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THE LEGAL AND THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF *SUMMA THEOLOGIAE* II-II, Q. 64, A. 7

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QUESTION 64, ARTICLE 7 of the *Secunda secundae* of Saint Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*, on "whether it is licit for someone to kill another in defending himself," has been the focus—or, at least, the starting point—of countless articles and books over the past several decades. Notwithstanding the great attention paid to the article, there remains much disagreement regarding how it is to be understood. The present essay proceeds on the assumption that understanding the intellectual context within which Thomas was writing—taking into account especially the works he cites in the article—enables us to come to reasonable conclusions regarding what he meant in making various points.

Offered first of all, in section I of the present essay, is a translation of the *corpus* of the article, followed by some brief remarks on the various parts (and subparts) of its argument. More extensive remarks upon this main argument will be found in subsequent sections, the initial concerns of which are typically the article's objections, Thomas's responses, and the authorities he cites. Section II considers objection 1 and ideas that Thomas found in St. Augustine's *Letter* 47 to Publicola. Section III considers objection 2 and ideas that he found in Augustine's *De libero arbitrio*. (This section is rather lengthy; but the discussed arguments from *De libero arbitrio*, which are complex and subtle, are extremely useful in understanding Thomas's own complex attitude toward self-defense.) Section IV moves away briefly from the article and considers what Thomas says about intention

earlier in the *Summa theologiae* and in a passage in the *Quaestiones disputatae De veritate*. Section V considers Thomas's responses to objections 1, 2, and 4 and what they tell us about the intention to defend oneself. Section VI, also rather lengthy, begins with a consideration of objection 3 and Thomas's response, in both of which what is at issue is whether a cleric can kill another in self-defense, as discussed in a letter written by Pope Innocent III. Close attention to this letter helps one to understand how Thomas regards licit self-defense as effected by a private individual and noncleric. Section VII considers the final part of the *corpus* of the article, where Thomas says that public officials might licitly intend to kill but adds that they ought not to be moved by personal animosity. It considers also objection 5 and Thomas's response, which also deal with personal animosity.

I. *STH* II-II, Q. 64, A. 7

The following is a fairly literal translation of our article, dividing it into parts and subparts for easy reference:[1]

{1a} Nothing prohibits there being two effects of a single act, only one of which is intended [*in intentione*], the other being beside the intention [*praeter intentionem*]. {1b} Moral acts, however, take their species with respect to what is intended, not from that which is beside the intention, since this is *per accidens*, as is made clear above.[2] {1c} So, from the act of someone who defends himself there can follow a double effect: one, the conservation of one's own life; the other, killing of the aggressor. {1d} Such an act, therefore, in so far as what is intended is the conservation of one's own life, does not have the character of the illicit, for it is natural to whatever thing to conserve itself in being as far as possible.

{2a} It is possible, however, for some act proceeding from a good intention to be rendered illicit, if it is not proportionate to the end. {2b} So, if someone

[1] Citations of the *Summa theologiae* refer to the Leonine edition: *Summa theologiae, cum commentariis Thomae de Vio Caietani ordinis Praedicatorum*, *Opera omnia*, vv. 4-12 (Rome: Ex typographia polyglotta S. C. de Propaganda Fidei, 1888-1906). The passage in question here comes from volume 9. At one point later in this article I refer to the Ottawa edition.

[2] Modern editions of the *Summa theologiae* direct readers to *STh* I-II, q. 72, a. 1 and II-II, q. 43, a. 3. On these two articles and their relationship with *STh* II-II, q. 64, a. 7, see Kevin L. Flannery, "Thomas Aquinas and the New Natural Law Theory on the Object of the Human Act," *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 13 (2013): 85-92.

in defending his own life uses more force than is called for, the act will be illicit. {2c} If, however, he should repel a force moderately, the defense will be lawful, for, according to law, it is licit "to repel force by force," provided it is "with the moderation of blameless self-protection." {2d} Nor is it necessary for salvation that a man omit an act of moderate self-protection so as to avoid the killing of another, since a man is more obliged to take care of one's own life than of the life of another.

{3} But because it is illicit to kill a man, unless by public authority for the common good, as was made clear above [*STh* II-II, q. 64, a. 3], it is illicit for a man to intend to kill a man in order to defend himself, except for one who has public authority, who, intending to kill a man in self-defense, refers this to the public good, as is apparent in the case of the soldier fighting against foes and of the minister of a judge fighting against a thief—although even these sin if they are moved by a private passion.

Part {1}—and in particular {1b}—certainly gives the impression that the dominant, even sole, factor in Thomas's analysis of self-defense will be intention.[3] It is important to understand, however, that, when he says that moral acts "take their species with respect to what is intended," his point is that, in his taxonomy of moral acts, whether a particular act belongs to a particular species depends upon what that act's object is and the context in which it is an object.[4] Thus, an act of private self-defense has as its object one's own life but presumes also a context, namely, an imminent threat to that life. That context also includes the fact that the person defending himself is not, in

[3] Authors who have emphasized the role of intention in *STh* II-II, q. 64, a. 7 would include the exponents of what has come to be called the "new natural-law theory." See Germain Grisez, "Toward a Consistent Natural-Law Ethics of Killing," *American Journal of Jurisprudence* 15 (1970): 64-96; John Finnis, "Intention and Side Effects," in idem, *Intention and Identity: Collected Essays,* vol. 2 (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 173-97; and Joseph Boyle, "'Praeter intentionem' in Aquinas," *The Thomist* 42 (1978): 649-65. Boyle acknowledges that the meaning of *praeter intentionem* (the expression used in {1b}) changes, depending on the context in which the expression appears (see ibid., 654-56). See also Gregory M. Reichberg, *Thomas Aquinas on War and Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 181-82. The present essay, in as much as the expression *praeter intentionem* enters into its argument, is interested simply in how it is used in *STh* II-II, q. 64, a. 7.

[4] See Kevin L. 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, especially 39-42.

that act, exercising public authority (see part {3}). Part {2} provides the legal basis for maintaining that private self-defense is licit. It also speaks about a way in which such an act might be rendered illicit.

That part {1} is about the species "private self-defense," and that {1b}'s point about intention has primarily to do with identifying this species, becomes apparent in part {3}, where Thomas says that someone who is exercising public authority *can* intend to kill a man in self-defense and do so morally. This latter is a different species of act: it has a similar object, but it is performed within a different context, one in which the self-defender has the proper authority and is acting within a context in which the exercise of that authority is appropriate.

II. The Augustine-Publicola exchange

The first objection in the article quotes a remark by Augustine in his *Letter* 47, responding to a certain Publicola, of whom little is known other than what can be gleaned from this exchange.[5] Thomas quotes a line in Augustine's letter which suggests that, unless the act is performed by someone with the proper public authority, the idea that killing in self-defense might be licit "does not sit well with" him (that is, Augustine).[6] And so, concludes the objection, killing in self-defense appears to be illicit.

Before getting to Thomas's response to this objection, it will be useful to know more about the exchange between Publicola and Augustine in general. Most of Publicola's letter has to do with relations with non-Christians, such as whether a Christian ought to honor an oath made by a "barbarian" (*barbarus*), but a couple of sections rise above such issues and ask questions that pertain to ethics itself (that is, to barbarians and Romans alike). In one such section (section 12), Publicola asks:

[5] Publicola's letter is letter 46 (Augustine, *S. Aureli Augustini, Hipponiensis Episcopi, Epistulae 31-123*, *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum* 34, part 2, ed. Alois Goldbacher [Prague: Tempsky, 1898], 123-29); Augustine's is letter 47 (*CSEL* 34/2:129-36).

[6] Augustine, *Letter* 47 (*CSEL* 34/2:135).

If a Christian realizes that he will be killed by a barbarian or a Roman, ought the Christian to kill them lest he be killed by them—or is it permitted, without killing them, to repulse them or fight them off, for it is said: "Do not resist evil"?[7]

There are a number of obscurities in this passage, which are important for understanding Augustine's response. The first has to do with the phrase translated as "ought [*debet*] the Christian to kill them." A few lines later, Publicola uses a similar expression in asking whether a Christian "ought [*debet*] to bathe" in waters where sacrifice is made to pagan idols. It is clear in both places that the question is not whether one is *obliged* to do these things but whether it is permissible, as when in colloquial English one might ask "whether he ought really to be doing those things."

The second obscurity has to do with the second part of the query, that is, whether it is "permitted, without killing them, to repulse them or fight them off, for it is said: 'Do not resist evil.'" At first glance this seems to be suggesting a more acceptable alternative—as if the author were asking, "Is it permissible to kill the assailant or must I limit myself to resisting him?" But that cannot be the idea, since the passage quoted from Scripture (Matt 5:39) itself speaks of—and apparently rejects—resisting evil. So, the pair of questions asked by Publicola is (1) whether one can kill an assailant (whether barbarian or Roman), and (2) whether one can even put up a fight.

Somewhere between the years 396 and 399, Augustine responded to Publicola. At the beginning of section 5 of that letter (*Letter* 47), he says the following:

[7] "Si christianus videat se a barbaro vel Romano velle interfici, debet eos ipse christianus interficere, ne ab illis interficiatur: vel si licet sine interfectione eos repellere vel impugnare, quia dictum est: Non resistere malo?" (Augustine, *Letter* 47 [*CSEL* 34/2:127]). The letter is written in not very classical Latin. According to Gordon Messing, the construction *velle interfici* is a circumlocution for the future tense. He references "the Rumanian periphrastic future" (Gordon M. Messing, review of Henry François Muller, *L'époque mérovingienne: Essai de synthèse de philologie et d'histoire*, in *Language* 23 [1947]: 297]. One manuscript, instead of "vel si licet" has "vel scilicet," which may be preferable.

(1) Regarding the killing of men lest someone be killed by them, the suggestion that it is licit does not sit well with me, unless perhaps the person is a soldier or obliged by virtue of a public function, so that he would not do this on his own behalf [*pro se*] but for others [*pro aliis*] or for the city [*pro civitate*] in which he finds himself, having acquired the proper authority, if it accords with his person. (2) Those, however, who are deterred [*repelluntur*] by way of some forewarning [*terrore*] lest they do some ill—for them it perhaps does some good. (3) As for the saying that we ought not to resist evil, this is said as a caution—lest vindication, which feeds the soul upon another's evil deed, delight us—and not in order that we might neglect to correct others.[8]

In the first sentence here (which is the only part of the quotation that appears in objection 1), Augustine says very little about private self-defense: most of it is about killing done by a duly appointed authority or functionary (what we might call "public killing"), of which he approves.[9] He does not say explicitly whether such killing is necessarily killing while under attack or whether it might be (or might also be) performed independently of such immediately impending circumstances; but, since the one person is a soldier and the other is said to be "obliged" (*teneatur*) to kill (that is, he fulfills his duty *by* killing), it is apparent that Augustine is allowing also what we might call "non-immediately" defensive killing at least by such persons. It is also significant that Augustine uses the preposition *pro* (plus the ablative) in his explanation of what these persons do. As we shall see below, Thomas associates that construction as used by

[8] "De occidendis hominibus ne ab eis quisque occidatur, non mihi placet consilium; nisi forte sit miles, aut publica functione teneatur, ut non pro se hoc faciat, sed pro aliis, vel pro civitate, ubi etiam ipse est, accepta legitima potestate, si eius congruit personae. Qui vero repelluntur aliquo terrore ne male faciant, etiam ipsis aliquid fortasse praestatur. Hinc autem dictum est, non resistamus malo, ne nos vindicta delectet, quae alieno malo animum pascit; non ut correctionem hominum negligamus" (Augustine, *Letter* 47 [*CSEL* 34/2:135]).

[9] On authority for killing, see Donald X. Burt, "To Kill or Let Live: Augustine on Killing the Innocent," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 58 (1984): 112-19. On killing in general, see Donald X. Burt, "Augustine on the Morality of Violence: Theoretical Issues and Applications," in *Congresso internazionale su S. Agostino nel XVI centenario della conversione: Roma, 15-20 settembre 1986* (Rome: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1987), 25-54. See also John M. Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 231-36.

Augustine with a certain type of act. It is relevant, therefore, to the argument of article 7 and, in particular, to the contrast between part {1} (in particular subpart {1d}) and part {3}. It would suggest that a soldier (for instance) might in *some* sense plan a defensive killing in advance of an attack, but that a private citizen might not.

As for private self-defense, Augustine does exclude it—although he does so rather tentatively ("the suggestion . . . does not sit well with me" [*non mihi placet consilium*]). Why the hesitation? It would seem that Augustine realizes that there is more to say—in particular about killing effected by a private person while under attack.

Immediately following the passage we have been considering (but still in section 5), Augustine considers a number of acts that are connected in various ways with an ensuing death. He mentions, for instance, the act of erecting around one's property a protective wall, which is subsequently somehow instrumental in another person's death.[10] He mentions also St. Paul's revealing to Claudius Lysius, the commander overseeing his imprisonment, that certain Jews were intending to kill him upon his being led out of the prison. This results in Paul's being transferred to Caesarea by a huge armed escort (Acts 23:12-35). (The suggestion is that he knew that some such protection would be provided.) Had those Jews fallen victim to this force, Augustine asks rhetorically, would Paul have considered himself culpable in the shedding of their blood? "God forbid that the things we do, or have, for the sake of that which is good and licit, if because of these things, beside our will [*praeter nostram voluntatem*], something bad should happen to someone, the latter should be imputed to us."[11] That phrase, "beside our will" (*praeter nostram*

[10] The text is uncertain at this point. Goldbacher, acknowledging a lacuna, gives: "Unde nec reus est mortis alienae, qui cum suae possessioni . . . murum circumduxerit, aliquis ex ipsorum usu percussus intereat" (Augustine, *Letter* 47 [*CSEL* 34/2:135]).

[11] "Absit, ut ea, quae propter bonum ac licitum facimus aut habemus, si quid per haec praeter nostram voluntatem cuiquam mali acciderit, nobis imputetur" (Augustine, *Letter* 47 [*CSEL* 34/2:135-36]).

voluntatem) is possibly at the back of Thomas's mind when he begins his analysis of self-defense in subpart {1a}: "Nothing prohibits there being two effects of a single act, only one of which is intended, the other being beside the intention [*praeter intentionem*]."[12]

A close examination, therefore, of the first sentence of section 5 of Augustine's *Letter* 47 reveals—or, at least, suggests—that Augustine has not excluded as immoral all efforts by a private person in defense of self. In the second sentence of that section—which Thomas does not quote in objection 1 but certainly knew—Augustine explains how the killing treated in the first sentence can be understood as done "for the city [*pro civitate*]": it can serve as a deterrence or "forewarning" to those who might consider performing similar criminal acts. The Latin word he uses, *terror*, has in English and in today's world an extremely negative connotation, but it is clear that Augustine holds that *terror*—that which causes fear—can be used to good purpose, that is, when it serves as a deterrent to other criminal acts.

The third sentence in section 5 has to do with Publicola's query regarding Matthew 3:39. Augustine reassures him that the verse is only about taking pleasure in vengeance. Bearing in mind Publicola's original query, Augustine is not necessarily speaking in this sentence about killing, but would include also resistance involving no killing or any intention to kill. He cautions against the possible concupiscence that might come of vengeance—although, he insists, preventing evil by means of fraternal correction is not only permissible but to be recommended. A caution against vengeance is found also at the very end of the *corpus* of this article, that is to say, in Thomas's remarks about

[12] Gregory Reichberg suggests that Augustine's expression is "very likely the source" of Thomas's expression (Reichberg, *Thomas Aquinas on War and Peace*, 188). But, as we shall see below (at n. 38), for Thomas in these matters the distinction between will and intention is important. It is also true that the type of acts that Augustine discusses just before using the expression *praeter nostram voluntatem* are quite different from the type of acts regarding which Thomas uses the expression *praeter intentionem*.

killing effected by a public official.[13] That caution is discussed below.

III. THE AUGUSTINE-EVODIUS EXCHANGE IN *DE LIBERO ARBITRIO*

In the second objection in article 7, Thomas again quotes Augustine, this time book 1 of his *De libero arbitrio*, written in 387-88, some years before the letter to Publicola. The objection is conceived, of course, as a problem for the thesis in favor of which Thomas will go on to argue in the body of the article, that is, that it is morally upright (sometimes) for someone to kill while defending himself. Thomas quotes Augustine as saying, "How in view of divine providence are they free from sin who, for these things which one ought to despise, are defiled by human bloodshed?"[14] Thomas goes on to explain that "these things which one ought to despise" are, according to the argument found in *De libero arbitrio*, those things that might be taken away from someone unwillingly (such as life in the body), as opposed to those things that cannot be taken away (such as one's virtue).[15]

In order to understand the words, "How in view of divine providence are they free from sin," one must read them within

[13] In his letter to Macedonius (*Letter* 153), while speaking about the liceity of various sorts of killing (including capital punishment but also defensive killing by a private citizen), Augustine, like Thomas, warns against "cupidity for injury" (*utrum fiat nocendi cupiditate*). See below, n. 21.

[14] "Quomodo apud divinam providentiam a peccato liberi sunt qui pro his rebus quas contemni oportet, humana caede polluti sunt?" (*STh* II-II, q. 64, a. 7, obj. 2). The words *pro his rebus* become important in Thomas's interpretation.

[15] Evodius (who expresses this opinion) is in fact not sure whether life itself can be taken away from one unwillingly, although he would agree that bodily life can be: "Regarding life, someone might perhaps have doubts since the soul is in no way taken away when this body is killed. But if it can be taken away, it is to be despised; if it cannot be, there is nothing to be feared" ("De vita enim fortasse cuipiam sit dubium, utrum animae nullo pacto auferatur, dum hoc corpus interimitur: sed si auferri potest, contemnenda est, si non potest, nihil metuendum") (Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 1.5.12 [ed. William M. Green, in *Sancti Aurelii Augustini: Contra academicos; De beata vita; De ordine; De magistro; De libero arbitrio*, ed. Klaus-Detlef Dauer and William M. Green, *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 29 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1970), 218]).

their proper context. *De libero arbitrio* is a dialogue between two characters in a fictional dialogue: Evodius and Augustine. The historical Evodius (of Uzalis) was a slightly younger colleague of Augustine; in *De libero arbitrio*, he is portrayed as a thoughtful man, whose ideas with respect to the issues discussed are not yet settled. Especially in the first book, the character of Augustine is portrayed as his intellectual superior; he interrogates Evodius in dialectical fashion, occasionally eliciting from him acknowledgment of his own ignorance.[16] The words quoted by Thomas in objection 2 are spoken by Evodius, although, as we shall see, in the larger passage of *De libero arbitrio* itself, Augustine (the character) indicates a certain degree of assent to what Evodius says. The key question is, to what exactly does Augustine assent? To answer this question, it is necessary to consider the yet larger context: in particular, what has transpired in the dialogue prior to Evodius's remark.

The most important chapters for our present purposes are chapters 4 and 5 of the first book. In chapter 4, Augustine in effect argues that evil desire does not fully explain the immorality of murder. Near the beginning of the chapter, the two interlocutors agree that the following is an instance of culpable murder: "Someone, not because of the desire to acquire something but fearing lest something evil befall him, kills a man."[17] The formulation is Augustine's. Although Evodius agrees that the act is immoral, he maintains also that the man who kills in order to live free from fear does so because he is dominated by desire. Augustine agrees, but points out that the desire to live free from fear can hardly be called evil and that it is possible, therefore, for an act that both of them agree is evil to be performed not because

[16] See Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 1.4.10 (*CCSL* 29:216), where, regarding the slave who plans the murder of his master, Evodius says: "It seems to me now that he was condemned unjustly—which I would not dare to say if I had something else to say" ["Iam mihi videtur iniuria iste damnari, quod quidem non auderem dicere, si aliud haberem quod dicerem"]. Within a few lines of this remark, Evodius reverses his position once again. In books 2 and 3, Evodius argues more confidently and challengingly.

[17] "A. 'Quid si ergo quispiam non cupiditate adipiscendae alicuius rei, sed metuens ne quid ei mali accidat, hominem occiderit? Num homicida iste non erit?' E. 'Erit quidem'" (Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 1.4.9 [*CCSL* 29:215]).

one is dominated by evil desire.[18] What Augustine says here corresponds to what Thomas says in {1d} of his *corpus*: that "it is natural to whatever thing to conserve itself in being as far as possible." But, like Evodius and Augustine, Thomas does recognize at the end of {3} that killing can be born of a disordered desire.

Just as important, however, as the remarks about desire is what is said about the nature of the act that Evodius and Augustine agree (at least initially) is immoral: someone's killing another because he fears a possible evil at the other's hands. At this point in the dialogue, it is not absolutely clear whether self-defense occurring *while* a person is being attacked would be included within the class of acts that the two are agreed are immoral. But Augustine soon makes it apparent that that is not the sort of act that he (in any case) has in mind; rather, he is concerned with an act in which a person kills another in order to avoid some evil that he believes will otherwise occur in the future. Augustine uses the example of a slave who kills his master "from whom he was fearing grave tortures." Even this, however, cannot be understood in an unqualified way, since he and Evodius also agree that when "a soldier kills an enemy or a judge (or his minister) kills a malefactor" the act is not immoral.[19] A soldier is

[18] "Proinde cogimur fateri esse homicidium, in quo nequeat malae illius cupiditatis dominatio reperiri" (ibid.).

[19] "Evodius: 'If 'homicide' is to kill a man, it can sometimes occur without sin. For a soldier who kills an enemy and a judge (or his minister) who kills a malefactor—or someone unwilling but imprudent from whom perhaps a missile escapes his control—do not appear to me to sin when they kill a man.' Augustine: 'I agree; but they are not usually called murderers. Tell me, therefore, whether he who kills his master, from whom he was fearing grave tortures, you would include among those who so kill someone but do not deserve be called murderers?' Evodius: 'I see that this case is quite different from those, for they were acting according to the laws—or, at least, not contrary to the laws; the crime, however, of this other no law approves" ("E. 'Si homicidium est hominem occidere, potest accidere aliquando sine peccato. Nam et miles hostem, et iudex vel minister eius nocentem, et cui forte invito atque imprudenti telum manu fugit, non mihi videntur peccare, cum hominem occidunt.' A. 'Assentior: sed homicidae isti appellari non solent. Responde itaque, utrum illum qui dominum occidit, a quo sibi metuebat cruciatus graves, in eorum numero habendum existimes, qui sic hominem occidunt, ut ne

sent out *in order* to kill enemies, and neither the judge nor his minister is immediately under attack by the malefactor they execute; and yet both Evodius and Augustine accept—and without argument—that neither of these acts is immoral. And so the act that Augustine (the character) holds is immoral is clearly the act of a private person who in some sense *plans* the death of another. This does not necessarily mean that any planning is excluded, such as, when an assailant is approaching, choosing a sword that is sharp rather than one that is dull; the crucial factor appears to be whether the threat is impending or not.

The case of private self-defense while being attacked does come into play in the fifth chapter of book 1 of *De libero arbitrio*, which Augustine begins by asking Evodius whether an "onrushing foe or stealthy assassin might, for the sake of one's life, one's liberty, or one's chastity, but without any passion, be killed."[20] Evodius, who cannot let go of the idea that the essence of sin lies somehow in passion, says that he simply cannot understand how individuals who take up the sword "for those things of which they can be deprived unwillingly" can be free from passion.[21] On the other hand, in the case of things of which one cannot be deprived unwillingly, why fight? Since this is to suggest that one ought not to defend oneself even when attacked, Augustine, adopting a tone of stunned disbelief, responds:

> So the law is not just which gives to a traveller the power to kill a highwayman lest he be killed by him or to any man or woman to kill, if possible, a violently onrushing rapist before being raped? For a soldier is even *ordered* by law to kill an enemy and, if he declines to effect this bloodshed [*caede*], a penalty is levied by the emperor. Are we to be so bold as to say that these laws are unjust—or,

homicidarum quidem nomine digni sint?' E. 'Longe ab eis istum differre video, nam illi vel ex legibus faciunt, vel non contra leges, hujus autem facinus nulla lex adprobat'") (Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 1.4.9 [*CCSL* 29:216]).

[20] "Prius enim mihi discutiendum videtur utrum vel hostis irruens, vel insidiator sicarius, sive pro vita, sive pro libertate, sive pro pudicitia, sine ulla interficiatur libidine" (Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 1.5.11 [*CCSL* 29:217]).

[21] "Quomodo possum arbitrari carere istos libidine, qui pro his rebus digladiantur, quas possunt amittere inviti?" (ibid.). Notice that here he uses the same phrase—*pro his rebus*—that Thomas uses in objection 2 and that he declares crucial in his responses to objections 1 and 2.

indeed, null and void? For it seems to me that a law which is not just is no law at all.[22]

The latter remark—that "a law which is not just is no law at all"—will become one of Augustine's most famous, attracting the special ire of legal positivists.[23] He is indicating—indeed, emphasizing—here in *De libero arbitrio* that killing while under attack is correctly regarded by positive law as acceptable.

It is apparent to Evodius that Augustine does not believe that the relevant law should be declared null, and so he waffles. Law, he suggests, is always imperfect, but it does the best that it can: "law is indulgent with respect to minor misdeeds, lest greater ones be committed."[24] In any case, even if a law is imperfect—whether in itself or because the legislator is imperfect—it can be discharged without passion.[25] Straying a bit from the logic of his

[22] "Non ergo lex iusta est, quae dat potestatem vel viatori, ut latronem, ne ab eo ipse occidatur, occidat, vel cuipiam viro aut feminae, ut violenter sibi stupratorem irruentem ante inlatum stuprum, si possit, interimat. Nam militi etiam iubetur lege, ut hostem necet, a qua caede si temperaverit, ab imperatore poenas luit. Num istas leges iniustas, vel potius nullas dicere audebimus? Nam mihi lex esse non videtur, quae iusta non fuerit" (Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 1.5.11 [*CCSL* 29:217]). We find something similar in Augustine's *Letter* 153 to Macedonius: "Nevertheless, even when a man is killed by a man, it makes a great difference whether he does this out of a desire to harm or to take something unjustly—such as might be done by an enemy or a thief—or rather he does this because of an order to punish or to obey, as from a judge or an executioner, or because of the necessity of evading or assisting, as when a bandit is killed by a traveller or an enemy by a soldier" ("Quamquam etiam cum homo ab homine occiditur, multum distet utrum fiat nocendi cupiditate, vel iniuste aliquid auferendi, sicut fit ab inimico, sicut a latrone; an ulciscendi vel obediendi ordine, sicut a iudice, sicut a carnifice; an evadendi vel subveniendi necessitate, sicut interimitur latro a viatore, hostis a milite") (Augustine, *S. Aureli Augustini, Hipponiensis Episcopi, Epistulae 124-84*, in *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum,* vol. 44, ed. Alois Goldbacher [Prague: Tempsky, 415]).

[23] See Kevin L. Flannery, *Acts amid Precepts: The Aristotelian Logical Structure of Thomas Aquinas's Moral Theory* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2001), 188.

[24] "Legem quidem satis video esse munitam contra huiuscemodi accusationem, quae in eo populo quem regit minoribus malefactis, ne maiora committerentur, dedit licentiam" (Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 1.5.12 [*CCSL* 29:217]).

[25] This idea, as we shall see, comes into Thomas's commentary on Romans 12. See below, at the end of section VII.

own argument (which is about those who defend their own lives, liberty, or chastity), he notes that "one can obey without passion that law which, in the interest of defending citizens, orders that a hostile force be repelled by the same force."[26] But then he comes back to those who kill while defending themselves:

> But I do not see how those men, by virtue of a blameless law, can be blameless, for the law does not compel them to kill but leaves it in their power. They are free not to kill anyone for those things of which they can be unwillingly deprived and which, for that reason, they ought not to love.[27]

Evodius concludes this part of his discourse with a remark regarding the assailants mentioned earlier by Augustine (that is, those who attack private persons): "And so I do not blame the law, which permits such individuals to be killed, but in what way I might defend those who kill, I cannot discover."[28] This elicits from Augustine the weary remark: "Much less can I discover why you are seeking a defense for men whom no law regards as guilty."[29] It is apparent here—and, indeed, throughout this first book of *De libero arbitrio*—that in deciding these matters Augustine regards law as fundamental. This is consistent with the approach adopted by Thomas, who, having first (in part {1}) spoken of that which is either intended or beside intention, in {2c} and {2d} has recourse to law: first positive, then natural.

At this point in *De libero arbitrio* Evodius makes a remark that attracts Augustine's particular interest; the second sentence of the remark is the piece quoted by Thomas in objection 2. To

[26] "Potest ergo illi legi, quae tuendorum civium causa vim hostilem eadem vi repelli iubet, sine libidine obtemperari" (Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 1.5.12 [*CCSL* 29:218]). As we shall see, language similar to the language used here—in particular, *vim hostilem eadem vi repelli*—reappears in {2c} of Thomas's *corpus*.

[27] "Sed illi homines lege inculpata quomodo inculpati queant esse non video; non enim lex eos cogit occidere, sed relinquit in potestate. Liberum eis itaque est neminem necare pro his rebus, quas inviti possunt amittere et ob hoc amare non debent" (Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 1.5.12 [*CCSL* 29:218]). Note once again the phrase *pro his rebus*.

[28] "Quapropter legem quidem non reprehendo, quae tales permittit interfici, sed quo pacto istos defendam qui interficiunt, non invenio" (ibid.).

[29] "Multo minus ego invenire possum, cur hominibus defensionem quaeras quos reos nulla lex tenet" (Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 1.5.13 [*CCSL* 29:218]).

