of political life and contemplation manifest by the intellective dimension of the human soul as ways of becoming like the divine by participating more fully in immortality. In doing so, human beings are perfecting their nature, not jettisoning or transcending it. Aquinas, a Catholic theologian who integrates Aristotelian philosophy within a reflection on God as revealed by Christ, sees the natural law as a divine gift governing the care of one's individual, familial, political, and contemplative life so as to make one happy by making one like God in the activities of virtue.[71] By integrating these Aristotelian insights and their Thomistic developments, we can conclude that the precepts of the natural law protect and promote those fecund activities ingredient in human happiness in which human beings transcend the limits of time, space, and matter, thereby facilitating their imitation of God, perfecting

[70] This reasonable care is not mere self-preservation but includes the naturalness of risking one's life in defense of one's polity; see *STh* I, q. 60, a. 5. For our purposes, it does not matter whether the precepts enumerated in *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 should be titled "primary" or "secondary." See *STh* I-II, q. 94, aa. 4 and 6.

[71] For virtue as likeness to God, see *STh* I-II, q. 99, a. 2. We will discuss this text in detail below.

their nature as rational animals, and enabling them to participate in immortality in the sharing of common goods.

The third inclination articulated by Aquinas merits some specific attention. Aquinas says that this inclination is toward

> the good with respect to the rational nature that is proper to [man]; thus, man has natural inclination toward *knowing the truth about God and toward living in society*. Accordingly, those things that are related to this sort of inclination belong to the natural law, e.g., that a man avoid ignorance, that he not offend the others with whom he has to live in community.[72]

This natural inclination is actually a structured network of inclinations toward knowing the truth about God and toward living in political society, and we have seen from our discussion of Aristotle that these goods do not simply run parallel to each other. They are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. A communal life open to and encouraging of the search for the truth about God provides the context within which rational, coupling, political animals can live in peace and friendship with themselves through imitating God in the activities of human life. To the degree that a given polity and culture frustrate the search for truth about God and disparage the intellectual life, the possibility of virtuous friendship amongst its citizens will be abrogated. This claim is not a political prognostication, but a philosophical insight based on human nature, a nature embedded in a cosmos but also transcending it by the activity of intellect.

We can now see that being like to God and being friends with our fellow human beings are integrated and mutually reinforcing. Interestingly, Aquinas argues that there are two things necessary for human beings to live well (that is, happily) in a community: first, they must be properly related toward the one who rules the community, and, second, they must interact well with the other members of the community.[73] Because a divine law, such as the natural law, orders human beings toward a "sort of community or republic of men under God," it "must first lay down some

[72] *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 2.

[73] See *STh* I-II, q. 100, a. 5.

precepts ordering a man toward God, and, second, it must lay down other precepts ordering a man toward those others who are living together with him as his neighbors under God."[74] Although this text comes from Aquinas's treatment of the Old Law, it sheds light on this third natural inclination and gives us an insight into why Aquinas would mention knowledge of the truth about God before he mentions life in society: life in society depends upon searching for the truth about God.

A) Initial Question Revisited: Eternal Law and Friendship with God

We are now in a position to return to our initial question and pose it anew: Does the natural law direct us principally toward friendship with God? In order to give a fuller response, we must go beyond philosophical thinking and introduce properly theological topics. It is important to see that the *eternal law* aims principally at establishing friendship with God and that the *natural law* is only the initial, natural human participation in the eternal law. As we have seen, Aquinas classifies a law as human or divine on the basis of its legislator. The natural law, the Old Law, and the New Law are therefore distinct species of (divine) eternal law because they are given by God; they are hierarchically graded manifestations of the same eternal law, so the uplifting of human reason begun with the natural law is continued and specified by the Old Law and completed in the New Law of grace.[75] The natural law is the beginning of what will eventually be revealed as a gradual road to friendship with God. When, through God's revelation, the natural law is taken not only as the law that is prior to the positive laws and customs of a community, but also as the first of three divinely given laws, or rather the first

[74] Ibid.

[75] Aquinas says, "The Old Law is distinguished from the law of nature not in the sense of being altogether different from it, but in the sense of adding something to it. For just as grace presupposes nature, so too divine law must presuppose the natural law" (*STh* I-II, q. 99, a. 2, ad 1).

of three disclosures of the eternal law, then the law of nature can more easily be seen to participate in the uplifting of human thinking and action that culminates in the gift of friendship with God. A brief discussion of the relationship between the natural law, the Old Law, and the New Law can help us clarify this point.

The Torah initiates the Israelites (and through them all the nations) into a greater knowledge of and intimacy with God through a direct and extensive revelation of his governing wisdom and loving care for his creatures. The Old Law accomplishes this by manifesting (1) principles of justice that are to structure the human interactions at the core of social life (moral precepts), (2) the proper mode of responding to God through divine worship (ceremonial precepts), and (3) principles for regulating the conditions of the Jewish people in accordance with justice and equity (judicial precepts).[76]

Aquinas argues that the moral precepts of the Old Law, especially the Decalogue, are the same as those "contained" in the natural law.[77] These precepts are repromulgated in the Old Law, in part because human beings had become so corrupted by sin that they needed to be taught what they should have known by their own natural lights.[78] Further, Aquinas says that it is fitting that the Torah contain moral precepts because—as we have discussed—the main intention of the Old Law as a species of divine law is to establish man's friendship with God. Aquinas argues that "likeness is a reason for love [*similitudo sit ratio amoris*]," and therefore "it is impossible for there to be friendship between man and God, who is absolutely good, unless men are made good [*impossibile est esse amicitiam hominis ad Deum, qui*

[76] See *STh* I-II, q. 99.

[77] See *STh* I-II, q. 100, aa. 1 and 11.

[78] *STh* I-II, q. 98, a. 6: "[Man] is proud with respect to knowledge in the sense of thinking that natural reason can suffice for his salvation. So in order that man's pride on this score might be conquered, he was left to the guidance of his own reason without the support of a written law, and man was able to learn that he suffered from deficiencies of reason—and he learned this from experience, in virtue of the fact that by the time of Abraham men had fallen into idolatry and into the most shameful vices. And so it was necessary for the written Law to be given after that time as a remedy for human ignorance."

est optimus, nisi homines boni efficiantur]."[79] Since the goodness of the human person consists in the life of virtue, it is fitting that the Old Law contains moral precepts that aim at the inculcation of those habits perfective of our native faculties. Thus, Aquinas says that the Old Law aims principally at friendship with God by means of making men to be like God in the possession and activities of virtue.[80]

Because the moral precepts of the Old Law are not other than the dictates of the natural law, but are rather those dictates as manifest by a direct revelation of God, whose revelation includes not only moral precepts but also ceremonial and judicial ones, the continuity between the natural law and the Old Law is clear.[81] However, one might ask: Is Aquinas correct that the Old Law tends toward friendship with God as its ultimate end? Can the Jewish people themselves speak this way? I wish to suggest that while the Jewish relationship to God through the Torah is covenantal and is therefore to be marked by a faithful love, it is not a full friendship.[82] However, we can say, along with Aquinas,

[79] *STh* I-II, q. 99, a. 2.

[80] For the claim that the moral precepts are unique among the statutes of the Old Law because they are the only ones given directly by God, whereas the others are given through Moses, see *STh* I-II, q. 100, a. 3.

[81] For the way in which the natural law aims at the activities of virtue, see *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 3.

[82] Perhaps we can say that the Torah contains a loving promise of friendship with God but does not establish the friendship itself. This interpretation is my own, but I arrived at it in large part through conversations with Professors Jeffrey Wilson and David Novak. I wish to thank Professors Wilson and Novak for their generosity and their insightful comments, which are not the source of any errors on my part. As evidence of my claim, one could point to the scarcity of the term "friend(s) of God" (or its equivalent) in the Hebrew Scriptures. Maimonides's interpretation of Exodus 33:11 is interesting in this regard. The biblical text says that "the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a person speaks to a friend." Maimonides draws various points from this text, two of which are helpful for our purposes. He says (1) that Moses, as distinct from all the other prophets, did not receive God's revelation through the intermediary of an angel and therefore saw a full and open revelation without metaphor or allegory; and (2) that Moses, again alone among all the prophets, was not overawed, confounded, and terrified by God's revelation to him. Clearly, the lack of an angelic intermediary and the absence of terror on Moses's part represent a move toward intimacy but are something less than

that the Old Law is oriented toward friendship with God if we take it as one of a series of divine laws that culminates in the grace given by Christ and his Church. That is, one can say correctly that the Old Law tends principally toward friendship with God only when one can call it the "*Old* Law." The Old Law can be known to aim at friendship with God when it is seen from the perspective of Christ, the giver of the New Law, who calls us his friends and teaches us that he comes "not to abolish but to fulfill" the Mosaic Law.

According to Aquinas, when we contemplate the Old Law from the perspective of the New, it can be understood to prepare for Christ in two ways: (1) it properly ordered the life of the Jews toward God and toward each other (love of God and neighbor) and (2) it prefigured Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection, as well as the institution of the Church as the mystical body of Christ.[83] The Old Law teaches and governs both literally and figuratively, with the literal and figurative related not as two separate teachings but as two dimensions of the same teaching. It is precisely by rightly ordering the Jews toward God and each other that the Old Law prefigures the coming of Christ, his Church, and the gifts of grace. The Old Law, therefore, prepares for friendship with God (1) by aligning the Jewish people more closely with God morally, religiously, and judicially and thereby (2) pointing beyond itself to the friendship with God to be achieved in Christ. The new lies hidden in the old, and the old is manifest in the new.

B) Natural Law and the Human Person as capax amicitiae cum Deo

In a way analogous to our perspective on the Old Law, we can see that the natural law, as a divine law, tends principally toward

friendship. See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Yesodei ha-Torah, VII.6; *The Guide of the Perplexed*, II.45. For a Jewish perspective on natural law, see David Novak, *Natural Law in Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[83] See *STh* I-II, q. 100, a. 12; q. 102, a. 2; q. 104, a. 2.

friendship with God when we can take the law of nature as a foundation for the Old Law and as uplifted and fulfilled in the New. Our participation in the eternal law is far from exhausted by the natural law given to us by the natural light of human reason. The natural light of reason and the natural law give us only a small glimpse of the eternal law, a short but necessary prologue or foreword to God's Word more fully manifest in the Old Law and incarnated as the giver of the New Law.[84] The natural law is like the initial cultivation of the soil which makes it possible that, after the seeds are planted and the garden tilled, the plants may bear fruit in due season.

Thus, the eternal law "begins" to cultivate friendship with God in the natural law and "continues" to direct us toward such friendship through the preparation provided by the Old Law and its fulfillment in our participation in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who gives the grace of the New Law and calls us his friends as he discloses the Father to us and us to ourselves. As Matthew Levering says,

> The created "normative order," the norms of justice in relationships between human beings and between human beings and God, is taken up, not overturned, in the covenantal friendship promised by the Torah and fulfilled in Christ.[85]

While the natural law aims to make us like God by directing us to live by truth, and while Moses spoke to God as a man would his friend, Jesus makes us his friends by speaking to us through the human nature united to the second person of the Trinity. The natural law can be said to lead to friendship with God insofar as it can be understood as a preparation for the coming of the Messiah of the Jews.

The natural law does not, by its native exigencies, aim at friendship with God understood as the unity of three divine, coequal, and coeternal persons, just as we do not have a natural

[84] On Jesus Christ as giver of the New Law and the role of the apostles in its promulgation, see *STh* I-II, q. 108, aa. 1 and 3.

[85] Matthew Levering, *Jewish-Christian Dialogue and the Life of Wisdom: Engagements with the Theology of David Novak* (New York: Continuum International, 2010), 99.

desire for supernatural beatitude.[86] As our natural desire for happiness is uplifted by grace into a supernatural desire for participation in the triune life of God, so too the natural law itself is elevated into the economy of the Old Law and its fulfillment in the life of Christ. The natural law directs those human abilities that manifest our natural openness to God insofar as he can be known and loved as first cause and final end of the natural world, thereby refining those abilities that make us *capax Dei*. Aquinas, following Augustine, argues that to be *capax Dei* means that the human soul can exercise memory, intelligence, and will and that the human person can know and love (God).[87] As Aquinas says, man is by nature *capax Dei*, and we can add that through the direction of the natural law man is *capax amicitiae cum Deo*.

Our discussion of Aristotle specifies what it means for the natural law to make a human person *capax amicitiae cum Deo*. The capacity to be elevated into friendship with God is manifest in the ways that human agents "immortalize themselves" by engaging in the fecund activities of familial, political, and contemplative friendship. When these activities are done in accordance with immortal, eternal, and divine *nous*, then the human being identifies himself with that part of his being that is most authoritative and thereby perfects his social and rational nature, making him like God in whatever ways he can be. The fecund activities directed by the precepts of the natural law—the activities of familial, political, and contemplative friendships—are therefore "a natural substrate that can be elevated by grace into the Christian theological virtue of charity."[88] They are a "point of contact between nature and grace. Charity, therefore, is not without a natural anticipation."[89] To live in accordance with the natural law is to live in accordance with the mind and

[86] See Lawrence Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God according to St. Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters* (Naples, Fla.: Sapientia Press, 2010).

[87] See *STh* I, q. 59, a. 1; II-II, q. 18, a. 1; III, q. 4, a. 1, ad 2; *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 2, ad 5.

[88] Robert Sokolowski, "Phenomenology of Friendship," *The Review of Metaphysics* 55 (2002): 470.

[89] Ibid.

with truth; it is to make ourselves as like to God as we can be and thereby to be most perfectly what we are by nature. Such a life in accordance with reason reveals the dimensions of human life that are most immediately directed by the natural law and that are able to be transformed by grace.

C) The New Law of Grace and Charity as the Establishment of Friendship with God

We should not confuse Plato's and Aristotle's understanding of making ourselves immortal with a kind of Pelagian conception of salvation. They speak philosophically about how human beings can act well toward each other and toward God known as final end of the cosmos, not about how human persons can accept or refuse the offer of salvation in Christ. Thus, Aristotle articulates the nature or *ousia* of friendship, but, bereft of revelation, he is unable to see how friendship can be established between man and God. As we move to the supernatural order, we can see charity as the graced friendship of human persons with God, a friendship founded upon a kind of communication between human persons and God insofar as God communicates something of his happiness to us.[90] The New Law of grace given by Christ and the gift of charity establish friendship with God by achieving the equality, commonality of life, and oneness of mind with God that are hinted at but not accomplished by the natural law.