Augustine's suggestion that those who simply defend themselves break no law, Evodius responds:

None of the laws, perhaps, that are manifest and read by men—for I do not know whether they might not be constrained by some other more forceful and most secret law, given that there is nothing that is not governed by divine providence. For how in view of it [divine providence] are they free from sin, who for these things which one ought to despise, are defiled by human bloodshed? So, it appears to me both that that law which is written in order to rule people rightly permits these things and that divine providence punishes them. The former takes on the task of punishing those things that are required in order to establish peace among ignorant men and as many such things as can be governed by man. But those other offenses have appropriate punishments from which, it seems to me, only wisdom can give freedom.[30]

In other words, according to Evodius, wisdom, which transcends "temporal law," preserves certain men from committing those acts, such as acts of private self-defense, which temporal law is incapable of preventing among the less enlightened.[31]

Augustine's reaction is positive but careful and complex:

I praise and approve of this, your distinction: although it is inchoate and less than perfect, still it is marked by faith and suggestive of things sublime. For it appears to you that that law which is adopted for the governing of cities concedes many things and leaves them unpunished—things that are avenged, however, by divine providence, and rightly so. Nor certainly is it the case that,

[30] "Nulla fortasse, sed earum legum quae apparent et ab hominibus leguntur; nam nescio, utrum non aliqua vehementiore ac secretissima lege teneantur, si nihil rerum est, quod non administret divina providentia. Quomodo enim apud eam sunt isti peccato liberi, qui *pro his rebus*, quas contemni oportet, humana caede polluti sint? Videtur ergo mihi et legem istam, quae populo regendo scribitur, recte ista permittere et divinam providentiam vindicare. Ea enim vindicanda sibi haec assumit, quae satis sint conciliandae paci hominibus imperitis et quanta possunt per hominem regi. Illae vero culpae alias poenas aptas habent, a quibus sola mihi videtur posse liberare sapientia" (Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 1.5.13 [*CCSL* 29:218-19]). Again, note the phrase *pro his rebus* (emphasis added).

[31] Augustine draws a distinction between temporal and eternal law at *De libero arbitrio* 1.6.14-15 (*CCSL* 29:219-20).

just because it does not do everything, the things that it does do are to be despised.[32]

Augustine clearly likes the idea that there is a law higher than temporal law: the "eternal law" that enjoins things not feasible for temporal law to enjoin.[33] And he does not reject outright what Evodius says about human bloodshed. On the other hand, he does not withdraw his earlier strong endorsement of temporal law, provided that it is just. What temporal law accomplishes, he insists, is not "to be despised." Indeed, he holds that all justice—and, in particular, the justice of the temporal law—is derived from eternal law.[34]

[32] "Laudo et probo istam, quamvis inchoatam minusque perfectam, tamen fidentem et sublimia quaedam petentem distinctionem tuam. Videtur enim tibi lex ista, quae regendis civitatibus fertur, multa concedere atque impunita relinquere, quae per divinam tamen providentiam vindicantur, et recte. Neque enim quia non omnia facit, ideo quae facit improbanda sunt" (Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 1.5.13 [*CCSL* 29:219]).

[33] Thomas likes this idea as well: see *STh* I-II, q. 96, a. 2, where he argues that it does not belong to human law to correct every vice. In the *sed contra* of this article, Thomas quotes the words that come immediately after the quotation in *STh* II-II, q. 64, a. 7, obj. 2 about those who are "defiled by human bloodshed"; that is, Thomas quotes Evodius's remark that "So, it appears to me both that that law which is written in order to rule people rightly permits these things and that divine providence punishes them" (Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 1.5.13 [*CCSL* 29:218]). (The sentence as quoted by Thomas is slightly different, but the differences are inconsequential.) The character of Augustine also speaks of the things that the temporal law does not regulate: "Sin is not punished when these things [i.e., things of which one can be deprived unwillingly] are loved but when through dishonesty they are taken away by others" ("Non autem ulciscitur peccatum cum amantur ista, sed cum aliis per improbitatem auferuntur") (Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 1.15.32 [*CCSL* 29:233]).

[34] You must hold, says Augustine to Evodius, that "those who are subservient to temporal law cannot be free from the eternal law, from which, as we said, all things that are just, or are justly modified, are derived" ("eos, qui temporali legi serviunt, non esse posse ab aeterna liberos, unde omnia quae iusta sunt, iusteque variantur exprimi diximus") (Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 1.15.31 [*CCSL* 29:232-33]). Augustine in fact holds that one cannot unwillingly be deprived of wisdom, which is equivalent to the eternal law. "Now nobody is secure in those goods which he can lose against his will. Nobody, however, loses truth, and especially wisdom, against his will, for it is not possible for anyone to be physically separated from it, but that which is called separation from truth and wisdom is a perverse will by which inferior things are delighted in. No one, however, *wills* anything unwillingly" ("Nemo autem securus est in iis bonis quae potest invitus amittere. Veritatem autem atque sapientiam nemo amittit invitus. Non enim locis

This brings us back finally to the "key question" asked above: In reacting (generally) positively to Evodius's remark, to what does Augustine assent? Important for answering this question is his endorsement of temporal law. What does he understand as being included in a (presumably just) temporal law? Clearly, the permissibility of both the killing done by a soldier and that done by a private individual—when, for instance, a highwayman or rapist attacks and the individual defends himself—for it is with respect to these types of killing that the character of Augustine asks whether we are "to be so bold as to say that these laws are unjust."[35] Excluded, however, from the temporal law is killing in order to prevent some future ill being done to one, as when the slave kills his master "from whom he was fearing grave tortures."[36] He and Evodius are agreed on this point; they would probably agree too that such killing is contrary to the eternal law.

IV. Intention according to Thomas's action theory

Before (in section V) looking directly at Thomas's response to objections 1 and 2 (and also at objection 4 and his response to that), it will be useful to go into what Thomas says about intention in his action theory, relating this material to what he says in the *corpus* of article 7 and also to the Augustinian ideas just presented. Regarding intention as understood in article 7, a frequently debated issue is whether the means used in self-defense described there are intended.[37] But before getting into that issue, it will be useful to say something about the word "means."

The phrase used by Thomas which is often translated as "means" is *ea quae sunt ad finem*: literally, "things that go toward the end" or "things that are for the end." Thomas, following

separari ab ea quisquam potest, sed ea, quae dicitur a veritate atque sapientia separatio, perversa voluntas est, qua inferiora diliguntur. Nemo autem vult aliquid nolens") (Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 2.14.37 [*CCSL* 29:262]).

[35] See above, n. 21.

[36] See above, n. 18.

[37] See Joseph Boyle, "'Praeter intentionem' in Aquinas," 651-54; but see also Reichberg, *Thomas Aquinas on War and Peace*, 174-82.

Aristotle, recognizes two ways in which someone can will to order things that are for an end, to the end.[38] One—which we more easily term "means"—occurs when, with one act, a person wills the end and, with another, wills that which is for the end; the other occurs when a person, with one act, wills both the end and that which is for the end. Thomas compares this second case to apprehending a principle and that which follows from it with a "single grasp" (*uno intuitu*). In this second case—that is, when a person, with one act, wills both the end and that which is for the end—Thomas says that it is true to say that the person wills to order the things that are for the end, to the end. So, in what immediately follows, when we use the phrase "things that are for the end" (or similar phrases), we mean to include also means that a person might seize upon "in a flash," that is, at the same time as he realizes that his life is threatened. We also, in subsequent sections, use the more common English term "means," understanding it as including also things that, in the thought process of the agent, are separate from the end they are for.

Let us now consider a passage in which Thomas explains the way in which things which are for the end are intended. In his response to the fourth objection in question 12, article 1 of the *Prima secundae*, he says that "intention is an act of the will with respect to an end"—although he immediately acknowledges that an act of the will might be with respect to an end in various ways, only one of which pertains to intention. The act of the will that is intention is that act which "considers the end as the terminus of something that is ordered toward it. We are not said to intend health simply because we *will* it but because we will to arrive at it through something else."[39]

[38] "Et tamen erit verum dicere quod velit ordinare ea quae sunt ad finem, in finem" (*STh* I, q. 19, a. 5). A few lines prior to this remark, Thomas speaks of apprehending a principle and a conclusion with a "single grasp": "uno intuitu apprehendens utrumque." On the concept of "things that are for the end," see David Wiggins, "Deliberation and Practical Reason," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society (1975-1976)* 76 (1976): 30-36.

[39] "Ad quartum dicendum quod intentio est actus voluntatis respectu finis. Sed voluntas respicit finem tripliciter. . . . Tertio modo consideratur finis secundum quod est terminus alicuius quod in ipsum ordinatur, et sic intentio respicit finem. Non enim solum

What we see here is that, in considering a particular action and posing questions about what is intended, the primary consideration is the end sought; that which is for the end is secondary—it could be something else—although it is what makes it to be the case that the end is intended and not just willed.

This is not to say, however, that in such an action that which is for the end cannot be said to be intended. In question 22, article 13 of the *Quaestiones disputatae De veritate*, Thomas argues that intention, since it is a "tending" from one point to another and so has extension, takes in both the end and that which is for the end. In this passage (as in *STh* I-II, q. 12, a. 1) he is concerned to show that intention is an act of the will, although, since determining upon a way to get to the end is a work of the intellect, the will as involved in intention has "left in it the impression of reason."

He continues:

> Since it is proper to reason to put things in order and to compare them, whenever there appears in an act of the will some comparison or ordering, such an act will be of the will not absolutely but in connection with reason. It is in this way that to intend is an act of the will, since to intend appears to be nothing other than, from that which someone wills, to tend toward something else as toward an end. And thus to intend differs from to will in this: that to will tends toward an end absolutely; but to intend speaks of [*dicit*] an order *towards* an end, according as the end is that toward which are ordered the things that are for the end.[40]

The advantage of this passage for our present purposes is that, while acknowledging (as in *STh* I-II, q. 12, a. 1, ad 4) that one

ex hoc intendere dicimur sanitatem, quia volumus eam, sed quia volumus ad eam per aliquid aliud pervenire" (*STh* I-II, q. 12, a. 1, ad 4].

[40] "Alium vero actum habet, qui competit ei secundum id quod ex impressione rationis relinquitur in voluntate. Cum enim proprium rationis sit ordinare et conferre, quandocumque in actu voluntatis apparet aliqua collatio vel ordinatio, talis actus erit voluntatis non absolute, sed in ordine ad rationem: et hoc modo intendere est actus voluntatis; cum intendere nihil aliud esse videatur quam ex eo quod quis vult, in aliud tendere sicut in finem. Et ita intendere in hoc differt a velle, quod velle tendit in finem absolute; sed intendere dicit ordinem in finem, secundum quod finis est in quem ordinantur ea quae sunt ad finem" (*De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 13).

who intends does intend the end (as to be arrived at "through something else"), it also acknowledges that intending encompasses the tending of the will—as receptive of an impression from reason—towards that which is for the end: "to intend appears to be nothing other than, from that which someone wills, to tend toward something else as toward an end."[41]

Interpreting the *corpus* of article 7 in light of what Thomas says in these other two passages, it is apparent that things done for an end can be described as intended. Indeed, given Thomas's Aristotelian understanding of things that are for an end, together with his understanding that intention of the end can be said to take in those things, there is little reason to deny that even in very hurried acts of private self-defense, that which is for the end can be described as intended.[42] That said, however, in the analysis of self-defense the primary concern must be, not whether that which is for the end is intended, but whether what is intended is the conservation of one's life rather than the death of the other person.

This leaves us with the crucial question: How does it happen that sometimes private self-defense has as its intention the conservation of one's life and at other times the killing of another person? This is determined, at least partially, by law, since law recognizes certain types of acts as legitimate self-defense and others as not so qualifying. The act of private self-defense that has as its intention the conservation of one's life is recognizable—

[41] See also *STh* I-II, q. 12, a. 4; and q. 13, a. 1. In the first, Thomas argues that (understood in a certain way) the intention of the end is the same act as the willing of that which is for the end; in the second, he talks about the way in which, when a means to an end is chosen, reason leaves an impression upon the activity of the will.

[42] In this regard, I agree with Reichberg (*Thomas Aquinas on War and Peace*, 177) and Steven A. Long ("A Brief Disquisition regarding the Nature of the Object of the Moral Act according to St. Thomas Aquinas," *The Thomist* 67 [2003]: 61). Gareth Matthews argues that Thomas would allow only killing in self-defense that one effects "unintentionally": "I could have killed him unintentionally. Not having a great deal of practice at stopping attackers by hitting them with rocks, I might not have been able to judge accurately how much force would be needed to stun but not kill my assailant" (Gareth B. Matthews, "Saint Thomas and the Principle of Double Effect," in *Aquinas's Moral Theory: Essays in Honor of Norman Kretzmann*, ed. Scott MacDonald and Eleonore Stump [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press], 68).

together with that which is for that end—in natural law and in such positive law as is in accordance with that part of the natural law. Fighting to conserve one's life, such as might involve a killing, and the conservation of one's life are of a piece. Such an act, stretching from the fighting to the conservation of one's life, follows an intelligible path whose type is already recognized within law. That, however, leaves open the question, what is it that alters an action from one in which the intention is to conserve one's life into one in which the intention is to kill? To answer that question, we return to article 7.

V. Thomas's Answers to Objections 1, 2, and 4

Thomas responds to objections 1 and 2—that is, the objection that quotes Augustine's letter to Publicola and the one that quotes his *De libero arbitrio*—with a single response. It runs as follows:

> Regarding the first objection, the authority of Augustine is to be understood as applying to that case in which someone intends to kill a man in order to free himself from death. It is with respect to this case also that the authority, introduced from *De libero arbitrio*, is understood. There significantly it is said, "for [*pro*] these things," by which is designated intention. And with this the response to the second objection is obvious.[43]

It is notable that in this response Thomas does not speak of Augustine but rather of Augustine's authority. Given that in *De libero arbitrio* the words in question are given to Evodius, Thomas's claim to Augustine's authority may seem implausible at first; but, when the passage quoted is understood within the larger context of *De libero arbitrio* itself, it makes good sense. As we have just seen, immediately after Evodius's remark, Augustine (the character) expresses a certain amount of agreement with

[43] "Ad primum ergo dicendum quod auctoritas Augustini intelligenda est in eo casu quo quis intendit occidere hominem ut seipsum a morte liberet. In quo etiam casu intelligitur auctoritas inducta ex libro *De libero arbitrio*. Unde signanter dicitur, pro his rebus, in quo designatur intentio. Et per hoc patet responsio ad secundum" (*STh* II-II, q. 64, a. 7, ad 1-2).

him. When one considers the array of types of acts that Augustine has already considered and his judgments in their regard, there is one type that Augustine would say is "not free from sin": that is, private self-defense that is in some sense planned.

The sense of "planned" that Thomas has in mind in his response is suggested by the way he describes the immoral intention. He speaks of one who intends to kill someone "in order to free himself from death" (*ut seipsum a morte liberet*). This does not seem to be the most apt description of what occurs when one is under attack and so kills someone; in such a situation, the phrase "in order to preserve one's life"—as in the *corpus* of the article, subparts {1c} and {1d}—is more accurate. But the action of the slave killing his master is accurately described as done "in order to free himself from" tortures. That appears to be the sense of intention that Thomas has in mind in this response. It is important, however, to bear in mind that it is not the fact that there is an intention to kill that *per se* makes such an act immoral. As Thomas states in part {3) of the *corpus*, a soldier or a public official can intend to kill and not sin at all. What makes a private person's intention to kill immoral is the fact that that intention pulls his act out of the pertinent path of legitimate self-defense.

That Thomas understands self-defense in this way is apparent in his answer to the fourth objection. That objection argues that it is not permissible to commit fornication or adultery for the conservation of one's life; but homicide (*homicidium*) is a more serious sin than fornication or adultery; therefore, it is not permissible to kill another in order to conserve one's life. Thomas replies that "an act of fornication or adultery is not ordered toward the conservation of one's life *from necessity*, as is an act from which sometimes there follows a homicide [*homicidium*]."[44] In question 18, article 7 of the *Prima secundae*, Thomas says similarly that the exterior act might be related to the end of the

[44] "Ad quartum dicendum quod actus fornicationis vel adulterii non ordinatur ad conservationem propriae vitae ex necessitate, sicut actus ex quo quandoque sequitur homicidium" (*STh* II-II, q. 64, a. 7, ad 4). On the translation of homicidium as 'homicide,' see below, note 47.

will—the end of the interior act—in two ways: "one way, as *per se* ordered to [that end], as 'to fight well' is *per se* ordered to victory; and, another way, '*per accidens*,' as 'receiving something belonging to another' is *per accidens* ordered to giving alms."

To take the first example, that is, committing fornication in order to conserve one's life, there are certainly other ways in which this might be effected. In this sense, it is similar to the slave killing his master so that he might avoid future tortures: that result might be obtained in a different manner—for instance, by going to the appropriate public authority or even by escaping somehow from service to that master. As Thomas says in his response to the fourth objection, there is no *necessary* connection between killing the master and living free from that fear. But when a person is attacked and needs to fight in order to conserve his life, that act has an intelligible structure already recognized by natural law. The act has this intelligible structure only if the agent is truly forced to defend himself.

Thomas also says in the *corpus*, subparts {2a} and {2b}, that the act of a private citizen undertaken in order to conserve his life must be "proportionate to" that end. "So," he says, "if someone in defending his own life uses more force than is called for [*maiori violentia quam oporteat*], the act will be illicit." What is proportionate to the end of conserving one's life depends upon what means are available. If one uses certainly lethal means when less certainly lethal means would save one's life—and one knows this—one does not leave the intelligible path of private self-defense. This case is not one of planning, as when the slave plans to kill his master. But added to that act is what Thomas calls elsewhere "a principal condition of the object repugnant to reason."[45] (We will discuss this added factor more extensively below.)

[45] *STh* I-II, q. 18, a. 10: "principalis conditio obiecti rationi repugnans." Thomas says in ad 3 of that article that "nothing prevents one moral act from being in plural—even disparate—moral species" ("non sit inconveniens quod unus actus moralis sit in pluribus speciebus moris etiam disparatis"). He then refers back to *STh* I-II, q. 18, a. 7, ad 1: "an action which according to its substance is in one species of nature can, according to

VI. Objection 3, Thomas's Response, and Innocent III on the Case of a Priest

Objection 3 reads as follows:

> Pope Nicholas says, and it is stated in the Decretals, "Regarding the clerics about whom you seek advice—that is, those who defending themselves kill a pagan—whether, having first been set right through penance, they might return to their original status or ascend to a higher one, be it known that we offer no opportunity, nor do we grant to them any license to kill any man in whatever way." But both clerics and laymen together are obliged to hold to the moral precepts; therefore, neither for laymen is it licit to kill someone in defending themselves.[46]

Nicholas was pope between 858 and 867 and was known for his vindication of genuine Christian morality, especially among the clergy.

Thomas's response is not immediately intelligible to modern readers:

> Irregularity is a consequence of an act of homicide [*actum homicidii*] even if it is without sin, as is apparent in the case of the judge who justly condemns someone to death. And for this reason a cleric, even if he kills [*interficiat*] someone while defending himself, is irregular even though he did not intend [*non intendat*] to kill but to defend himself.

In order to understand Thomas's position here, it is essential first of all to understand what he—together with the ecclesial/legal culture in which he lived—means by "irregularity." Irregularity itself is quite distinct from sin, although it is sometimes incurred as the result of sin. Elsewhere Thomas says this explicitly. An objection argues that no one ought to be

supervening moral conditions, be referred to two species" ["actus qui secundum substantiam suam est in una specie naturae, secundum conditiones morales supervenientes, ad duas species referri potest"). See also *STh* I-II, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3 (considered below).

[46] I translate here the objection as it appears in the Ottawa edition of the *Summa theologiae*. The canon cited can be found at Aemilius Ludovicus Richter and Aemilius Friedberg, eds., *Decretum Magistri Gratiani*, vol. 1 of *Corpus iuris canonici* (Leipzig: B. Tauchnitz, 1879), col. 179. Raymond of Peñafort cites this canon at Raymond of Peñafort and William of Rennes (=Ioannis de Friburgo), *Summa de casibus poenitentiae, cum glossis Ioannis de Friburgo* (Rome: Ioannis Tallinus, 1603), 153.

impeded from any sacrament because of an act of virtue. "But sometimes blood is shed for the sake of justice—for instance, by a judge; and, holding that office, he would sin if he did not shed it." Thomas responds: "Irregularity is not incurred only because of sin but principally because of the unsuitableness of the person to minister the sacrament of the Eucharist."[47] In the very next response, he speaks of self-defense, even morally justified self-defense: "Irregularity is also incurred without fault; and so even he, who in some case while defending himself does not sin committing a homicide, is nonetheless irregular."[48] In the *corpus* of the same *questiuncula*, he explains why this is: "because homicide is maximally contrary to peace and homicide is more conformed to those who killed Christ than to Christ killed."[49] We find similar reasoning in Pope Nicholas's letter, just after the part quoted by Thomas: he says that he will give to none of "Christ's soldiers" license to defend themselves other than in the way that Christ defended himself.[50]

It is apparent in what Thomas says in these various places—and in accordance with the legal authorities he cites—that he recognizes that natural law permits certain instances of killing in

[47] "irregularitas non incurritur propter peccatum tantum, sed principaliter propter ineptitudinem personae ad sacramentum Eucharistiae ministrandum" (IV *Sent.*, d. 25, q. 2, a. 2, qcla. 2, ad 2) (Thomas Aquinas, *Commentum in quatuor libros Sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi*, vol. 2, p. 2 [Parma: Typis Petri Fiaccadori, 1858], 909).

[48] "etiam sine culpa incurritur irregularitas; et ideo etiam ille qui se defendendo in aliquo casu non peccat homicidium committendo, nihilominus irregularis est" (IV *Sent.*, d. 25, q. 2, a. 2, qcla. 2, ad 3 [Parma ed., 909]). Translating *homicidium* as "homicide," given that what is referred to is not a sin or even a crime, seems incorrect; but just before this passage Thomas has acknowledged that killing a man accidentally is not to be called a homicide but simply a killing. As we shall see, he does think there is something disordered even about a sinless *homicidium*.

[49] "Et quia homicidium maxime contrariatur paci, et homicidae magis conformantur occidentibus Christum quam ipsi Christo occiso, cui omnes ministri praedicti sacramenti debent conformari" (IV *Sent.*, d. 25, q. 2, a. 2, qcla. 2 [Parma ed., 909]).

[50] "Non igitur licentiam damus militibus Christi aliter se defendere quam ipse in se monstravit Christus" (Nicholas I [Pope], "Nicolai I Papae Epistolae," in *Epistolarum*, vol. 6, *Karolini Aevi IV*, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* [Berlin: Weidmann, 1925], 661).

self-defense and also of capital punishment (as imposed according to justice by a judge), but also that he recognizes a sort of "supernatural law," binding in a special way upon clerics, whose sacramental role requires them to follow and to have followed Christ more closely in these regards.[51] This implicit reference to a higher law regarding killing reminds one of the passage we saw above in Augustine's *De libero arbitrio*, where the character Augustine, while upholding the positive law that permits killing in self-defense, does not reject Evodius's distinction between a law "which is written in order to rule people rightly" and another law that is according to "divine providence."

What Thomas says about irregularity is a help in understanding what he says in part {2} of the *corpus*, where he cautions against one who "uses more force than is called for." That part of the *corpus* concerns licit private killing in self-defense, and yet the legal document Thomas cites there has to do with a cleric who may have killed in self-defense and with whether he ought to be allowed to continue to function publicly as a cleric. This suggests that, for Thomas, even licit self-defense should reflect Christ's radical respect for life by reserving it to well-defined situations—and also not using more force than is called for. The example of Christ, which (presumably celibate) clerics are obliged to follow in the strictest sense, is not obligatory in natural law, which is binding for all, including those with responsibilities towards their families and the state. That said, however, respect

[51] Thomas says similar things in a more secular (and Aristotelian) context, where he distinguishes two "intentions" of the natural law. "Nothing prohibits something's being contrary to the first intention of nature without its being contrary to its second intention, just as every corruption and defect and growing old is—as is said in *De caelo*—contrary to nature since nature intends being and perfection, but is not contrary to nature according to the second intention of nature since, because nature cannot preserve being in one thing, it preserves it in another which is generated from the corruption of the first" (IV *Sent.*, d. 36, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2 [Parma ed., 994]). The reference to *De caelo* is to 2.6.288b12-16. On Thomas's use of the Aristotelian distinction (and its possible contemporary applications) see Kevin L. Flannery, "Moral Taxonomy and Moral Absolutes," in *Wisdom's Apprentice: Thomistic Essays in Honor of Lawrence Dewan, O.P.*, ed. Peter A. Kwasniewski (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 237-59; and Kevin L. Flannery, "Capital Punishment and the Law," *Ave Maria Law Review* 5 (2008): 399-427.

for human life should so inform the character of a good Christian—or, for that matter, the character of any human being—that he would be disinclined to use possibly lethal means except when necessary, or ever to use more force than is called for, or to embrace such an occasion as an opportunity to exact personal vengeance.

So then, immediately after saying (at {2b}) that the use of more force than is called for makes the act of private self-defense illicit, Thomas says that, if the person "should repel a force moderately, the defense will be lawful, for, according to law, 'it is licit to repel force by force, provided it is 'with the moderation of blameless self-protection.'" The phrases "to repel force by force" (*vim vi repellere*) and "with the moderation of blameless self-protection" (*cum moderamine inculpatae tutelae*) are both taken from a canon in Gregory IX's *Decretals*.[52] The canon in question quotes at length a missive, sent by Pope Innocent III in the early thirteenth century to an abbot in Germany, in which he identifies the various factors and principles the latter should bear in mind in determining whether, in a particular case, a priest should be considered a killer (*homicida*) and, therefore, barred

[52] *Decretal. Gregor. IX* 5.12.18, in Aemilius Ludovicus Richter and Aemilius Friedberg, eds., *Decretalium Collectiones*, vol. 2 of *Corpus iuris canonici* (Leipzig: B. Tauchnitz, 1881), col. 800-801. On the more distant origins of these phrases, see Stephan Kuttner, *Kanonistische Schuldlehre von Gratian bis auf die Dekretalen Gregors IX: Systematisch auf Grund der handschriftlichen Quellen dargestellt*, Studi e testi 64 (Vatican City: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1935), 336-43. The two phrases (*vim vi repellere* and *cum moderamine inculpatae tutelae*) have different origins. It is possible but unlikely that Thomas just happened to join the two phrases that Innocent III joins in his letter. There can be no doubt that Thomas knew the *Decretals* (where the letter is found); they were compiled by his religious superior Raymond of Peñafort. He wrote an *expositio* of the first two decretals (*Expositio super primam et secundam Decretalem ad archidiaconum Tudertinum*, in *Opera omnia* 40, part E [Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1968]). In *STh* II-II, q. 64, a. 7, he makes reference to the *iura* ("nam secundum iura, vim vi repellere licet cum moderamine inculpatae tutelae"); in the quodlibetal questions, he uses the term "iura" in referring to Gregory IX's *Decretals* (*Quodl*. IX, q. 7, a. 2, in *Opera Omnia* 25/1 [Rome: Commisssio Leonina; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1996]). The reference is to Decretal. Gregor. IX 3.5.18 (Richter and Friedberg, eds., *Decretalium Collectiones*, col. 471).

from celebrating the sacraments. Somewhat paradoxically, it is a canon in which is delineated the sort of action that *would* create irregularity in which is delineated most clearly the sort of action that is *not* excluded according to natural law. But, to repeat, this suggests that, given canon law's high regard for restraint even to the point of nonresistance, legitimate self-defense should be characterized by prudent—even cautious—moderation.

Addressing the abbot in the second person—the opening word (and title) of the canon is *Significasti*—Innocent first recalls briefly what he has heard from the abbot. He recounts, that is, that when a certain malefactor (*maleficus*), having entered a church, proceeded to carry away the Eucharist as well as altar ornaments and liturgical books, a priest (and canon regular) named Laurentius

> struck the aforesaid son of iniquity with a hoe [*fossorio*] he had grabbed. But whether such a blow was mortal both you and he [that is, the abbot and the priest] are entirely ignorant: the parishioners of the church, seeing the man carrying off the ornaments of the church, having grabbed swords and clubs, killed him instantly on that very spot.[53]

Innocent goes on to mention a couple of other, related canons, which would not have appeared in the edition of the *Decretals* from which Thomas was reading, and so he may not have known them.[54] Still, whether he knew them or not, they are relevant to the present argument, since they tell us something about the legal context within which he was operating. One of the canons concerns cases in which "four or five or more men" get into a brawl with one man and he is wounded by them. In such an event,

[53] "praefatum iniquitatis filium fossorio arrepto percussit. Sed, si ad mortem fuit ictus huiusmodi, tu et ipse penitus ignoratis; quem parochiani ecclesiae videntes ornamenta ecclesiae asportantem, arreptis gladiis et fustibus in eodem loco protinus occiderunt."

[54] The section of Innocent's letter describing these cases ("Praefatus vero Laurentius . . . non habuit occidendi") is included in the most authoritative edition of the *Decretals*, although the editor (Aemilius Friedberg) indicates that they did not appear in Raymond of Peñafort's original. See Richter and Friedberg, eds., *Decretalium Collectiones*, col. xlv-xlvi. The first canon comes out of the Council of Vermerias (see Richter and Friedberg, eds., *Decretum Magistri Gratiani*, col. 965); the other originates with Pope Nicholas I (see ibid., col. 194-95).

according to the canon, anyone who has struck a blow is to be considered a killer. The other canon comes from another letter by Nicholas I and concerns a priest who strikes a deacon who is on horseback; the deacon falls from the horse and dies, his skull crushed. According to the canon, if (*quod si*) the blow was not a mortal blow, a penance should be imposed upon the priest, who has acted incautiously (*incaute*); that is, he should be suspended for a time from the celebration of Mass. "But if the deacon has truly been killed *by* any such blow of the priest, in this case, for no reason is he to be permitted to minister as a priest, even if he had no intention [*voluntatem*] of killing." Notable here is the fact that the killing by the priest is (as Thomas would put it) *praeter intentionem*, and yet it still brings about the irregularity of the priest involved.