Concerning the equality requisite for friendship between human persons and God, Aquinas considers an objection in which the objector cites Aristotle as saying that there can be no friendship with God because there is the "highest degree" of inequality between human beings and God. In response, Aquinas says, "Charity is not a virtue of man in as much as he is man but in as much as, through the participation of grace, he becomes

[90] See *STh* II-II, q. 23, a. 1.

God [*fit Deus*] and a son of God."[91] Through the gift of charity flowing from the incarnate Lord, God establishes a kind of equality with human persons by healing, uplifting, and perfecting them, thereby allowing them "to share in the divine nature" (1 Pet 1:4).

This graced equality enables human persons to share a common life with God. Aquinas speaks of charity as establishing a kind of "spiritual society" between human persons and God, since

> charity loves God above all things in a more eminent way than [human] nature does. For nature loves God above all things insofar as he is the source and end of natural goodness, whereas charity loves God above all things insofar as man has a certain spiritual society with God [*quandam societatem spiritualem cum Deo*].[92]

Grace is a participation in the life of God which makes us to be partakers of the divine nature and of the eternal life of the Trinity, and charity generates a common life between Christians and God, one so intimate that we can say with St. Paul, "Through the law I died to the law, that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:19-20).

Grace and the gifts of faith and charity also establish a kind of *homonoia* or oneness of mind between human persons and God. As Jesus says, "I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father" (John 15:15). When Christ reveals the truth to us, he opens up the possibility of true friendship with God because he enables us to be of one mind with him. Such oneness of mind in the truth is necessary for the love of friendship because, as Aquinas says,

[91] *De Caritate*, a. 2, ad 15 (my translation). Aquinas speaks of charity as a habitual form super-added (*habitualis forma superaddita potentiae naturali*) to the human will that inclines the human person to love God in a way that is above the natural power of the soul. See *STh* II-II, q. 23, a. 2.

[92] *STh* I-II, q. 109, a. 3, ad 1.

"Every act of will is preceded by an act of the intellect,"[93] and "The act of the will is nothing other than an inclination proceeding from an interior principle of knowledge."[94] Friendship with God is founded upon the knowledge of him and of ourselves that God has revealed to us, and to live this friendship requires a continual *metanoia*, a stretching of the mind to think and act in accordance with the truth revealed.[95]

Finally, we can add a fourth dimension of friendship that has not been discussed to this point: reciprocity. According to Aristotle, friendship is mutual well-wishing mutually recognized.[96] When God becomes man so that man may become God (*fit Deus*), the love of God for man is revealed in concrete and personal ways. Christ's life, words, and actions disclose to us that God "wishes us well," and he gives the grace that enables us to recognize and participate in the reciprocal well-wishing necessary for friendship.[97] Such well-wishing may be said to be mutual in some sense, but Christ teaches, "It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. This I command you: love one another" (John 15:16-17). Aquinas interprets this statement to mean that Jesus reveals to us that he, and he alone, is the cause of the friendship

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

[94] *STh* I-II, q. 6, a. 4.

[95] For the point that in revealing himself to us, God also reveals us to ourselves, see Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes* 22. This theological insight was often used by Pope St. John Paul II; see, *inter alia*, *Redemptor Hominis* 9.

[96] See *Nic. Ethic.* 8.2.1155b30-1156a5.

[97] Can Aristotle's God be said to wish well to human beings? Aristotle says that the human being "who is active in accord with the intellect" is the one who "also seems to be dearest to the gods [*theophilestatos*]" (*Nic. Ethic.* 10.8.1179a23-25). We should note both the conditional "seems" (*eoiken*) and the plural "gods." We could, following Reeve, interpret this passage as referring to the heavenly spheres that Aristotle identifies as gods, which govern the various planets and which can be said to benefit us through the "regulation" of the sublunary seasons and cycles of fertility and infertility. Thus, the one who studies these gods and the God they imitate can be said to be benefited by them (and quite indirectly by the one they imitate). See Reeve, *Action, Contemplation, and Happiness*, 216-18.

between human persons and God. By giving us the New Law and commanding us to love God and neighbor, Christ enables us to bear the abiding fruit of the society of the faithful leading to eternal life (*congregatio fidelium in vitam aeternam perducatur*).[98] Both the recognition that such well-wishing is mutual and the ability to take part in this mutual benevolence are gifts of God given

> so that the immortal and incorruptible life of Jesus may be manifested in our now mortal flesh, so that our mortal flesh may put on immortality at the resurrection: "For that which is corruptible must clothe itself with incorruptibility, and that which is mortal must clothe itself with immortality" (1 Cor 15:53).[99]

In the supernatural order, our immortality is achieved by God himself and given to us as a gift, a gift of immortality that will not merely transcend but transform the limits of our mortal flesh.

Conclusion

There is a distinction between the truth and the perspective from which the truth can be known. In order to answer the question of the way that natural law tends toward friendship with God, we must hold in view both that which can be seen to be true and the perspective from which that truth can be seen. From the philosophical perspective, we can see that the natural law leads us to happiness understood as likeness to God through fecund spiritual activities in friendships that enable us to participate in the immortality constitutive of the life of the divine. The natural law directs us to likeness to God precisely through the protection and promotion of virtuous human friendships (familial, political, and intellectual), which are set within the context provided by a polity that recognizes the importance and transcendence of the life of thinking. From the Catholic theological perspective, we

[98] See *Super Ioan.*, c. 15, lect. 3.

[99] *Super II Cor.*, c. 4, lect. 4 (my translation; full text of the quotation from 1 Cor 15 added).

can see that the natural law tends toward friendship with God insofar as it is the natural substrate for the Old Law and its fulfillment in the New Law. This truth can be seen to accord with right reason when reason is healed by the grace of Christ. Thus, just as intellectual friendships, of which Aristotle wrote so well, assist each friend in seeing truth, so too the friendship offered to us in Christ enables us to see the myriad ways God has prepared us to be his friends. Aquinas is therefore correct to imply that the natural law tends principally toward friendship between human persons and God, but he can be seen to be correct only when he is seen to be speaking from the perspective of a Catholic theologian who is a great friend of Jesus Christ.

Let us close, then, with two texts that illustrate the philosophical and theological truths that we have shown to be complementary. The first comes from Cicero, who reports that Aristotle says that "man, a sort of mortal God, is born toward two things, understanding and acting."[100] The second comes from St. Irenaeus, who reflects on the revealed truth that Jesus, the Word of God, fulfills and extends the natural precepts of the Old Law. Irenaeus concludes that "friendship with God brings the gift of immortality to those who accept it."[101] The natural law directs the thinking and acting of us mortal gods toward imitating and thus being like the immortal God, who heals, uplifts, and perfects us by calling us his friends and offering the gift of immortality in the life, death, and resurrection of his only Son.[102]

[100] Cicero, *De finibus*, trans. H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library 40 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1914), book 2, c. 13: "Hominem ad duas res, ut ait Aristoteles, ad intellegendum et ad agendum esse natum, quasi mortalem deum" (translation modified).

[101] St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.13.4 (trans. Alexander Roberts and William Rambaut, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, vol. 1, *The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus,* ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe [New York: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885]).

[102] I wish to thank Fr. Stephen Brock and a reviewer for generous and helpful comments on an earlier version of this essay.

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UNLOCKING BONAVENTURE: THE *COLLATIONES IN HEXAËMERON* AS INTERPRETIVE KEY

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JAY HAMMOND'S new translation of Bonaventure's *Collationes in Hexaëmeron*[1] fills a critical gap in the availability of the Seraphic Doctor's works in English and forms the capstone of the Works of St. Bonaventure series by Franciscan Institute Publications. This text is arguably the most important of Bonaventure's works, and yet no English translation of it was in print prior to the publication of the current version. Hammond's translation is based on the text of the *Opera omnia*, but the hundreds of footnotes track, among other things, all the places where the competing edition of the Latin text, published by Marie Ferdinand Delorme in 1934 and surviving in only one manuscript, departs from the critical edition. The apparatus alone makes this translation a huge advance over its out-of-print predecessor by José de Vinck.[2]

This does not exhaust the importance of this new translation, however. In order to cause that importance to appear, it is necessary to look at several factors: (1) the importance of the text within the Bonaventurean corpus and Bonaventure scholarship, (2) the content of the text, (3) its relevance for

[1] *Collations on the Hexaemeron: Conferences on the Six Days of Creation: The Illuminations of the Church*, trans. Jay Hammond, Works of St. Bonaventure 18 (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2018).

[2] *Collations on the Six Days*, trans. José de Vinck, The Works of Bonaventure 5 (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1970).

contemporary scholarly discussion, and (4) the merits of the translation itself. What follows is an attempt at a sketch that will at least convey the significance of this publication.

I. The Importance of the Text

The *Hexaëmeron* is a text whose genre is not easy to fix and whose style is striking and, for most readers, unfamiliar. Various factors contribute to this situation, and several of them are crystallizations of what is so peculiar to Bonaventure himself, namely, his ability to move easily from one genre to another and to synthesize disparate material in surprising ways. The particularities of the text combine to define its importance.

First, it must be said that though this text ranges over a wide variety of topics, in most cases it does not represent Bonaventure's most complete discussion of these questions. For example, topics in philosophical theology are more fully addressed in both the *Breviloquium* and the commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, and the path to holiness is more clearly spelled out in the *Threefold Way*. And yet, the form of the discussions we get in the *Hexaëmeron* are of critical importance, for two reasons. The first is that, because they were composed in the last year of Bonaventure's life, they constitute his most mature reflection on these topics. Discussions in the *Sentences* commentary have to be compared to the positions Bonaventure takes here, and texts such as the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* must be considered in light of passages in the *Hexaëmeron* where Bonaventure returns to the very parts of Dionysius the Areopagite with which the *Itinerarium* ends.

Second, this text fulfills a unifying role within the Bonaventurean corpus, linking the work of his early years at the University of Paris with the spiritual treatises of his years as minister general of the Franciscans. It performs this task by means of its own genre and style, which resume something of the Scholastic manner of discourse, but in a mode that is changed by the intervening years. Consider, for example, conference 21, which belongs to the fourth vision (understanding elevated by contemplation). Here Bonaventure is

concerned with the celestial hierarchy, corresponding to the creation of the sun on the fourth day. He begins with a consideration of the Trinitarian persons, who may each be considered as they are or as they are related to the other persons. To each of these ways of thinking about the Trinitarian persons belongs an illumination: three illuminations as they are considered in themselves, and six as they are considered in relation to each other (the Father in the Son and in the Spirit, the Son in the Father and in the Spirit, the Spirit in the Father and in the Son). The six relational considerations are correlated to the six days of creation specifically through the divine speaking of "let it be; and there was made."[3] Bonaventure will detail these nine considerations in sections 12-15 of this collation, but before that he takes the time to lay down some rules for divine appropriations (21.4-11). And once the nine considerations have been demonstrated, he turns to the hierarchy established by the illumination that flows from these considerations (21.16-33).

In evidence here are typical Scholastic precision and orderliness, and yet not only is the form not that of a *quaestio* or *disputatio*, there is constant reference to the disposition required in the reader to attain the contemplation described, which is in clear continuity with the pastoral tone of spiritual writing. This is not a mere juxtaposition: it is not as if some passages are more Scholastic while others are more affective; rather, the text treats topics with Scholastic rigor but in an affective way. This text is often beautiful and moving, filled with memorable images and pastoral exhortation, and yet it manifests a rigor that renders it invaluable in tracing not only the Seraphic Doctor's mature view on central topics, but in fact his fundamental teaching about them. The following passage, for example, begins in a traditionally Scholastic register:

[3] *Hex.* 21.3 (Hammond, trans., 360).

From this way of considering (*sensu*) [God], there is born in the soul (*anima*) a threefold stabilizing influx from that light (*luce*) through which the soul (*anima*) may be stabilized (*stabiliter*) in God. The first is the strength of virtue, the second, the zeal of the truth; the third, the excess of love (*excessus amoris*). The strength of virtue is first, because nothing is difficult for the soul (*animae*) that has unshaken faith, because *if one is able to believe, all things are possible for the believer*, for one is prepared to endure everything for God's sake, because by faith virtue is stabilized.[4]

And yet by the time we arrive at the third influx, the tone of the passage has changed:

The third influx is the excess of love (*excessus amoris*), when the soul (*anima*), [even] in insults [and] in tribulations, always feels (*sentit*) inner joy; this is greatest when one feels (*sentit*) a burning that the Lord makes [one] taste the *bread of children*. And everyone [else] considers this [person] stupid, and [the person] himself considers all [of them] stupid, and indeed they truly are. And this is the summit of faith and the apex, that, through one's own experience (*experientiam*), one may be intoxicated and now not care about the world.[5]

It can be said, in anticipation of what is to come later, that here we see demonstrated in the very form of the text the unity and ordering of intellect and affect that is so important to Bonaventure's thinking.

This text was delivered at the University of Paris, and so the most immediate audience is the Franciscan community at the university. However, as Hammond points out in his introduction, this was a strategic setting from which the text could be expected to be disseminated to every Franciscan chapter house in Europe.[6] Bonaventure's audience is thus made up of both the students and masters at the university and the Franciscan order more generally—in other words, the entirety of those over whom he would have had direct pedagogical and pastoral authority.

His message for his charges is polemically situated. On the one hand, the text aims to address the theological errors of

[4] *Hex.* 9.27 (Hammond, trans., 203).
[5] *Hex.* 9.28 (Hammond, trans., 203).
[6] Jay Hammond, "Introduction," 24.

those on the other side of the poverty debate;[7] on the other hand, the text addresses the philosophical errors of those who have strayed too far in their dependence on Plato and Aristotle.[8] And yet this is not really a polemical text: after the brief discussion of the errors of the philosophers in conferences 6 and 7, the matter of philosophical error is set aside. Likewise, there is no direct confrontation with the theological claims of the secular masters that were aimed at the foundation of the existence of the Franciscan order; rather, the Franciscan vision of the spiritual life is simply assumed, and used as the basis for reasoning about the matters at hand. The text aims to correct bad understandings not by targeting them with sustained polemics, but by building a positive alternative account. This is why the errors of the philosophers can be so easily set aside: it is enough to indicate where the philosophers have gone astray and to take up the task of philosophical reflection at just these points, correcting them with a proper understanding of the nature of the world, the soul, and so on.