There then follows the section of Innocent's missive that Thomas certainly did know; it returns to the case of Laurentius with the following (rather labyrinthine) analysis:

> (1) In the present case, we believe that it needs to be ascertained whether it is possible to verify that the aforesaid priest did not inflict a mortal blow but that rather, if the wounds of the others had not followed, the person struck would not have died and whether the one who struck had not the intention [*voluntatem*] of killing, nor by his design, counsel, or mandate did the others proceed against him.
>
> (2) And indeed if the matter is such that perhaps with investigation it is possible to show that, according to the judgment of experienced doctors, such a blow would not be lethal ([that is to say,] if it appears certain that the blow struck by him was so slight and so light and to that part of the body in which, if someone is struck lightly, he normally does not die), since, among other things, this priest is to be believed—who has not been accused or denounced by anyone but, concerned for his own salvation, of his own volition seeks salutary counsel—he can, after a penance imposed for caution's sake, minister in the priestly office, favor being most especially appropriate since he is a canon regular and can without any scandal celebrate the priestly office.
>
> (3) But if it is not possible to determine from whose stroke the one struck died, because of this doubt the priest ought to be regarded as a killer [*homicida*] (although perhaps he is not a killer) and must abstain from the priestly office, for in this case to cease would be safer than rashly to celebrate—for this reason: that, for the one, no, but for the other, great danger is to be feared. . . .
>
> (4) If, however, in some manner it comes to light that this priest, struck first by that church defiler, immediately [*mox*] then struck him in return on the head

with the hoe [*ligone*], although every law and every statute permits one to repel force by force, since, however, that ought to come about with the moderation of blameless self-protection, not in order to take revenge but in order to repulse injury, it does not seem that the same priest is entirely absolved from the penalty due to killing, both by reason of the instrument with which he struck—which, since it is heavy, does not usually inflict a light injury—and by reason of the part of the body in which he was struck, where with a slight blow one is usually injured lethally.[55]

In what is marked here as part (1), intention is mentioned, although Innocent does not speak explicitly of intention in the remainder of the letter.[56] Indeed, it is significant that Innocent says here that, before getting into the details of his analysis, "it needs to be ascertained . . . whether the one who struck had *not*

[55] "Nos in praemisso casu credimus distinguendum, utrum constare possit, quod praefatus sacerdos non inflixit percussionem letalem, de qua *videlicet*, si aliorum non fuissent vulnera subsecuta, percussus minime interiisset, et si percussor voluntatem non habuerit occidendi, neque ipsius studio, consilio vel mandato processerint alii contra illum. Et quidem, si hoc ita se habet, quod forsan ex eo posset ostendi, si certa apparuisset percussio ab eodem inflicta tam modica et tam levis, in ea parte corporis, in qua quis de levi percuti non solet ad mortem, ut peritorum iudicio medicorum talis percussio assereretur non fuisse letalis, quum de ceteris credendum sit ipsi *sacerdoti*, qui non accusatur vel denunciatur ab aliquo, sed per se ipsum, *de sua salute sollicitus*, consilium appetit salutare, post poenitentiam ad cautelam iniunctam in sacerdotali poterit officio ministrare, maxime religionis accedente favore, quum sit canonicus regularis, et sine omni scandalo possit sacerdotale officium celebrare. Quodsi discerni non possit, ex cuius ictu percussus interiit: in hoc dubio tanquam homicida debet haberi sacerdos, etsi forte homicida non sit, a sacerdotali officio abstinere debet, quum in hoc casu cessare sit tutius quam temere celebrare, pro eo, quod in altero nullum, in reliquo vero magnum periculum timeatur. . . . Si vero, quemadmodum perhibetur, sacerdos iste prius ab illo percussus sacrilego, mox eum cum ligone in capite repercussit, quamvis vim vi repellere omnes leges et omnia iura permittant; quia tamen id debet fieri cum moderamine inculpatae tutelae, non ad sumendam vindictam, sed ad iniuriam propulsandam: non videtur idem sacerdos a poena homicidii penitus excusari, tum ratione instrumenti, cum quo ipse percussit, quod, quum grave sit, non solet levem plagam inferre, tum ratione partis, in qua fuit ille percussus, in qua de modico ictu quis letaliter solet laedi" (*Decretal. Gregor. IX*, 5.12.18 [Richter and Friedberg, eds., *Decretalium Collectiones*, col. 800-801]). (Words in italics did not appear in Raymond of Peñafort's original; see Richter and Friedberg, eds., *Decretalium Collectiones*, col. xlv. I have kept and translated them since they make no difference to the sense of the passage and they do allow it to be read more easily.)

[56] The word used is "will" (*voluntas*) and not "intention" (*intentio*), although what Thomas calls intention is clearly what Innocent means. The word *voluntas* is also used by Nicholas in the canon referred to just previously.

the intention of killing." In effect, he is setting to one side what Thomas sets aside in part {1} of the *corpus* of article 7 when he characterizes licit private self-defense as "*beside* the intention." Consistent with this, Innocent, in the immediately succeeding phrase, also sets aside anything brought about by the priest's "design, counsel, or mandate." Anything along these lines would constitute "planning."

Parts (2), (3), and (4) each propose a possible analysis of the priest's action. Part (2) supposes that it is possible to verify that the blow that killed the malefactor was inflicted by the priest but that it was so slight as to indicate that the priest did not intend to kill; in this case, irregularity would not be incurred. Part (3) supposes that it is not possible to determine who struck the blow and therefore whether or not the priest intended to kill; in this case, it would be "safer" to presume irregularity. The fear is that the priest might have engaged in licit self-defense that is not contrary to the natural law but that would create an irregularity.

Part (4) begins with the stipulation that the priest struck the other person *mox* ("immediately"). In itself, this would mean that the eventual killing was *praeter intentionem*. The word *mox* is followed then by the phrases quoted by Thomas at subpart {2c} in connection with private self-defense that is *praeter intentionem*: "according to law, it is licit 'to repel force by force,' provided it is 'with the moderation of blameless self-protection.'" Since it is clear that Thomas was drawing from this part of the canon in Gregory IX's *Decretals*, there is good reason to believe that, in speaking about licit private self-defense, he has in mind Innocent's use of the term *mox*.

Innocent's point is that, although the law recognizes that such an immediate striking is not to be regarded as (to use Thomas's vocabulary) *in intentionem*, the priest's celebration of the Eucharist would be irregular in as much as this striking is not the type of act that Jesus Christ would ever have performed. Innocent also adds that such immediate acts of self-defense ought not to be performed "in order to take revenge" (*ad summendam vindictam*), a factor that Thomas mentions only later in part {3}. Innocent mentions too that (under the hypothesis) the instrument

used would have been a lethal one, especially when used against a vulnerable part of the body. He makes no suggestion, however, that this factor makes it to be the case that the cleric's intention in so acting was the death of the assailant.[57] Given that Thomas cites this very canon in article 7 there is good reason to maintain that he accepts that the use of certainly lethal weapons in private self-defense is (independently of other factors) morally licit.

Presuming, then, that in depicting licit private self-defense Thomas had in mind Innocent's term *mox*, how might he have understood that term? A help in this regard is Raymond of Peñafort, whose work Thomas knew well.[58] Raymond discusses the sort of situation in which "striking back" (*repercutere*) might be licit, making a distinction between striking back when one's person is attacked and striking back when one's property is attacked. It is the former that primarily interests us.[59]

Raymond's analysis, it should also be noted, concerns irregularity only tangentially, and is concerned primarily with the

[57] The canon, as it appears in the Friedberg edition contains a conclusion which Thomas would not have read (at least, in the *Decretals*). It has to do with self-defense that is tinged with revenge: "especially since, according to the popular proverb, it is said that, 'Who strikes first, strikes making contact; who strikes second, strikes being aggrieved'" ("maxime quum secundum vulgare proverbium asseratur, quod, qui ferit primo, ferit tangendo, qui ferit secundo, ferit dolendo"). Analyses of such situations appear as early as Aristotle; see *Eudemian Ethics* 2.8.1225a14–19 (see also Flannery, *Action and Character*, 95-97). The canon concludes (in the version that Thomas possibly did not know) with Innocent's judgment regarding the priest: "All things considered, it seems that it would be best for him, with humility, to abstain from exercising the priestly office" ("Unde, pensatis omnibus, ei creditur expedire, ut cum humilitate abstineat a sacerdotali officio exsequendo").

[58] See Leonard E. Boyle, "The Setting of the *Summa theologiae* of St. Thomas—Revisited," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen Pope (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press), 1-2.

[59] Raymond's remarks in this regard owe much apparently to an earlier gloss, beginning with the words "Qui repellere possunt," on Gratian's *Decretum*, part 2, causa 23, q. 1 (Gratian [Gratianus], *Decretum Divi Gratiani Universi Iuris Canonici: Pontificias constitutiones, & Canonicas brevi compendio complectens, una cum glossis & thematibus prudentum, & doctorum suffragio comprobatis* [Lyon: Pidaieus, 1554], 840). See Gregory M. Reichberg, "Preventive War in Classical Just War Theory," *Journal of the History of International Law* 9 (2017): 7-10. The gloss is translated into English at Gregory M. Reichberg, Henrik Syse, and Endre Begby, eds., *The Ethics of War: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2006), 109-11.

morality of the pertinent acts according to natural law.[60] Raymond begins by noting that, according to law, "it is licit to 'repel force by force' contiguously [*in continenti*]—and this 'with the moderation of blameless self-protection.'"[61] Quoted here, of course, are the two phrases that appear both in Thomas's subpart {2c} and in Pope Innocent's *Signficasti* (which Raymond eventually mentions).[62] The two phrases appear together in both these places; Raymond, however, takes the expression "*in continenti*" from a different canon where it appears together only with "repel force by force," the entire phrase reading "*in continenti vim vi repellat*."[63] Raymond argues that this means that force can be repelled "before it is inflicted" (*priusquam sit illata*). But he adds: "If, however, after harm is inflicted upon someone, he strikes back, if he does this contiguously—that is, when he should see him [the attacker] once again prepared to strike—in no way is he liable."[64]

[60] Raymond does at one point mention the distinction between clerics and others, but it is clear that the position he upholds at that point makes no difference between the two; he also, a few lines later, mentions irregularity (Raymond of Peñafort and William of Rennes, *Summa de casibus poenitentiae,* 186).

[61] Ibid., 185.

[62] Ibid., 187.

[63] Richter and Friedberg, eds., *Decretalium Collectiones*, col. 890.

[64] Raymond of Peñafort and William of Rennes, *Summa de casibus poenitentiae*, 186. When, however, it is property that is attacked, the concept "contiguously" has a broader extension. As Raymond puts it: "If force should be inflicted upon *things*, it is licit to repel both force inflicted [*illatam*] and force to be inflicted [*inferendam*]—although it ought rather, that is, very much preferably, be force inflicted [*illatam*]—provided this is done contiguously [*in continenti*], that is, as soon as the person is aware of the force inflicted [*illatam*] and before he turns to a contrary act" (ibid., 186-87). Raymond's contemporary Dominican brother, William of Rennes, who glossed the entire work (though in editions of the work the glosser is falsely identified as John of Freiburg), maintains that, when the recovery of property is at issue, eating or drinking or even extended preparation would not constitute "contrary" acts. A contrary act, he says, would involve looking away from the injury suffered and turning to some other matter (ibid., 187]. In a book coedited by Gregory Reichberg it is stated that, "in his gloss on this passage, William sought to expand the notion of justifiable defense beyond the strict limits that had been set by Raymond. The concept of immediacy (defense *in continenti*), which had constituted the core of Raymond's account, should not be taken to imply, William argued, that an attack can

Employing Thomas's vocabulary, in the latter two cases the death of the attacker would be *praeter intentionem*. In accordance with what was argued above in section IV, the requirement that the reaction be effected contiguously would not mean that the self-defender might not deliberate, even for some minutes, about how to stave off the attack. In other words, he might intend to employ the "means"—"that which is for that end"—which he either seizes upon immediately or which he chooses after some deliberation. On the other hand, a slave's planning to kill the master who threatens him with tortures—and his subsequently doing so—would take him outside of that intelligible path of licit private self-defense and into the path of that which is "intended" (subpart {1a}).

We might repeat here also another point made above: that Thomas regards the agent who uses more force than is called for as still intending to conserve his life, albeit with an act that is immoral. This is indeed suggested by the way he makes his point in subpart {2b}: "So, if someone in defending his own life uses more force than is called for, the act will be illicit." Although this person uses more force than is called for, he is still defending his own life.

VII. Licit Intending to Kill, Plus Objection 5 and Thomas's Response

In the foregoing, we have mentioned a number of times the statement in part {3} that it is licit for one who has public authority to intend to kill a man in self-defense—this standing in stark contrast with what Thomas says in part {1} regarding private self-defense, which is illicit if it involves the intention to

legitimately be countered only in the heat of the moment, when it was actually under way or about to begin" (Reichberg, Syse, and Begby, eds., *Ethics of War*, 133]. In his later book, Reichberg does not see such a conflict between Raymond and William's gloss. With good reason he says that it "remains unclear" whether the explanation by Raymond and William of acting *in continenti* when property is attacked is to be applied when the attack is upon a person (Reichberg, *Thomas Aquinas on War and Peace*, 192). Still, what William says does suggest that *in continenti* can be understood as allowing for preparation that is not *strictly* speaking "immediate" (*mox*).

kill. But we have not considered up until now Thomas's saying in {3} that the public official who intends to kill "refers this to the public good." This latter remark raises a question. Is Thomas suggesting that the act ought not to be understood as the public official's intending to kill but rather as his intending to promote or protect the public good? The answer to this question lies in his use of the expression "refers this to" (*refert hoc ad*).

The one place in Thomas's works where he uses precisely this expression is in his commentary on 1 Timothy 4:8, the verse in which St. Paul says that "corporal exercise is useful for little, but piety is useful in every way."[65] In order to explain how corporal exercise can nonetheless be meritorious when performed for the love of God and by means of piety, he notes that, "When there are two virtues and one contains the other, that which is of the superior virtue *per se*, holds of the inferior *per accidens*." He gives an example: "if one who is fasting does not refer this to [*refert hoc ad*] the love of God, he does not merit eternal life." So, the phrase *refert hoc ad* signals that the added end (which in this case defines the higher virtue) holds of the lower act only *per accidens*. This means that the act of fasting remains the species of act that it is; in other words, it remains the species determined by that act's proximate end and does not become (except *per accidens*) an act of the species determined by the remote end.

We find the same idea at in question 1, article 3 of the *Prima secundae* (ad 3) where the example that Thomas employs is identical to the one employed in our article 7, part {3}:

> Still, it is possible that an act that is one according to its species of nature might be ordered to diverse ends of the will, just as that very thing which is killing a man, which remains the same according to its species of nature, can be ordered as towards an end for the conservation of justice—and also for the satisfaction of anger. The result is that there will be diverse acts with respect to moral species, for in one way it will be an act of virtue, in another way an act of vice.

[65] "corporalis exercitatio ad modicum utilis est, pietas autem ad omnia utilis est" (Vulgate).

For the motion does not receive its species from that which is the terminus *per accidens* but only from that which is the terminus *per se*.[66]

We must conclude, therefore, that the public official mentioned in {3} does intend to kill. That species of act remains, even though it is referred to the public good.

The just-quoted passage—and in particular the phrase,"and also for the satisfaction of anger"—assures us that a similar thing can be said with respect to the very final clause of {3}, where Thomas states that a soldier or a minister of a judge, although licitly intending to kill, "sin if they are moved by a private passion." Such private animosity does not remove the agent's act from the path of authorized killing in self-defense. The situation is similar to what we saw above regarding private self-defense: even the use of disproportionate means does not disqualify the act as an act of private self-defense.[67]

That brings us to the final objection in article 7 and Thomas's response, which, like the final clause in {3}, declares private passion to be sinful, although its scope is wider, pertaining not just to public authorities. Consideration of its background in the thought of Thomas as he interprets Christian tradition sheds light upon the significance of his specifying in {3} that the passion that public authorities ought to avoid is *private* passion.

Objection 5 runs as follows:

If the tree is evil, so is the fruit, as is stated at Matthew 7.17. But self-defense itself appears to be illicit, according to Romans 12:19: "Not defending yourselves, dearly beloved." Therefore, also the killing of a man, which proceeds from it, is illicit.

Thomas, in formulating this objection, is recalling the Vulgate translation of Romans 12:19, "*non vosmetipsos defendentes,*

[66] "Possibile tamen est quod unus actus secundum speciem naturae, ordinetur ad diversos fines voluntatis, sicut hoc ipsum quod est occidere hominem, quod est idem secundum speciem naturae, potest ordinari sicut in finem ad conservationem iustitiae, et ad satisfaciendum irae. Et ex hoc erunt diversi actus secundum speciem moris, quia uno modo erit actus virtutis, alio modo erit actus vitii. Non enim motus recipit speciem ab eo quod est terminus per accidens, sed solum ab eo quod est terminus per se."

[67] See above, at n. 44.

carissimi"—which translation gives the objection a seemingly stronger case than is found in the Greek, for the latter employs the word ἐκδικοῦντες, which speaks more clearly of vengeance or punishment.[68] And, indeed, that is the gist of Thomas's response: "Prohibited there is defense which is with vindictive spite. And so the Gloss says: 'Not defending yourselves,' that is, 'Not striking adversaries back.'"[69]

There is not much more to be said about objection 5 and Thomas's response. But his commentary on the verse from the Letter to the Romans that he cites in the objection itself sheds light upon what he says in {3}—and upon article 7 more generally. Immediately after saying "Not defending yourselves, dearly beloved," Paul says, "but give place to anger." Regarding the first clause, Thomas speaks of "precepts of patience always to be retained in the preparation of the heart."[70] Regarding the second ("but give place to anger"), he says that Paul is referring to "divine judgment." "It is as if he were saying," says Thomas, "'entrust yourselves to God, who by his judgment can defend and vindicate you, according to what is said in 1 Peter: 'Cast all your worries upon him, for he cares for you.'" "This, however, is to be understood," he adds, "in the event that there is not available to us the faculty of acting otherwise according to justice." He goes on to mention "the authority of a judge" (*auctoritate iudicis*) and "princes" (*princeps*), whom he describes as ministers of divine judgment.[71] The vengeance discouraged with the phrase

[68] Thomas writes actually, "non vos defendentes, carissimi." The word ἐκδικοῦντες (or ἐκδικέω) might be translated as "meting out justice" (on one's own). Within the very same verse Paul writes: "but give place to anger, for it is written, the meting out of justice [ἐκδίκησις] is mine; *I* will have vengeance, says the Lord." Paul is criticizing human beings who assume authority that is properly God's.

[69] "Ad quintum dicendum quod ibi prohibetur defensio quae est cum livore vindictae. Unde Glossa dicit, non vos defendentes, idest, non sitis referientes adversarios" (*STh* II-II, q. 64, a. 7, ad 5).

[70] "Sunt igitur ista praecepta patientiae semper in cordis praeparatione retinenda" (*In Rom.*, c. 12, lect. 3).

[71] "Secundo assignat rationem, cum dicit sed date locum irae, id est divino iudicio. Quasi diceret: committatis vos Deo, qui suo iudicio potest vos defendere et vindicare, secundum illud I Petr. ult.: 'omnem sollicitudinem vestram proiicientes in eum, quoniam

"Not defending yourselves" is to be left to God *or* to his ministers.[72]

What this does is to turn sinful—because disordered—passion into naturally virtuous and reasonable behavior: the pursuit of justice. The passion, provided that it is truly passion for justice, is channelled into the intelligible path pre-established in natural law and in that positive law that is consistent with natural law.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, then, and that very briefly, question 64, article 7 of the *Secunda secundae* has attracted enormous attention over the years, not only because it deals with themes fundamental for ethics and for our attempts to live together in a just manner, but also because it was written by Thomas Aquinas. The words and the ideas he puts forward in the article have been subject to various, sometimes conflicting interpretations. In order to determine just what he intended to say—and so what ideas should enjoy his authority—it is reasonable to pay close attention to the literature and the law he placed before himself as he wrote the article.

ipsi cura est de vobis' [1 Peter 5.7]. Sed haec intelligenda sunt in casu in quo nobis non adest facultas aliter faciendi secundum iustitiam." See above, at n. 24.

[72] Seeking vindication is not necessarily immoral: see *STh* II-II, q. 108; I-II, q. 158, a. 1; see also III *Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 2, ad 4: "a man ought not to punish as one vindicating himself but as one vindicating God, if this is his role by virtue of his office" ("homo non debet punire quasi se vindicans, sed quasi Deum vindicans, si hoc ex officio habet").

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BETWEEN ACTUALITY AND NONBEING: PRIME MATTER REVISITED

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IN HIS COMMENTARY on book I of the *Physics*, as he takes stock of what has been demonstrated therein, Thomas Aquinas echoes and amplifies sentiments expressed by Aristotle himself: namely, that while a number of difficulties led the ancient naturalists to deny generation, corruption, and a plurality of natural substances, once the nature of matter is made manifest, "all of their ignorance is resolved."[1] That Aristotle's notion of matter might prove to be so powerful is of course remarkable. Still, even if Aquinas's appraisal is accurate, it comes, as it were, with a catch. The "enlightenment" that an Aristotelian conception of matter brings about is conditional: the nature of matter removes further ignorance once it is understood. Aquinas evidently assumes that Aristotle has understood matter—if not exhaustively, at least rightly—and that he himself sees what Aristotle saw before him.

Whether their more-or-less shared account is true is a question of great interest, especially to those committed to a nonreductive account of nature, though it is not an issue that I will attempt to adjudicate, at least not directly. Rather, I want to consider, more modestly, whether contemporary interpreters have achieved a sufficiently accurate understanding of the Aristotelian account of matter defended by Aquinas, as the viability of this account first

[1] I *Phys*., lect. 14 (Marietti ed., no. 128). See *In octo libros Physicorum Arisotelis expositio,* ed. P. M. Maggiolo (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1954). Unless otherwise noted, translations of Aquinas are my own.

requires its correct articulation. It may be noted that, even if modest, this aim is only relatively modest, since I am taking for granted that such a conception is notoriously difficult to grasp.

To appreciate this difficulty, I want to direct the present reflection towards Aquinas's understanding of "prime matter" (*materia prima*), a notion that he takes himself to be drawing from Aristotle's physics.[2] Insofar as matter, as such, is a principle of potency, and insofar as Aquinas identifies prime matter with *pure* potency (*potentia pura*), one of the chief difficulties that besets his conception of matter presents itself in concentrated form in the doctrine of prime matter.[3] We might readily understand, for example, how brick and beam, as buildable, are material with respect to a house; but this is in no small part because such materials are in fact actual, *qua* brick and beam—and, in the natural order, are actual *qua* stone and wood. But how, we might ask, is something a principle of natural being, and so of real being, when it is, of itself and by definition, "potency alone" (*potentia tantum*), as Aquinas frequently describes prime matter?[4] The

[2] For various instances of Aristotle's use of *prōtē hulē*—instances which, to be clear, often bear a meaning that is nontechnical and highly dependent on context—see *On the Generation of Animals* 1.20.729a31-33; *Physics* 2.1.193a28-29; *Metaphysics* 5.4.1014b32 and 1015a5-11; 5.6.1017a5; 8.4.1044a20-24; and 9.7.1049a25-7. The last reference is probably most explicit in capturing the notion with which Aquinas is working. Aquinas acknowledges that some notion of prime matter precedes Aristotle and that "the Platonists" had already made significant headway in articulating its character (I *Phys.*, lect. 15 [Marietti ed., no. 131]). William Charlton offers a similar list of passages from Aristotle in "Did Aristotle believe in Prime Matter?," an appendix to *Aristotle's "Physics I-II,"* trans. W. Charlton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 129. Incidentally, Charlton denies that Aristotle defends what has come to be a standard conception of prime matter; however, Charlton presumes prime matter to be a quasi-independent substrate, a view which my present argument attempts to overcome.

[3] Aquinas uses the expression "*potentia pura*," in reference to both matter and prime matter, from the *Sentences* commentary (e.g., II *Sent.*, d. 3, q. 1, a. 1, obj. 4 and ad 4; II *Sent.*, d. 17, q. 1, a. 2) up through the *Summa theologiae* (e.g., *STh* I, q. 115, a. 1, ad 2), as well as in *ScG* I, c. 17; *De Verit.*, q. 10, a. 8; *De Pot.*, q. 5, a. 3; *Q. D. De anima*, a. 6, obj. 12 and ad 12; a. 18, ad 5; *De Spirit. Creat.*, a. 1, obj. 17 and ad 17; obj. 25 and ad 25; *De Substan. Sep.*, a. 7; and *In Boet. De Trin.*, q. 4, a. 2.

[4] Appearances of "*potentia tantum*" and "*tantum in potentia*" number in the hundreds. For a few examples of these expressions as specifically identified with prime matter, see I *Sent.*, d. 39, q. 2, a. 2, ad 4; *De Verit.*, q. 8, a. 6; *ScG* I, c. 43; II, c. 43; II, c. 96; II, c. 98; *STh* I, q. 7, a. 2, ad 3; q. 87, a. 1; q. 115, a. 1, ad 4.

question inevitably imposes itself on the reader of Aquinas, and indeed is something of a cliché. Avoiding the apparent contradiction, however, remains a tall order. One is tempted to hold that the reality "pure potency" aims to pick out cannot be cleanly transposed into the domain of concepts at all. Rather, it can only be interpreted by approximation, and by taking one of two paths at the hermeneutical fork in the road: that is, one seems forced either to accord prime matter some kind of actuality of its own, so as to preserve its reality, or to deny it being altogether, so as to preserve the purity of its mere possibility.

This article seeks to articulate a kind of *via media* by engaging with two contemporary readings of Aquinas's account of prime matter. I will begin with Aquinas's account, chiefly as it is articulated in his *On the Principles of Nature*. In section II, I will consider two interpretations of Aquinas, each of which represents one of the horns of the dilemma. The first reading, defended by Robert Pasnau, offers what we might call a "reductionist" and "anti-realist" interpretation, since Pasnau denies that pure potency—or, for that matter, materiality in general—designates an existing principle that is really distinct from natural form; natural substances possess no real composition as hylomorphic.[5] In contrast to this view, Jeffrey Brower has more recently argued for a "realist" account, in which prime matter is conceived as what he calls "gunky stuff," an expression technical in meaning, even if colloquial in its formulation. As "gunky stuff," prime matter is a nonindividuated substrate that requires the addition of natural form but exists in the concrete composite as something uncharacterized by such form.[6] I consider these contemporary

[5] See principally his "Excursus metaphysicus: Reality as Actuality," the coda to part I of *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 131-40. Pasnau employs the language of "reductionism" throughout; the term "anti-realist" serves to anticipate, by way of contrast, Brower's interpretation, insofar as Brower uses the "realist"/"anti-realist" distinction as a way of describing the ontological status of prime matter.

[6] In characterizing Brower's interpretation, I will be drawing upon his "Matter, Form, and Individuation," in Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump, eds., *Oxford Handbook of Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 85-103; and *Aquinas's Ontology of the Material World: Change, Hylomorphism, and Material Objects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

interpretations precisely because they capture two perennial possibilities for how we might interpret matter in the Aristotelian tradition, and they establish the dialectical poles between which a more authentically Thomistic account might emerge.

While each of these interpretive possibilities will help us arrive at our goal, I will suggest in section III that neither quite captures what Aquinas seems to mean by "prime matter." Stated simply, one falls short by according prime matter too little existence, the other by according it too much. The former eliminates the means by which Aquinas explains both substantial change and the difference between material and immaterial being; the latter makes substantial form something artistic or accidental and so compromises the unity of substance. Although these contemporary interpretations are evidently opposed, they achieve this opposition by virtue of a shared inability to conceive of matter as a principle of potency. In the remainder of the article, then, I will offer an account of potency that seeks to preserve the real distinction between form and matter without imparting actuality to matter, such that it becomes a characterless substratum. Taking seriously the primacy of the existing substance, I will provide a basis for prime matter in the determinate matter of the concrete composite, as defined and characterized by the presence of form. Prime matter will thus come to light in the mind's consideration of the remote possibilities of matter, as grounded in the real and proximate potencies of determinate matter. Nonetheless, Aquinas's insistence that prime matter is "potency alone," known only through form, precludes that prime matter exist as such, in its purity, in any particular material body. To make sense of prime matter's mode of existence, I will conclude by drawing an analogy between prime matter and Aquinas's understanding of the existence of universals. In the end, just as Aquinas's account of universals seeks to protect the hylomorphic individual "from above," with respect to form, prime matter aims to preserve the individual "from below," with respect to matter.