The *Hexaëmeron* has had a central place in twentieth-century scholarship on Bonaventure. Joseph Ratzinger's classic study, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, bases itself primarily on this text; indeed, the entire first chapter is given over to establishing the grounds for Bonaventure's theology of history in the *Hexaëmeron*.[9] Zachary Hayes's *The Hidden Center* takes its point of departure from the *Hexaëmeron*, specifically the sevenfold centrality of Christ introduced in

[7] Hammond devotes space in his introduction to explaining the background of this debate (7-13 and 16-17).

[8] Hammond speaks of the new Aristotelianism at Paris ("Introduction," 13-14 and 17-21). Bonaventure also levels critique at the philosophical errors of Platonism in conference 7 (see Hammond, trans., 173-76).

[9] Joseph Ratzinger, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, trans. Zachary Hayes (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1989), 1-55.

conference 1.[10] Other major studies whose conception is not so fundamentally tied to the *Hexaëmeron* still depend on it heavily in making their arguments.[11] Scholarly interest in the text continues, with recent dissertations (from which one may expect future monographs to develop) devoted entirely to the text, and, if anything, increased dependence upon the text in recent articles.

All of this is sufficient to establish that, to the specialist, this text is of critical importance. It should be possible to understand why, in light of all the foregoing: the text is Bonaventure's most mature thought without being his most exhaustive; it is polemically situated, yet is constructive rather than polemical in nature; it is situated at the union of Scholastic and spiritual ways of writing; and it is directed at the university audience, but with the expectation that it will spread to the whole order. It is in fact Bonaventure's *magnum opus*, but it is not a *summa*: it lacks the organization and comprehensive scope of a *summa*. But what it is is quite a bit more interesting: it is an interpretive key that can be applied to the rest of the *corpus*, helping to elucidate obscure passages in other texts and indicating the direction in which Bonaventure intended his thinking to be interpreted, at least at the end of his life.

Consider an example already referenced, namely, the end of the *Itinerarium* and the corresponding discussion in the *Hexaëmeron*. At the end of the *Itinerarium*, as we approach the final vision of God that is the whole journey, Bonaventure turns to the words of Dionysius to describe the ecstasy of the soul:

> Leave behind the world of the senses, and being unaware even of yourself, allow yourself to be drawn back into unity with that One who is above all essence and knowledge in as far as that is possible. Thus, leaving all things and freed from all things, in a total and absolute ecstasy of a pure mind,

[10] Zachary Hayes, *The Hidden Center: Spirituality and Speculative Christology in St. Bonaventure* (Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist, 1981), 12ff. The relevant passage in the *Hexaëmeron* is on page 79 of Hammond's translation.

[11] For example, J. A. Wayne Hellman, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology* (trans. J. M. Hammond [St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2001]), references it with great frequency.

transcending your self and all things, you shall rise up to the super-essential radiance of the divine darkness.[12]

Bonaventure will return to this same passage of Dionysius in *Hexaëmeron* 2.32. He says, "And this Dionysius teaches: to dismiss the sensible, the intellectual [. . .] and so, to enter into a ray of darkness."[13] But he goes on to clarify: "It is called darkness because understanding does not grasp it, and yet the soul is supremely enlightened."[14] He next glosses the Dionysian "supersubstantial Trinity," also quoted in *Itinerarium*,[15] as meaning, not that God is not substance, but that God is a substance beyond our understanding. The turning away of the eyes of the mind is glossed as referencing the intellectual eyes; but affectual eyes, that is, the eyes of wisdom, do attain the goal, and this is "the elevation of mental considerations."[16] As a result of all of this reinterpretation of Dionysius, the interpreter is left with a choice: either one must conclude that Bonaventure's position on this question has changed, or one must accept that the *Itinerarium*'s use of Dionysius is not as apophatic as it might seem at first glance.[17]

The *Hexaëmeron*'s function as an interpretive key is the reason why it occupies a position of such prominence in Bonaventure scholarship, and why this English translation, the first to be done with such scholarly rigor, is so important for the wider study of Bonaventure. For the very nature of the *Hexaëmeron* makes it well suited also to help the nonspecialist

[12] *Itin.* 7.5 (Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, trans. Zachary Hayes, The Works of St. Bonaventure 2 [St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2002], 137-39).

[13] *Hex*. 2.32 (Hammond, trans., 107).

[14] Ibid.

[15] *Itin.* 7.5 (Hayes, trans., 137).

[16] *Hex*. 2.32 (Hammond, trans., 108).

[17] Indeed, there is good internal evidence in the *Itinerarium* that it ought to be read in harmony with the *Hexaëmeron* rather than the other way around. See for example *Itin*. 7.1 (Hayes, trans., 133) where the mind having completed the six steps of the ascent is said to be "filled with the light of heavenly wisdom."

go deeper into Bonaventure's thought and make sense of a corpus that can appear to lack unity and that is not approachable with any single interpretive method.

II. Content

Now to say a word about the content of this book, which will also serve as a sketch of the way of doing theology that this book recommends and exemplifies.

The purpose of the project, as Bonaventure expresses it, is to show that "in Christ *are hidden all the treasures of God's wisdom and knowledge* (scientiae), and that [Christ] himself is the center (*medium*) of all the sciences (*scientiarum*)."[18] And yet the text as a whole is not organized around the centralities of Christ, but rather a sevenfold (or eightfold) vision of the understanding.[19] How are these related? In this way: What follows this claim in collation 1 is the reduction, in the sense of leading back, of all human knowledge to Christ. This was also the goal of one of Bonaventure's earliest works, the *Reduction of the Arts to Theology*.[20] But here there is a twist: Bonaventure will accomplish this reduction not by beginning with each science and showing how it teaches theological truths in all of its parts, as he did in the earlier text. Rather, he will examine the knowing faculty itself (*intelligentia*) in all of its possible states (some very common, such as the state of nature, and some very rare, such as when caught up in mystic ecstasy) across the seven (eight) visions, and will show how in each of these states Christ is central to the activity that is taking place. The goal, which becomes clearer as the text progresses, is for understanding to arrive at the eternal reasons. These, as would be familiar to Bonaventure's audience not only from the *Disputed Questions*

[18] *Hex*. 1.11 (Hammond, trans., 79).

[19] Bonaventure says that there is an eighth vision, corresponding to the resurrection of the body, which is a repeat of the first day (*Hex.* 3.31 [Hammond, trans., 126]).

[20] Bonaventure, *On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology*, trans. Zachary Hayes, The Works of St. Bonaventure 1 (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1996).

on the Knowledge of Christ[21] but even more so from Augustine's *83 Questions*[22] are not other than God, and ultimately are to be identified with Christ. What each vision aims at is the demonstration of a certain relation or path of the understanding to the eternal reasons, and therefore to Christ.

The project was intended to unfold across seven visions, each detailing what it looks like for the understanding to be in a particular state. These are the understanding: (1) endowed by nature, (2) elevated by faith, (3) instructed by Scripture, (4) elevated by contemplation, (5) enlightened by prophecy, (6) absorbed into God by rapture, and (7) at rest in glory. Bonaventure only completed the conferences on the first four of these.

A) The Understanding Endowed by Nature

The first vision is concerned with those things knowable by nature, which are reducible to three types of truths: the truth of things, the truth of words, and the truth of morals. These ground the nine philosophical sciences (metaphysics, mathematics, and physics [truth of things]; grammar, logic, and rhetoric [truth of words]; and ethics, industry [which includes wisdom, the arts, and prudence], and politics [truth of morals]). These all lead to a tenth science, promised by philosophy but never delivered: contemplation. Christ is central to each of these philosophical sciences. For example, Christ is central to metaphysics as the ground of essence, which references Christ under the concept of eternal generation. Accordingly, the highest thought of the metaphysician is exemplarity. It is when the metaphysician considers first being as exemplary that he or she is most truly a metaphysician;[23] and it is as the exemplary

[21] Bonaventure, *Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ,* trans. Zachary Hayes, The Works of St. Bonaventure 4 (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2005).

[22] Saint Augustine, *Eighty-Three Different Questions*, trans. David L. Mosher (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1982).

[23] *Hex*. 1.13 (Hammond, trans., 80).

expression of the Father and thus the mid-point of the Trinity that Christ is the metaphysical center, grounding our thinking about being in terms of emanation, exemplarity, and consummation.[24]

The analysis could be continued for each of the branches of philosophy. Even at this stage, however, the progression makes a few things clear. Bonaventure believes that human understanding in its natural state ought to be able to arrive at the contemplation of God as the first principle (Bonaventure's version of natural theology). Yet philosophy recognizes that to attain this tenth science the virtues are necessary. And so natural reason must be exercised in the exemplary and cardinal virtues. At this point it looks as if the text is progressing directly to understanding elevated by contemplation, and yet this is the fourth vision, not the second. The problem is that, because of the Fall, the virtues are not able to reach their end apart from grace. But the knowledge that the human soul is fallen (and the consequent knowledge that the affect must be healed and satisfaction made before the virtues can be truly exercised) cannot be reached by reason, but requires faith. Understanding endowed by nature thus naturally arrives at the second vision, understanding elevated by faith.

B) The Understanding Elevated by Faith

As the text transitions to the second vision, it becomes possible to see the nature of the project more clearly. Bonaventure declared at the outset that the goal of the project was to show how the treasures of all knowledge are hidden in Christ. The first vision seemed to be expansive enough to cover all of the topics of human knowing; will the second vision now show new topics of understanding not covered in the first?

Yes and no. On the one hand, in the twelve articles of the Creed we come to truths not available apart from faith. But the heart of Bonaventure's consideration is not the fact that there is a set of things that can only be known by faith. Rather, faith

[24] *Hex*. 1.17 (Hammond, trans., 83).

creates a different mode of knowledge by which the human mind returns to the topics considered in the first vision and sees them transformed. Thus the metaphysician, for example, is able through faith to see first being no longer as merely first in the *ratio* of origin, exemplar, and end, but as in fact Trinitarian. This deepens and corrects our understanding not just of first being but of all being, precisely because that highest thought of the metaphysician, exemplarity, is now understood in a robustly Christological (and therefore Trinitarian) way.

Both natural reason (first vision) and faith (second vision) then aid the understanding to rise to the eternal reasons that are the goal of all understanding, and the object (even if only indirectly) of every science. These two paths to the eternal reasons are tutored by the book of nature, by which sensible and intellectual creatures lead the mind on towards their eternal exemplar. However, while the highest of contemplatives such as Francis can read this book, in general it is unreadable due to the damage done by sin. Most of us need the book of Scripture, which not only teaches what we should have been able to read off of the book of nature, but also restores something of our ability to read the book of nature itself.

C) The Understanding Instructed by Scripture

The third vision, the longest of the four, shows how Scripture leads to the eternal reasons by means of spiritual senses, sacramental figures, and multiform theories. Most prominent here, however, is Bonaventure's theology of history.[25] This may

[25] The importance of the theology of history elaborated at this point in the *Hexaëmeron* is difficult to assess. In the wake of Ratzinger's *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure*, much has been made of it, to the point that it seems to be central to the plan of the *Hexaëmeron*. In support of this is the length of the section and its central location. But it was not meant to be located centrally: it is only positioned thus because the text is incomplete. And other reasons can be given for its length relative to the role it plays in the larger Bonaventurean project of this text. It is important to note as well that the greatest difference between the Delorme and Quaracchi texts occurs here,

seem strange, but it is key: it is an expression of the way in which Scripture, as a book given in concession to understandings darkened by the Fall, interprets and clarifies the world around us. As such, Scripture returns us to the topics of natural reason, but once again transformed, as a guide leading us back to the recognition of the eternal reasons in not only the things around us, but also the actions around us: "Hence sacred Scripture is illuminating (*illuminativa*) of all things and leading back (*reductiva*) [all things] into God, just as creation was at the beginning."[26] Thus the fruitfulness of natural vegetation is now seen to refer to the realities of grace,[27] not as if a new meaning were being added on, but as the inner meaning that natural reason, conditioned as it is by the Fall, is unable to attend to. This renewed vision of the objects of natural reason nourishes the intellect and the affect, which produces charity in the soul. Charity is then able to do the ordering, rectifying, and healing work that the virtues aim at, thus disposing the soul for contemplation.

D) The Understanding Elevated by Contemplation

In the fourth vision the human understanding is back on the track it was naturally created for (having been restored by faith and the Scriptures). Here the understanding has arrived at a contemplation that truly exceeds the other sciences, for here the objects of contemplation are the celestial hierarchy (both uncreated in the Trinity and created in the angels) and the earthly hierarchies that image it, namely, the Church and the hierarchized soul. As Bonaventure indicated in the first vision, all philosophy is pointed to this tenth science, contemplation, as its goal, but only after the intellect has been rectified can it reach this science, for "no one has this vision except the *person of*

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which certainly raises some questions. Even if we are to back away from the enthusiasm that has surrounded this topic in recent years, however, we must not pass over its significance, which is certainly signaled by the amount of space devoted to it.

[26] *Hex.* 13.13 (Hammond, trans., 241).

[27] E.g., *Hex.* 14.3 (Hammond, trans., 250-51).

desires, nor can one have it except through great desire."[28] This language is instructive: this same text[29] is mentioned at the beginning of the *Itinerarium* in describing the necessary condition for contemplation.[30] In that text, Bonaventure goes on to invite the reader to "groans of prayer through Christ crucified, through whose blood we are purged from the stain of our sins,"[31] for, he says, we are not to think that

> reading is sufficient without unction, speculation without devotion, investigation without admiration, circumspection without exultation, industry without piety, knowledge without charity, intelligence without humility, study without grace, the mirror without the inspiration of divine wisdom.[32]

The last pairing is critical: what all of these are pointing out is that, because of sin, the understanding endowed by nature is not sufficient for contemplation. Rather, it must be elevated by faith and instructed by Scripture: the "mirror" of nature is not sufficient without the "divine wisdom" of Scripture.