I. Prime Matter in Aquinas's *De principiis naturae*

The notion of *materia prima* appears throughout Aquinas's scholarly career and in various genres within his corpus—for example, in each of his three great summations of theology, in most of his disputed questions, in the relevant Aristotelian commentaries, and in various *opuscula* and other works.[7] In our initial exposition, however, we will principally have recourse to a work in which Aquinas perhaps most directly introduces and characterizes this principle, that is, his primer to Aristotelian natural philosophy, *De principiis naturae*.[8]

In this short work, Aquinas treats of prime matter as an extension of his broader treatment of matter, form, and privation, which constitute Aristotle's three principles necessary for change. He defines matter, most generally, as "being in potency" (c. 1, ll. 12-15), a natural being's positive capacity to become what it is not. As such, matter differs from that at which potency aims and through which it is actual—namely, form—and it likewise differs from that absence of form or being which is overcome in change—namely, privation. Distinct from form and privation, matter itself admits of a distinction. As being in potency, matter takes two basic forms, depending on the type of being towards which the potency in question aspires. Hence, Aquinas distinguishes between matter that stands in potency to accidental existence and that which stands in potency to substantial existence. He refers to the latter as *materia ex qua*—that is, the "matter out of which" a substance comes to be—and he deems it to be matter

[7] Thus, prime matter appears in *De veritate*, *De potentia*, *De malo*, *De anima*, *De spiritualibus creaturis*, *De malo*, and *Quodlibet* IX, as well as in Aquinas's commentaries on *De anima*, *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, *On Generation and Corruption*, *On the Heavens*, and *Meteorology*. For relevant opuscula, see *De ente et essentia*, *De principiis naturae*, *De mixtione elementorum*, *De substantiis separatis*, and the *Compendium theologiae*. For non-Aristotelian commentaries, see Aquinas's commentaries on Boethius's *De Trinitate*, Dionysius's *De divinis nominibus*, and the *Liber de causis*. Finally, the notion appears in *De 108 articulis* and even in a few of Aquinas's scriptural commentaries—namely, on the Psalms, on the Gospels of Matthew and John, and on the Letter to the Hebrews.

[8] All citations of *De principiis naturae* refer to the Leonine edition and follow its division of chapters and line numbering: *Opera omnia*, vol. 43 (Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1976), 36-47.

in the more proper sense (c. 1, ll. 20-23).[9] Since matter is being in potency, that which stands in potency to being in the most proper sense is itself matter in the most proper sense. Thus, potency with respect to substantial being is more properly material than potency with respect to accidental being. To take Aquinas's own example, sperm considered in relation to the human being generated therefrom is "material out of which" and is more properly material; the human being in relation to a possible skin tone, by contrast, constitutes a material subject "in which" an accident may inhere and so is material in a less proper sense.

Aquinas defines prime matter both by extending his general account of matter and by contrasting prime matter with the senses of matter already discussed. Thus, as is consistent with matter considered more generally, prime matter is neither form nor privation but is "subject to form and privation" (c. 2, l. 76). On the other hand, unlike the materiality of sperm with respect to human being or human body with respect to being tan—each of which clearly signifies a composite of matter and form—prime matter is understood as having no form whatsoever. Likewise, while sperm has a determinate absence of human form and a pale body lacks the hue of bronze, prime matter is understood without any particular privation. Thus, while prime matter, as matter, is "subject to form and privation," it is, as primary, "understood without a form or privation of any kind" (c. 2, ll. 74-78).[10] As

[9] Here I follow the Leonine edition, where matter with respect to substantial being is called matter in the proper sense (*dicitur proprie materia*). The critical edition prepared by John Pauson has "*dicitur materia prima*", but this insertion of prime matter seems to overstate Aquinas's intentions. See *De principiis naturae*, intro. and critical text by John J. Pauson, Textus Philosophici Friburgenses, vol. 2 (Fribourg: Société Philosophique, 1950).

[10] See also, e.g., *De Spirit. Creat.*, a. 1. Here we might suspect that prime matter is "primary" precisely because it actually possesses and signifies every possible privation. Nevertheless, to be understood as possessing a privation, prime matter would need to be the proper subject of coming to be or change, in terms of which privation is defined. The susceptibility to change, however, requires a basic degree of actuality and completion on the part of the subject—a completion that prime matter, as such, lacks. Thus, rather than being that which contains all privations, prime matter, as pure potency, lacks the determination from which particular privations might follow. Note that while an earlier claim in *De principiis naturae*—namely, that matter is "never stripped of privation"—appears to contradict the present point, Aquinas's immediate elaboration actually serves

that which altogether lacks the actuality of form, prime matter is tantamount to a principle of pure possibility. Anterior to specification, it seemingly represents what stands in potency to natural form and so natural body, simply as such.

Already, it appears as if prime matter constitutes both a special case of matter and matter in the most genuine sense. The former holds because prime matter, as altogether lacking actuality, most departs from colloquial discussions of matter and is generally not the most proximate principle needed to explain instances of change. It is neither matter that is itself a composite—a specified body open to further actualization—nor is it the specified matter of that which is a composite—that is, the complement of form as determined by that form. On the other hand, prime matter expresses with still greater intensity what is true of matter more generally. If matter is a principle of potency, if it is incomplete in itself and has being only through another (c. 1, ll. 30-32), then prime matter is matter in its most purified expression, since it is purely potential and altogether incomplete.[11] As the distillation of natural potency, it deserves to be called "*hyle*" (c. 2, l. 78). Accordingly, whatever ambiguity might remain in the term "matter," the designation "*prime* matter" eliminates this ambiguity, and it does so precisely by eliminating from "matter" the possible signification of some specific actuality or form. And because there is no formality within it, there is then "no other matter before it," no more fundamental sense of natural potency to which it might be reduced. Prime matter represents, as it were, the outer limit of potency—*potentia pura* or *potentia tantum*.[12]

to confirm it. Matter is "never stripped of privation" *because* "inasmuch as it is under one form, it has the privation of another" (c. 2, ll. 20-23). "Matter," here, is already informed, and by this specification it acquires a determinate privation (or set of privations); such matter is evidently not prime matter as such. With all of this being said, Aquinas can still affirm that prime matter, in its maximal indetermination, has a relation to all forms and privations; in the real order, though, any proper relation obtains through the mediation of form.

[11] Thus it is unsurprising that Aquinas freely describes not simply *prime* matter as "pure potency" but matter more generally. See, e.g., *De Pot.*, q. 5, a. 3; and *De Spirit. Creat.*, a. 1, ad 25.

[12] In *De Princ. Natur.*, c. 2, ll. 85-89, Aquinas allows for a secondary and relative use of prime matter, namely, as that matter which is primary not absolutely, but in a particular

But if prime matter exists precisely as potency, then in what sense does it exist at all? If prime matter constitutes the outer limit of potency, is it then the outer limit of being—or, in stripping potency of all act, have we altogether passed beyond being? Aquinas clearly insists that prime matter cannot exist by and through itself: "Sed per se numquam potest esse" (c. 2, ll. 114-15). Since potency exists only on account of the completion and determination added by actuality, then to the extent that matter exists, it exists only by way of form and thus in and through the composite body. And since prime matter implies no intrinsic actuality, no ordination to any particular form, it certainly cannot exist of its own accord. Indeed, Aquinas is so committed to the incapacity of prime matter to exist through itself that he famously insists that even God cannot create prime matter apart from form.[13] From Aquinas's perspective, to allow prime matter to exist *per se* is simply to *equivocate* upon the term "prime matter"—that is, to mean by that expression something other than "pure potency." Prime matter, then, "est solum in potentia" (c. 2, ll. 117-18). Such an affirmation acknowledges not simply the nature of prime matter as potency, but likewise implies that its independent existence can be approached but never realized. Like the infinite division of the continuum, it exists potentially but never in act. "Whatever is in act cannot be called prime matter" (ibid.).

genus. Thus, water could be called the "prime matter" of all aqueous substances. Here, Aquinas is clearly drawing upon *Metaphysics* 5.4.1015a5-11, though by way of modification. In Aristotle, water is used—hypothetically, or following Thales—as an example of what might be prime matter in a universal (i.e., absolute) sense, in contrast to bronze, which—in the case of select artifacts—might be primary "with respect to the thing itself" (apparently, with respect to a particular order or genus). See also Aquinas's commentary on this passage, at V *Metaphys*., lect. 5 (Marietti ed., no. 821), where he distinguishes between matter that is primary "ex toto vel simpliciter" and what is primary "secundum genus." See *In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio*, ed. M.-R. Cathala and R. M. Spiazzi (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1964).

[13] See, e.g., *De Pot*., q. 3, a. 5, ad 3; q. 4, aa. 1-2; and *STh* I, q. 66, a. 1. God's omnipotence extends only to what is metaphysically possible, and once matter is understood as a principle of potency, the coexistence of matter with form is not simply something that *happens* to hold true; it is, rather, an absolutely necessary condition of natural being—lest we have "actual being without act" (*STh* I, q. 66, a. 1).

If prime matter cannot exist through itself, then for the same reason it cannot be known through itself. If knowledge aims at expressing something determinate in reality, it presumes the actuality and determination that follows upon form. Thus, since prime matter altogether lacks actuality, it "cannot be defined or known in itself" but is instead known only through form and so with reference to a composite (c. 2, ll. 80-81).[14] Knowledge follows upon being, and that which cannot exist through itself cannot be known through itself.[15] Matter is thus known only through a dual consideration, one that bears upon both principles intrinsic to the composite. Hence, we know the specified matter of the human body only by virtue of what has been done for it by the rational soul, which both exceeds the body and makes it what it is.[16] To such knowledge *per formam*, Aquinas adds a second way in which we might know matter, another dual consideration, though one that operates *ad extra*, rather than simply *ad intra*. He argues that matter can be known by way of analogy.[17] We can grasp the nature of the human body as distinct from, and yet related to, both soul and man, and in a way that is analogous to, for example, the relationship between bronze and the figure or the statue. The body as possibility-for-rational-life and its

[14] For the provenance of this claim, see Aristotle, *Metaphys.* 9.9.1051a29ff.

[15] This is not a problem strictly for human knowledge, since just as God cannot create prime matter apart from form, neither can God know prime matter apart from its reference to form. Matter, *secundum se*, is unknown (*In Boet. De Trin.*, q. 4, a. 2). See, e.g., *STh* I, q. 15, a. 3 for a discussion of the relationship between divine ideas and prime matter. For a brief survey of Aquinas's various treatments of this issue, see Gregory Doolan, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas as Exemplar Causes* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 133-35.

[16] See Aristotle's definition of soul in *De anima* 2.1. Because form exceeds matter, but precisely as that which makes the material body what it is, the "dual consideration" of matter and form evidently does not involve merely attending to two discrete and self-defining principles—principles that, in a merely secondary manner, happen to relate to one another in an intelligible fashion. As being-in-potency, matter is always already made to be, and to be intelligible, by the work of form within it. Knowledge of matter through form is not, then, simply a way of enhancing one's knowledge of material being; it is, more radically, a condition of the commencement of such knowledge.

[17] See *In Boet. De Trin.*, q. 4, a. 2, where Aquinas specifies that matter is known in two ways, by analogy or proportion and through form. *De Princ. Natur.*, c. 2, l. 80 specifies that prime matter must be known "per comparationem" ("per compositum" in Pauson).

material relation to the living organism become intelligible by their approximate, structural equivalence to the bronze's possibility-for-artistic-figure and its realization as Donatello's *David*. To capture the pure possibility of prime matter, however, Aquinas must further radicalize this artistic analogy. Thus, he argues that as bronze is related to the statue and its shapelessness, so prime matter is "related to all forms and privations" (c. 2, ll. 82-85).[18] Such an analogy anchors the mind in a relationship between relative indetermination (bronze) and some further actualization (statue) and then invites us to extend this relationship, as if to the point of pure indetermination. By amplifying, even universalizing, the potency of matter for natural form, the mind (in concert with the imagination) finds itself impelled towards a notion of primary materiality.

That matter can be so conceived as primary proves relevant, not simply for explaining the constitution of the natural substance, but also for modeling its capacity to undergo change. In particular, matter as pure potency seems to be implied by the tenuous continuity present in instances of substantial change. Unlike the continuity undergirding accidental change, which has as its primary locus the actuality of the composite subject, the continuity of substantial change lies on the side of material potency. Substance passes into substance without total ontological rupture because of some sort of underlying permanence, a perduring material unity. Such continuity inspires the positing of a material "substrate" of change, and—while dangers of reification loom—the relative unity of this substrate gestures toward the unity of prime matter.[19] This primary unity comes "closest to

[18] See Aristotle, *Phys.* 1.7.191a9-12: "The underlying nature can be known by analogy. For as the bronze is to the statue, the wood to the bed, or the matter and the formless before receiving form to any thing which has form, so is the underlying nature to substance, i.e., the 'this' or existent" (following Hardie and Gaye's translation in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 1, ed. J. Barnes [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995], 326). At I *Phys*., lect. 13 (Marietti ed., no. 118), Aquinas interprets this passage explicitly in terms of prime matter.

[19] In an observation relevant to the permanence of the substrate, but which also serves as a further caution against reification, Aquinas notes that prime matter is itself neither generated nor corrupted (*De Princ. Natur*., c. 2, ll. 90-97). Because substance is the primary locus of being, generation and corruption apply only to substance itself. To insist

the surface" in the case of change between the elements, where the lowest order of form informs a body at one remove from pure potency.[20] Prime matter is felt as not quite realized at the seam between elemental states.[21] Were it so realized, *per impossibile*, it would constitute something like a unified substrate of pure indifference. To shift perspective but slightly, matter can serve as a continuous substrate of change precisely because a body's form does not exhaust the possibility of its materiality. On account of this noncoincidence of form and matter, natural body remains open to being other; it exceeds itself by way of its materiality. Accordingly, a natural composite may be said to have a kind of "indetermination within its determination" due to its being material. When maximized, such indetermination has its own unity precisely as indeterminate. In this way, prime matter is understood to be "one," not through the work of form, but through the undoing of form's influence (c. 2, ll. 98-99).[22]

that matter be subject to generation and corruption is tantamount to granting it *per se* being. Moreover, since every coming-to-be *presumes* an underlying material substrate, the material substrate cannot be the *result* of the coming-to-be, at least not without some still more basic substrate. Since prime matter is "that matter which has no prior matter," it does not admit a more fundamental substratum and so cannot be the subject of generation or corruption.

[20] See, for example, I *Phys*., lect. 13 (Marietti ed., no. 118): "Since, therefore, we see that air sometimes becomes water, it is necessary to say that there is something existing under the form of air, and at times under the form of water; and so this is something beyond the form of water and beyond the form of air, just as wood is something beyond the form of a stool and beyond the form of a bed. What therefore is so related to these natural substances, as bronze is related to the statue and wood to the bed—and whatever is material and formless to form—this is said to be prime matter."

[21] To be clear, to note that the elemental stands "at one remove" from prime matter, or that prime matter is "not quite realized" in the elemental, is hardly to suggest an equivalent distance between, on the one hand, the elements and prime matter and, on the other, the elements and the next most actual composite—as if one step down from the elemental on the hierarchy of being were equally proximate to one step up. Because prime matter cannot actually be realized in itself, there is, as it were, an infinite-because-untraversable gap between the elemental and prime matter. To fail to acknowledge this asymmetry between what lies above and below the elemental is to reify and falsify prime matter.

[22] On the relation between the oneness of matter and the continuity presumed in change, see Aristotle, *Phys.* 1.7.190a13-16; and Aquinas, I *Phys*., lect. 12 (Marietti ed., no. 102-4).

With all of this in mind, it seems that prime matter enjoys a strange kind of being and a strange kind of unity, each of which presents a challenge to its intelligibility. Prime matter is a principle of existing natural beings, but its own existence is one of pure possibility, which apparently denotes that which could be but is not. Prime matter can be said to have unity, it is "one in number," because, paradoxically, it is "understood without any of the dispositions from which difference in number arises" (c. 2, ll. 106-8). Both of these facts entail, again, that prime matter can be known only in a correspondingly peculiar fashion: not through itself but through form. Any attempt to isolate matter separates it from actuality, and so from intelligibility; so matter seems to withdraw from view precisely to the extent that intelligence attempts to know it as prime. Moreover, to the extent that prime matter has no intrinsic actuality, it likewise seems to lack its own corporeal density—that is, it lacks the kind of natural dimensionality that one would associate with "matter." Thus, a commitment to materiality as pure potency seems to relegate prime matter to the domain of mere metaphysical abstraction, thereby leaving a vacancy in Aquinas's account of the physical order. Materiality in its purity might, counterintuitively, have nothing to contribute to the "weightiness" of a body's natural being or physicality. Given matter's lack of intrinsic actuality, the ultimate coherence of prime matter cannot but tempt suspicion.

Any effort to minimize the importance of these difficulties by minimizing the ultimate significance of prime matter immediately runs aground. The coherence of pure potency, rather than constituting a special and isolated problem, stands as an essential part of an integrated vision of natural substance. As pure potency, prime matter condenses what is true of materiality as such, and so represents, *ad extremum*, one of the two basic polarities that define hylomorphism. Thus, a hylomorphism that concedes the problematic character of prime matter, but then simply tries to quarantine this problem, achieves a dubious consistency and cannot find final rest in its principles. To this extent, Aristotelian nonreductionism can rightly be said to rise or fall on the coherence of *materia prima*.

II. The Being of Prime Matter: Two Interpretations

It is still not sufficiently evident how prime matter can be said to "be"—how it can *exist* without being *actual* and so exist while remaining *pure potency*. Even if, as Aquinas has claimed, the potency of prime matter requires that it exist only through the actuality of form, what existence remains for prime matter, beyond the existence accorded to form itself? Or, assuming some distinctly material existence does remain, how can such existence be *prime* matter? Seemingly, prime matter oscillates between nonbeing and being, and this oscillation invites two, divergent metaphysical frameworks: on the one hand, a monism of actuality that denies the real existence of material potency and so denies genuine dynamism in nature; on the other, a dualism that accords matter its own distinct actuality and so undermines the very unity of substance.

One strategy for negotiating this difficulty involves denying that Aquinas ever understands prime matter to be a real and distinct constituent of natural being. This strategy finds an advocate in Robert Pasnau, who defends what we might call an anti-realist or eliminativist account of prime matter in his *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*.[23] For Pasnau, prime matter as pure potency quite simply does not exist. Nonetheless, while the term "prime matter" does not name a really distinct principle in natural beings, it is not for that reason empty of content. It expresses instead a limit condition, a state that bodies asymptotically approach as we move down the hierarchy of being. Prime matter cannot exist of itself because reality is constituted only by that which is actual; thus, if we imagine being as it comes to be ever more diminished in its actuality, it passes out of existence altogether before ever realizing a state of "pure possibility." Even though Pasnau admits that Aquinas's language often suggests that prime matter is some sort of quasi-subsistent reality, he insists that positing the existence of prime matter defies the

[23] The language of "eliminativism" is Pasnau's (*Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 131).

Dominican's deeper intentions.[24] Only by denying the reality of prime matter do we preserve the primacy of actuality in Aquinas's metaphysics. In so doing, we happily avoid the scourge of dualism and make Aquinas's thought more amenable to contemporary conceptions of nature and the human being.

To appreciate more fully why prime matter is not a real principle of material being, we need to consider how such a view reflects Pasnau's broader treatment of Thomistic hylomorphism. For, while prime matter is not an independent principle, really distinct from form, neither is matter itself. If all that exists, as such, must be actual, and if for Aquinas form is the principle of actuality, then the existent is formal to the extent that it is. Accordingly, insofar as materiality is understood as potency, and insofar as what merely *can* be *is* not, materiality can be reduced in the order of being to actuality and so to form.[25] To quote Pasnau himself: "Material beings are not composites of actuality plus some kind of elusive stuff known as matter, they are instead just composites of certain sorts of actuality. Reality is actuality all the way down, and substances are bundles of actuality, unified by organization around a substantial form."[26] For Pasnau, then, natural bodies are not composites of form and matter (act and

[24] Pasnau acknowledges that his reading is "highly unorthodox," for "Aquinas regularly talks as if material substances are composed of matter and form, and he regularly speaks as if prime matter is a kind of substratum. But it seems to me," insists Pasnau, "that such talk cannot be taken literally" (ibid., 132).

[25] To quote Pasnau, "metaphysically speaking, Aquinas's hylomorphism is reductive in the direction of form," because "matter makes no causal contribution that can't be attributed to form" (ibid., 133). Again, "actuality is explanatorily basic because it is metaphysically basic, because there is simply nothing else that might figure into an explanation. What seem to be explanations in corporeal terms—the brain, the heart, fire, air—always turn out in the end to be appeals to actuality" (ibid., 131).

[26] Ibid., 131. Here, we leave aside the issue of whether a reduction to form could allow for the "subordination" of "bundles of actuality" (see also ibid., 135, 140, and 168) to a single substantial form, with the unity of *ens* as its result. At the very least, such a view gives rise to formulations, such as the following description of the human being, that strike the ear as an exotic repurposing of Thomistic terminology in defense of a new kind of formal unicity: "The apparently disparate ingredients of human nature constitute a single form, whose parts function together, are essentially related, and give rise to a substance composed of a complex variety of actualized forms which is nevertheless one thing in the strongest sense" (140).

potency) but composites of various, actual components held together in accordance with a substantial form. To think of prime matter, or even matter, as some thing existing within natural composites, somehow alongside form, is to project an abstract conceptual distinction upon the real order. In so doing, we violate the unity of material bodies. Prime matter, then, is not a real constituent because, more broadly, matter is not a real constituent; or, conversely, matter is not a real constituent because prime matter, as most properly and purely material, is not a real constituent.

Supposing that potency can be reduced to act in this way, we might wonder what justifies the language of "matter" in the first place. Why not simply talk of various formal expressions of being without flirting with the problematic dualism that "matter" invites? Pasnau anticipates such an objection and finds a way of legitimating Aquinas's use of this term. Although matter is not really distinct from form or actuality, it is conceptually distinct in this way: "matter" or "the material" is simply a means of designating actual beings of a certain kind or grade—namely, bodies—beings of inferior actuality that exist in space and are subject to change.[27] Thus, minerals, plants, animals, and so on,

[27] Thus, Pasnau speaks of the distinction between matter and form as "*conceptual*," rather than "*real*" (ibid., 131), and "follows [Aquinas's] lead" on what this distinction means (ibid., 423 n. 4); likewise, matter is described as a "conceptual part" of the material object (ibid., 131). Regarding the positive meaning of "material," Pasnau avers, "to be material is to be actual in a certain limited, inferior way. Matter is no more than a particular manifestation of actuality: complex actuality in motion, subject to alteration, generation, and corruption" (ibid.).

The exact nature or extent of this attempt at reductionism is often unclear. As but one example, Pasnau cites the soul-body relationship, as understood by Aristotle and Aquinas, as just another piece of "evidence" in favor of his reduction: "Although it might seem that such reduction is untenable in the human case, Aquinas is eager to claim that the soul-body relationship is on a par, in this respect, with other form-matter composites" (ibid., 133-34). While the body of his argument seems to contain no substantive qualification in its use of the soul-body composition as a paradigmatic example of hylomorphism, Pasnau acknowledges in an endnote that Aquinas clearly defends "the real composition of soul + body"; he adds, while "there is no doubt" regarding the real distinction of soul and body, "the question is how form and matter are composed," which he interprets by way of reduction (ibid., 424 n. 5). It is not clear how affirming the real distinction between soul and body is consistent with Pasnau's claim that—apart from questions surrounding the

are material, not with respect to something added to their formality or actuality, but because the kind of actuality that they possess is inferior to the actuality possessed by immaterial beings, that is, God and the angels. Materiality simply marks out a genus within actual being. For this reason, just as matter may be reduced (in an upward direction) to form, so too—within the order of natural bodies—we could just as well reduce form (downwardly) to matter.[28] Since form and matter are simply conceptually distinct ways of talking about natural being, we could rightly classify Aquinas as a kind of materialist, at least with regard to his account of natural being.[29] Actual bodies, after all, are "simply actual" as "simply material."

If Pasnau's interpretation of prime matter tends in the direction of a kind of monism, then it stands in evident contrast to the reading offered by Jeffrey Brower. In his entry in the *Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, as well as in his more recent book, *Aquinas's Ontology of the Material World*, Brower aims to offer an account of prime matter that affirms its distinct reality. He

human intellect—Aquinas can be read as a materialist regarding nature (see nn. 28 and 29 below). It is also not clear how a merely conceptual distinction could hold at the level of the genus (form + matter) but then not hold at the level of the species (soul + body). This problem is only further intensified when applied to the human being, given that Pasnau unambiguously acknowledges a real distinction between *rational* soul and body, as well as an excess of the operation of the former relative to the contribution of the latter. We once again have a particular case violating the more global metaphysical account, wherein "the material" is simply what stands below "the immaterial" on the spectrum of being; were we to attempt to minimize this inconsistency without actually abandoning the broader account, we could do so, ironically enough, only by conceding a too-radically dualistic conception of the human being.

[28] To be clear, Pasnau argues that his reductionism "cannot be in the direction of matter," because "the human soul is something over and above its matter" (*Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 135). This claim is not without difficulties, for reasons suggested in the preceding footnote. Nevertheless, given the territory that Pasnau has staked out, such a claim seems to amount to the following: while form, as such, is not reducible to matter, natural form can be reduced to matter so long as "matter" means an actual, natural body—and not simply potency—and so long as the form in question is not the rational soul. Within these parameters, claims of a downward reduction seem perfectly admissible.

[29] For instances in which Pasnau calls Aquinas a "materialist" regarding all natural substances and operations—save the human intellect and its activity—see ibid., 45, 65, and 98.

deems unsatisfying any account that makes prime matter "a mere logical abstraction," since only when matter is considered to be a real constituent of natural bodies do substantial generation and corruption become possible.[30] Thus, Brower defends what he calls a "realist" account of prime matter, which accords prime matter reality, not as a complete and independent substance, but as a formless ingredient of material substance.[31] To capture the incomplete, indeterminate, but nonetheless real character of prime matter, Brower classifies it as "gunky stuff."[32] As "gunky stuff," prime matter is a single kind of characterless—and thus not properly individual—substrate, portions of which enter into the composition of each and every material substance.[33] "Stuff" is the stuff *of* numerically individual substances, and, as such, it cannot exist apart from form. Still, in these individual substances, prime matter exists underneath form, as something really distinct. So understood, prime matter provides a substrate for change, and it gives natural bodies their extension in space.[34]

The distinctiveness of Brower's account perhaps best comes to light in his claim that prime matter, as a real constituent of material bodies, remains uncharacterized by the natural form of the composite that it constitutes. That is to say, prime matter retains its nature as one kind of thing, even as it is apportioned

[30] *Aquinas's Ontology of the Material World*, 121.

[31] For the language of "realism," see, e.g., "Matter, Form, and Individuation," 88. Brower explicitly refers to Pasnau's account as an example of "antirealism" (ibid., 100-101 nn. 7 and n. 18).

[32] *Aquinas's Ontology of the Material World*, 125ff.

[33] I call prime matter "characterless" because Brower insists that prime matter is neither "essentially" nor "accidentally" characterized "by any of the properties it possesses via inherence" (ibid., 149-50). On the other hand, Brower holds that prime matter, as extended stuff, "can be said to have a distinctive character or nature even in the absence of forms or properties" (ibid., 125 n. 34).

[34] In "Matter, Form, and Individuation," Brower explains prime matter's contribution to spatial extension as follows: "stuff, it is natural to suppose, is just that which accounts for an object's extension or capacity to fill a certain region" (93). Prime matter is "that which explains a material object's capacity to 'fill its place' or 'have extension in three dimensions,'" while a thing's *precise* dimensions require a further consideration of "certain . . . accidents or qualities" (ibid., 95-96). Brower likewise holds that, since a material individual, e.g., Romulus, "cannot exist without some dimensions or other, the same will be true of his prime matter" (ibid., 96).

out among many substances. Brower arrives at this feature of prime matter by comparing the role played by prime matter in accidental or artistic change with the role played by matter in substantial change; the latter, for him, involves prime matter. In particular, he compares a lump of bronze becoming a statue to a zygote becoming human (problematically understanding that the latter involves substantial change), and he distinguishes between these cases by considering how matter comes to receive form in each. In the example of the lump of bronze becoming a statue, there is a realization of an accidental compound whose material term is not prime matter. In all such cases, claims Brower, two conditions hold: (1) the matter goes from possessing one form to possessing another, and (2) the matter goes from being characterized by one form to being characterized by another. To quote Brower, "our lump goes not only (a) from *possessing sphericity* to *possessing statuehood* but also (b) from *being a sphere* to *being a statue*."[35] Attending to these conditions allows us to appreciate what is distinctive of substantial change, in which prime matter plays the role of substratum. In the case of substantial change—for Brower, when a zygote becomes human—only the first of the two aforementioned conditions holds. Specifically, while the material term goes from possessing one form to possessing another, the matter does not go from being characterized by one form to being characterized by another. The material term, precisely as prime matter, remains uncharacterized throughout. Again, to quote Brower, "prime matter . . . goes from *possessing zygotehood* to *possessing humanity*. Even so, such prime matter cannot itself be said to go from *being a zygote* to *being a human*."[36] So, in the case of natural beings, we can say that the matter (again, prime matter) possesses a form, and we can say that the composite constituted out of the form and matter is characterized by that form. Throughout,

[35] Ibid., 91. To be clear from the outset, there are reasons to find this modeling of artistic change to be misleading. A critical engagement follows below.

[36] Ibid. See also *Aquinas's Ontology of the Material World*, 104-5.

however, prime matter itself remains *un*characterized by the form that it possesses.[37]

Why should we insist, as Brower does, that prime matter remains uncharacterized by its form? The principal advantages seem to be the following. First, such an account allows us to assert that prime matter exists as a real principle of natural substance. If matter were characterized by a distinct relation to form, then the matter in question would no longer be pure potency, but potency of a certain kind, relative to a certain act. If, however, prime matter is left uncharacterized, its potency remains "pure"—it retains its native indifference—and so it can meaningfully be said to exist as such. The referent of Aquinas's notion of *materia prima* genuinely exists in the real order, in each and every natural substance.