The fruit of this contemplation is four perfections: perfect worship of God, a perfect bond with God, perfect zeal for God, and a perfect sense of God. It is here that the soul is prepared for the fifth state, that of the understanding enlightened by prophecy, which would then prepare for the ecstasies of rapture and the final state of rest. These collations remained undelivered at the time of Bonaventure's death.

The *Hexaëmeron* therefore traces something of a journey of the mind to God, recapitulating and expanding upon that of the *Itinerarium*. But it is likewise something of a reduction of the arts to theology, as already mentioned. In a sense it completes these two texts, one from the beginning of Bonaventure's career

[28] *Hex*. 20.1 (Hammond, trans., 341).
[29] Dan 9:23.
[30] *Itin*. prol.3 (Hayes, trans., 39).
[31] *Itin*. prol.4 (Hayes, trans., 39).
[32] Ibid.

(the *Reduction*) and one from the decisive shift in his career from teaching at the university to running the Franciscan order (the *Itinerarium*).

III. Relevance

To finish situating this text in terms of its utility for contemporary discussion, I want to glance briefly at an argument concerning Thomas Aquinas and Hans Urs von Balthasar as a way of indicating how Bonaventure in general and this text in particular can contribute to such discussions.

David C. Schindler has argued that the relationship between the intellect and the affect is a complicated and potentially thorny one for Aquinas.[33] The question is which of these powers should take primacy in a Christian understanding of the soul. As Schindler sees it, the fact that the characteristic action of the will is love, while the characteristic action of the intellect is knowledge or wisdom, indicates that the will ought to be set above the intellect. And yet, the philosophical concern with this is that if love is above rationality, then it is a-rational or irrational, and the human heart cannot be known nor is it even intelligible.[34] On standard accounts, Aquinas affords the highest place to the intellect, while Balthasar affords it to love. Schindler's own contention is that this conventional reading of Aquinas is in fact simplistic, and that a more rigorous reading of Aquinas would turn up a doctrine much more in line with Balthasar.[35] My concern here is not to determine whether Schindler is right, or whether, if he is right, it would be a good thing for Aquinas. What is interesting is the nature of Schindler's proposed solution, which is to argue that knowledge is nonpossessive: the thing known does not belong to the knower, but rather the knower in some way belongs to the thing known. The intellect becomes all things not by reducing

[33] David C. Schindler, "Towards a Non-Possessive Concept of Knowledge: On the Relation Between Reason and Love in Aquinas and Balthasar," *Modern Theology* 22 (2006): 577-607.

[34] Ibid., 578-79.

[35] Ibid., 586.

them to itself, but by participating in the greater whole that is produced by the encounter between the intellect and the thing known (the *Gestalt*). If knowledge is thus ecstatic, then the fundamental movement of its characteristic act is formally similar to that of the will: it goes beyond itself in the moment of knowing.[36] This closes the gap between the intellect and will, which allows the will to be primary without therefore being irrational, for love aims at the greater truth to which the lesser truth at which knowledge aims must yield: "In the end, *the absolute supremacy of love is precisely what makes reason ultimate* because it is what allows reason to embrace the very totality that remains, even in the embrace, ever-greater than reason."[37]

Bonaventure has much to add to this discussion. His vision of the affect elevated in conjunction with the intellect is the project of the *Hexaëmeron*, which is concerned with the question of how to order the soul's faculties and activities. In pursuing the way in which all wisdom and knowledge are contained in Christ and referred back to him as their sevenfold center, this text traces a pathway by which we human creatures begin with our intellect maximized according to its natural capacity (the first vision), then proceed through the pedagogical restoration provided by faith (second vision) and the Scriptures (third vision) to the realm of contemplation (fourth vision). But in this journey, the understanding is being not only taught, but transformed. Understanding is in fact the path to deiformity, which is achieved as much as possible in this life in the sixth vision (rapture), advanced in the soul's pure vision apart from the body (seventh vision, glorified soul), and perfected in the eighth vision with the resurrection of the body. Understanding, then, is the ladder by which the soul will climb to God, and it issues in wisdom.[38]

[36] Ibid., 596.
[37] Ibid., 599.
[38] *Hex.* 3.1 (Hammond, trans., 111).

This is where the picture gets interesting. For wisdom requires not only understanding but also conformity to God: "When the soul (*anima*) has been made godlike (*deiformis*), Wisdom immediately enters into it. . . . Without sanctity a person is not wise."[39] This deiformity has as its corequisite longing: "The door to wisdom is a yearning (*concupiscentia*) and vehement desire (*desiderium*) for it."[40] This is starting to sound like the language of love. And indeed, at the beginning of the second conference, Bonaventure indicates a taxonomy of the illumination of the powers of the soul, in which he says that wisdom is a light that "makes the intellective [power] (*intellectivam*) beautiful, the affective [power] (*affectivam*) delightful, and the operative [power] robust."[41] The outcome of the longing that is the door to wisdom is pleasure, which corresponds to the perfection of the affective power.

Bonaventure ties wisdom and love even more closely together in what follows, arguing that the desire for wisdom generates the desire for discipline, which in its turn generates love—a love initially for virtue and the laws, but as these sanctify the person he or she is drawn away from love of anything that is not God.[42] It is at this point that a person acquires sanctity, and wisdom enters immediately, as was seen above, for "sanctity is the immediate disposition toward wisdom."[43] This wisdom is the highest good, and so must be loved and sought above all else.

This is, then, a form of the claim that love is to be ranked above understanding, but note what has been excluded: any competition between the will and the intellect. Such a competition can only happen in the disordered soul, in which the intellect has been elevated above its place. In the picture Bonaventure is painting, understanding as the path to deiformity is the necessary precondition for the love that is the highest act of the will. But after setting this out in the second

[39] *Hex.* 2.6 (Hammond, trans., 96).
[40] *Hex.* 2.2 (Hammond, trans., 94).
[41] *Hex.* 2.1 (Hammond, trans., 93).
[42] *Hex.* 2.3 (Hammond, trans., 94-95).
[43] *Hex.* 2.6 (Hammond, trans., 96).

conference, he spends the rest of the text talking about the understanding, laying to rest at multiple points the fear that somehow understanding is to be left behind in the ascent to love. Indeed, Bonaventure too knows of an ecstatic knowledge (it is likely from him that Balthasar learned it), and though this text does not arrive at the discussion of it, this is because of its incompletion rather than anything else: ecstatic knowledge would have been the content of the sixth vision.

In addition to his contribution to the discussion Schindler highlights, I think that what Bonaventure represents is a more authentically Christian response to the excessive rationalism of the Enlightenment and, more broadly, the Modern project than anything that takes postmodernism or Kierkegaard as its point of departure. There remains an anti-intellectual residue in all these latter approaches that never arrives at affirming the *intellectus* embraced within the *affectus*, but instead preferentially elevates the *affectus*. By contrast, an authentically Bonaventurean assessment of reason does not need to limit the scope of reason to make room for the *affectus*. Bonaventure has not left the intellect behind in favor of the *affectus*, but rather he argues that the last stages of intellectual ascent can only be effected by turning the reins over to the *affectus*. In a world still struggling with both the remnants of positivism (usually enmeshed in a popular scientism) and a distinct distrust of the rational, this seems to me to be an important resource.

IV. Assessment of the Translation

The final task is then the assessment of the translation as a translation: that is to say, given the importance of this text within Bonaventure scholarship and its relevance to broader theological and philosophical reflection, how useful is this particular, long-awaited translation?

In this regard, the news is generally good. This translation is executed with a high degree of accuracy informed by a rich understanding of Bonaventure's own peculiar and habitual use

of Latin: the translator's erudition in both the Bonaventurean corpus and medieval Franciscanism more generally have paid rich dividends here. One can approach this text with a great deal of confidence that one is encountering the doctrine of the Seraphic Doctor with minimal editorializing or interpretation.

However, there is room to desire a bit more in terms of readability. The text is sometimes choppy and inelegant. This is not entirely unintentional: Hammond desires to respect the fact that this text is the result of collation, and so in some respects resembles lecture notes more than a polished product. And yet I find that the translation at times exceeds the original in its lack of polish: this version of the text is simply not as fluidly readable as one would hope. Contributing to this is the adoption of the practice of inserting the Latin terms in parentheses and clarifying or interpretive words in square brackets, which breaks up the reading in such a way that the experience of reading the translation is not as fluid as the experience of reading the Latin. The former insertions, though helpful to the specialist, may hinder rather than assist the nonspecialist, who may not even be aware what is at stake in the distinction between *scientia* and *intelligentia*, for example. The latter insertions often lead to a misleading sense that the text is ambiguous where it is not, or, in a few cases, that it is not ambiguous where it is.

This is a minor point though, and one quickly gets into something of a flow when reading extended passages of the text. The greatest virtue of the text for those serious about the study of Bonaventure or of the *Hexaëmeron* is the running comparison with the Delorme edition of the text, which alerts the reader every time the two texts diverge, with sufficient context given from Delorme to allow the reader to form a quick judgment about whether that text ought to be consulted in more depth. This great labor respects the scholarly consensus that the *Opera omnia* version represents the more reliable version of the text, while also making the Delorme easily available for integration into discussion of the theology presented across these conferences. The volume is thus an indispensable and welcome addition to the study of Bonaventure's thought.

BOOK REVIEWS

Aristotle in Aquinas's Theology. Edited by GILLES EMERY, O.P., and MATTHEW LEVERING. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. $110.00. Pp. xviii + 261. ISBN: 978-0-19-874963-9 (hardcover).

As the editors of this very welcome volume note in their preface, resistance to—and sometimes flat rejection of—Aristotelian thought by Christian theologians goes back at least to Gregory of Nazianzus, who lamented Aristotle's "mean conception of Providence, his artificial system, his [supposedly] mortal view of the soul, and the human-centered nature of his teaching" (vii). In recent years, the same editors note, the school of thought known as the *nouvelle théologie* "found the regnant scholastic forms of theology to be dry and overly abstract" and "blamed much of this on the influence of Aristotle" (xi). This had an effect also upon interpreters of Thomas Aquinas, such as Marie-Dominique Chenu, who often sought to underplay the influence of Aristotle upon his thought. The ten authors of the chapters of this volume (who include the editors) do not overreact to this anti-Aristotelianism; they all acknowledge that the characteristic features of Christian theology cannot strictly be termed Aristotelian since those features are invariably bound up with the supernatural, while Aristotle's main focus was always upon the natural. Even still, however, they all also recognize that Aquinas's employment of Aristotelian concepts—logical, ethical, and metaphysical—allowed him to expound the truths of revealed theology (*sacra doctrina*) with unprecedented precision and insight.

The first chapter, by Gilles Emery, entitled "Central Aristotelian Themes in Aquinas's Trinitarian Theology," is especially useful for its depiction of the way in which Aristotelian concepts shape Thomas's elaboration of themes and ideas which are decidedly not Aristotelian. Emery speaks, for instance, of Aquinas's use of book 5 of *Metaphysics* in his account of the real relations within the Trinity. Aquinas rejects as inapplicable Aristotle's quantitative relations (two being greater than one, for instance) since God has no quantity; he finds useful, however, Aristotle's pairing of action and passion, even while he acknowledges that there is no real passivity in the Trinity. Emery also takes note of Aquinas's particularly subtle use of Aristotle's concept of the "individual." "The word 'individual' (*individuum*)," writes Emery, "is a 'name of intention' (second intention), that is, it does not signify the singular thing itself, but rather 'the

intention of singularity.'" The term "individual" thus refers to an accidental difference employed in order to indicate "an individual mode of existence"—that which is properly sought in this sector of Trinitarian theology. This move, suggests Emery, "allows Aquinas to locate the principle of distinction of the divine persons in the relations"—which of things in our world are similarly accidental features—"insofar as these relations denote a 'distinct mode of existence'" (10).

In the second chapter, "Aristotelianism and Angelology according to Aquinas," Serge-Thomas Bonino argues that, although Aquinas's angelology is more directly dependent upon *sacra doctrina*, he does make significant use of Aristotle's ideas regarding separate substances. He prefers Aristotle's approach to separate substances to Plato's because, although both recognize that immaterial substances are ultimately dependent upon God, Plato "is the victim of the illusion of an ontological-logical parallelism. He projects on the real what are in fact the elaborations of human thought (which is not a direct reflection of the ontological structures of reality)" (37). This indeed is Aristotle's basic criticism of Plato's theory of the Forms. Neither, however, does Aquinas embrace Aristotle's separate substances unreservedly, since Aristotle regards their action as always mediated by the heavenly bodies. Aquinas does not accept this latter thesis because he holds that certain sensible phenomena, such as demonic possession, must be attributed to certain separate substances directly and not by way of the movements of the stars (38). Bonino also discusses Aquinas's use of Avicenna in this regard, noting that the latter (like Aquinas) rejects the Aristotelian thesis that separate substances do not act immediately in this world (43). Aquinas, however, rejects the heretical idea found in Avicenna that the separate substances participate in the act of creation (ibid.).

The hylomorphism considered by Raymond Hain in the third chapter, "Aquinas and Aristotelian Hylomorphism," characterizes Aquinas's understanding of the human soul. The chapter begins with a convincing argument to the effect that the treatise on the soul found in questions 75-89 of the *Prima pars*, although it contains frequent references to Christian authorities, is essentially Aristotelian. The argument depends partially on the frequency with which Aquinas cites Aristotle in the *sed contra* passages of these eighty-nine articles, but also on the treatise's general structure, which mirrors closely the structure of Aristotle's *De anima*. Hain then argues (again, convincingly) that this Aristotelian-Thomistic approach is preferable to either an approach that looks solely to the matter in man or one that looks solely to the form. For the rest of the chapter, Hain enters into the problems that nonetheless confront the hylomorphistic account, primarily the problem of how to make sense of the state of the disembodied soul in a way compatible with Christianity, given the thesis which Aquinas finds in Aristotle that the separated intellect is without the passive "intellect" which is the subject of passions and so (before death) permits thoughts (see Aquinas's commentary on III *De anima*, lect. 4, ll. 229-49) and given too the Christian belief that the saints intercede for those on earth and

hear their prayers. Hain considers and discards a solution put forward by Eleonore Stump and puts forward one of his own, to the effect that the separated human souls retain "a certain set of potentialities" previously associated with their physical existence and that they can therefore "still be understood as importantly material beings" (68).