Second, once we allow that prime matter exists in reality, we have a substrate that mediates substantial change.[38] Brower takes quite literally Aristotle's claim that whenever there is generation or corruption—whenever we pass from one terminus to another—something must underlie the change and remain one throughout. Clearly, substantial form cannot so remain and, by implication, neither can matter characterized by such form, since its characterization would vary in strict conformity to its governing form. Matter can be this single, unchanging substrate, if and only if it is characterized neither by the form (or privation) of the *terminus a quo* nor by the form of the *terminus ad quem*. Prime matter, on account of its indifference, satisfies this condition; it can receive both forms, and innumerable others, while remaining the same in nature. Hence, rather than have its capacity for form be "used up" by its present arrangement, prime matter remains uncharacterized and so retains potency for all other natural forms.[39]

[37] By implication, "prime matter is a type of being that can be *re-identified over time*" (*Aquinas's Ontology of the Material World*, 113).

[38] Generation and corruption require a substratum and so the real distinction between matter and form, and "if there is no prime matter, then material substances cannot literally be composed of matter and form" (ibid., 121).

[39] Brower also thinks that his account makes sense of Aquinas's claim in *De Princ. Natur.*, c. 2 that prime matter is somehow "one" (*Aquinas's Ontology of the Material*

III. Towards a *via media*: Purifying Potency

While each of these interpretations has merit, I think that we cannot be forced to choose between them. They best serve to point us in the direction of Aquinas's genuine account, which lies between these extremes, or perhaps beyond the logic that they share.

Pasnau's interpretation rightly attends to Aquinas's broader metaphysics of actuality when assessing his natural philosophy. And Pasnau rightly seeks to privilege the unity of being as it is found within the real order, rather than reconstituting reality out of abstract parts. Yet, despite his commendable attempt to avoid untoward dualisms, he appears to defend "the wrong kind of monism."[40] That he is willing to defend a monism at all suggests a problematic conception of what the real distinction of matter and form actually amounts to. He argues that, once we consider what is actual in a thing, we have exhausted the whole of the existing thing. Since the actual is the formal, one can give a complete account of the being of a thing in terms of form, such that there is no room left for matter. But this account elides the distinction between form and being, between principle and substance, by trading on various senses of "actuality." It is of

World, 116-18). For Brower, prime matter achieves numerical unity, not by virtue of its identity within any single composite, nor by way of being a single substratum corresponding to a single, cosmic form. Instead, we arrive at the oneness of prime matter by adding together all of the uncharacterized "gunky stuff" in the universe that is apportioned out among substances. I take Aquinas to be arguing, more modestly, that the notion of prime matter is intelligibly one because, by the removal of diverse formalities in nature, we approach a lack of determination, which has its own sort of unity—imperfect, relative to the full unity achieved via form. Still, the vanishing point of act, natural receptivity as such, can be called "one." See *De Princ. Natur.*, c. 2, ll. 98-108; and *De Ente*, c. 2, ll. 236-39 (Leonine ed., 43:367-81). As will be clear below, prime matter cannot possess the unity of gunky stuff.

[40] Pasnau uses this expression to anticate a possible line of objection, which he grants has some merit: "one might still regard my account as wrongheaded in that it defends the wrong kind of monism. Rather than treat actuality as basic, perhaps we should treat the composite substance as basic" (*Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 135). Treating the composite substance as basic—while of course acknowledging its fundamental unity—and treating its composition as involving a real distinction between matter and form—rather than simply a bundle of distinct formalities—is, I argue, what Aquinas actually does.

course undeniable that all that exists does so by way of actuality, but the fact that form is the principle of actuality does not entail that existence is nothing more than formality. Indeed, insofar as natural form is merely a *quo*, the "that by which" a material being is made actual, it demands matter as its distinct complement.[41] Natural form is that which confers actuality upon what might receive it—namely, a material possibility. Thus, the relationship between form and matter is one of necessary complementarity: the actual does not exclude the potential, as one thing might exclude another; form completes matter so as to make a body actual as something distinct and one. This complementarity is likewise, then, an expression of causal dependency. Form actualizes, unifies, and defines a material body, while materiality receives and restricts this actuality. Apart from the causal determination added by form, the material body would be something else—because, with respect to its materiality, it has the natural potency to be otherwise.[42] In the end, given that matter and form stand in this reciprocal, causal relationship, it is not clear how they could be "merely rationally distinct"; what is merely rationally distinct is really one, and what is simply one admits of no such causal reciprocity.[43]

Therefore, while it is true that material being can be understood as having a lower grade of actuality relative to immaterial being, more can be said on this score, because this "diminished actuality" does not rule out the need to invoke real composition. Lower-grade actuality expresses itself through

[41] V *Metaphys*., lect. 10 (Marietti ed., no. 904).

[42] Given that matter must be informed in one way or another, and given that matter always brings some form with it, one might be tempted to infer that "form" and "matter" are merely rationally distinct ways of naming the same organized substance. Accordingly, to say that a material body "could be otherwise"—rather than implying a real distinction—would be a truism that amounts to saying, "we could be talking about a different substance." But this alone is not the kind of potency at play in natural bodies: a material body "could be otherwise," not simply in some abstract, metaphysical sense, but because of the natural potencies inscribed in its material constitution.

[43] Insofar as the real distinction between form and matter follows straightforwardly from their reciprocal causality, one wonders how this distinction could be denied, apart from a privileging of efficient causality as a paradigm for all causal relationships—over against which formal causality can no longer be recognized as such.

composition, for, as being or actuality decreases, so too does unity.[44] Material beings are distinguished from immaterial beings, not simply because the former possess a lower degree of actuality that expresses itself in a physical mode, and not simply because they possess composition in the order of quantity. Material beings, as such, are not purely formal. In point of fact, Aquinas already has a place in his hierarchy of being for the purely formal, for an "upward reduction to form": angelic beings, as subsistent forms, possess no complementary material principle; and among the angels differences of actuality are still admitted.[45] Accordingly, material beings are, as such, not susceptible to a formal reduction. They are subject to a composition of matter and nonsubsistent form, the latter of which exists through body as its act. Such composition sets the basic conditions of natural being's dynamism—its generation and decay, growth and diminution, and (more broadly) historical and cosmic unfolding. Thus, within the material individual, the unity and identity that follow principally from form coexist with a susceptibility to accidental and essential change, susceptibility that follows principally from matter.[46] Such susceptibility, though "potential," is not for this reason "unreal"; rather, it is real precisely as being-in-potency.

[44] *ScG* I, c. 42. To this extent, Pasnau's account upsets Aquinas's hierarchical metaphysics. Pasnau admits the real composition of the human soul and body, but this composition becomes an exception, rather than the expression of a truth that would have to hold, *mutatis mutandis*, for all natural kinds falling below man on the chain of being.

[45] Aquinas' provocative insistence that angels altogether lack matter, even spiritual matter, gives rise to the consequence that each angel constitutes its own species (*STh* I, q. 50, a. 4), differing from other angels by virtue of its intellectual capacities (*STh* I, q. 55, a. 3).

[46] To justify his reduction, Pasnau insists that matter never has any causal efficacy that cannot be referred to form, and so matter has no explanatory power that cannot be reduced to form (again, see *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 131 and 133). But this observation simply takes advantage of the fact that, for Aquinas, matter *just is* a relative principle, specifically ordered to an additional principle of actuality. Thus, any attempt to find evidence of matter's wholly independent causal contribution, as some "extraformal agent," will in principle fail. This is not to say, however, that matter has no explanatory power, since its addition to form proves to be a condition for the possibility of change, which is one of the first lessons of Aristotle's *Physics*.

Thus, to deny that material potency is a distinct principle is to render material beings invulnerable to natural change. By refusing to probe actuality further, Pasnau's account leaves us with material beings limited in actuality, but without these beings possessing, within the actuality of what they are, a genuine possibility to be other. Such limited but invulnerable beings simply have no place in Aquinas's metaphysics.

Brower offers what is arguably a more orthodox treatment of matter in Aquinas, to the extent that he maintains the real distinction of form and matter. His notion of "gunky stuff" furthermore represents a fairly literal reading of prime matter that relates rather intuitively to Aquinas's conception of change and the need for a material substratum. Aquinas does state, as we have seen, that prime matter is "related to all forms and privations as bronze is to the statue and the shapeless." Is not prime matter, then, a more elemental bronze, a still more sculptable materiality? And would not uncharacterized and indifferent "stuff" be the purest potency imaginable? Perhaps, though, such a conception of prime matter is too imaginable, too easy to express in an image, and so not *pure* potency, a notion more properly grasped by intellectual insight and analogy.

It seems to me that, if Pasnau's account is too reductionistic and parsimonious, then Brower's is too dualistic. Brower's account affixes prime matter to form in the way that Pasnau is rightly anxious about. To be clear, Brower does not append matter to form in a way that is mysterious because of matter's superfluity, since on his account matter and form serve distinct and defined roles; rather, the mystery lies in how matter and form are meant to constitute an integrated whole. Brower holds that natural substances are composites of form and prime matter, but he still wants to maintain that prime matter possesses natural form while remaining uncharacterized by that form, even though the composite is itself so characterized. But if natural substances are simply, for Brower, composites of form and prime matter—such that prime matter actually exists—and if form does not characterize prime matter, then what matter does it characterize? If natural form is the actuality of a material potency, then what potency does it actualize? And if, in actualizing matter, form is

not also characterizing, what do we even mean by the "actualization," "fulfillment," or "completion" of what is potential?

Apparently, such an account proceeds only by thinning out what actualization entails, and—as a necessarily corollary—by impoverishing the meaning of potency. Regarding the former, substantial form ends up "actualizing" matter by granting it admission into being, but as something largely added alongside itself. Admittedly, gunky stuff still needs to be arranged in a determinate way in order to exist, and so form permeates matter to the extent that it provides matter's concrete dimensionality. And yet, to be clear, extension as such is not, for Brower, the additional contribution of form: gunky stuff is inherently extended, and so form simply brings this inherent dimensionality to a particular and concrete determination. With respect to dimensionality, then, form actualizes only to the extent that it "firms up" the corporeal substrate that is prime matter, rather than imparting the very actuality of spatial extension. This extrinsicism of actualization is still more evident in the case of form's conferral of a specific nature, which is what "characterization" seems chiefly to entail for Brower. While determinate dimensions can be transferred to prime matter itself on account of its own inner nature as indeterminately dimensive, a thing's specific nature cannot be so transferred. Instead, the nature of a thing—and here it becomes difficult to find a sensible verb—"adheres" to prime matter without determining (and so compromising) the purity of its potency. The specific nature actualizes as, at most, a kind of artistic impress; it provides body a means of identification, but one that matter carries with it, rather than realizes from within its depths.

It becomes clear, then, that the superficiality of act or form in such a dualistic account has as its necessary correlate the fundamental indifference of prime matter's "potency." Matter serves as an artistic medium to be writ upon, and so potency for form

amounts to infinite malleability, not genuine inclination.[47] In the concrete particular, prime matter remains the "gooey indeterminate center" upon which rests the façade of formal structure.[48] Thus, if prime matter maintains its supposedly pure character, this is only because matter does not fully receive form into itself; it holds itself back from the suffusion of act. Of course, that matter *can* hold itself back suggests that it has something to hold back; actuality has already been smuggled into its possibility. Brower's account can protect the purity of prime matter from formal characterization only on the condition that prime matter is already "impure," is something more than pure potency. Prime matter is no longer a metaphysical principle of pure potency, but is instead the most underlying natural and quasi-integral part of the composite, an element still more elemental than earth, air, fire, or water. Or, expressed differently, it is not pure potency, but rather something closer to "body as such, considered indeterminately"—though body which, even in the real order, continues to "prescind" from specific characterization.[49]

Given this rendering of form and matter, it would appear that Brower models natural substance in an overly artistic fashion, which undermines the unity that should distinguish natural compounds from artificial compounds. Once prime matter is defined as having its own actuality, the relationship between it and its form must have something of an accidental character, like that of bronze and its artistic arrangement. That Brower relies upon a model of artistic change to introduce Aquinas's hylomorphism is not itself problematic; however, when he turns his

[47] Here, we are a long way from Aristotle's remarks on the natural inclination of matter found at *Physics* 1.9.192a21-24: "The truth is that what desires the form is matter, as the female desires the male and the ugly the beautiful."

[48] Brower himself describes material substances as "layer cakes" with "pudding" at the center—this pudding being "prime matter" (*Aquinas's Ontology of the Material World*, 41).

[49] For a discussion of *praecisio*, see *De Ente*, c. 2, ll. 123ff. Evidently, insofar as *praecisio* describes an act of intellectual abstraction, I am applying the notion in a somewhat nonconventional fashion. However, this is because prime matter, on Brower's terms, exists in a nonconventional fashion: namely, it exists in the real order according to a kind of abstract indifference that should be possible only in the order of knowing.

attention to nature, art retains a paradigmatic status.[50] And, to the extent that the equivalence between art and nature is qualified, it is qualified in the wrong way. Aquinas himself insists that artistic compounds are not genuine substances, precisely because artistic form is accidental to the underlying matter, which retains its own character as a natural substance (e.g., as bronze).[51] Inverting Aquinas, Brower insists that form characterizes matter in the domain of art and not in the domain of nature: the artistic matter *is* a statue, while the prime matter of Socrates *is not* specifically human.[52] Insofar as Brower allows form to characterize its matter in artistic compositions, but not in natural ones, nature becomes more artistic than art itself.

[50] See "Matter, Form, and Individuation," 86-90.

[51] This is why, for Aquinas, "bronze" does not immediately signify a form or privation: it exists as bronze with and without artistic arrangement (*De Princ. Natur.*, c. 2).

[52] This inversion has a provisional plausibility on the artistic side only if, unlike in Aquinas, the bronze is no longer the statue's material term—since bronze evidently *does* retain its character—and if "characterization" is no longer ontological in nature. Of course, what exactly the material term would then be proves to be problematic. In "Matter, Form, and Individuation," Brower seems to think that the lump of bronze, *qua* lump, is the material term that is characterized by artistic form (91), though he is not wholly consistent in this regard (94). (For a lengthier treatment, see *Aquinas's Ontology of the Material World*, 166ff. and 227ff.) Using the "lump" as the material term seems to allow for a principle of continuity through change, and it provides a subject of characterization—precisely because of the lump's own indifference as a kind of abstract *suppositum*. The question becomes whether a "lump" serves as the *relevant* locus of characterization in the analogy between art and nature. In Brower's modeling of change, the artistic lump is supposed to be analogous, in the order of natural, substantial change, to prime matter—though *merely* analogous, since prime matter distinctively fails to be characterized by its form. Such an analogy, however, seems to be contrived, and so its putative implications for prime matter as uncharacterized should elicit skepticism. Given the particular sort of abstraction that "lump" represents, its more evident natural analogue would be, not prime matter, but "natural body considered indeterminately." And, in the real order, such "body" would exist, not indeterminately, but as a determinate kind of body; in fact, this body would be "characterized" in a more robustly ontological sense than the lump constituting the statue, since it would have a substantial form as its act. In the end, Brower's notion of prime matter actually seems to be strongly analogous to a statue's bronze, and while this prima facie accords with Aquinas, Aquinas's analogy presumes a greater nonequivalence between nature and art. Thus, against Aquinas, Brower has prime matter retain its characterlessness beneath its substantial form, just as bronze retains its own natural identity beneath its artistic form.

Here, we have the resuscitation of a line of thinking that runs through both ancient materialism (of the nonatomist variety) and Platonism[53]—each of which Aristotle and Aquinas see themselves as overcoming in their accounts of matter—as well as a return to a (softened) version of the *forma corporeitatis*—the rejection of which set the Thomists at odds with the Franciscan school.[54] This account of prime matter avoids a more overt materialism, a single cosmic substrate, by apportioning matter out, by diffusing it and requiring the co-presence of distinct substantial forms, but it fails to secure matter's full subordination to form and so its integration within each characterized substance. It avoids a more robust Platonism by clearly specifying a single, substantial form in the case of each substance—avoiding a constellation of "participations" converging on the surface of the *khôra*—but it does not fully "bring this form down" into potency, and so, again, the unity of *ousia* is left incomplete. Brower's account comes about as close to the Thomistic view as is possible without fully divesting itself of these prior influences. Still, once we conceive of the principle of potency in terms of "stuff," as a substrate of "actual indifference"—that is, once matter is given definition prior to *ens*—then *ens* can only be the result of a partitive reconstruction.[55] Having been submitted to the wrong kind of

[53] See Plato, *Timaeus*, 48e-50c, where matter is described as a characterless, but quasi-substantial, receptacle. Of course, a vein of the Platonic tradition will object, in turn, to Aristotle's account of prime matter. For Plotinus's objection, see Lloyd P. Gerson, *From Plato to Platonism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2013), 262.

[54] It is genuinely puzzling that Brower underscores how his account, in particular, makes sense of Aquinas's "unwavering commitment to the so-called 'unicity of substantial forms' doctrine" ("Matter, Form, and Individuation," 93). He writes, "For once some prime matter or stuff combines with a form or property, it is natural to think of the result as an individual substance each of whose further forms are accidental" (ibid.). Even when informed by Brower's broader reflections, the "it is natural to think . . ." seems insufficiently pregnant in meaning to arbitrate decisively between Aquinas's notion of matter and that of, for example, Scotus. Indeed, Brower's account actually threatens the doctrine of unicity, not *after* the addition of substantial form—not with respect to "further forms"—but *prior* to its addition, in the already-too-formal character of prime matter. The exaggerated actuality of prime matter threatens to make substantial form a second form within the composite.

[55] That prime matter ends up as stuff is no doubt connected to a privileging of one possible meaning of "matter"—namely, matter as unchanging substrate—which then

abstraction, matter and form simply cannot be reintegrated in a coherent manner; their dualism invites yet further mediating principles, whose number—even if extended to infinity—could not make both ends meet.[56] Such an account cannot secure the unity of *ens*, because such unity requires the complete reception of the nature by the *suppositum*. Form must permeate and characterize matter in the depths of its potency.[57]

I think, then, that Aquinas would seriously qualify the claim that (1) prime matter *possesses* form, and this because he would altogether reject the claim that (2) prime matter is left *uncharacterized* by that form. Regarding the first point, natural substance may of course be understood in terms of the principles of prime matter and substantial form. Such an affirmation, however, differs from an insistence that a particular kind of natural substance be understood, principally, as prime matter in possession of a specific form or quiddity.[58] In the concrete order,

unduly governs all further discussions. Accordingly, Brower sets as the basic sense of "matter" for Aquinas "that which remains the same throughout a given change—that is . . . the enduring subject of change" (ibid., 87).

[56] Indeed, in Brower's account, we are left with a strange divide not only between the material and the formal, but also between the formal and the formal. Without denying that there is an ordering of formalities, a Thomist should be perplexed by the claim that, while prime matter remains uncharacterized by substantial form, it nonetheless has extension, size, and even color (*Aquinas's Ontology of the Material World*, 150). It is unclear, however, why the "whiteness" of Socrates would not be the result of the characterizing influence of his human nature. (For reasons described in *De Ente*, c. 6, ll. 81-86, however, nothing prevents such whiteness from perduring in the corpse of Socrates.)

[57] Throughout his works, Brower alternates between describing a natural substance as a composite of prime matter and form and as a composite of prime matter and quiddity (e.g., "zygotehood," "humanity," etc.). Strictly speaking, Aquinas treats quiddity as the complementary principle, not of matter, but of the supposit (V *Metaphys*., lect. 10 [Marietti ed., no. 904]).

[58] That Brower privileges prime matter as the complement, not only to substantial form, but even particular species of forms, runs through his analysis. For but one example, which appears in the context of explaining Aquinas's notion of the *forma totius* (vs. the *forma partis*), Brower claims that "the nature or essence of human beings includes not only substantial form"—which Brower identifies as "humanity" (93)—"but also prime matter" ("Matter, Form, and Individuation," 102 n. 27). When Aquinas himself explains the notion of the *forma totius*, he insists that it includes both form and "common sensible matter" (e.g., VII *Metaphys.*, lect. 9 [Marietti ed., nos. 1467-73]). That is to say, the

in a particular kind of substance, prime matter is not that which possesses form; primarily, the human body possesses a rational soul, the canine body a specific sensitive soul, and so on. That is to say, actualized bodies possess form. Bodies possess form on account of being fulfilled from within by that form. Secondly, and relatedly, to the extent that matter exists, it cannot be left uncharacterized by form, because, to exist at all, the matter of a natural substance must be characterized by its form. A substance could not possess a form in the first place without its matter being so characterized. After all, substances possess a natural form only on the condition that a material potency which *can* receive form *has* received it, as its act—and, in so doing, matter is specified by form. Thus, as potency, matter's very existence depends upon actualization and so characterization. Rather than saying that the composite is characterized by its form but the matter is left uncharacterized, we must insist that the composite has a character only on the condition that its matter has been characterized. The composite simply is the characterized matter—"For through form, which is the act of matter, matter becomes an actual being and this something."[59] As Aristotle and Aquinas repeatedly insist, form and matter, when united, are one in being, insofar as they constitute an actualized potency.[60]

Thus, to deny that prime matter possesses form in the sense outlined above is not simply to prefer one, more concrete, modeling of substance over another, more abstract—but equally legitimate—one. It is to accord primacy to the real order, in its organic unity, and to articulate the principles of this order in a way that safeguards its unity. Expressed negatively, it is to avoid

quiddity or *forma totius* of the human being consists of a rational form and "flesh and bones," i.e., a human body considered indeterminately. Such indeterminate matter is not prime matter; rather, it expresses what distinguishes human bodies from bodies of other species but abstracts from what distinguishes one human body from another. By extension, when Aquinas claims that the concrete individual, e.g., Socrates, is composed of *this* form and *this* matter, he means not simply "this portion of matter" but this particular *human* body, constituted of *this* flesh and *these* bones. See *De Ente*, c. 2, ll. 77-89.

[59] *De Ente*, c. 2, ll. 31-32.

[60] For but two notable examples, see VIII *Metaphys.*, lect. 5 (Marietti ed., no. 1767); and II *De Anima*, lect. 1 (Marietti ed., no. 234). See *In Aristotelis librum De anima commentarium*, ed. A.-M. Pirotta (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1948).

projecting upon the real what belongs only and derivatively to the domain of analysis. The interpretation of prime matter as "stuff" capable of possessing form involves just such a projection. To privilege prime matter as the principal subject in possession of form is symptomatic of a reification of prime matter, a reification that then leaves a fault line between matter and form. The temptation so to reify matter is certainly understandable, at least in this regard: apparently, the density or extension of the corporeal stands in need of explanation, and given that of the two potential candidates, matter and form, only the former is distinctive to bodies, assigning such density to matter seems an inevitability. Prime matter, then, is extended stuff, standing in potency to further configuration. But hylomorphism, at its heart, flouts just such an inevitability. Such a conception of prime matter invests in but one principle what exists more primordially in the union of both form and matter. Corporeal extension clearly presumes actualization and so must in fact be a feature of *body*, and not a feature of matter in its primary sense. For Aquinas, then, extension follows "from the nature of corporeality itself."[61] Thus, prime matter is not stuff, because it is not of itself extended, not even indeterminately so. Bodies are extended, and even if subjected to the gaze of reflective analysis their extension cannot be separated from actuality and so formality. Extension obtains in the primacy of the concrete body and cannot be found in the derivation of the abstracted principle, *potentia pura*.

[61] *In Boet. De Trin.*, q. 4, a. 3. Aquinas concludes that, while some thinkers attempt to locate dimensiveness in something more superficial, filling a place fundamentally applies to a body *ex ipsa corporeitatis natura*. Now, body can be subjected to further analysis to determine how exactly it is able to fill place (*replere locum*), but this analysis will not arrive at a singular cause more basic than *corporeitas*: accordingly, form is in place only *per accidens*, and matter is similarly (*similiter*) not subject to place when considered in itself (*secundum se considerata*) and precisely because matter, taken in itself, is understood as being *prior* to all genera (*quia sic intelligitur praeter omnia alia genera*). Matter does indeed take on extension, but only through its relation to something else which has a more primary connection to place (*per quod habet primam comparationem ad locum*)—namely, the formality of dimension. Thus, body fills place on account of matter filling place, but only because matter is subject to the formality of dimensionality in a body. See ll. 176-207 (*Opera omnia*, vol. 50 [Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1992], 129).

Simply put, the dimensiveness of the natural requires actuality and so obtains above the level of prime matter.

In the real order, it is thus the concrete body that possesses form. Matter may likewise be said to possess form, but only by virtue of being characterized by form. Still, by insisting upon the characterization of matter—by insisting that matter is at no level left indeterminate—are we not allowing form, as it were, to "soak up" all potency, and so to soak up the potency necessary for substantial change? Do we not then revert back to Pasnau's position, which seems to render material beings "atomic" by denying real difference with respect to their principles, a difference that opens being to becoming? Must prime matter remain uncharacterized as a condition of substantial change?

Thomists cannot admit this generic underlayer of matter, for reasons already suggested, and need not do so to allow for change. Substantial change does not emerge out of, or unfold on the surface of, the matter that is left untouched by form—no existing matter goes untouched. Change springs, instead, from the potency of the very matter that is characterized by form and, in part, insofar as it is so characterized.[62] Natural forms, as such, actualize and characterize matter but do so without exhausting a thing's potency.[63] And natural form leaves potency unexhausted not by failing to permeate all of matter, but through the very

[62] In attending to natural change, I intentionally leave aside the issue of obediential potency. I note only that, insofar as God makes use of obediential potency, God's causal influence still presumes an order of determination in potency relative to an ordained end of actualization. Thus, the human being (not the beast) can be ordained to the supernatural, the intellect (not touch) to the virtue of faith, Adam's rib to Eve's body, etc. Regarding the last sort of example, God would actualize through the incorporation of relevant matter or, beyond this, resort to the act of creation. No greater degree of actual indifference need be attributed to prime matter than in instances of natural change. See *STh* I, q. 92, a. 3, ad 1.

[63] This reserve of potency is what, for Aquinas, differentiates forms found in the sublunar order and the forms of incorruptible, celestial bodies. To explain the putative incorruptibility of the celestial bodies Aquinas argues that their natural potency is wholly subordinated to form without remainder, and so these bodies lack a susceptibility to take on other substantial forms. Such a view of the heavenly order dovetails with a belief in a quintessence, since a genuine potency for substantial change is rooted in a theory of natural bodies constituted out of the four elements, whose various and rival qualities allow for corruption. See *STh* I, q. 9, a. 2; and XII *Metaphys.*, lect. 2 (Marietti ed., no. 2436).

manner by which it does permeate matter. That is to say, form characterizes the whole of matter such that matter remains capable of being otherwise characterized. On account of its present actualization, matter is obliquely oriented to a specific range of alternative actualities. For this reason, change unfolds according to delimited pathways, and this process is mediated, not by the indifferent underlayer of prime matter, but by virtue of matter's determinate possibility. Sperm becomes human zygote, and the oak tree, upon death, decomposes into pulp and carbon dioxide. In the natural course of things, tree matter cannot become sperm, at least not proximately, because its matter is not immediately open to generation or corruption of that kind. These processes of determinate unfolding are the result of how prime matter has been characterized—insofar as the purity of prime matter is arrived at only by abstracting from such determination. As Aquinas observes, "although generation comes about from nonbeing which is in potency, still something does not come about from anything whatsoever, but diverse things come from diverse matters."[64] Without materiality, as such, we would not have passibility, as such; in nature, however, even in the case of substantial change, we always find characteristic passibility, and we cannot explain characteristic passibility apart from the way in which matter has been determined by form.

[64] XII *Metaphys.*, lect. 2 (Marietti ed., no. 2438). Aquinas continues, "For each thing that can be generated has determinate matter from which it comes to be, since form must be proportionate to matter. For although prime matter is in potency to all forms, still it receives them according to a certain order. For, first, it is in potency to elemental forms, and through their mediation, according to diverse proportions of commixing, is in potency to diverse forms: whence anything is not able to come immediately from anything whatsoever, except perhaps through resolution into prime matter." Regarding this concluding remark, Aquinas is hemming in his previous reflections by considering a hypothetical extreme that would serve as the condition under which anything whatsoever could pass into anything. There can of course be no *actual* resolution into—and back out of—prime matter, because the indetermination of pure potency cannot concretely obtain. Even elemental change does not involve such a momentary resolution and reemergence of form but instead involves one element yielding immediately to another, to which it is determinately oriented. As Aquinas suggests, prime matter can become anything, but only because its "ideality" is mediated in the real order by diverse and determinate potencies.

CONCLUSION: PRIME MATTER'S FOUNDATION IN REAL POTENCY AND THE PROBLEM OF UNIVERSALS

If we find in nature characterized potency, then is prime matter, in the end, a real constituent of natural bodies? Can it be said to exist? First, and negatively, the above reflections provide genuine grounds for denying prime matter's existence, assuming the proper qualifications. If by prime matter we mean, following Aquinas, "pure potency" or "potency alone," and if we take seriously his claim that "whatever is in act cannot be called prime matter,"[65] then I think we have to say that prime matter as such—that is, in its purity "as prime"—does not and cannot exist. Its existence would require a contradiction, since delimitation and determination are the price that must be paid to enter the order of creaturely being. What exist in nature are concrete substances, each constituted out of a determinate act and determinate materiality. To this extent, prime matter is, to use Pasnau's language, a "limit notion" asymptotically approached by reality. Nevertheless, prime matter need not limit reality in the way described by Pasnau, such that it merely marks out the null space right below the lower bound of diminished, but incomposite, actuality. We avoid this interpretation precisely by affirming matter's existence as a real complement to form: material potency does exist as a principle of natural being and precisely insofar as the particular material potencies of bodies do exist. And only because matter exists as a real principle of being does nature retain the potency and receptivity that make possible both change and the diversity of natural substance. Furthermore, affirming the real existence of materiality does not signal disagreement with Pasnau only regarding the nature of matter more generally, and agreement regarding prime matter. Prime matter must be defined relative to matter more generally, and so a different account of the latter implies a different conception of the former.