The fourth chapter, "Aristotle and the Mosaic Law," by Matthew Levering, is divided into two sections: the first considering question 100 of the *Prima secundae* (on the moral precepts of the Old Law), the second considering question 105 of the *Prima secundae* (on legal and political issues). In the first section, Levering points out that Aquinas uses remarks in book 5 of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* in order to explain how the Old Law pertains not just to relations with others but also to a subject's internal dispositions. Levering also discusses (among other things) Aquinas's use of Aristotle's concept of equity (or *epieikeia*), as set out in that same book, in order to draw, in a philosophically precise manner, the distinction between precepts that bind always and those that allow of exceptions (76). In the second section, Levering explains, for instance, how Aquinas uses Aristotle's position that "property should be in a certain sense common, but, as a general rule, private" (*Politics* 2.5.1263a26-7) in order to argue that the Jewish jubilee year does not abolish private property (81-82). Levering does maintain that Aquinas's use of Aristotle "at times obscures the Torah's own concerns by replacing them with the worldview of Aristotle" (90), but he also acknowledges that, in arguing that the Old Law is wise law, the philosophical tools provided by Aristotle serve Aquinas's purpose well (92).

In chapter 5, "Aristotle's Philosophy in Aquinas's Theology of Grace in the *Summa Theologiae*," Simon Francis Gaine considers the influence of Aristotle upon Aquinas's answers to a number of questions: Why is grace necessary? What is its essence? What are its cause and its effects? His consideration of the first question reveals the profundity of the Aristotelian influence. At one point Gaine writes: "Aquinas discerns a reason for the necessity of grace other than sin. It is the finite limitations that go with a created nature, even with the rational nature of an intellectual being" (100). Aquinas surely takes this idea from the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where Aristotle backs off his own concept of "perfect happiness" as a life of "self-sufficiency," "lacking in nothing" (*Nic. Ethic.* 1.7.1097b6-21; 10.7.1177b16-26), remarking that "such a life would be too high for man, for it is not in so far as he is man that he will live so but in so far as something divine is present in him" (*Nic. Ethic.* 10.7.1177b26-28). Gaine also refers a couple of times to a very striking argument in Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics* in which he says that in order to avoid the infinite regress of thought causing thought causing thought, we must posit a first mover. As Aristotle puts it: "The object of our search is this—what is the commencement of movement in the soul? The answer is clear: as in the universe, so in the soul, it is god [*theos*]" (*Eud. Ethic.* 7.2.1248a25-26). As Gaine acknowledges (103), Aquinas

cites this passage even in arguing that apart from grace man cannot do good in the fullest sense (see *STh* I-II, q. 109, a. 2, ad 1). Given all this Aristotelian influence even upon Aquinas's understanding of grace, one wonders how Gaine can say that Aquinas "never supposed that Aristotle had ever postulated even the possibility of divine grace" (95).

Guy Mansini's main concern in chapter 6, "Aristotle and Aquinas's Theology of Charity in the *Summa Theologiae*," is to show that, according to Aquinas, charity, man's graced relationship with God, corresponds analogically to friendship as understood by Aristotle, for whom friends intend the good of one another and share a common life oriented toward the same end. Mansini notes at one point that "St. Thomas never raises an objection to considering charity as friendship from the disproportion of the excellence or the inequality of the friends"—that is to say, the disproportion between man and God. What allows this to be the case is grace: "grace really does make natural for us what is proper to God" (129). This very close (although qualified) adherence to the Aristotelian definition of friendship among equals entails that charity is not, according to Mansini, friendship "only analogically." Charity, he says, is "supereminently analogically friendship"—which is to suggest that it is the same thing, only higher. Charity, he says, "is *friendlier* than all other friendships" (130). Mansini also notes that Aquinas maintains that we cannot speak of friendship within the Trinity. Were we to do so while sticking to the Aristotelian definition of friendship as existing between persons with distinct wills, the result would be a lack of unity among the divine persons. Says Mansini: "Charity is friendship with God. And God is love. But God is not friendship" (138).

The major part of chapter 7, "Aristotelian Doctrines in Aquinas's Treatment of Justice" by Christopher A. Franks is given over to a consideration of Aquinas's use of Aristotle with regard to private property. Franks opposes the approach of Joan Lockwood O'Donovan, who he says criticizes Aquinas for "opting for Aristotle over against a more Augustinian (and Christian) conviction that the regime of 'mine' and 'yours' is necessary only in light of human sin" (153). Franks maintains rather that, although Aquinas never really says that there was property in paradise, given what he says about the importance of order even there, he could have said this. But Franks, while recognizing Aquinas's debt to Aristotle in these regards, also recognizes a crucial difference. Whereas Aristotle regarded private property as the default position (*holōs*) and common property as the exception (see *Politics* 2.5.1263a26-27), Aquinas holds the inverse position (see *STh* II-II, q. 66, a. 2, ad 1). Still, Aquinas does regard private property as legitimate, probably, as Franks argues, because of worries about a too-Franciscan approach, which would regard property as a mark of imperfection. Aquinas holds that bishops, who normally own property, are not excluded from perfection (156).

Chapter 8, "Contemplation and Action in Aristotle and Aquinas," by Mary Catherine Sommers, is primarily about what she regards as a discrepancy between two passages in the *Secunda secundae*: question 182, article 1, where

Aquinas expounds Aristotle's eight reasons in favor of the contemplative life and maintains that the contemplative life is simply speaking better (*simpliciter melior*) than the active life, and question 188, article 6, where he says that an active life involving teaching and preaching and which "issues from the fullness of contemplation" is to be preferred to "simple contemplation" (*simplici contemplationi*). Sommers uses in support of the thesis that the latter passage is a "defection" (174) from the former one a passage from the *Tertia pars*: question 40, article 1, response to the second objection, which begins with a back reference to question 182 but concludes that the type of active life identified in question 188 is "more perfect than the life that only [*solum*] contemplates." Sommers maintains that, by drawing in this way from separate articles, Aquinas "is letting us know that he has changed his mind" (174). This general argument depends, however, upon Sommers's translation of the words *simpliciter melior* (in *STh* II-II, q. 182, a. 1; and *STh* III, q. 40, a. 1, ad 2) (168, 173) as "unconditionally better." Understood as "simply speaking better," Aquinas would be attaching a *condition* to his identification of the contemplative life as better: it is better considered on its own, independently of other activities that might issue from contemplation.

Corey L. Barnes's essay that constitutes chapter 9, "Aristotle in the *Summa Theologiae*'s Christology," both begins and ends with discussion of two articles: question 56, article 1 of the *Tertia pars*, where Aquinas argues that Christ's resurrection is the cause of the resurrection of all bodies, and question 1, article 8 of the *Prima pars*, where he asks whether sacred doctrine is "argumentative" (not, of course, in the pejorative sense). Although widely separated in terms of pages (and so time), the two articles are remarkably closely related. In between these "bookend" discussions, Barnes expounds three concepts with clear roots in Aristotelian thought: fittingness, *actiones sunt suppositorum*, and instrumentality. With regard to the first of these three, he explains how the concept of fittingness (or *convenientia*) gets Aquinas past the problem that an Aristotelian science is about necessities, while Christology is about contingent realities, subject not to necessity but to God's will. The second concept is derived more directly from Aristotle, that is, from the latter's remark that "actions and productions are all concerned with the individual" (*Metaphys.* 1.1.981a16-17). The third concept, instrumentality, Aquinas uses in order to describe, for instance, the relationship between the Father and Jesus of Nazareth. Aristotle's thesis that instruments are sometimes humans, endowed with reason and free will, allows Aquinas to avoid any suggestion that this is a relationship of necessity. When, toward the end of the chapter, Barnes comes back to the resurrection and to sacred doctrine as argumentative, he does an admirable job of showing how Aquinas intertwines Aristotelian methodology and the authority of Scripture, maintaining at one point that 1 Corinthians 15:12-20 qualifies formally as an Aristotelian demonstration (201-3). Barnes also identifies in the responses to the objections in question 56, article 1 of the

Tertia pars (the article about the resurrection) the influence of the previously expounded three Aristotelian concepts.

In chapter 10, "Aristotle in Aquinas's Sacramental Theology," John P. Yocum considers three basic areas in which Aquinas's use of Aristotle in his sacramental theology is either discernible or explicit: (1) sacraments as language, (2) sacraments as sensible signs, and (3) sacraments as involving causation. With regard to the first, Yocum cites as of primary interest Aristotle's remark in section 1 of *Peri hermeneias* (16a3-8) where he sets out the so-called "semantic triangle": vocal (and written) sounds, "passions of the soul" (by which phrase Aristotle means conceptions of the intellect), and things outside the mind. Yocum acknowledges too that important for both Aristotle and Aquinas is the social character of language, which idea he links to Aristotle's *Politics* (1.2.1253a9-18). Aquinas employs the semantic triangle in explaining both why the sacraments are valid even when presented in different languages (214), and also why a particular sacrament is tied to a particular sign, that is, the sign specified by the signifier, God (215-16). In speaking of these sensible signs themselves, Yocum explains (220) how Aquinas makes use of book 3, sections 1-5 of *De anima*, where Aristotle gives his account of how human knowledge depends upon the senses. In this regard, Yocum expounds also the argument of question 79, article 4 of the *Prima pars*. This exposition is rendered less clear, however, by his use of the English Dominican translation which in that article repeatedly translates the word *possibilis* (as in *intellectus possibilis*) as "passive." The chapter's final section contains an admirably detailed account of Aristotelian causation, although Yocum also notes that Aquinas "stretches the notion of what can be counted as a cause" (224) and makes use of Aristotelian causality "in an analogous way" (230).

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Aquinas's Way to God: The Proof in "De ente et essentia". By GAVEN KERR. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. xxi + 205. $78.00 (cloth). ISBN: 978-0-19-022480-6.

Gaven Kerr's *Aquinas's Way to God* is a book-length exposition and defense of the compact argument for God's existence that Aquinas presents in *De ente et essentia*. Such a book is much needed. Aquinas's argument is both a powerful theistic proof and crucial to a proper understanding of his conception of God, but it is little-known outside Thomistic circles. It also raises a number of tangled

metaphysical and interpretive questions. A work that carefully unpacks Aquinas's reasoning, and interacts along the way with both the Thomistic literature and relevant literature in contemporary analytic philosophy, is long overdue. Kerr's book provides exactly this. It is excellent and pleasing, and can be read with profit both by those already familiar with Aquinas and those coming to him for the first time.

What follows are summaries of each of Kerr's chapters, and then a few points of criticism. Chapter 1 is devoted to an analysis of the argumentation for the real distinction between essence and *esse* (a thing's being or existence) in chapter 4 of *De ente*. Commentators typically identify two stages of this argumentation. The first, sometimes called the *intellectus essentiae* argument, appeals to the circumstance that we can know a thing's essence without knowing whether or not it exists. The second stage argues that a thing whose essence is identical to its *esse* would necessarily be unique, so that for any type of thing of which there is or could be more than one instance, its essence and *esse* must be distinct.

Kerr rejects the view of Joseph Owens that Aquinas's argumentation for the real distinction *presupposes* God's existence, which would entail that it cannot be used as the basis for a *proof of* God's existence. Another point of disagreement among Thomists is whether the first or *intellectus essentiae* stage of argumentation constitutes a separate, stand-alone argument for the real distinction, or instead merely establishes a conceptual distinction as a preamble to the second stage's establishment of the real distinction. Kerr endorses the latter view. He also responds to a potential Aristotelian objection to the Thomistic argument for the real distinction, posed by David Twetten.

In chapter 2, Kerr provides an exposition of the Thomistic understanding of essence, showing how it builds on but modifies Aristotle's conception of form and matter. Whereas previous Aristotelians tended to identify essence with form, Aquinas takes the matter of a material object also to be part of its essence. Kerr also discusses how Thomistic essentialism differs from, and is superior to, the versions of essentialism debated in contemporary analytic philosophy (with their excessive reliance on the notion of possible worlds and tendency toward Platonism).

Chapter 3 gives an account of the Thomistic notion of *esse*. Kerr explains how, by making *esse* rather than form the fundamental principle of actuality, Aquinas goes beyond Aristotle, and that by taking a thing's existence to amount to participation in *esse* he takes on board a key Platonic notion. However, since participation is interpreted by Aquinas in causal terms and tied to the Aristotelian idea of the limitation of act by potency, the resulting view is neither Aristotelian full stop nor Platonic full stop, but distinctively Thomistic. Kerr also compares and contrasts Aquinas's understanding of *esse* with the accounts of existence associated with Meinong; with Frege, Russell, and Quine; and with more recent analytic philosophers like David Lewis and Nathan Salmon. Kerr

argues that each of these alternatives is deficient in various ways and that Aquinas's position is not only still defensible, but superior to them.

Aquinas's account of efficient causality is the subject of chapter 4. Kerr attributes to Aquinas a "causal principle" to the effect that a thing's properties are to be explained either as deriving from its own nature or as the effect of some external cause. He regards this as a variation of the principle of sufficient reason and explains how, for Aquinas, causation in general and the causation of *esse* in particular are to be understood as the actualization of potency.

Kerr considers two objections to Aquinas's position. The first asks why, even if we accept Aquinas's understanding of causation, we should rule out the possibility that some property of a thing might neither derive from its nature nor have any external cause. The second asks why we should accept Aquinas's understanding of causation in the first place, as opposed to an alternative account such as Hume's.

Kerr skillfully shows how developments in contemporary analytic philosophy can be deployed in defense of the Thomistic position. There are, for example, Elizabeth Anscombe and Barry Stroud's critiques of Humean skepticism about objective causal connections, and John McDowell's critique of the epistemology of "bald naturalism." If followed out consistently, the epistemological assumptions that underlie challenges to Aquinas's account of causation would undermine the possibility of our knowing any objective world at all.