Indeed, prime matter finds its proper place as an extension of the potency of determinate matter found within natural bodies.

[65] *De Princ. Natur.*, c. 2, ll. 117-18.

The potency of any natural body, in its real and proximate openness to what is other, can be understood as being open, more remotely, to still other and more diverse possibilities, diverse in species and nobility, constituting higher or more rudimentary expressions of actuality. Accordingly, the mind can discern these possibilities, indefinite in number, in the materiality of any body. And, in appreciating these possible actualities that lie before a natural body, the mind also and necessarily appreciates, with respect to the inward depth of the natural body, the contingency of its present, formal determination. In all of this, the mind decouples materiality from its current specification and opens it to all natural actualities, as if "at once." Here the notion of prime matter finds its place: it comes to light as an extension of the real potency of a natural body, when the mind strips this potency of its present act and so relates it, as pure possibility, to all natural actualities. Potency is a genuine and distinct way of being, and prime matter is an extension of this real dimension of the natural order, but beyond the degree of proximate potency that can be accommodated by the determination of a discrete substance.[66]

Thus, by considering real and determinate potency in various instances of change, the mind can so direct its attention away from the pole of actuality that it can conceive of potency for natural form as such. This act of mental abstraction is, at it were, inverted, because here the mind does not consider some formality

[66] To be clear, to say that the notion of prime matter includes what lies beyond the proximate possibility of determinate matter is not to claim that prime matter simply designates what is presently excluded in substance, so as to make prime matter indistinguishable from privation. While prime matter is an extension of the positive fecundity of matter, a *per se* principle of being, privation is a negative principle and is determinately negative. Unlike form and matter, privation does not enjoy real being, even if the mind discerns its presence—as absence—as a genuine condition of change. For this reason, Aquinas calls privation a *per accidens* principle. Moreover, privation is determinately negative, since it follows upon the determination provided by form and is defined relative to a state of actuality to which matter has a proximate relationship. Thus, the lump of bronze in the artist's studio has a privative relationship to the form of the completed statue, a possibility that is rationally transferred back onto the bronze in the manner of a present absence; the bronze does not possess, e.g., the privation of life, since such a state of actuality is not proximately available to it. See *De Princ. Natur.*, c. 2, ll. 6ff.; and XII *Metaphys.*, lect. 2 (Marietti ed., no. 2437).

in a universal manner, by drawing it forth from its material individuation, but considers matter "even more universally," by divesting it of a relationship with any particular form. To the extent that matter can be known only through form, such abstraction takes place imperfectly, and in a context of analogy or comparison between composite wholes. To conceive of matter as "stuff," however, is to trivialize the claim that matter is known "only through form and by way of analogy": when understood as a malleable substrate, prime matter is known through the composite only because it always happens to exist alongside form, whose specificity matter bears upon its back. When rightly understood as potency, matter is known only by working through actual composites, where prime matter is not yet found in its purity, to what lies beyond the order of concrete existence. By an expansion of the tension of analogical difference, the mind is eventually taken beyond the ambit of the imagination and the horizon of composite being, to the limit notion of prime matter.

If, in all of this, prime matter's particular mode of existence seems too Janus-faced, it might be fruitful to compare this vexing issue to another, equally vexing issue within Thomism, though one about which Thomists have perhaps come to a greater consensus: the problem of universals. While universal natures and prime matter evidently occupy nonequivalent places in Aquinas's metaphysics, their status relative to the question of existence seems, in certain respects, to be helpfully analogous. As is well known, when faced with the question of whether universals exist outside of the mind, Aquinas answers the question either affirmatively or negatively, by way of a distinction.[67] If by "universal" we seek to designate a universal nature, precisely with respect to the quiddity in question, then the universal can be said to exist in nature, in the things in possession of such a nature; if, however, by "universal" we seek to designate a universal nature, precisely with respect to its universal aspect as common to many, then the universal cannot be said to exist outside of the mind, in the order of individuals. In short, universal natures exist in

[67] See VII *Metaphys*., lect. 13 (Marietti ed., no. 1570); II *De Anima*, lect. 12 (Marietti ed., no. 378); and *STh* I, q. 85, a. 2, ad 2.

reality, but not *qua* universal. Such a distinction preserves the difference between the natural and ideal, while granting universal concepts a genuine foundation in things, thereby avoiding the false alternatives of extreme realism and nominalism.

In the case of pure potency, we encounter a similar problem, not with respect to form, but with respect to matter. Here, too, we ought to avoid picking between false alternatives—matter as nothing really distinct from form or matter as quasi-actual stuff. Instead, we can say that prime matter exists, *qua* matter, but not *qua* prime. Insofar as "prime matter" aims to designate pure possibility untethered from any formal specification, prime matter does not exist as such. If it aims to designate the matter of existing natural substances, insofar as it is capable of existing otherwise, and more specifically as it is remotely open to any natural form, then prime matter does exist.[68] But we must avoid going further. The possibility for remote actualities must be distinguished from the potency of matter in its present specification, with the immediate possibilities that follow thereupon. To smuggle all remote actualities—indiscriminately and with equal determination—into the constitution of any material body, under the guise of "prime matter," is to conflate notions of "possibility." It is to conflate what follows immediately from a body's present determination with what could follow on the supposition of further mediation: namely, on the supposition of multiple, subsequent acts of generation and corruption and so multiple, intervening kinds of determinate potency. Thus, to posit in substance a materiality that is indifferently open to any possible eventuality is to impose on being what the mind more abstractly discerns as what could be, and precisely as mind abstracts away from all of the intervening determinations that would need to obtain within the real order. These remote possibilities must, instead, be left to exist when the time comes,

[68] The analogy between the existence of universals and the existence of prime matter thus supposes the following nonequivalence: a nature's potency for universality finds its actuality *in the mind*, whereas matter's potency, considered as prime, finds its possible actuality *in nature*, but not all at once, and so *as discerned* by the mind.

under the required conditions.[69] In this way, materiality, in its present form, is preserved as real and genuine potency—"genuine potency" not only in a negative sense, by virtue of the absence of what is not yet actual, but also in a positive sense, by virtue of its determinate orientation to proximate causal conditions.

In the end, such an account of prime matter secures hylomorphic unity "from below" as Aquinas's account of universals secures it "from above." At its heart, hylomorphism seeks to accommodate dynamism and relationality while retaining a rich account of substantial unity. Accordingly, its account of form and matter allows for substantial change in the order of nature and, in the order of knowledge, secures the intelligibility of natural bodies in terms of essences. Still, in affirming relationality—the anticipation in being of what is naturally or intelligibly other—hylomorphism likewise aims to accord maximal integrity to the individual substance through the unity of matter and form. Such balance is struck only through a proper notion of potency. With respect to form, natural substance anticipates its intelligibility in intellect, but Aquinas denies the universal actual existence *in re* and insists instead on a material substance's merely possible intelligibility, thereby preserving the integrity of the individual as having an actuality of its own.[70] With respect to matter, natural substance anticipates any number of alternative determinations within the order of nature, but by denying matter its own actuality Aquinas ensures that any matter that does exist in substance exists with determinate potency, as subject to the actuality of form. Thus, rather than suggest that all natural possibilities exist all at once, or at equal remove, in matter's generic indeterminacy, the doctrine of prime matter explicitly

[69] Any attempt to make the underlying potency of substance open to all alternative actualities with equal proximity must default to one of two models of matter already proposed in Presocratic philosophy: matter as actually indeterminate, represented by Anaximander's *apeiron*, or matter as hyperdeterminate, albeit germinally so, represented by Anaxagoras's *spermata*.

[70] On the distinct modes of natural and intelligible being, see *STh* I, q. 84, a. 1. Moreover, to be clear, affirming the natural object's possibility to be known implies no real relation in the knowable object relative to the knowledge that it brings about. See, as but one example, *De Verit*., q. 1, a. 5, ad 16.

denies this fact. For Aquinas, pure possibility exists beyond the limits of concrete being, so that real and determinate possibility can exist within it. So, just as natural substance has nothing abstract and universal with respect to its actuality, it likewise has nothing generic with respect to its potency.[71]

[71] In addition to thanking the anonymous readers from *The Thomist*, I would like to express my gratitude to Matthew Gaetano and Alexandre Winston for their helpful editorial suggestions, which undoubtedly improved the clarity and depth of this piece.

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"TO GIVE US AN EXAMPLE OF MAKING PROGRESS": AQUINAS ON THE PERFECTION AND GROWTH OF CHRIST'S VIRTUE

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ONE OF THE CENTRAL ethical themes of the New Testament is that Jesus provides a model for his followers to imitate.[1] In his Last Supper Discourse in John's Gospel, Jesus himself declares to his apostles, "I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15). Likewise, the First Epistle of Peter reminds its readers, "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps" (1 Pet 2:21). Saint Paul, too, instructs the Philippians to "let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:5), and he urges the Corinthians to "be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1). The biblical authors insist that throughout Jesus' life and ministry, and especially in his passion and death, he exemplifies most perfectly the pattern to which his disciples must be conformed.

The exemplarity of Christ is also a prominent and recurring motif in the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas.[2] Indeed, in the very

[1] For a recent attempt to chart the moral exemplarity of Jesus in the New Testament from the perspective of biblical studies, see Richard A. Burridge, *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2007). This biblical principle also animates Catholic moral theology, as Pope John Paul II asserts: "Jesus' way of acting and his words, his deeds, and his precepts constitute the moral rule of Christian life" (Pope John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, §20).

[2] On the exemplarity of Christ, see Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 2: *Spiritual Master*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 101-24; Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Christ and Spirituality in St. Thomas*

opening question of the *Tertia pars* of the *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas submits that it was fitting that the Word should become flesh, "with regard to right operation, in which he set us an example."[3] Aquinas thus views the incarnation as, among other things, a form of embodied instruction for humanity.[4] In the *Summa contra gentiles*, he expands on this insight, suggesting that "so that man might be strengthened in virtue, it was necessary for him to receive from God made man both the teaching and the examples of virtue."[5]

Aquinas embeds this view of Christ as moral exemplar within a broader metaphysical and soteriological account of Christ's ontological exemplarity so that the actions of Christ are not only morally instructive but also efficiently salvific. Through the hypostatic union, Christ's human actions serve instrumentally as efficacious causes of the grace which, by virtue of his headship, he mediates to human beings.[6] Moreover, because the nature of an instrument leaves its mark on the effect produced, Christ's humanity imparts its own distinctive character to the divine grace that is mediated through it. Consequently, the grace that Christ bestows to human beings conforms them to himself as their

Aquinas, trans. Bernhard Blankenhorn, O.P. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 74-109; Thomas Ryan, *Thomas Aquinas as Reader of the Psalms*, Studies in Spirituality and Theology 6 (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 81-105; Michael J. Dodds, "The Teaching of Thomas Aquinas on the Mysteries of the Life of Christ," in *Aquinas on Doctrine: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Thomas Weinandy, Daniel Keating, and John Yocum (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 91-115; Richard Schenk, O.P., "'Omnis Christi actio nostra est instructio': The Deeds and Sayings of Jesus as Revelation in the View of Thomas Aquinas," in *La doctrine de la revelation divine de saint Thomas d'Aquin*, ed. Leo Elders (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1990), 103-31.

[3] *STh* III, q. 1, a. 2. All references to the *Summa theologiae* are to the Leonine edition, and translations are my own.

[4] On this point, see Mark D. Jordan, *Teaching Bodies: Moral Formation in the Summa of Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), 21-79.

[5] *ScG* IV, c. 54. The English translation is mine, based on the Leonine edition.

[6] *STh* III, q. 19, a. 1. On the connection between the instrumentality of Christ's humanity and Christ's grace of headship in relation to exemplarity, see Bernhard Blankenhorn, O.P., *The Mystery of Union with God: Dionysian Mysticism in Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2015), 267-69.

ontological exemplar.[7] For Aquinas, then, Jesus not only models perfect virtue through his actions, but he also mediates, through those same actions, the grace that conforms the human person to himself and that enables the human person to exercise the very virtues that he displays.[8] Christ makes possible the imitation of his moral example by the grace that conforms human beings to him ontologically. Therefore, Aquinas can say not only that "Christ's action is our instruction,"[9] but also that "all Christ's actions and sufferings operate instrumentally by virtue of his divinity for human salvation."[10]

One of the most interesting, but also most frequently overlooked, places where Aquinas takes up this theme of Christ's exemplarity is in a sermon composed for the First Sunday after Epiphany, likely preached in 1271 during his second regency at Paris.[11] The sermon's opening line foregrounds Christ's salvific exemplarity as Aquinas declares that "all the things together that the Lord has done or undergone in the flesh are salutary lessons and examples."[12] Aquinas does not intend for this opening flourish to serve merely as a general claim about Christ's action as instructive, overlooking the concrete particulars of his embodied, salvific teaching. On the contrary, he insists,

> Because there is not any age from which the way of salvation is absent—and to the highest extent this applies to the years in which one comes to discernment—the adolescence of Christ is made an example for adolescents. Growth and

[7] *STh* III, q. 19, a. 1, ad 2. Torrell, *Christ and Spirituality*, 91-94.

[8] *Super Ioan.*, c. 12, lect. 1 (*Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura*, ed. R. Cai [Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1972], no. 1604).

[9] *STh* III, q. 40, a. 3.

[10] *STh* III, q. 48, a. 6.

[11] For the dating of this text, I follow the chronology proposed by Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1, *The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996). For helpful background concerning the sermon, see Vivian Boland, O.P., "St Thomas's Sermon *Puer Iesus*: A Neglected Source for His Understanding of Teaching and Learning," *New Blackfriars* 88 (2007): 457-70.

[12] *Sermo Puer Jesus*. English translations of *Puer Jesus* are taken from *Thomas Aquinas: The Academic Sermons*, trans. Mark-Robin Hoogland, C.P. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 87-107, at 87.

progress are proper to adolescents. Therefore, the progress of Christ is made an example for adolescents.[13]

With these words, Aquinas narrows the sermon's scope and directs his hearers' attention to Jesus' childhood—a period characterized by growth and development—as a locus for moral and theological reflection.

As the sermon proceeds, Aquinas examines the growth that marks Jesus' adolescence from a number of different angles, most of which are inspired by the appointed liturgical text for the day, which includes St. Luke's observation that Jesus "advanced in age and wisdom and in grace with God and the people" (Luke 2:52).[14] Hence, the sermon explores, among other things, Jesus' physical maturation, his intellectual development, and his growth in human fellowship. Yet, one dimension of Jesus' growth that Aquinas does not explicitly take up in the sermon is whether and how Christ grew in virtue. This omission raises the question that guides this article: according to Aquinas, did Jesus grow in virtue?

This question has significant implications for understanding how we ought to conceive of the relationship between Christ's exemplarity and the graced efforts of Christians to grow in virtue as his disciples. For example, one philosopher has recently proposed that attributing growth in virtue to Christ has benefits for a Christian moral pedagogy insofar as it enables us to "look to Jesus as a moral exemplar . . . who grew and developed in his moral character in ways that we can understand and imitate. In our efforts to grow in virtue, we can engage in the same disciplines that Jesus practiced as he grew in virtue, and we can be confident in their effectiveness."[15] Others, however, remain more circumspect. They prefer to maintain that Jesus' exemplarity consists only in his manifestation of the perfection of human nature as the archetype of what human beings are to become by

[13] *Sermo Puer Jesus* (Hoogland, trans., 87).

[14] Ibid. I am using the translation of the biblical text that appears in Aquinas's sermon.

[15] Adam C. Pelser, "Temptation, Virtue, and the Character of Christ," *Faith and Philosophy* 36 (2019): 81-101, at 99.

grace, and not in any display on Jesus' part of the process of coming to attain that perfection.[16]

In what follows, I venture an answer *ad mentem Thomae* to the question of whether Christ grew in virtue. In doing so, I strive to hold together two central Thomistic claims: first, that virtue is susceptible to growth and increase; and second, that Christ is the "supreme exemplar of perfection" who possesses the virtues most perfectly.[17] The paper proceeds in five parts. The first section offers an exposition of Aquinas's understanding of virtue as a *habitus* which admits of growth, and the second part examines his claim that Christ possessed "all the virtues most perfectly."[18] The third section considers whether Christ's perfection in virtue is the terminus of a process of growth or an abiding perfection, and it examines a key Thomistic distinction in order to argue that Christ grew in the works of virtue, but not in the *habitus* of virtue. The fourth section considers the fittingness of Christ's growth in virtue, and the fifth section proposes a conceptual framework for making sense of Christ's growth amid perfection in light of Aquinas's virtue theory. Finally, a brief conclusion gestures toward how Christ's growth in virtue, while importantly different from ours, nonetheless offers an example for our own progress in virtue.

I. The Developmental Nature of Virtue

When Aquinas discusses virtue in both the *Summa theologiae* and the *Quaestiones disputatae De virtutibus*, he does so in terms

[16] See, for example, Stewart Clem, "The Passions of Christ in the Moral Theology of Thomas Aquinas: An Integrative Account," *New Blackfriars* 99 (2018): 458-80, at 476: "Christ's exemplarity is not accomplished by taking on *all* defects of our humanity (including sin) and then showing us how to 'cope' with them or rise above them." Aquinas would agree with this formulation, but the burden of the present article is to suggest that Christ's growth in virtue can be conceived—on Aquinas's own grounds—as a model for our own growth despite the marked differences between Christ's growth in virtue and our own. Jesus need not "cope" with all the defects of our humanity in order to show us an example not only of perfect virtue but also of moral growth.

[17] *Super Ioan.*, c. 12, lect. 1 (Marietti ed., no. 1604).

[18] *STh* III, q. 15, a. 2.

of *habitus*. In both texts, an affirmation that virtue is a species of *habitus* precedes his presentation of a formal, comprehensive definition of virtue. In the *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas devotes six questions to *habitus* in general before beginning his discussion of virtue, and then he devotes the first three articles of his treatment of the essence of virtue to identifying virtue as a good, operative *habitus*. He even goes so far as to modify the authoritative Augustinian definition in order to reflect the nature of virtue as a *habitus*.[19] In order to understand Aquinas's account of virtue, then, it is first necessary to consider the broader category of *habitus*.

Aquinas identifies a *habitus*, along with the powers of the soul, as intrinsic principles of human acts.[20] A *habitus* is a quality, a stable perfection of some power of the soul,[21] which inclines that power toward a determinate kind of operation that is either becoming or unbecoming to the nature of its subject.[22] A *habitus* provides a measure of stability and direction to powers that are naturally underdetermined with respect to their proper operation. Such indeterminacy is especially characteristic of the powers of the human soul, Aquinas explains, because human beings pursue the good neither solely by natural appetite nor solely by instinct, but also by reason which "retains the power of being inclined to various things."[23] Consequently, in concrete situations of choice, "the judgment of reason may follow opposite courses and is not determinate to one."[24] Yet, since attaining the end of

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

[20] *STh* I-II, q. 49, prol.

[21] Bodily faculties can also be subjects of habits, in a sense.

[22] *STh* I-II, q. 49, a. 3. For a helpful exegesis of Aquinas's treatment of *habitus* in the *Summae theologiae*, see Robert C. Miner, "Aquinas on *habitus*," in *A History of Habit: From Aristotle to Bourdieu*, ed. Tom Sparrow and Adam Hutchinson (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2013), 67-87. See also David Decosimo, *Ethics as a Work of Charity: Thomas Aquinas and Pagan Virtue* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2014), 72-105; Nicholas Austin, S.J., *Aquinas on Virtue: A Causal Reading* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2017), 23-57; Jean Porter, *The Perfection of Desire: Habit, Reason, and Virtue in Aquinas's "Summa theologiae"* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette University Press, 2018), 15-54.

[23] *STh* I, q. 83, a. 1.

[24] Ibid.

human life requires the ordered and integrated pursuit of the good as one's overarching goal, the indeterminacy of the soul's powers requires focus and specification. *Habitus* provide such direction to the powers of the soul.[25] For this reason, Aquinas argues that *habitus* are necessary for human beings.[26]

For Aquinas, what differentiates a *habitus* from other species of quality (like *dispositio* or *consuetudo*) is its stability. A *habitus* confers an orientation to the soul's powers that is firmly established, long-lasting, and difficult to change.[27] The stability that characterizes a *habitus* leads Aquinas to describe it as the "first act" of the soul's powers, since a *habitus* involves a genuine actualization of its subject insofar as that power is truly inclined toward certain kinds of operations.[28] Yet, he also notes that the subject of a *habitus* still remains "in a state of potentiality in respect to operation," since a *habitus* is only a disposition toward a certain kind of operation rather than the operation itself, which Aquinas terms "second act."[29] A *habitus* thus involves "a kind of intermediate actualization" of the soul's powers because a power modified by a *habitus* remains in a sort of active potency toward certain operations.[30]

Readers of Aquinas have noted how his description of *habitus* in terms of actualizing the potentiality of human capacities suggests an inherently developmental understanding of human agency. For instance, Jean Porter suggests that *habitus* "reflects a kind of development or formation" of the soul's powers as they are determined toward certain goods.[31] Similarly, Romanus Cessario argues that *habitus* "implies a dynamic view of the

[25] *STh* I-II, q. 50, a. 5, ad 1.

[26] *STh* I-II, q. 49, a. 4. See also Jean Porter, "Why Are the Habits Necessary? An Inquiry into Aquinas's Moral Psychology," in *Oxford Studies in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Robert Pasnau, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 113-35.

[27] *STh* I-II, q. 49, a. 2, ad 3.

[28] *STh* I-II, q. 49, a. 3, ad 3.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Jean Porter, *Justice as a Virtue: A Thomistic Perspective* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2016), 20.

[31] Porter, *Perfection of Desire*, 16.

human person," since it involves a modification of the soul's powers from indeterminacy toward specificity.[32] Somewhat paradoxically, the character of *habitus* as a stable disposition that must be developed bespeaks the malleability and dynamism of human nature, whose powers can be stably developed in different ways and to various degrees.

These observations are further borne out in Aquinas's account of the growth of *habitus*, which lays the groundwork for his subsequent treatment of virtue's increase. Aquinas maintains that the stable disposition of *habitus*, once possessed, is still subject to further increase (and also to diminution).[33] His understanding of the growth of *habitus* is rooted in its identity as an accidental form. He argues that a *habitus* increases when the subject of that *habitus* comes to participate more intensely in the form of the *habitus*.[34] In other words, the growth of a *habitus* is not an increase on the part of the *habitus* itself but rather a fuller reception of the form on the part of the subject. Thus, one who already possesses a *habitus* can come to possess that same *habitus* more intensely. Aquinas's understanding of *habitus* is thoroughly dynamic and inherently incremental, for it allows growth not only in the formation or generation of a *habitus* but even within the possession of a *habitus*.

Aquinas posits that when the soul's powers are determined by a *habitus* toward modes of operation that are consonant with right reason, they are the subjects of virtue. The virtues are thus a species of *habitus*.[35] They actualize human capacities in ways that conform to the good of human nature, and they represent stable developments of the soul's powers that align with the true good of the person. With respect to the will, the *habitus* of virtue

[32] Romanus Cessario, O.P., *The Moral Virtues and Theological Ethics*, 2d ed. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 35.

[33] On the relationship between the formation of a *habitus* (rather than a less stable disposition) and the subsequent perfection of that *habitus*, see Decosimo, *Ethics as a Work of Charity*, 168-73.

[34] *STh* I-II, q. 52, a. 1. See also Gloria Frost, "Aquinas on the Intension and Remission of Accidental Forms," in *Oxford Studies in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Robert Pasnau, vol. 7 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 115-46.

[35] *STh* I-II, q. 55, a. 1.

forms the rational appetite so that it is inclined toward the good determined by reason, especially the good of one's neighbor and the supernatural good of God himself. With respect to the concupiscible and irascible appetites, the virtues align the movements of the passions with the judgments of reason so that they become "rational by participation."[36]

As his view of *habitus* as a stable development of natural human capacities suggests, Aquinas does not hold that human beings possess the virtues by nature, although he does maintain that an aptitude to virtue is natural to human beings.[37] On account of the intellect's natural grasp of the first principles of human action through *synderesis* and the will's basic orientation toward the good defined by reason, human beings possess the "seeds of the virtues."[38] Nevertheless, Aquinas insists that these are not true virtues, for they merely reflect the human person's inherent potential to harmonize the movements of the appetites with the judgments of reason; they do not represent the attainment of such harmonization. Likewise, Aquinas suggests that certain aspects of an individual person's temperament or constitution might make her "inclined to the activity of some virtue," but he insists that this natural inclination is "not perfect virtue, for the moderation of reason is required for the perfection of virtue."[39] Without the firm and enduring impression of reason's influence on the appetites, these dispositions lack the stability characteristic of virtue as a *habitus*.

Since human beings naturally possess only an aptitude to virtue rather than virtue itself, the only way they can possess the virtues is by undergoing a change. They must move from lacking a stable orientation toward action in accordance with right reason and divine law to being stably inclined to desire and act according to the dictates of reason and divine law. Aquinas argues that the means by which one undergoes such a change from lacking a

[36] *STh* I-II, q. 56, a. 4, ad 1.

[37] *STh* I-II, q. 63, a. 1.

[38] Ibid.

[39] *De Virtut. in Comm.*, q. 1, a. 8 (*Quaestiones disputatae De virtutibus in communi*, ed. E. Odetto [Turin: Marietti, 1965]).

virtue to possessing it is of two sorts. One comes to possess virtue either as a result of one's own activity (acquired virtues) or through God's gracious bestowal (infused virtues).

The acquired virtues are the products of human acts by which the appetitive powers are habituated to obey the judgments of reason. Inasmuch as the appetitive powers are in potency to a variety of operations and are apt to receive the kind of stable modification that *habitus* imparts, they have a passive character in relation to reason which, as an active principle, moves them by determining them to a particular course of action.[40] Reason leaves its mark on the appetitive powers when it directs them toward certain goods, and in doing so, it inclines them to act accordingly on subsequent occasions. When reason repeatedly determines the appetitive power to a particular course of action in conformity with right reason, this disposition is progressively strengthened and eventually becomes a virtuous *habitus*. Aquinas insists that this process occurs over the course of many acts because "in order that some quality may be caused in what is passive, that which is active must totally overcome the passive."[41] Since the appetitive power is naturally inclined to many diverse objects, a single formal movement of reason that determines the appetite by way

[40] *STh* I-II, q. 51, a. 2; *De Virtut. in Comm*., q. 1, a. 9. When Aquinas speaks of the intellect "moving" the appetitive powers, he is not espousing an intellectualist view of the relationship between intellect and will according to which the will is entirely passive and subservient to the judgments of reason. While his view on the relationship between intellect and will develops over his career, his most mature view is found in *STh* I-II, q. 9, a. 1. There he insists that the will moves itself *quantum ad exercitium*, inasmuch as the will wills itself to will or not to will at all. Moreover, he contends that the will moves the intellect after the manner of an efficient cause, directing the intellect to consider or not to consider a certain object. Nevertheless, he also holds that the intellect moves the will *quantum ad determinationem*, by judging a particular object to be good and presenting that object to the will. In doing so, Aquinas submits, the intellect determines the will to its act "after the manner of a formal principle." With respect to this *formal* motion, therefore, he submits that the intellect and will are related as active and passive, respectively. On this point, see Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: A Philosophical Study of Summa Theologiae, 1a 75-89* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 214-33; Michael S. Sherwin, O.P., *By Knowledge and by Love: Charity and Knowledge in the Moral Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 24-53.

[41] *STh* I-II, q. 51, a. 3.

of specification to a certain course of action is insufficient stably to determine that appetite to a course of action in accordance with right reason in every set of circumstances. Thus, reason disposes the appetitive power to itself through a series of acts, "as many drops hollow out a rock."[42] The process of acquiring the virtues is inherently incremental.

Moreover, Aquinas maintains that, once one has acquired a virtue through human actions, it can be further strengthened and perfected through subsequent human acts. Like strengthening a muscle, augmenting the virtues requires repeated virtuous action of an intensity that corresponds to or exceeds the intensity of the virtuous *habitus* already possessed.[43] As the virtuous person performs more and greater virtuous deeds, reason's impression on the appetites is further strengthened, and the agent comes to participate even more intensely in that virtue. So, Aquinas holds, the acquired virtues can be strengthened progressively over time as the agent comes to be even more stably inclined to desire and choose the good with ease, promptness, and pleasure. Thus, the life of acquired virtue can be, for Aquinas, a life of continuous growth and progress.

While the acquired virtues are the products of human effort, the infused virtues are given by God alone. Because the human person is oriented by God to an ultimate end that exceeds the capacities of his nature, Aquinas argues that "it is necessary that there should be given to man . . . something by which man's very nature should be raised to the dignity which would make such an end suited to him, and for this grace is given."[44] Habitual grace is the accidental form that modifies the essence of the soul so as to give the human person a participation in the divine nature.[45] Aquinas argues that, along with this new supernatural principle in the essence of the soul, God endows the graced human agent with new *habitus* in the powers of the soul which enable them to

[42] *De Virtut. in Comm.*, q. 1, a. 9, ad 11.

[43] *STh* I-II, q. 52, a. 3.

[44] *De Verit.*, q. 27, a. 2. English translation from *Truth*, vol. 3, *Questions 21-29*, trans. Robert W. Schmidt, S.J. (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1954).