Chapter 5 examines what Kerr calls Aquinas's "*per aliud* principle" to the effect that what exists only though another must be explained in terms of that which exists through itself. Also treated in the chapter is Aquinas's distinction between *per se* causal series and *per accidens* causal series, and his view that the former sort of series cannot regress to infinity. Kerr discusses the different views Thomists have taken about how the *per aliud* principle is related to the notion of the impossibility of infinite causal series. He argues that they are related in such a way that to establish the impossibility of an infinite regression of causes would suffice to establish the *per aliud* principle.

Kerr offers an illuminating analysis of the difference between *per accidens* and *per se* causal series in terms of their involving, respectively, either a one-one or one-many relation between members of the series. He also responds to the criticisms of Aquinas's appeal to *per se* causal series in arguing for God's existence that have been raised by philosophers like Anthony Kenny and Paul Edwards.

The focus of chapter 6 is on Aquinas's notion of God as *esse tantum* or pure being. Kerr addresses two main objections to Aquinas's account, the first being Kenny's critique of the notion of *esse tantum* as incoherent. Kerr argues that Kenny commits several errors. First, he begs the question by deploying against Aquinas a Fregean analysis of existence that Aquinas would reject. Second, he ignores the role the *per aliud* principle plays in Aquinas's inference to the existence of God as *esse tantum*. Third, Kenny falsely supposes that a real distinction between essence and *esse* would entail that essence and *esse* could

exist separately. Fourth, he overlooks the implications of Aquinas's distinction between *esse commune* (the participated *esse* common to all essence-*esse* composites) and *esse divinum* (the unparticipated *esse* that cannot be multiplied, which Aquinas attributes to God).

The second objection against the notion of *esse tantum* addressed by Kerr is the charge that it yields a conception of God that makes him too abstract to be the personal God of the Bible. One version of this charge is Alvin Plantinga's objection that Aquinas makes God out to be a kind of "property," an objection which, as Kerr argues, rests on misunderstandings of Aquinas's metaphysics. Kerr also endorses Etienne Gilson's famous view that the notion of *esse tantum* is the implicit "metaphysics of Exodus," the upshot of God's scriptural reference to himself as "I Am Who Am."

Finally, chapter 7 relates Aquinas's proof of God's existence in *De ente* to the notion of creation. Kerr explains, first, that contrary to what Stephen Hawking and some other scientists suppose, whether the universe was created does not necessarily have anything to do with whether it had a temporal beginning at the Big Bang. Aquinas did not think it could be established one way or the other via philosophical arguments whether the world had a beginning in time, but he still thought that it *can* be established via philosophical arguments that the world was created by God. An effect might depend on a cause even if neither effect nor cause had a beginning. For example, the moon's illumination would depend on the sun even if neither moon nor sun had come into being. Similarly, even if the universe had had no beginning in time, it would not follow that it need not have had a creator.

Second, Kerr explains that, for Aquinas, creation is not a matter of bringing about a change in some pre-existing subject, but rather is a matter of making it the case that any subject exists at all. This is the sense in which creation is *ex nihilo*. Creation essentially involves imparting *esse* to an essence that would otherwise be merely potential, rather than making a change to something already actual. A consequence of Aquinas's analysis of creation is that for God to create a thing and for him to sustain a thing in being are ultimately one and the same act.

Let me now move to some points of criticism. First, as I have said, Kerr's book can be read with profit both by Thomists and by newcomers to Aquinas. However, it seems to me that he could have made things at least a little easier for the latter. As my discussion so far has indicated, the book repeatedly uses untranslated technical expressions such as *esse*, *per aliud*, *esse tantum*, and so forth, and makes casual reference to Thomistic notions such as act and potency. There is nothing necessarily wrong with this procedure, and Kerr has good reason for it insofar as there are nuances in Aquinas's meaning that would not be conveyed by a simple translation of (for example) *esse* by "existence." Moreover, Kerr does explain what he means by these terms. Open-minded,

attentive, and patient readers who are not familiar with Aquinas's terminology will certainly be able to follow the discussion.

The trouble is just that there are also bound to be hostile, inattentive, and impatient readers who might not give the book a fair hearing or a full read because of the prevalence of such jargon, but who perhaps could have been persuaded to do so with a little more hand-holding. And since it is important to get the *De ente* argument a wider hearing in contemporary debates over theism, it seems to me that Thomists are well advised to do as much hand-holding as is reasonably possible. But this is not a major criticism.

A second, and also minor, criticism of the book is that Kerr's defense of the version of the principle of sufficient reason he attributes to Aquinas could, it seems to me, have gone further. Kerr seems content to rebut objections to the thesis, rather than to mount a more aggressive positive case for it. But one can, in my view anyway, make such a case by way of *reductio ad absurdum*. In particular, one can argue that any attempt to deny the principle of sufficient reason will lead the denier to contradict other things he wants to affirm. Thomists like Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange have developed versions of this strategy, and contemporary analytic philosophers like Alexander Pruss, Robert Koons, and Michael Della Rocca have presented arguments that bear a family resemblance to it. It might be that Kerr declined to pursue this issue further than he did because to do so would require going too far beyond the actual views of Aquinas himself, and the book is at the end of the day more about Aquinas's own argument than it is about Thomism or natural theology in general.

My main criticism of the book, and my only substantive disagreement with Kerr, concerns his treatment of the *intellectus essentiae* argument. In my opinion, Kerr is too quick to sell it short as a stand-alone argument for the real distinction between essence and *esse*. His main reservation is that to take the argument to establish a real rather than merely conceptual distinction would be to affirm a kind of inference from thought to reality of which Thomistic epistemology should make us suspicious.

However, I would submit that there is nothing in such an inference that entails a rationalist epistemology, or any other epistemological assumptions which ought to trouble a Thomist. To be sure, an inference from the concept of a thing to the real existence of the thing—after the fashion of Anselm's ontological argument—*would* be objectionable. But that is not what an *intellectus essentiae* argument for the real distinction between essence and *esse* involves. It merely involves an inference about what would be true of a thing *if* it exists. And there are other inferences of that sort to which Thomists do not object. For example, no Thomist denies that *a priori* reasoning can reveal the properties that a geometrical figure must have *if* it exists. Moreover, no Thomist would deny that we can know *a priori* that certain things *cannot* exist in reality, such as round squares. So why would an *intellectus essentiae* argument for the real distinction be any more objectionable a move from thought to reality than are these other sorts of inferences?

But no two Thomists are going to agree on everything, and we can only profit from Kerr's pressing this issue and forcing us to get clearer about it. Quibbles notwithstanding, Kerr's book is superb, and the work on which future commentators on the *De ente* argument will have to build.

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Commentary on Thomas Aquinas's "Treatise on Law". By J. BUDZISZEWSKI. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. xliii + 475. $78.79 (hard), $38.99 (paper). ISBN: 978-1-107-02939-2 (hard), 978-1-316-60932-3 (paper).

The title of this volume indicates precisely what it is: Budziszewski has produced a very detailed commentary on questions 90-97 of the *Prima secundae* of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*. After a 24-page introduction that gives background on Thomas, the *Summa* and its structure, and some basic issues in reading the "treatise on law," the author discusses each article in chunks that derive from the parts of the article, that is, the question (which is mistakenly referred to as the "*ultrum*" throughout), objections, *sed contra*, *respondeo*, and replies. For each of these he reprints the well-known translation by the English Dominican Fathers, accompanied by his own paraphrase, and follows this with his detailed comments, which sometimes run to several pages.

While the intended audience for the commentary is broad, Budziszewski emphasizes accessibility to "students, general readers, and other serious amateurs" (xxiii), and for this audience especially the book will be quite valuable. Among its strengths is the attention devoted to the objections given in each article—often passed over by students, but often crucial in understanding why Thomas gives the answer he does. Another strength is the serious attention given to Thomas's chosen authorities, especially patristic authors and Roman and canon lawyers, who are not only identified, but often quoted at greater length to show the context of the passages cited. The author also devotes sustained attention to scriptural references and quotations, providing a salutary reminder to anyone inclined to forget that Thomas was first and foremost a Christian theologian. The writing is clear, jargon-free, and often incorporates helpful images and analogies as well as schematic representations of arguments designed to make them maximally accessible to the uninitiated. All of this could also have the happy consequence of opening up the treatise especially to lawyers and law students.

The book to which this volume is probably most immediately comparable is the late Robert Henle's *The Treatise on Law* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), which incorporated the Latin text, along with Fr. Henle's own translation and commentary. That book included a much lengthier introduction discussing various aspects and themes of the treatise, also intended to acclimate beginning students. One can, however, find discussions of most of those themes distributed throughout Budziszewski's commentary. The main difference is that the commentary proper is much shorter in Henle, and Thomas's text takes up a lot more space on the page, so Budziszewski offers considerably more, and more detailed, commentary. While he opts to reprint an existing (still generally quite good) translation, his paraphrases give him the opportunity to correct some slips and to update by means of less literal representation some formulations that now seem less clear than they would have a century ago.

Because of the main audience for the commentary, interpretive debates among scholars are largely ignored. The effects of this policy choice are mixed. In some cases, large controversies about moral or legal theory are alluded to, but dispatched far too peremptorily (e.g., the relationship between morality and law [3-4]). This is also the case with the discussion of what seems an important ambiguity in Thomas's treatments of St. Paul's views about the Gentiles' knowledge of natural law in Romans 2:14 (78-79, 292), the vexed question of the derivation of normative conclusions from empirical premises (248-49), and the interchangeability of *ius naturale* and *lex naturalis* (267, 422). The issue is less Budziszewski's own conclusions about these matters (I find myself, at any rate, in agreement with him more often than not) than the helpfulness of these clipped treatments to his intended audience. In one case I think the problem is more serious, namely, on the issue of the character of the most basic precepts of the natural law (246-53). Here it is hard to see how an adequate treatment of a crucially important, but not altogether clear, point in Thomas could avoid some introduction and discussion of the various interpretive options debated by modern Thomists. And this would be entirely in the spirit of Thomas's own forms—the articles of the *Summa*, after all, are patterned after the form of the disputed question.

On the other hand, there are lengthy discussions of some issues that are clearly intended to make intelligible for contemporary readers—especially, one imagines, undergraduate students—what is frequently most mysterious and implausible to them. This often succeeds admirably, most importantly in the many pages devoted to the eternal law, a topic often given short-shrift by those concerned especially with questions of law and politics. Here there is no denying the importance of Thomas's doctrine of creation and the various ways that it informs his understanding of practical reasoning and the actual order of human communities. Budziszewski's discussion of this is clear and illuminating and presented in a maximally accessible way. This aspect of the book is

obviously the fruit of many years of classroom experience and valuable for precisely that reason.

In the discussion of human (positive) law, some contemporary examples or material from American legal cases and controversies are used to illustrate points in Thomas. This usually works well, but not always. In discussing article 6 of question 96, on whether one who is under the law may act beside the letter of the law, Budziszewski not unreasonably raises the issue of action on the basis of the inferred intention of the legislator against the strict letter of the law. He then offers as an illustration Justice David J. Brewer's Supreme Court opinion in *Church of the Holy Trinity v. the United States*, 143 U.S. 457 (1892), now viewed by many scholars and judges (most famously, the late Justice Antonin Scalia) as a mischievous invitation to judicial overreach (410-13).

Budziszewski's text is a little over 450 pages in length, but he and Cambridge University Press have made available on-line a *Companion to the Commentary*, typeset like the printed book and running to an additional 239 pages. This contains commentary on select articles of questions 100 (Thomas's important discussion of the Decalogue), 105 (with the important discussion of political regimes), and 106 (on the New Law), as well as extended discussions of themes from the earlier questions that are indicated in the printed text. Some of these discussions are quite extensive and tend to engage with rival views and cite scholarly literature more than the printed text does. Indeed, in some cases one wishes they could have been included in the printed text, especially for the benefit to students. One example is Budziszewski's discussion of the relationship between natural law and natural rights (*Companion*, 136-41), a very clear and sensible treatment of an often neuralgic point among Thomists. There are similarly useful and insightful discussions of virtue ethics and Thomas (*Companion*, 151-52), and of the nowadays vexed question of conscience and conscientious objection to positive laws (*Companion*, 189-200). The discussion of slavery, on the other hand (*Companion*, 160-66) seems a bit strained, perhaps by a somewhat overly apologetic intent. It would have been helpful to discuss the thought of some later Thomists like Francisco de Vitoria, and the debates about the Spanish conquest among Vitoria's successors.

On the whole this commentary is a valuable resource and appears at a good time. As the problems of contemporary politics increasingly lead people to look for alternatives from earlier in the tradition, it increasingly leads them to the thought of Thomas, which is not always as accessible as one would like. This work will help students and lay-readers to reacquire a way of thinking about morality, law, and politics that we greatly need.

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Hell and the Mercy of God. By ADRIAN J. REIMERS. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2017. Pp. xvi + 256. $34.95 (softcover). ISBN 978-0-8132-2940-9.

Can "a good God send anyone to hell?" (4). Demonstrating the plausibility of everlasting damnation, while also defending God's goodness and mercy, is the central task of Adrian Reimers's book. Its overall thrust can be taken from the first page of its Conclusion, where Reimers succinctly states what he has intended to demonstrate: that the "devil and his angels are real"; that we human beings "can be—and often are—genuinely wicked"; that although God did not plan for any human being to go to hell, he *did* create hell for Satan and the other angels "that rebelled against him"; and that God also created a place for human beings to be with himself, while those "who have rejected God's love have no place else to go but hell" (239). What is essential, Reimers believes, is that God's primary will for his creatures is love; thus, God seeks to save them, not to condemn them. What the author wishes to rule out is the notion of hell as externally imposed by a vengeful God, maintaining that God does not "deliberately inflict great pain on his enemies forever" (11). Reimers seeks rather to show that it is reasonable, and in accord with Scripture, to consider hell as the Devil's domain and the inevitable final abode of those who will not accept God's mercy. He thus defends damnation as a real possibility for those making the choice against accepting God's love. The topic is a timely one, the author asserts (no doubt, rightly), given that "we of the 21st-century are blind to the reality and gravity of this choice" (5).