[45] *STh* I-II, q. 110, a. 2.

generate acts proportioned to the supernatural end of eternal life. These *habitus* are the infused virtues—both the theological virtues and the infused moral virtues. They are infused together with habitual grace, and they flow from grace as from "their principle and root."[46]

Although the infused virtues are bestowed directly by God, their divine origin and supernatural orientation do not render them incapable of growth. On the contrary, Aquinas insists that the infused virtues do admit of increase. He develops this point most clearly with respect to charity, "for through it man's mind is united to God."[47] Since the human person is a wayfarer advancing toward his ultimate end of beatific union with God, "it belongs to the very *ratio* of the wayfarer's charity that it be able to increase, for if it could not, progress along the way would cease."[48] For Aquinas, the possibility (and reality) of growth in charity is essential to the human person's pilgrimage to God. The virtue of charity—and indeed, all the infused virtues—can be characterized by growth and increase.[49] In fact, Aquinas goes so far as to say that there is no upper limit to the human person's growth in charity in this life, "since it is a certain participation of the infinite charity which is the Holy Spirit."[50]

While Aquinas holds that both the acquired virtues and the infused virtues admit of growth, the causes of their growth are distinct. The acquired virtues are both generated and increased by the gradual strengthening of reason's imprint on the appetitive powers through human acts, but "our acts are not the active causes of the increase of charity and the other infused virtues," just as our actions are not the active causes of the infused virtues'

[46] *STh* I-II, q. 110, a. 3, ad 3.

[47] *STh* II-II, q. 24, a. 4.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Aquinas emphasizes the gradual nature of growth in charity by specifying three distinct stages of its growth: the *incipientes*, who focus on avoiding sin and preserving the gift of charity; the *proficientes*, who strengthen charity by steadily advancing in greater works; and the *perfecti*, whose exercise of charity is directed at union with and enjoyment of God. See *STh* II-II, q. 24, a. 9. See also Servais Pinckaers, O.P., *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, trans. Sr. Mary Thomas Noble, O.P., 3d ed. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 359-71.

[50] *STh* II-II, q. 24, a. 7. See also *De Virtut. in Comm.*, q. 2, a. 10.

coming to be in the first place.[51] Rather, Aquinas maintains that the increase of the infused virtues is due to God's action, just as their initial infusion is God's gift.

Even as he insists on the primacy of divine action in the growth of infused virtue, Aquinas also acknowledges a role for human action in this process, for he notes that human beings can both merit and dispose themselves to receive an increase of the infused virtues.[52] By exercising the *habitus* of infused virtue through the performance of virtuous actions, the human agent increases her capacity to receive the form of the virtue more completely when God elects to bestow an increase. Moreover, Aquinas holds that acts of infused virtue, which are informed by charity, merit an increase in virtue inasmuch as such an increase constitutes the means toward attaining eternal life which human beings merit through charity.[53]

The preceding analysis clearly illustrates that Aquinas's understanding of virtue is inherently developmental. As a *habitus*, virtue reflects the stable development and orientation of human capacities in accordance with right reason and divine law. Moreover, the virtues themselves admit of growth and increase, either as a product of human action or through a divine gift. Given this dynamic understanding of virtue as a *habitus* subject to increase, the question at hand concerns whether Christ's virtues, too, underwent the process of growth that characterizes Aquinas's account of ordinary human progress in the life of virtue.

[51] *De Virtut. in Comm.*, q. 1, a. 11, ad 14.

[52] *De Virtut. in Comm.*, q. 1, a. 11.

[53] *STh* I-II, q. 114, a. 8. On Aquinas's teaching on merit in the *Summa theologiae*, see Joseph P. Wawrykow, *God's Grace and Human Action: "Merit" in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 177-99. Wawrykow notes that, for the most part, the meritorious and dispositive aspects of graced human action coincide in Aquinas's thought, inasmuch as one both "disposes oneself for greater perfection, including ultimately the perfection of the light of eternal glory" and also "creates a right to the reward of eternal life and of the growth in grace and charity that leads to eternal life" (ibid., 225-26).

II. Aquinas on Christ's Perfection in Virtue

Throughout the *Tertia pars*, Aquinas frequently attributes particular virtues to Jesus and commends him as a model to be followed, yet his systematic analysis of Christ's virtue remains quite brief. Nevertheless, its context proves instructive, and its implications are significant. The discussion occurs within his larger treatment of Christ's coassumed perfections and defects and, more specifically, within question 7, which is dedicated to Christ's personal grace.

Although Aquinas affirms that, by the incarnation, a human nature is hypostatically united to the divine person of the Word through an unmerited gift which he terms the grace of union,[54] he nonetheless asserts in the first article of the question that Christ also possesses the gift of habitual grace. This attribution might appear superfluous, and Aquinas acknowledges this concern in the article's first objection. The objection proposes that Christ does not possess habitual grace because habitual grace is merely a participation in the divine nature, whereas Christ is divine by virtue of the hypostatic union.[55] Aquinas argues, however, that to suggest that the hypostatic union could account for the sanctification of Christ's human soul would be mistaken, for such a claim emphasizes the union of Christ's person at the expense of the distinction of natures. In response, he asserts that "the soul of Christ is not essentially divine," since the Word assumed a genuine human nature with a human soul, and consequently, Christ's human soul "must be made divine by participation, which is by grace."[56] Therefore, Aquinas posits that Christ possesses the gift of habitual grace so that his human soul is proportioned to the supernatural works that are essential to his salvific mission.

[54] *STh* III, q. 6, a. 6.

[55] *STh* III, q. 7, a. 1, obj. 1.

[56] *STh* III, q. 7, a. 1, ad 1. Yet, as Dominic Legge observes, there is some ambiguity surrounding Aquinas's description of Christ's possession of habitual grace, namely, whether such possession is necessary or highly fitting in relation to the grace of union. For an analysis of this question, see Dominic Legge, O.P., *The Trinitarian Christology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 135-57.

Aquinas further contends that Christ possesses the *fullness* of habitual grace, and he distinguishes two aspects of this plenitude. First, he insists that Jesus possesses the fullness of grace *intensively*, insofar as he "has grace in its highest degree, in the most perfect way it can be had."[57] This is crucial for his role as head of the Church, the one from whose "fullness we have all received" (John 1:16). Aquinas argues that it is fitting that Christ, as the source of grace for his members, should possess the fullness of grace just as "fire, which is the cause of heat in all that is hot, is itself the hottest thing."[58] Second, he posits that Jesus possesses the plenitude of grace *extensively*, insofar as "he had it for all the operations and effects of grace."[59] Christ's human soul not only participates in the *habitus* of grace as fully as possible, but his habitual grace also elicits all the effects to which grace can give rise.

Aquinas specifically names the virtues among those effects of grace, noting rather tersely that "Christ had all the virtues."[60] He proceeds to qualify this statement in subsequent articles, however. Specifically, he denies that Christ possesses the theological virtues of faith and hope because they are characterized by certain defects, inasmuch as faith regards divine things not yet seen and hope aspires to a supernatural end not yet attained.[61] Aquinas argues that it would be unbecoming to ascribe to Christ these defects implicit in faith and hope because, possessing the fullness of grace, Jesus already beholds God's essence and thus enjoys fully the divine object to which faith and hope attain only partially and anticipatorily. Nevertheless, as Joseph Wawrykow points out, while Aquinas denies the virtues of faith and hope to Jesus on account of their inherent imperfections, he does hold that Jesus possesses whatever "perfections" of intellect and will

[57] *STh* III, q. 7, a. 9.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] *STh* III, q. 7, a. 2.
[61] *STh* III, q. 7, aa. 3-4.

are conferred by the virtues of faith and hope, respectively.[62] Thus, rather than undermining Aquinas's claim that Christ possesses all the virtues, the denial of faith and hope in Christ actually preserves Aquinas's logic of infused virtue: the extensive fullness of Christ's habitual grace extends to all the powers of the soul so that grace's effects enable those powers to operate in ways that are proportioned to the divine nature.[63]

The relationship between Christ's fullness of grace and his possession of virtue is not limited to the extensive fullness of grace that implies Christ's possession of all the virtues. Because Aquinas maintains that Christ's plenitude of grace is not only

[62] *STh* III, q. 7, a. 9, ad 1. Joseph Wawrykow, "Jesus in the Moral Theology of Thomas Aquinas," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 42 (2012): 13-33, at 22-24.

[63] Aquinas is silent on the question of whether Jesus possessed the acquired virtues. It is tempting to read his claim that Christ had "all the virtues" because he possessed the fullness of grace as implying that Jesus did not have the acquired virtues. This interpretation would support what Angela McKay Knobel calls a "transformationist theory" of the relationship between acquired and infused virtue by suggesting that the infused virtues are the only virtues that Christ possesses (and could possess) because the infused virtues take up and transform the acquired virtues. Yet, this is not the only possible interpretation of Aquinas's silence on this matter. Proponents of what Knobel terms a "coexistence theory" might interpret Aquinas's silence on this question as an unfortunate omission in his analysis (as Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange does), or they might argue that "all the virtues" that Christ possesses by virtue of the fullness of grace are not only the infused virtues but also the acquired virtues which he receives by infusion. The grounds for this latter possibility come from Aquinas's treatment of the generation of *habitus*, where he acknowledges the possibility of a *habitus* that is proportionate to human beings' natural capacities nonetheless being infused directly by God. See *STh* I-II, q. 51, a. 4. Concerning the ongoing debate about the relationship between acquired and infused virtue, see, among others, William C. Mattison III, "Can Christians Possess the Acquired Cardinal Virtues?," *Theological Studies* 72 (2011): 558-85; Angela McKay Knobel, "Can Aquinas's Infused and Acquired Virtues Coexist in the Christian Life?," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 23 (2010): 381-96; idem, "Two Theories of Christian Virtue," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 84 (2010): 599-618; idem, "Relating Aquinas's Infused and Acquired Virtues: Some Problematic Texts for a Common Interpretation," *Nova et vetera* 9 (2011): 411-31; David Decosimo, "More to Love: Thomas Aquinas on Infused and Acquired Moral Virtue," in *The Virtuous Life: Aquinas on the Moral Virtues*, ed. Harm Goris and Henk Schoot (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 47-72; Jean Porter, "Moral Virtues, Charity, and Grace: Why the Infused and Acquired Virtues Cannot Co-Exist," *Journal of Moral Theology* 8, no. 2 (2019): 40-66; William C. Mattison III, "Aquinas, Custom, and the Coexistence of Infused and Acquired Cardinal Virtues," *Journal of Moral Theology* 8, no. 2 (2019): 1-24.

extensive—that is, giving rise to all the effects of grace—but also intensive—that is, being as full a participation in the divine nature as is possible for human nature—he asserts not only that Christ has all the virtues but also that he has "all the virtues *most perfectly*."[64] He goes on to equate the intensity and perfection of Christ's virtues with what he describes elsewhere as "the virtues of those who have already attained to the divine likeness" or the "virtues of the already-purified soul."[65] Those who possess these virtues desire, judge, and act in complete accord with the divine exemplar to whom they have been most perfectly conformed. Thus, Aquinas observes that "we say that these are the virtues of the blessed, or, in this life, of those who are most perfect."[66]

Aquinas asserts not only that Christ's virtues are perfect but also that he possesses them "beyond the common mode."[67] Such an assertion illustrates his readiness to affirm significant differences between Christ's possession of the virtues and our own. With respect to the passions, which virtue perfects by making them rational by participation, Aquinas not only affirms that Christ has perfectly ordered and integrated passions as a result of his perfect virtue, but he further contends that "the passions were in Christ otherwise than in us."[68] For Christ, the passions tend only toward licit objects, they are always in accord with reason, and they never cloud reason's judgments.[69] Likewise, Aquinas argues that Christ's perfection in virtue beyond the common

[64] *STh* III, q. 15, a. 2.

[65] *STh* I-II, q. 61, a. 5. For Aquinas's ascription of these virtues to Christ, see *STh* III, q. 7, a. 2, ad 2.

[66] *STh* I-II, q. 61, a. 5.

[67] *STh* III, q. 7, a. 2, ad 2.

[68] *STh* III, q. 15, a. 4.

[69] Ibid. A complete treatment of the passions of Christ's soul is beyond the scope of this article, but there has been a recent surge of interest in this aspect of Aquinas's theology. The magisterial work on the topic remains Paul Gondreau, *The Passions of Christ's Soul in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Providence, R.I.: Cluny Media, 2018). See also Barrett H. Turner, "The Propassiones of Christ, His Fullness of Grace, and His Moral Exemplarity according to St. Thomas Aquinas," *Nova et vetera* (Eng. ed.) 18 (2020): 201-36; Craig Steven Titus, "Passions in Christ: Spontaneity, Development, and Virtue," *The Thomist* 73 (2009): 53-87; Clem, "Passions of Christ."

mode entails not only that he is free from sin but also that he does not experience the *fomes peccati*, the affective inclination to sin that most other human beings—including the virtuous—suffer as a consequence of original sin.[70] For Aquinas, Christ is the virtuous man *par excellence* who possesses all the virtues most perfectly and in an absolutely unique manner that follows from his singular fullness of grace.

III. Aquinas on Christ's Growth in Virtue

Aquinas clearly and straightforwardly ascribes perfect virtue to Christ. Yet, when this attribution is considered in light of Aquinas's understanding of virtue as a *habitus* characterized by growth and increase, there remains an ambiguity concerning the precise nature of Christ's perfection in virtue. Specifically, one might wonder whether Aquinas's affirmation of Jesus' "most perfect" possession of virtue is intended to describe the terminus of a process of growth in virtue over time, or whether he means to posit that Jesus stably possessed all the virtues most perfectly throughout his whole life, undergoing no moral growth.

The latter interpretation—that Jesus always possessed the virtues most perfectly without growth or development—is more congruent with Aquinas's insistence, later in the *Tertia pars*, that Jesus possessed the fullness of grace from the moment of his conception.[71] Aquinas's argument for this claim draws on the intimate connection he established in question 7 between the grace of union by which the Word is hypostatically united to a human nature and the habitual grace by which that human nature is sanctified through a created participation in the divine nature. Aquinas argues that the sanctification of Christ's human nature must be contemporaneous with that human nature's union with the Word, and since that human nature is hypostatically united to the Word from the first instant of Christ's conception, he concludes that Christ possesses the fullness of grace from the first moment of his earthly existence. In other words, there is no

[70] *STh* III, q. 15, aa. 1-2.
[71] *STh* III, q. 34, a. 2.

temporal gap between the Word's assumption of human nature and the sanctification of that human nature. Aquinas asserts as much when he declares, concerning Christ's spiritual perfection, that "he did not progress, but had it stably from the very beginning."[72] Since we have seen that Aquinas regards Christ's virtues as the effects of sanctifying grace, this assertion would seem quite plainly to indicate that Christ *did not* grow in virtue, but rather was infused with the fullness of virtue from the first instant of his human life.

Yet, a difficulty emerges for this interpretation of Christ's perfection in virtue when one recalls Scripture's attestation that "the boy Jesus advanced in age and wisdom and in grace before God and the people" (Luke 2:52). At first glance, there appears to be a tension between St. Luke's observation that Jesus grew (*proficiebat*) in grace and Aquinas's insistence that Jesus' sanctification did *not* include growth (*non profecit*) in holiness.[73] Well aware of the evangelist's words, the Dominican Master of the Sacred Page endeavors to reconcile Luke's testimony concerning Christ's growth in grace with his own emphasis—inspired by the prologue of John's Gospel[74]—on Christ's fullness of grace.

Aquinas's solution to this dilemma rests on a distinction between growth according to *habitus* (*secundum habitum*) and growth according to act (*secundum actum*).[75] In light of Luke's claim that Jesus grew in grace and wisdom, Aquinas proposes that such growth might be of two sorts. On the one hand, the very *habitus* of grace and wisdom might be increased such that one comes to participate in them more intensely. Aquinas firmly denies that Jesus' growth in grace is of this sort, because it would preclude his possession of the fullness of grace from the moment of conception. On the other hand, Aquinas notes that one might

[72] *STh* III, q. 34, a. 2.

[73] Ibid.

[74] For noting the biblical roots of Aquinas's position, I am indebted to Andrew V. Rosato, "Aquinas and Maritain on Whether Christ's Habitual Grace Could Increase," *Nova et Vetera* (Eng. ed.) 15 (2017): 527-46, at 533.

[75] *STh* III, q. 7, a. 12, ad 3.

also be said to grow in grace "according to its effects, inasmuch as one does greater and wiser works."[76] He *does* attribute this kind of growth to Christ, "since, according to his progress in age, he did more perfect works."[77]

This distinction is clearly relevant for ascertaining how Aquinas might answer the question of whether Christ grew in virtue—although that is a question that he himself never explicitly asks. Taken in its immediate context, however, the distinction is insufficient, for it addresses only the question of whether Christ grew in *grace*. As we have seen, Aquinas insists that grace and virtue are not identical, even if they are intimately related.[78] Therefore, in order to determine whether Christ grew not only in grace but also in virtue, further investigation is necessary.

In attempting to move from an understanding of Christ's growth in grace to an understanding of his growth in virtue, some have argued that Aquinas's affirmation of Jesus' growth in the effects of grace implies his growth in the virtues. At first glance, this strategy is enticing, since Aquinas describes the (infused) virtues as effects of grace.[79] If the virtues are effects of grace, so the argument goes, then growth in the effects of grace would be nothing other than growth in the *habitus* that is virtue. The trouble with this approach, however, is that Aquinas elsewhere treats growth in the *habitus* of virtue as linked to growth in grace *secundum habitum*.[80] He contends that the *habitus* of infused virtue is capable of increase only to the extent that one also grows in the *habitus* of grace, since the powers of the soul can only be proportioned to certain operations if the essence of the soul is likewise proportioned. But, if Jesus does not grow in grace *secundum habitum* (as we have seen Aquinas explicitly affirm),

[76] *STh* III, q. 7, a. 12, ad 3.

[77] Ibid.

[78] *STh* I-II, q. 110, a. 3.

[79] Arielle Harms, "The Moral Virtue of Christ: An Examination of *Tertia Pars* Question 7 Article 2," *Angelicum* 90 (2013): 371-89, at 386.

[80] See, for example, *STh* III, q. 89, a. 2: "the penitent sometimes arises to a greater grace than that which he had before, sometimes to an equal, sometimes to a lesser grace: and the same applies to the virtues, which flow from grace."

then he cannot grow in virtue *secundum habitum*, either. It follows, then, that any growth of Christ's virtue must be growth *secundum actum*, and it must be found in the "more perfect works" of virtue that Jesus performed "according to his progress in age" rather than in the *habitus* of the virtues themselves.[81]

IV. The Fittingness of Christ's Growth in Virtue

Before considering how Jesus' gradual performance of "more perfect works" could indicate genuine growth in virtue if he already possesses the virtues perfectly *secundum habitum*, we must first take up a prior question that arises from Aquinas's decision to link Christ's performance of more perfect works to his progress in age. If Jesus possessed all the virtues most perfectly *secundum habitum* from the first moment of his conception, why did he only perform more perfect works of virtue as he advanced in age? Why did he not perform perfectly virtuous deeds from the beginning of his earthly existence? Aquinas takes up this question, with respect to Christ's growth in wisdom, in the aforementioned sermon on Jesus' adolescence:

> It is true that Christ from the beginning of his conception was full of wisdom and grace, but he has not shown it from the beginning, but at an age when others usually show it. In that case we speak of advancing in wisdom, not in the absolute sense of the word, but in view of the effect through which he advanced amidst the people. If he had willed to show his wisdom when he was seven years of age, people could have doubted the truth of the assumed human nature. And because of this, Christ wanted to be similar to others. . . . At the time when a sign of wisdom normally appears for the first time in a human being, Christ manifested his wisdom for the first time, namely, when he was twelve years of age: thus little by little. He did not will to show his wisdom, so that the truth of the human nature in him would be acknowledged and in order to give us an example of advancing in wisdom.[82]

[81] In his examination of the development of Christ's passions, Craig Steven Titus rightly points to this distinction between *habitus* and effect as a locus for thinking about Christ's growth in virtue, but he does not investigate the further question of whether Christ's growth in the effects of grace is a consequence of volition or necessity. See Titus, "Passions in Christ," 83-84.

[82] *Sermo Puer Jesus* (Hoogland, trans., 89-90).

Aquinas gives two reasons why Christ did not manifest the fullness of wisdom until he was twelve years old. First, he suggests that Christ did not reveal his wisdom until the time that others would be well-disposed to accept it. Here, Aquinas manifests his abiding anti-docetism and his concern for the credibility of the incarnation. As Paul Gondreau observes, Aquinas worries that "a docetic take on Christ's humanity might ensue if Jesus appears as *too perfect* a human individual."[83] Therefore, he argues that it would have been unfitting for Christ to display the fullness of wisdom he already possessed before an age when human beings would typically exhibit wisdom. Second, Aquinas discerns a pedagogical motive behind Christ's progressive display of his fullness of wisdom when he suggests that Christ's revelation of his wisdom at the usual age gives human beings an *exemplum* of growth in wisdom. Such arguments would also apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to Christ's gradual advance in the works of virtue.

Upon reading this text, however, one might worry that Aquinas's explanation of why it was fitting for Jesus to reveal his fullness of wisdom and virtue in a gradual manner seems to imply that Jesus' growth *secundum actum* is not real growth at all but rather only a shrewd pedagogical strategy. One might be tempted, in other words, to interpret Aquinas's claim that "he did not will to show forth" the fullness of his wisdom and virtue as suggesting that Christ strategically refrained from executing the works of perfect wisdom and virtue that were otherwise immediately possible to him.

Such an interpretation sits uneasily with some of Aquinas's most fundamental Christological commitments, however. It would certainly be an ironic form of anti-docetism for Aquinas to propose that Christ did not really develop like us but instead strategically revealed his perfection so that he would merely

[83] Gondreau, *Passions of Christ's Soul*, 141. On Aquinas's staunch anti-docetism, see Paul Gondreau, "The Humanity of Christ, the Incarnate Word," in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Rik van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 252-76; Paul Gondreau, "Anti-Docetism in Aquinas's *Super Ioannem*: St. Thomas as Defender of the Full Humanity of Christ," in *Reading John with St. Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Michael Dauphinais and Matthew Levering, (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 254-76.

appear to have developed like us. Although the process of growing in virtue is an accidental perfection of human nature rather than something essential to it (since Christ would still have been fully human even if he had been perfect in virtue *secundum actum* from the beginning), nevertheless, denying that Christ could grow in virtue would undermine Aquinas's anti-docetic efforts by making Christ appear too perfect a human being and thereby lessening the credibility of the incarnation that Aquinas is at pains to preserve. Moreover, it would be odd to speak of Christ's strategically gradual revelation of his already-perfect virtue as providing human beings with an example of "growth" in virtue in any recognizable sense.[84] These factors caution us against interpreting Aquinas as implying that Christ is strategically "holding back" whenever he does not perform some magnificent act of wisdom or virtue.

How, then, should we understand Aquinas's explanation for why Jesus only gradually displayed his perfect virtue? I contend that Jesus' gradual growth in the works of virtue is best understood as a coassumed feature of the incarnation itself. For Aquinas, the *coassumpta* are the perfections or defects which qualify the Word's assumed human nature but which are not essential to it. They are thus accidental aspects of concrete human existence which the Word deems it fitting for him to assume in view of his redemptive mission.[85] To say that Christ's capacity for growth in the works of virtue is a coassumed defect of his human nature, then, is to submit that God, in his wisdom, deemed it more fitting than any alternative possibility that the Word should

[84] One might object that Christ gives us an example of growth in virtue the same way that a teacher, already knowing the answer to a geometric proof, models the steps of completing the proof for the benefit of his students. Yet it is important to note that the teacher is only modeling genuine growth to his students insofar as he is replicating for them his own process of arriving at knowledge of the proof (albeit, a process that likely occurred at some point in the past). If he had not himself undergone a process of growth in knowledge with respect to the proof, he could not model genuine intellectual growth to his students but only the exercise of a technique.

[85] On Aquinas's understanding of the *coassumpta*, see Gondreau, *Passions of Christ's Soul*, 132-41.

assume human nature in such a way that gradually coming to perform greater works of virtue should be an integral component of Christ's development as a human individual. As with any other coassumed feature of the Word's humanity, assuming this feature is not strictly necessary.[86] The Word could have become truly human in a way that bypassed the normal processes of growth and maturation. Yet, in his wisdom, God judged it more suitable that the Word should become human in such a way that his execution of greater works of virtue was tethered to his growth in age. In this way, the incarnate Word conformed himself to the concrete situation of the human nature he was coming to redeem, a nature which at certain stages of development is not capable of performing advanced acts of wisdom and virtue.[87]

Viewing Christ's capacity for growth in the works of virtue as a coassumed defect enables us better to interpret Aquinas's perplexing claim above that "[Christ] did not will to show forth his wisdom." If the capacity for growth in virtue *secundum actum* is a coassumed feature of the incarnation, then we must understand this fact to be ultimately rooted in the Word's divine wisdom, which established the conditions whereby his assumed human will would and, indeed, did cooperate with his divine

[86] Here my position differs from that of Jean Galot, who views Jesus' growth as essential to the truth of his humanity. See Jean Galot, S.J., *Who Is Christ?: A Theology of the Incarnation*, trans. M. A. Bouchard (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1981), 378-79.

[87] Understanding Christ's capacity for growth in the works of virtue as a coassumed defect has the added benefit of harmonizing the claims of Aquinas's sermon—which revolves around the exegesis of Luke 2:52—with some of the sources he cites in the *Catena aurea in Lucam*. For example, the *Catena* quotes a comment from Theophylact of Orchid who writes that "if, hearing that the Word humbled himself, no one is offended (thinking slightingly of the true God), but rather marvels at his compassion, how is it not absurd to be offended at hearing that he increases? For as he was humbled for us, so for us he increased, that we who have fallen through sin might increase in him. For whatever concerns us, Christ himself has truly undertaken for us, that he might restore us to a better state" (*Catena aurea in Lucam*, c. 2, lect. 14). Theophylact emphasizes the agency of the Word in humbling himself, first, by the incarnation, and second, by submitting to the possibility of growth and increase, which seems to be the same principle implicitly undergirding Aquinas's claims in the sermon. I am grateful to Jane Sloan Peters for suggesting to me the relevance of the *Catena* and to Daria Spezzano for alerting me to this passage from Theophylact.

will.[88] Moreover, the reasons why the Word might choose to divest himself of the possibility of executing perfect acts of virtue from the beginning of his earthly existence cohere well with the reasons Aquinas offers in the sermon for the delay in Jesus' execution of perfect works of wisdom and virtue. Coassuming the capacity to grow in these ways corresponds to the way that human nature is typically experienced and thus safeguards the credibility of the incarnation, and it enables Jesus to provide a true example of making progress in wisdom and virtue.[89]

V. Conceptualizing Christ's Growth amid Perfection

But how could Jesus' gradual performance of "more perfect works" indicate genuine growth in virtue if he already possesses the virtues most perfectly *secundum habitum*? After all, Aquinas posits a reciprocal connection between the performance of more perfectly virtuous deeds and the strengthening of the virtuous *habitus*. Performing a virtuous act that corresponds to or exceeds the intensity of the *habitus* one possesses leads to an increase—or, in the case of the infused virtues, a disposition to receive an increase—of that *habitus*.[90] Conversely, the strengthening of a *habitus* enables one to perform greater acts in accordance with

[88] Consider, by way of analogy, the argument that Aquinas presents for the fittingness of Christ's passibility and other bodily defects before the resurrection. Holding that Christ enjoys the beatific vision, Aquinas nonetheless argues that Jesus' body does not experience the effects of the soul's glory overflowing into it, and therefore it is passible and subject to other defects. Note well that Aquinas holds that this forestalling of Christ's beatitude in the soul "was subject to the will of his Godhead" and not to some sort of independent act of his human will (*STh* III, q. 14, a. 1, ad 2), respecting the truths about Christ's unity of person and about the lack of disorder or contrariety between Christ's wills (*STh* I, q. 18). Thus, Christ's passibility is predicated on the divine dispensation which includes that passibility should be a structural feature of how the Word assumes human nature. So too, I suggest, is Christ's inability to perform certain works of perfect virtue at certain stages of his human development.

[89] See *STh* III, q. 14, a. 1, where Aquinas argues that Christ's coassumption of certain defects is fitting by virtue of (1) their suitability to his redemptive mission, (2) their capacity to protect the credibility of the incarnation, and (3) the opportunity they afford him to provide an example of bearing defects well.

[90] *STh* I-II, q. 52, a. 3; II-II, q. 24, a. 6.

that virtue with promptness, pleasure, and ease. Given the mutual interdependence between the execution of more perfect acts and the growth of *habitus*, it is necessary to ask whether these two facets of growth in virtue can coherently be separated from one another such that Jesus could be said to grow in virtue *secundum actum* but not *secundum habitum*.