Without striving "directly to engage the state of scholarly discussion" on its subject matter (xii), Reimers offers a breadth of considerations related to the book's central question. The tone is occasionally personal, as he admits, although there is never an appeal to subjective feeling in a way that is only privately applicable. Although not drawing from any particular sources extensively, his favored theological resources include Sacred Scripture, Thomas Aquinas, and Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II, while he draws on Aristotle and Plato when making certain philosophical points. A bibliography of works cited is included at the end of the book, along with a combined name/subject index. Thankfully, the book employs footnotes rather than endnotes. The book is not a painstaking argument for a thesis, but a set of philosophical and theological reflections attempting to offer a "logical and conceptually coherent" (xii) account supporting the plausibility of damnation as a real possibility, given an infinitely loving and merciful God. Reimers approaches the matter from several angles, as the following summary will illustrate.

Chapter 1, "The Fall of Satan," accounts, philosophically and theologically, for how Satan could have chosen to allow his beatitude to be provided by God, but instead, out of pride, chose to pursue whatever end he could reach on his own. Explaining how this choice against God is possible even for a superior, angelic intellect, Reimers then shows how Satan has set himself up as an

alternative to God, to ensnare us: "through his power to influence the formation of human knowledge and understanding, he can try to induce humans into participating in a realm or world of his own design" (38), showing himself to be aptly characterized in Scripture as a "'liar from the beginning'" (39, citing John 8:44). When one turns away from God's mercy, one will find oneself outside that mercy, with "no option but to enter the society of Satan" (41), bringing unending suffering.

"Original Sin and the Fall" are then addressed in chapter 2, which begins by contrasting human freedom with the will of Satan, which by a single irrevocable choice has been fixed in evil virtually from his beginning. It includes a discussion on how an angel could tempt a human being. Reimers sees this primarily as presenting men an alternative (misleading) "interpretive principle"—one that is a rival to God's interpretive principle, which is the truth of his love. The gospel stories of the final judgment (Matt 25:31-46), of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), and of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37) serve as examples in which the proper interpretive principle—God's love—is, by belief and by manner of life, accepted by some and rejected by others.

Chapter 3, "The Last Judgment," concerns what happens at that definitive encounter with God. Reimers contrasts what judgment is like for someone like St. Peter, who is imperfect but earnest, with the experience of the wicked soul, which has chosen the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16), without being able to sate any of these desires. He characterizes hell negatively as the state of separation from God, and positively as the state of satanic abuse and enmity. Reimers says there are three forms of suffering to deal with: pain, failure, and despair, the latter being most at work after the judgment, without any consolation of company for any relief. He presents the seven deadly sins as leading to such despair.

In chapter 4, "Resurrection and Final Judgment," Reimers rightly names bodily resurrection (rather than a merely spiritual life after death) as the central promise of the New Testament. He also offers a reflection on the last judgment, including judgment not only on individuals but on collectivities such as nations. This section includes a reflection on Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche, the "masters of suspicion," whose approaches, Reimers notes, are centered on an object of desire that corresponds (respectively) with the three classic kinds of (idolatrous) temptation: the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. "The Mystery of Iniquity" (chap. 5) explores especially the philosophical plausibility of how evil can be chosen, and how that choice tends to make one continue to choose evil. Reimers states that "the last judgment . . . is about separating the merciful from those who had chosen against love" (154). Chapter 6, "Hell on Earth," shows how truly monstrous human choices can be, focusing on how one bad choice is connected with another, orienting us toward either the kingdom of God or the kingdom of Satan.

Reimers explains "Damnation" (chap. 7) as an overall "turning away from one's authentic good and toward an idol," because "to turn away from truth is death for the intellectual being" (185). The rest of the chapter defends the possibility of intrinsically evil acts and mortal sin, explaining how a single act can blind human persons to the truth, leading them to make the kinds of choices that constitute a definitive, everlasting turning away from God that is damnation. The chapter includes a significant reflection on how the pains of hell are distinguished from pains of this earth (even the most extreme kinds).

Chapter 8, "The Fullness of Good," is a reflection on the question of the justice of God in the face of evil, suffering, sin, and death (theodicy). Unsurprisingly, Reimers does not claim to be able to explain fully why a good God allows extreme suffering and even damnation. However, he does provide some explanation of the plausibility of God's goodness despite the existence and/or prospect of such truly horrific fates. He also attempts to explain how those in heaven would not be distressed at the everlasting pain and suffering of the damned, since the latter have truly chosen—and deserve—that condition (although this can be difficult for us to understand).

On any given topic discussed in this book, a specialist is unlikely to find Reimer's treatment fully satisfactory. In most cases, this would not be due to any serious shortcoming on the part of the author; instead, it would be the result of the book's necessarily brief considerations of the many implications of the central question, which touches on so many topic areas (anthropology, angelology, theodicy, general resurrection, final judgment, etc.)—while maintaining a relatively moderate size. The merit of the book is as a collection of insights that help explain how damnation could present itself as a real possibility. Reimers's attention to the question of *how* evil can be definitively chosen—rather than focusing, for example, on the justice of everlasting punishment (although he certainly deals with that topic)—will provide a welcome perspective for those wishing to pursue ways to explain, rather than explain away, our own (very human) capability of choosing against God's love, which thereby leaves us vulnerable to the possibility of permanent exile from that love.

While the book is well edited and relatively free of faults, one particular shortcoming in drawing from Aquinas's work should be noted. In describing the conditions that apply to angels, Reimers considers the kind of duration that Aquinas associates with their existence: *aevum* or "aeviternity." He claims that Aquinas holds that aeviternity "has no beginning" (18). This is not a proper account of his usual use of this term; in fact, for Aquinas, *aevum* is typically employed as designating precisely the kind of duration that applies to that which has a beginning, but no end (such as the being of an angel). This problem does not end up vitiating Reimers's reflections; he calls Satan's original choice against God "aeviternal" (ibid.), which would correspond to Aquinas's appraisal (whom Reimers seems to be following). Nevertheless, a shortcoming such as this shows that the value of Reimers's reflections lies less in his testimony to the sources he

employs than in the coherence and persuasiveness that his own reflections offer, taken on their own terms.

Hell and the Mercy of God offers a wide-ranging reflection, both philosophical and theological, in defense of the possibility of eternal loss in Catholic thought—a worthwhile pursuit, to be sure, as the New Testament witness and the Church's interpretive tradition attest extensively to that possibility. Specialists, professors, and graduate students will want to review it for the breadth of related topics it broaches and for the arguments it presents, if only in introductory form. Being relatively free of technical terms (whether of philosophy or theology), it should be accessible to undergraduates and to those educated adults who have some familiarity with Western philosophy and with the Catholic theological tradition. Because the book does not attempt to engage extensively with historical or current scholarship on the topics it considers, it would likely not be suitable for use as a textbook for a course segment on damnation; nevertheless, it could be useful as ancillary reading in such a setting, for highlighting the many questions and considerations that arise from a thoughtful and faithful consideration of hell.

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Ecce Homo: On the Divine Unity of Christ. By AARON RICHES. Foreword by ROWAN WILLIAMS. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2016. Pp. xxi + 279. 978-0-8028-7231-9 (paper).

Modern Christology tends to suffer from a persistent and malignant inclination towards problematic dualisms ultimately aligned with Nestorianism. Such is the diagnosis underlying Aaron Riches's *Ecce Homo: On the Divine Unity of Christ*, and Riches prescribes as remedy a Christology of divine unity rooted in the insights of Cyril of Alexandria and further articulated by the councils of Chalcedon and Constantinople II and III. Riches's well-researched study is at once systematic, historical, and genealogical, though not always in equal measure. The book includes an Introduction, ten main chapters organized within three parts ("The Unity of Christ," "The Synergy of Christ," and "The Existence of Christ"), an eleventh chapter as a Coda ("The Communion of Jesus and Mary"), and a short Conclusion. Riches moves through thematic divisions mostly chronologically, investigating and reprising the fundamental tensions of Christological debates through the centuries.

The Introduction specifies the unity of Christ as the book's point of departure and notes that "to begin from the *unio* of humanity with the divine Son is to begin with a paradox" (5). Awareness of this paradox pervades the study and, for Riches, guards against the "false dualisms" inherent in Nestorianism and modernity, dualisms ultimately rooted in monism. The book's primary aim is combating these false dualisms through articulations of this paradoxical unity.

Part I ("The Unity of Christ") includes three chapters that leverage recent work in historical theology to distill basic systematic Christological principles. Chapter 1 ("Against Separation") details the Christological controversy ignited by Nestorius's rejection of the Marian title *Theotokos*. The chapter offers careful interpretations of Cyril of Alexandria's responses to and efforts against Nestorius, highlighting Cyril's insistence on the oneness of Christ as proclaimed at Nicaea. At issue in the debate between Cyril and Nestorius was the unity and singularity of subject in Christ. Nestorius, and before him Theodore of Mopsuestia, feared that ardent emphasis on this unity and singularity risks the distinction between divinity and humanity in a theologically untenable manner, while Cyril countered that failure to emphasize this unity and singularity undermines the truth of the incarnation and the offer of salvation it inaugurated.

Chapter 2 ("The Humanity of Christ") introduces the crucial concept of *communicatio idiomatum*, according to which "because of the union of divinity and humanity in Jesus, properties that are properly divine may be predicated of the man Jesus while properties that are properly human may be predicated of the divine person of the Son" (42). After clarifying that and how this does not entail a confusion of divinity and humanity, Riches guides a historical tour through the "concentric circles" of Nestorianism and Pelagianism in order to identify the shared underlying anthropological assumptions as well as how and why those assumptions appeal to modern advocates of a Christology "from below."

Chapter 3 ("Chalcedonian Orthodoxy") frames the famous Chalcedonian "Definition of the Faith" with initial consideration of Eutyches and his misunderstanding of Cyril's formula *mia physis*. Eutyches's attempted adherence to Cyril led him to profess a *tertium quid* rather than the hypostatic union by falsely correlating concrete union in hypostasis with the abstract identity of the natures united, an error that combated any problematic separation of the natures with an equally problematic and corrupting identity. Both errors represent inadequate responses to the crucifixion, responses addressed by Chalcedon's *Definitio*. Riches draws careful and critical attention to some modern tendencies in discussing Chalcedon. One tendency is to focus narrowly on the *précis* of the *Definitio*, a focus that excludes the traditional character and aims of the *Definitio* under the misguided assumption that it strives for a novel formula. Against this, Riches stresses Chalcedon's fundamental dedication to and continuation of Nicea and, even more

fundamentally, to apostolic teachings. Another tendency is to frame the Chalcedonian *Definitio* as a "clash between two internally coherent and disciplined Christological 'schools', that of Antioch, associated with Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius, and that of Alexandria, associated with Athanasius, Cyril and Dioscorus" (74). Against this Riches argues that for "the Council Fathers, Cyril did not represent one Christological 'option', much less a Christology bound to the style of a particular region; he was for them the representative of Catholic truth, of the Nicene orthodoxy defended by Athanasius, which they understood as the faith handed down from the apostles themselves" (79).

Part II ("The Synergy of Christ") begins with a chapter on "Mingling and Inversion" (chap. 4) that offers close readings and interpretations of Gregory of Nazianzus and Dionysius the Aeropagite with special attention devoted to expressions—such as Gregory's references to "mingling" in Christ and Dionysius's references to theandric activity/energy—occasionally viewed with suspicion from a perspective of Chalcedonian orthodoxy. Riches presents Gregory as "a fully Athanasian thinker for whom the existential unity of Christ is the ground of possibility of his human difference, and this is the Christological program he brought to the capital" (97). Prior to Chalcedon's *Definitio* the language of mingling did not signify any *tertium quid* but only the rejection of a separation between divinity and humanity that would undermine their paradoxical union. The second point for terminological clarification concerns Dionysius's reference to theandric activity/energy (whether "one" or "new" was debated) in Christ. Riches holds that the formulation of a "new theandric activity" "specifies the traditional doctrine of *communicatio idiomatum* as entailing an ontological inversion" (105). What Riches has in mind by "inversion" with respect to energy/activity is the basic notion that Christ performs divine works humanly and human works divinely. Employing the same interpretive strategy as Cyril's *mia physis*, Dionysius's affirmation of theandric activity indicates not a confusion of natures but rather their concrete union in one hypostasis.

The investigation resumes consideration of modern frameworks in chapter 5 ("Theopaschism"), beginning with Karl Barth's notion of *enhypostatos*. Riches sketches Barth's use of *enhypostatos* to present the foreground for Constantinople II (553), but a foreground that typically functions as background for modern readers in the wake of Barth's framing. Riches then turns to the historical background of Constantinople II and Emperor Justinian's desire for a conciliar response to or condemnation of the anti-Cyrillian "Three Chapters." Framed against the "Three Chapters," Constantinople II becomes a defense and extension of Cyril's single-subject Christology, culminating in the council's affirmation of a "compound hypostasis" in Christ. Riches notes that Constantinople II received a halting reception in the West, more for political than for theological reasons, until the Lateran Synod of 649.

The final chapter of part II (chap. 6, "Dyothelite Unity") traces the monenergist and monothelite controversies leading up to Constantinople III (680-81). Maximus the Confessor brought terminological precision to these politically and theologically fraught contestations, distinguishing *logos* and *tropos* as a useful scheme for articulating the "ontological inversions" treated by Dionysius. *Logos* signified a nature according to its defining principles, while *tropos* signified the concrete mode according to which a nature is actualized/realized. Jesus shared with humanity an identical nature according to *logos* while actualizing that nature according to a divine hypostatic mode (*tropos*). Based upon this specification, Maximus highlighted Christ's prayer at Gethsemane as revelatory of Christ's *tropos* insofar as it "realizes a new pattern of theandric synergy in the obedience of the Son's prayer" (142).

Part III, "The Existence of Christ," begins with a chapter devoted to "The Divine Essence" (chap. 7). Thomas Aquinas serves as chief source in no small measure due to his recovery of the conciliar and patristic sources shaping Christological orthodoxy, sources largely forgotten in western Europe prior to Aquinas. "Thomas's Christology," Riches remarks, "is truly a Latin work across the Great Schism" (156). Riches highlights Thomas's use of Constantinople II together with his interest in exploring the hypostatic unity and natural diversity in Christ through the category of *esse*, ultimately supporting the harmony of Thomas's typical emphasis on one *esse* in Christ and his allowance in *De unione* of an *esse secundarium*, a topic to which Riches returns in chapter 10.

Chapter 8 ("Theandric Action") addresses Thomas's use of Constantinople III, which "allowed Thomas to affirm the resistance of the human nature of Jesus to death in a way that was ontologically profound, while at the same time holding that this recoil from death is not in fact a sign of contrariety but rather suffered within a more fundamental synergy of the human will of Christ to accomplish the will of the Father" (180). Riches extends the treatment through Thomas's presentation of Christ's human nature as an instrument of divinity (*instrumentum divinitatis*) before turning to presentations of mission in Thomas, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Pope Benedict XVI.

The preceding chapters inform Riches's presentation of the passion in chapter 9 ("Union and Abandon"). Here Riches explores Thomas's intricate analysis of Christ's noetic and voluntary disposition with respect to the passion. Thomas presents Christ as *simul viator et comprehensor*, and this simultaneity allows Christ to experience in the passion both the *maximos dolores* and the *fruitio beata*. This follows from a correct appreciation of the hypostatic union, which "ensures both the *fruitio beata* and the *maximos dolores* in Jesus insofar as the former is the direct effect of union and the latter results from the perfect functioning of human nature, which is also an effect of the hypostatic union" (201-2). Riches finds modern criticisms of Jesus's enjoyment of the beatific vision seriously lacking, in part because they fundamentally misconstrue the meaning or reality of human nature and its relationship to and fulfillment in and through the hypostatic union.

Chapter 10 ("Son of Mary") begins with John Duns Scotus's approach to a Christological "perplexity," namely, how the Son can assume an individual human nature (i.e., human nature *in atomo*) without assuming a person. Scotus and Thomas, Riches stresses, take different points of departure in considering this perplexity. Scotus appeals to *haecceitas* as individuating principles postulated in addition to substantial forms such that the Son can assume a human nature individualized according to its own *haecceitas* without thereby assuming a person or hypostasis. Though Riches judges Scotus to have avoided Nestorianism with this formulation, he takes subsequent advocates of a *homo assumptus* position—for example, Déodat de Basly, Leon Seiller, and Jon Sobrino—as developing Scotus's insight in Nestorian directions. With respect to Sobrino, Riches argues "[p]rivileging the kingdom he preached over the person of Jesus is directly connected to the *homo assumptus* priority, which aims to account for *hic homo* in a manner that prescinds from the *person* of the Logos" (220).

Riches counters these versions of *homo assumptus* as well as the Scotist perplexity he diagnoses as its root with a Cyrillian response "rooted in Thomas's doctrine of the *secundarium esse*" (223). Building upon his earlier interpretation of *esse secundarium*, Riches presents it as serving some of the Christological functions Scotus intended *haecceitas* to serve. That is, "*haec natura* of Jesus, fully individuated and constituted by the Person of the Logos, is nevertheless *in atomo* only as a reality received from the Virgin of Nazareth" (224). The seventeenth-century Dominican Louis Chardon developed this ontological insight mystically by exploring the correspondence between Jesus and Mary. Chardon unfolds the depths of various Marian roles, including *Theotokos*, exemplar of adoptive filiation, origin of Christ's humanity, and receptacle of divine grace. This discussion continues in the Coda on "The Communion of Jesus and Mary" in chapter 11 ("The Weight of the Cross"). Again following Chardon, Riches argues that "[j]ust as the Spirit overshadowed Mary and made possible the hypostatic union in her, now by the Pentecostal outpouring made possible by the Cross, the Spirit overshadows the Church to form in her womb the mystical union of humanity with Christ" (240). The sum of this analysis is to offer a pneumatological reading of Mary as co-redemptrix.

The Conclusion nicely summarizes the work of the whole in the following comment: "Against the impossibility of being human 'without Christ,' the recovery of a Cyrillian doctrine of the Incarnation with its accompanying grammar of *communicatio idiomatum*, forged against the perennial temptation to Nestorian dualism, stands forth as a prolegomenon to a Christological humanism, to a theology of the *sequela Christi* after modernity" (249).

Riches's book constructs a Christological genealogy that blends historical and systematic considerations for clearly articulated dogmatic aims, formulating a compelling overall argument interwoven with a number of interesting and insightful reflections. Given the broad nature of its historical coverage and the

ambitions of its systematic analyses and proposals, the retrieval of premodern sources is of necessity selective but nonetheless effective. Riches provides extensive and useful historical and political context for patristic debates from the fourth to the seventh centuries while leveraging these contexts to demonstrate the fundamental theological implications of a Cyrillian Christology. With part III's turn to the medieval period, the breadth of engagement narrows by focusing on Aquinas and, to a far lesser extent, Scotus. There is a risk in this selectivity, but Riches takes some care to emphasize systematic concerns over historical framings, a move that facilitates both consideration of modern iterations of a *homo assumptus* Christology as well as mystical and ecclesial developments of Thomas's Christology in Chardon. In all, this is a learned, thoughtful, readable, rewarding, and creative exploration of perennial Christological questions and the importance of appropriately constructed rules of Christological discourse for a wide range of theological topics.

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Hope and Christian Ethics. By DAVID ELLIOT. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. xv + 264. $105.00 (cloth). ISBN: 978-1-107-15617-3.

Religion is the opium of the masses. So says the typical accusation laid against Christianity for promising happiness not in this life but in the next. Marx and other atheists—with their focus upon this world and this world only—claim that religion teaches the people to suffer injustice passively by providing them with the expectation that the miseries they endure now will be rewarded with happiness in the next life. More accurately, Marxism, not Christianity, is the opium of the masses. It has taught the people to endure horrible injustices under communism with the promise of some distant paradise on earth. Nevertheless, the accusation against Christianity is not without its sting.

Saint Paul extols the three great virtues of faith, hope, and charity. The greatest of these, of course, is charity, but faith and hope are still essential to the Christian life. Unfortunately, hope's emphasis upon seeking happiness in the next life—or seeking personal happiness at all—might be viewed as an unseemly wart upon Christianity. There may be a tendency, then, to hide hope in the closet, keeping silent about it.

In *Hope and Christian Ethics*, David Elliot unashamedly examines hope and proudly proclaims its majesty to all who will listen, revealing that hope is not an embarrassing secret of Christianity but one of its glories. It is the foundation

and the mainstay of love. A world without hope is also a world without love. Hope is the tether that keeps us united with God. Hope is the star to which we must look to fend off the despair lurking in our culture.

Elliot proposes to use Thomas Aquinas as his guide. He will traverse many waters uncharted by Aquinas, waters agitated by the Reformation and secular humanism, but he will always turn to Aquinas as his standard.

Elliot's project begins with what he labels the "eudaimonia gap," which is the sheer emptiness of worldly goods. Even true goods, such as human friendship, always leave us unsatisfied. The happiness that can be found in this life, what Aquinas calls imperfect happiness, is very imperfect indeed. Even secular thinkers recognize that, when all is said and done, the best human life will be left unsatisfied. And most human lives fall far short of the best. Christianity remains brutally realistic: there will be no earthly paradise. The utopian dreams of communism must be exposed for what they are. Paradise will not be found in this life, and it will not be achieved by human efforts. Only God can bestow such a gift.

Elliot is careful to eschew an overly negative condemnation of earthly goods. We should not despair of all happiness in this life, nor should we sanctimoniously disdain the goods of this life. The goods of this world are indeed good. We should seek and cherish friendship, families, and the well-being of others. While we pursue these goods, however, we must remain ever alert to their limitations. Whatever happiness we achieve in this life can only be partial, a small drop within the deep longing of the human heart. This realization should steer us clear of a kind of passive Christianity, which merely checks the box of Christian belief and then moves on indifferently to worldly pursuits.

For Aquinas, the eudaimonia gap, which is largely a consequence of sin, has been conquered by Christ, who offers us the transcendent good of life united with God. Elliot contrasts Aquinas's vision to Jürgen Moltmann's theology of revolutionary hope, which was one of the greatest influences upon a twentieth-century theology of hope. While Moltmann proclaims hope in a revolutionary utopia, which becomes available only to the politically empowered, Aquinas reveals a hope that trusts patiently in God, who is always able to save us from our suffering. Hope rests upon faith in the resurrection and upon the gift of grace, which elevates our nature to union and friendship with God.

For Aquinas, God is the object of hope in two ways. First, he is the good we seek to achieve, for we desire fulfillment in the vision of God. Second, he is the help we rely upon to attain the goal. Since the goal sought is difficult to attain—both because of our limited human nature and most especially because of our sinfulness—we must depend upon the help of God; we cannot reach the goal of our own accord. Too often, discussions of hope focus upon God as the final goal, to the exclusion of God as helper. In the bread-and-butter of hope lived daily, however, it is God as helper to which we must continually return.

Elliot rebuts Timothy Jackson's accusation that hope sullies love with self-interest. According to Jackson, love is pure only when pursued despite the tragedy of a life that ends with death, with no expectation of resurrection. Elliot points out, however, that to hope in the afterlife is to hope for the fulfillment of love. Friends want to be with one another, and the friends of God want to be with God forever. There is no taint in such love. Furthermore, through hope we desire that others share in this good, thereby allowing us to seek the greatest good for our friends.

In chapter 3, Elliott emphasizes the joy of hope. Hope endures many hardships but only by looking to the positive good to be attained. Hope's trust that fulfillment can be achieved provides joy even in this life. Without hope, the desire for perfect fulfillment, being limited to finite and limited goods, will veer into misguided ends. It might aim at a worldly utopia, but more often it will sink into the mindless pleasures of cable television. Without hope, life all too often seems meaningless. "If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (1 Cor 15:32). We drown ourselves in drugs, sex, and video games. We entertain ourselves to death. All the while, a quiet despair lies hidden at the heart of our lives.

All are familiar with despair as the opposite of hope, but we often forget about presumption, the further extreme that can look like hope but destroys it. Presumption comes in two forms, both of which underrate the difficulty of achieving the goal. On the one hand, self-sufficient presumption (as Elliott calls it), relies upon one's own strength, thinking that the goal can be achieved without divine help. On the other hand, overconfidence in God thinks the goal is not difficult because God hands it out with no regard to our behavior. God's mercy is proclaimed but his justice is forgotten.

Elliot finds a modern-day Pelagianism, with its self-sufficient presumption, in the thought of Jeffrey Stout, who endorses a kind of solidarity by which we can achieve our own salvation, which in the atheism of Stout is found in a political community. It is little surprise, however, that atheists should be self-reliant. One wishes that Elliot had focused upon the true temptation to Christians, a temptation to earn one's salvation through good works. Ever in the background for those seeking to lead a good life is the thought that God will reward them for the great job they are doing. Sometimes, we would almost prefer to forgo our salvation, rather than to receive it unearned from God. Success can be the greatest barrier to hope. Ironically, the Christian thrives in failure, through which he sees his own neediness.

Elliot's treatment of overconfident presumption also seems to miss the mark, by ignoring its chief proponent. Perhaps out of a desire for ecumenism, Elliott fails to mention that the major peddlers of overconfident presumption are found in certain brands of Protestantism, which proclaim salvation without works.

Despite this oversight, Elliot does a fine job of revealing how overconfident presumption has led to an easy-going Christianity that makes the life of the

Christian indistinguishable from that of the pagans that surround him. For this brand of Christianity, hell is empty, or nearly so. Repentance is unnecessary because sin is not really all that bad. Elliot also does an excellent job of underscoring the profound need for our own cooperation with God's work of salvation. And yes, the much misunderstood fear of God has an important role to play. Without it, hope slides into presumption.

While considering despair, in chapter 5, Elliot reminds us that the Christian life is not constant consolation but is often filled with desolation, sometimes triggered by the horror of one's own sinfulness. Hope can persist in these dark times. In order to have hope, we do not need to feel hope. Christ himself cried, "Why have you forsaken me?" But he subsequently said, "Into your hands I commend my spirit." Hope helps us to submit our life to God. One might wish that Elliot had done more to capture the sense of this desperate hope. The virtue of hope can be like clinging with one's fingernails to a sheer cliff.

With its focus upon a goal in the next life, hope can appear entirely ethereal, having no moorings in the world. Elliot dismisses this misconception. Merely seeking the goods of this world, such as food, clothing, and a home, does not count as worldliness, for these goods can legitimately be pursued, so long as they are referred to higher spiritual goods. The danger of worldliness is to pursue these goods as if they were self-sufficient, independent of spiritual goods.

Hope is often portrayed as making Christians apathetic concerning the fate of this world. Actually, worldliness—rather than hope—can make us apathetic with regard to the fate of others. We get so caught up in our own good that we dare not consider the needs of others. Hope frees us from this attachment, setting our hearts on spiritual goods, so that we are willing to part with the goods of this world. Far from being the opium of the masses, hope has provided the freedom from attachments that is necessary for the exceptional acts of charity found throughout Christian history.

The disordered pursuits of worldly goods lead to the vice of acedia, a distaste for spiritual goods, which in turn leads to despair. Elliot mistakenly supposes that this distaste means that the person no longer desires spiritual goods. Such a lack of desire would certainly be the absence of hope, but it would not be despair. The distaste arises because spiritual goods are difficult, and their difficulty is augmented by attachment to worldly goods, which must be sacrificed for the sake of spiritual goods. The more worldly one becomes, the more difficult the spiritual good appears to be, since it involves giving up a greater share of one's perceived good. The greatest remedy to despair, then, is found in the beatitude "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Those who are poor are aware of their own neediness, the very dependence that is the hallmark of hope.

In the final chapter, Elliot assures the reader that hope in the next world does not mean alienation from the present world. He uses Aquinas's hylomorphic union of body and soul, together with the virtue of piety, to tie hopeful souls to the earthly city. Human beings are not just souls, so they cannot

disengage from their bodily aspects, which include their interaction in a human community. Christianity is incarnational, so in its pursuit of spiritual goods, it does not abandon the human. Nevertheless, insists Elliot, the things of this world have value only insofar as they are ordered to the next, which is our ultimate end. We must never forget our true homeland. The goods of this world must not distract us from the beatific vision.

Throughout his treatment, Elliot calls upon vast resources of secondary literature, from Nietzsche and Jackson to Shakespeare, Orwell, and Lewis. He weaves these disparate sources into a unified discourse, written in an accessible and pleasing prose. By raising hope to our attention, he has done a great service. By providing clear and cogent explanations of the matters thus raised, he has done an even greater service.

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