Aquinas considers precisely such a scenario in his treatment of the virtues in the *Prima secundae*, when he asks whether it is possible for someone to possess the infused moral virtues without charity. In that text, he considers an objection that argues that many people who have charity nonetheless experience difficulty in performing works of moral virtue, and therefore that such persons, although they possess charity, do not have the moral virtues.[91] While Aquinas rejects the objection's conclusion, he does acknowledge that "sometimes someone who has a *habitus* experiences difficulty acting in accordance with the *habitus*, and consequently feels no pleasure or satisfaction in the act."[92]

Aquinas posits two possible reasons for this difficulty in acting according to the *habitus* that one already possesses. First, it might be due to "some supervening extrinsic impediment."[93] As an example, he proposes that a person might possess the intellectual virtue of *scientia* yet be hindered from exercising it due to some contingent circumstance, such as feeling tired or ill. The agent's temporary sluggishness of mind does not diminish the *habitus* of *scientia*, but it does inhibit her from utilizing it. Second, Aquinas suggests that "sometimes the *habitus* of the infused moral virtues experience difficulty in acting because of certain contrary dispositions remaining from previous acts."[94] While he holds that the infusion of virtue eliminates any contrary vices that an agent had previously acquired, he nonetheless recognizes that "neither acquired nor infused virtue completely removes the passions that incline one to evil."[95] The graced human agent still experiences a struggle between the flesh and the spirit, and the inclination

[91] *STh* I-II, q. 65, a. 3, obj. 2.
[92] *STh* I-II, q. 65, a. 3, ad 2.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] *De Virtut. in Comm.*, q. 1, a. 10, ad 14.

toward inordinate acts remains, albeit as a *dispositio* rather than a *habitus*.[96] Thus, the person with infused virtue who still struggles with the lingering effects of a previous vice can act according to virtue, but the contrary disposition he possesses makes the performance of virtuous works more burdensome.

While Aquinas indicates that these two cases are analogous—presumably inasmuch as they both involve some disruption to the exercise of virtue—there is also an important dissimilarity between them.[97] In the second case, the person with infused temperance experiences difficulty in acting temperately precisely because there are inclinations in his concupiscible appetite, developed through his own actions, that run directly contrary to the inclinations of the virtue he now possesses. This is not merely an accidental obstacle, nor is it one that comes to him from the outside, nor will it simply disappear in time. Rather, the obstacle to the exercise of virtue is intrinsic and oppositional. In order for him to grow in virtue *secundum actum* by performing greater acts of temperance and doing so with promptness, pleasure and ease, he must root out the residual inclinations toward intemperance that inhibit the operation of his infused virtue. By contrast, the first case—the person unable to exercise her *scientia* due to sickness or exhaustion—involves an obstacle to the exercise of virtue that is extrinsic and accidental.[98] The agent's difficulty in

[96] *De Virtut. in Comm.*, q. 1, a. 10, ad 16.

[97] Aquinas connects the two examples with *similiter* in order to indicate this analogy. Sherwin highlights the analogous relationship between the two cases, perhaps as a pedagogical tool—moving from a more readily acknowledged case to a more counterintuitive one—but he does not mention the important difference in how the obstruction of virtue's operation occurs in the two examples. See Michael S. Sherwin, O.P., "Infused Virtue and the Effects of Acquired Vice: A Test Case for the Thomistic Theory of Infused Cardinal Virtues," *The Thomist* 73 (2009): 29-52, at 44.

[98] The distinction employed here between intrinsic/oppositional and extrinsic/accidental obstacles to the operation of a *habitus* mirrors distinctions that Aquinas draws elsewhere in his corpus. In his commentary on Aristotle's *De anima*, he distinguishes between the inhibition of knowledge's operation by a contrary *habitus* of ignorance, on the one hand, or by an accidental obstacle such as exterior preoccupations or bodily indisposition, on the other. See II *De anima*, lect. 11 (*In Aristotelis Librum De Anima Commentarium*, ed. Pirotta [Turin: Marietti, 1948], nos. 360-65). Similarly, in the

actually contemplating the knowledge she possesses habitually is not due to some opposed inclination in her mind, nor is such difficulty an intrinsic feature of her intellectual powers. She simply happens to be tired or sick, and once she gets some rest or the illness runs its course, she will once again be able to exercise her *scientia* with ease, promptness, and pleasure. In both of these cases, Aquinas notes that the agents still possess virtue *secundum habitum* despite their inability or difficulty in exercising it *secundum actum*.

While both of these cases are valuable for showing that, in principle, possessing the *habitus* of virtue need not imply ease in the operation of virtue, they are limited in their ability to shed light on the particular case of Christ's growth in virtue *secundum actum*. The second case is clearly unhelpful, since Christ's growth in virtue *secundum actum* is markedly different from that of the justified. As we have seen, Christ's virtues do not supplant previously acquired vices, his soul is not affected by the *fomes peccati*, and his passions are already perfectly ordered from the first moment of his conception. Christ's growth in the acts of virtue cannot therefore be described as the progressive removal of internal, contrary inclinations which oppose the inclination of virtue and hinder the virtuous *habitus* from being expressed in virtuous acts. The first example is also unhelpful, albeit in a less spectacular way, since it fails to illustrate genuine growth in the works of virtue. The person with *scientia* whose exercise of it is inhibited by illness or exhaustion has exercised this *habitus* in the past and will soon be able to exercise it again without necessarily exhibiting any greater knowledge than she did before she became tired or sick. Thus, growth is not essential to this obstacle being overcome. In other words, Christ's progress in the works of

Summa contra gentiles, Aquinas distinguishes between two kinds of obstacles to an agent's bringing about change. One involves an extrinsic obstacle, "for if fire is hot, it is necessary that it have the power to heat, although it is not necessary that it heat, since it may be hindered by something extrinsic." The other involves an intrinsic and oppositional obstacle on the part of the recipient of the change, whose potency can be "hindered by contrary agents or by contrary dispositions inherent to the movable, or by contrary forms offering an obstacle that is stronger than the power of the agent in acting—thus iron is not melted by a feeble heat." See *ScG* II, c. 30.

virtue cannot be explained by an extrinsic obstacle that comes and goes at random.

There are, however, two other cases that Aquinas examines that do prove helpful for understanding Jesus' growth in virtue *secundum actum*. In both examples, an agent lacks the capacity to act in accordance with a *habitus* already possessed. The first case concerns an agent who lacks the requisite development of her faculties to exercise a *habitus* she already possesses, while the second case involves an agent who lacks the requisite matter upon which to exercise the virtue he has *secundum habitum*. Each case shows, in different ways, how an agent can grow in the exercise of virtue without concurrently strengthening the *habitus* of virtue, and each case consequently sheds light on a different aspect of Christ's growth in virtue *secundum actum* amid his abiding perfection in virtue *secundum habitum*.

The first case concerns the situation of an infant who receives the infused virtues in conjunction with the grace of baptism.[99] Speaking about the baptized infant's ability to exercise the virtue of infused prudence in particular, Aquinas asserts that "in children who have been baptized but do not yet have the use of reason, there is prudence *secundum habitum* but not *secundum actum*."[100] He then goes on to suggest that, as the child "comes to the use of reason," the already-existent *habitus* of prudence is reduced to act and "through its exercise merits increase, until it is perfected."[101]

There are, of course, significant differences between the baptized infant's progress in virtue and Christ's own growth. Chief among them is that the infant's growth in virtue involves not only growth *secundum actum* but also growth *secundum habitum*. The child's need to grow in prudence *secundum habitum*—despite the fact that she truly possesses the *habitus* as an effect of baptism—stems from the fact that her growth in

[99] *STh* III, q. 69, a. 4. See Sheryl Overmyer, "Baptism and Its Glorious Cortege," *New Blackfriars* 96 (2015): 699-710.

[100] *STh* II-II, q. 47, a. 14, ad 3.

[101] Ibid.

virtue still requires that she contend with the concupiscible effects of original sin. Even though the infant does not possess the lingering effects of a previously acquired vice, she must still undertake the arduous project of harmonizing her passions with the judgments of reason and divine law. The *fomes peccati* stands as an intrinsic and contrary obstacle to the infant's growth in virtue, but such an internal force of opposition is altogether absent from the person of Christ. In short, Jesus' growth in moral virtue, unlike that of the baptized infant, does not involve the progressive rectification of his appetites—that is, growth *secundum habitum*—because his passions were always rightly ordered.

Despite this important difference, there remains an illuminating similarity between the baptized infant's growth in virtue *secundum actum* and the kind of growth in virtue that Aquinas ascribes to Christ. We may note that Aquinas attributes the baptized infant's inability to act in accordance with the infused *habitus* of virtue to an accidental obstacle, her lack of capacity to reason. This is not a contrary disposition involving an inclination inherently opposed to the exercise of prudence. Rather, it is simply the lack of the appropriate matter to facilitate the operation of prudence. Once this obstacle is removed through the natural processes of psychosomatic maturation, the infant will, with proper instruction, be able to perform acts in accordance with the *habitus* she already has.[102] The link that Aquinas establishes between the infant's gradual coming to the use of reason through intellectual and physical development and the acquisition of knowledge, on the one hand, and her gradually increasing capacity to exercise her *habitus* of prudence by performing more perfect works of virtue, on the other, likewise applies to Christ's growth in virtue *secundum actum*.

[102] Cessario discerns this distinction between *habitus* and act in his treatment of the baptized infant when he notes that, "for the infant, the infused virtues supplied only the principles of virtuous operation. These virtues could not account for the actual practice of virtue, since the individual lacked the physical and psychological abilities required for any moral act. In the case of the infant, then, the actualization of the infused virtues would accompany the normal development of human maturity which results from Christian upbringing" (Cessario, *Moral Virtues and Theological Ethics*, 118-19).

In the *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas famously affirms that Christ advanced in acquired human knowledge not merely by experience but also in essence, because it would be unfitting for Christ to lack the natural ability to abstract intelligible species from sensible images, and the execution of such abstraction requires the possibility (and reality) of growth in empirical knowledge.[103] Yet, although Aquinas posits that Christ increased in his acquired knowledge, he still insists on the perfection of that knowledge in a certain sense, holding that Christ's acquired knowledge "was always perfect *secundum tempus*, even though it was not always perfect *simpliciter et secundum naturam*."[104] By speaking about Christ's acquired knowledge as perfect according to its time, Aquinas tethers Jesus' growth in knowledge to his growth in age.[105] Christ's knowledge was always perfect in relation to a certain point in time, which is to say, at a certain age and level of psychosomatic development. But, at each discrete moment where Christ's knowledge was perfect for the time being, his knowledge nonetheless remained imperfect in comparison to the knowledge he would possess at the culmination of his psychosomatic development.[106] Affirming Aquinas's

[103] *STh* III, q. 12, a. 2. With this assertion, he departs in important ways from the views of his patristic predecessors and Scholastic contemporaries and indeed reverses his own earlier thinking on the matter in III *Sent*., d. 14, q. 1, a. 3, qcla. 5. On this development, see Kevin Madigan, "Did Jesus 'Progress in Wisdom'? Thomas Aquinas on Luke 2:52 in Ancient and High-Medieval Context," *Traditio* 52 (1997): 179-200; Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., "S. Thomas d'Aquin et la science du Christ: Une relecture des questions 9-12 de la 'Tertia pars' de la Somme de théologie," in idem, *Recherches thomasiennes* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2000), 198-213; Simon Francis Gaine, O.P., "Christ's Acquired Knowledge according to Thomas Aquinas: How Aquinas's Philosophy Helped and Hindered His Account," *New Blackfriars* 96 (2015): 255-68.

[104] *STh* III, q. 12, a. 2, ad 2.

[105] Aquinas's link between growth in acquired wisdom and growth in age coheres with the connection drawn between them in Luke 2:52, the text Aquinas cites in support of his position in the article's *sed contra*.

[106] Gaine notes that "Aquinas evidently takes [the absolute perfection of Christ's acquired scientific knowledge] to be achieved by adulthood, his early modern Carmelite commentators at Salamanca specifying the age of twelve" (Simon Francis Gaine, O.P., *Did the Saviour See the Father?: Christ, Salvation, and the Vision of God* [London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015], 136).

commitments to the embodied character of human knowledge as rooted in the senses together with the truth of Christ's integral humanity entails that, as Simon Gaine puts it, "Christ could not have exercised [his natural knowledge] without the requisite physiological developments having taken place."[107]

Here we see the likeness between the case of the baptized child's growth in the works of virtue and Christ's own progress. Just as the baptized infant possesses the infused virtues *secundum habitum* but cannot yet exercise them because she lacks the requisite physiological development to execute human acts, so too Christ, while possessing the virtues most perfectly *secundum habitum* from the first moment of his conception, was nevertheless unable to carry out *perfect* works of virtue until he had undergone the necessary development to facilitate the performance of exterior acts of virtue. This is not to suggest that, prior to some point in his human development, Christ ever acted imprudently or in ways that were contrary to virtue; that would be impossible given his perfect possession of the virtues *secundum habitum*. Rather, in his childhood and adolescence, Christ's exercise of the *habitus* of virtue that he already possessed most perfectly was inhibited by an accidental obstacle: his lack of complete psychosomatic human development. Once this impediment is removed through the natural processes of human maturation, Christ exercised all the virtues most perfectly *secundum actum*.

This analysis offers a plausible explication of Aquinas's claim, in his treatment of Christ's growth in grace, that "according to his progress in age, [Christ] did more perfect works."[108] As in his discussion of Christ's growth in wisdom, Aquinas here explicitly draws a connection between Christ's progress in age and his progress in the execution of more perfect works. His growth in age—and the psychosomatic development that accompanies it—constitutes the condition for the possibility of his performing more perfect works of grace, which is to say, more perfect works of virtue. The processes of ordinary human development

[107] Ibid., 146.

[108] *STh* III, q. 7, a. 12, ad 3.

constitute the gradual removal of an accidental obstacle to the exercise of the *habitus* of virtue that Christ already has most perfectly. As Jeremy Wilkins puts it, "the growth of Christ in stature and in acquired understanding was a growth in the matter to be perfected by grace."[109] The natural processes of human growth and development allowed the supernatural effects of Christ's grace to be exercised and manifested more clearly.

The parallels between Aquinas's linkage of Christ's progress in age to his increase in knowledge, on the one hand, and to his increase in the works of virtue, on the other, suggest that we might also reasonably apply Aquinas's distinction between absolute and relative perfection, already applied to Christ's wisdom, to his virtue as well.[110] While Christ's possession of the virtues *secundum habitum* was always perfect *simpliciter et secundum naturam* from the first moment of his earthly life, we might say that his performance of works of virtue was only perfect *simpliciter et secundum naturam* once he had completed the natural process of human growth and development.[111] Nevertheless, because the process of growth in age involves,

[109] Jeremy D. Wilkins, "Love and Knowledge of God in the Human Life of Christ," *Pro Ecclesia* 21 (2012): 77-99, at 91 n. 72.

[110] My application of the notion of relative perfection to Christ's virtue differs from that of Galot. I contend that Christ's virtue was always absolutely perfect *secundum habitum* and relatively perfect only *secundum actum*. By contrast, Galot argues that Christ's virtues were always relatively perfect both *secundum habitum* and *secundum actum*. This leads him to posit that Christ grew in virtue *secundum habitum* so that "his love for men . . . continued to grow until it attained its maximum degree in his death" (Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 379). This view, however, is incompatible with Aquinas's understanding of Christ's complete sanctification from the moment of conception.

[111] Garrigou-Lagrange contends that one cannot argue from Christ's growth in acquired knowledge to his growth in virtue because "the natural sciences do not make man absolutely good, as the moral virtues do, but good only in a qualified sense." The implied conclusion is that growth in virtue would render Christ imperfect in a way that growth in knowledge does not. This objection does not apply to the argument offered here, however, which does not contend that Christ grew in virtue *secundum habitum* so as to become better (which is Garrigou-Lagrange's chief worry) but only through the performance of more perfect acts. See Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *Christ the Savior*, trans. Dom Bede Rose, O.S.B. (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1950), 272; Galot, *Who Is Christ?*, 379.

anthropologically speaking, the removal of the accidental obstacle to Christ's exercise of the virtues he already possesses perfectly *secundum habitum*, it follows that the young Christ's every act of virtue also possessed a relative perfection *secundum tempus*, for they manifested his perfect *habitus* of virtue in ways that were appropriate to his corresponding stage of psychosomatic development.[112]

The second case in which Aquinas's analysis of growth in virtue *secundum actum* amid stability in virtue *secundum habitum* sheds light on Christ's growth in virtue concerns the situation of Adam in the state of original justice. Aquinas argues that the first man possessed all the virtues "in a sense" (*aliqualiter*), a qualification Aquinas introduces because he views the exercise of certain virtues as incompatible with the perfection

[112] While at first glance the affirmation in Heb 5:8 that "Christ learned obedience through what he suffered" appears particularly relevant to a discussion of Christ's growth in virtue, Aquinas actually takes this passage to be more germane to a discussion of Christ's growth in knowledge. In fact, he cites Heb 5:8 in the *sed contra* of *STh* III, q. 12, a. 2 on Christ's increase in acquired knowledge. Commenting on the passage, Aquinas notes that although Christ, possessing the beatific vision, had perfect knowledge of the nature of obedience through simple cognition, nevertheless he learned something new about this virtue through the experience of being obedient. In particular, Aquinas suggests that Christ "learned . . . how difficult it is to obey, because he obeyed in the most difficult matters, even to the death of the cross" (*Super Hebr.*, c. 5, lect. 2 [*Super Epistolam ad Hebraeos Lectura,* ed. R. Cai (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1953), no. 259]). In other words, Aquinas does not think that Jesus' obedient suffering on the cross was a means to his becoming more perfect in the exercise of obedience, since the obedience that Christ manifested on the cross is already supremely perfect both *secundum habitum* and *secundum actum*. Rather, he takes Heb 5:8 to mean that the experience of suffering—not merely in small matters but in the intense suffering of the passion—gave Jesus new insight into the costliness of obedience in a way that enables him to "have compassion on our infirmities" (Heb 4:15) and which perfects him to become, "to all that obey him, the cause of eternal salvation" (Heb 5:9).

Exegetical issues notwithstanding, however, it seems clear that Aquinas does see a progress of growth *secundum actum* in Jesus' exercise of the virtue of obedience. He notes that "Christ had most perfect obedience," just as he has all the virtues (*STh* III, q. 7, a. 3, ad 2). Still, that perfect obedience was always manifested in acts of obedience that were appropriate to Christ's age and circumstances, such as in his subjection to Mary and Joseph as a child (*Sermo Puer Jesus* [Hoogland, trans., 106]) and in his adherence to the dictates of the Old Law (*STh* III, q. 37, a. 1; q. 40, a. 4; *Super Ioan.*, c. 2, lect. 2 [Marietti ed., no. 375]). Thus, Christ's obedience in suffering and death suggests growth in obedience *secundum actum* amid stable perfection *secundum habitum*.

of humanity's primitive state.[113] For example, the sorrow, guilt, and unhappiness that compel the exercise of mercy did not exist in the state of original justice. Crucially, however, Aquinas argues that Adam still possessed the virtue of mercy, but he only possessed it *secundum habitum* and not *secundum actum*. By invoking this distinction, Aquinas asserts that "if [Adam] had seen misery in another, he would have dispelled it as much as he could."[114] Adam did

> not and could not exercise certain virtues in the state of original justice due to a lack of the necessary matter for their exercise, yet he still possessed the *habitus* that would have enabled him to perform such works with pleasure, promptness, and ease, if the necessary matter were to exist.

Aquinas holds that Christ did not assume human nature in the state of innocence, and therefore, he *did* exercise virtues like mercy which Adam possessed but did not exercise.[115] Nevertheless, Aquinas's exegesis of Adam's possession of certain virtues *secundum habitum* but not *secundum actum* still proves helpful for illustrating Christ's growth in virtue if we apply its logic to Christ's human development. We might say, for instance, that although Christ possessed all the virtues most perfectly *secundum habitum* from the first moment of his conception, he nonetheless grew in virtue *secundum actum* because, at certain moments of his development, the matter that serves as the necessary precondition for the exercise of certain virtues was absent.

[113] *STh* I, q. 95, a. 3.

[114] Ibid.

[115] For a fuller analysis of the relationship between Christ's passions and those of Adam, see Gondreau, *Passions of Christ's Soul*, 253-75; Daria E. Spezzano, *The Glory of God's Grace: Deification according to St. Thomas Aquinas*, Faith & Reason (Ave Maria, Fla.: Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University, 2015), 172-78; Clem, "Passions of Christ." Aquinas's affirmation of Jesus' exercise of *misericordia* revolves especially around the explicit biblical testimony, such as Matt 9:36 and Matt 14:14. See *STh* II-II, q. 30, a. 1, ad 1; *Super Matth.*, c. 9, lect. 6 (*Super Evangelium S. Matthaei Lectura*, ed. R. Cai [Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1951], no. 805); c. 14, lect. 1 (Marietti ed., no. 1238).

This is especially true of the virtues of the passions. Although Christ's passions were perfectly ordered by grace from the first moment of his conception, acknowledging the reality of true psychosomatic development in Christ allows us to recognize genuine development even in his experience of rightly ordered passions.[116] Consider, for example, Christ's growth *secundum actum* in the virtue of chastity. Because Christ was not subject to the *fomes peccati* and because the movements of his sensitive appetite were perfectly conformed to reason from the moment of his conception, Aquinas would hold that Christ possessed the virtue of chastity most perfectly and experienced no elicited sexual desires, let alone lustful ones.[117] Nevertheless, before Jesus' body had developed to physical maturity and therefore would have been suitable for sexual activity, his exercise of the virtue of chastity, while perfect according to his level of psychosomatic development, might also be considered imperfect in comparison with his practice of chastity at the age of maturity. Before the sensitive appetite's natural ordering to the good of sexual pleasure was sufficiently developed, Jesus could not have experienced the kinds of appetitive movements over which his perfect chastity could exercise its complete self-mastery. Once he reached such a point of psychosomatic maturity, however, Christ would have begun to exercise his perfect chastity in new ways, thereby growing in that virtue *secundum actum*. We might also make similar arguments concerning the development of Christ's fears or his anger. Differences in how the passions are experienced and integrated as the human being matures suggest that Christ's already perfect virtues could be manifested in new ways through the performance of greater works of virtue in a manner that indicates genuine growth on his part.

Both of the preceding cases show how Aquinas conceives of the possibility of performing greater works of virtue without

[116] On the development of Christ's passions, especially with respect to their spontaneity, see Titus, "Passions in Christ," 68-86.

[117] Paul Gondreau, "Aquinas on Christ's Male Sexuality as Integral to His Full Humanity: Anti-Docetism in the Common Doctor," in *Thomas Aquinas and the Crisis of Christology*, ed. Michael Dauphinais, Andrew Hofer, O.P., and Roger Nutt (Ave Maria, Fla.: Sapientia Press, forthcoming in 2021).

necessarily strengthening the *habitus* of virtue. While such cases are necessarily outliers among the ordinary experiences of human growth in virtue, they offer a framework for understanding how Christ, who is perfect in virtue *secundum habitum*, could still make progress in virtue *secundum actum*. Far from being a strategic manifestation of his already-perfect virtue, his gradual perfection in the works of virtue stems from the gradual perfection of the faculties that are the subjects of virtue, as in the case of the baptized infant, and from the emergence of new matter upon which his already-perfect virtues might act, the possibility of which is seen in the case of Adam.

Conclusion

Christ, who was perfect in virtue from the first moment of his conception, nonetheless grew in virtue. Possessing the fullness of grace and, consequently, the fullness of virtue *secundum habitum* from the beginning of his earthly life, he came to perform more perfect works of virtue over the course of time. This progressively perfect exercise of his already-perfect virtue is not a mere pedagogical strategy, as if he were restraining the splendor of his virtue from showing forth prematurely, but is rather a consequence of his concurrent growth in age. As Christ grew and matured, the natural, accidental obstacles that inhibited the exercise of his perfect *habitus* of virtue gradually disappeared, the emergence of new experiences of the passions offered opportunities to display the virtues that had until that time been exercised in limited ways, and newly acquired knowledge offered avenues for him to display in greater ways the perfectly ordered passions he possessed from the very beginning. Christ's performance of greater works of virtue thus reflected true growth amid his abiding moral perfection.

Aquinas asserts in his sermon on the child Jesus that "the progress of Christ is made an example for adolescents," and this is no less true of his growth in virtue than of any other respect in which he grew. This is not necessarily to suggest the *process* by which Jesus grew in virtue is a model for our own, as if we could

"engage in the same disciplines that Jesus practiced as he grew in virtue and . . . be confident in their effectiveness."[118] As we have seen, there are important differences between Christ's manner of progress in virtue and our own. While Christ's growth reflected the natural and gradual manifestation in action of the *habitus* of virtue that he already possessed most perfectly, our growth in virtue involves the struggle to align our unruly and concupiscent passions with the judgments of faith and reason so as to acquire, strengthen, or dispose ourselves for an increase of the *habitus* of virtue that we possess either imperfectly or not yet at all. Our growth in virtue requires repentance, conversion, and struggle against the effects of sin, while Christ's progress in virtue involved none of these; therefore, the process of our growth in virtue will differ accordingly.[119]

Despite these differences, however, the very *fact* of Christ's growth in virtue remains exemplary and crucially so. Jesus passed through each stage of human development from conception to human maturity, simultaneously sanctifying it and providing a model of perfection for each phase of human growth and development. To see Christ's growth as exemplary, therefore, is to see in him not only the perfection of virtue at every stage of human life but also a model of continual progress in the works of virtue. This model of progress is exemplary both morally, insofar as it instructs and encourages our own efforts to advance in virtue at every stage of life, and ontologically, for Christ's growth constitutes the source of our own progressive assimilation to him through grace.

[118] Pelser, "Temptation, Virtue, and the Character of Christ," 99. It is not clear that Aquinas thinks that there are precise "disciplines" by which Jesus grew in virtue, since he regards Christ's growth in virtue *secundum actum* to be a natural consequence of the disappearance of the natural and accidental obstacles to eliciting certain acts of virtue. Still, the spiritual practices in which Jesus engaged—e.g., prayer, solitude, fasting—certainly can be conducive to our own progress in the moral and spiritual life.

[119] While Christ himself had no need of repentance, Aquinas does propose that "Christ set the highest example to penitents, since he willingly bore the punishment, not of his own sin, but of the sins of others" (*STh* III, q. 15, a. 1, ad 5). Nevertheless, even this model for penitence stands at a remove from the situation of the sinner in such a way that it would be difficult for it to provide an immediate pattern for a sinner to imitate in his repentance from sin and struggle against vice.

Aquinas takes Christ to be an adept teacher who instructs not only by his word but also by his manner of living.[120] Christ's gradual manifestation of his perfect virtue through his progress in the works of virtue exemplifies this pedagogical acuity, for he condescends to offer human beings an example of perfect virtue that is suited to their particular stage of life and progressively to conform them by grace to that model. For this reason, Aquinas notes, "there is not any age from which the way of salvation is absent."[121] And while the scriptural accounts of Christ's life leave much of his growth and adolescence hidden, his teaching retains its power through its most important effect, namely, that he impresses it interiorly upon his disciples. Thus, Christ, in conforming himself to our condition not only by assuming human nature but also by undergoing the ordinary processes of human growth and development, enables our growth and development to be conformed to the perfection that he manifests in his own growth. Therefore, we can conclude with Aquinas that, even in his youth, Christ remains "the supreme exemplar of perfection," whose very "progress . . . is made an example."[122]

[120] See *STh* III, qq. 40 and 42. See also Michael S. Hahn, "Thomas Aquinas's Presentation of Christ as Teacher," *The Thomist* 83 (2019): 57-89; Mark J. Armitage, "Why Didn't Jesus Write a Book? Aquinas on the Teaching of Christ," *New Blackfriars* 89 (2008): 337-53.

[121] *Sermo Puer Jesus* (Hoogland, trans., 87).

[122] I am grateful to Paul Gondreau and Daria Spezzano for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

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CAN PALAMISM BE ACCOMMODATED TO THE WESTERN THEOLOGICAL TRADITION? A FEW CONSIDERATIONS ON "THE REAL PROBLEM"

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SCHOLARSHIP ON Gregory Palamas and Palamism often gives the impression that dismissing Western theology is the price that has to be paid in order to acknowledge the genius of the Orthodox tradition. One should therefore wholeheartedly welcome a book that has the explicit intention of bringing the teachings of Palamas one step closer to the Western Christian universe. From this point of view, one must salute Norman Russell's approach in *Gregory Palamas and the Making of Palamism in the Modern Age*.[1] As the author goes in search of a "real Palamas" hidden behind denominational controversies, he scrutinizes a considerable amount of scholarship for the benefit of nonspecialists. Readers will find an abundance—sometimes an overabundance—of observations related to known but also to much less well-researched elements of historiography on Palamas and Palamism. The courage of an attempt at such a vast synthesis certainly deserves commendation. This does not mean that the results of this attempt are immune to criticism. As I set forth my reservations in the pages that follow, my hope is that this critical analysis of Russell's book will eventually shed some more light on an ancient but still unsolved theological issue.

[1] Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. Pp. 272. $93.00. ISBN 978-0-19-964464-3. Parenthetical page numbers in the text refer to this work.

The argument of Russell's book could be roughly summarized as follows: modern historiography on Palamism has presented Palamas's doctrine as incompatible with Western—mostly Catholic—theological tradition on biased ecclesiological grounds; actually, when examined in itself, this doctrine has much to offer that could be integrated into the Western theological tradition and enrich it. In the first part of the book, "The Historical Reception of Palamite Theology," Russell recounts—or "deconstructs," as it is no longer fashionable to say—the steps that have given the Palamite controversy its current configuration. In the second part of the book, "Raising the Larger Questions," the author delves into the texts of Palamas himself, explaining them in the light of the controversies of the time, as he goes in search of a "real Palamas" who would be more acceptable to the Western theological tradition.

Russell's narrative of Palamas's *Rezeptionsgeschichte* consists of three moments. (1) After the definitive vindication of Palamas's theology in Byzantium (*Tomos* of 1368), a long period of almost complete silence ensued, neither Orthodox nor Catholic theologians showing themselves keen on reading his works and discussing their content. (2) The "problem" was revived by Martin Jugie in his articles on Palamas and Palamism for the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, but it was instrumentalized because of considerations pertaining to Church politics. Jugie's desire to see the "Greeks" come back into the Catholic fold "made" Palamism into a theology incompatible with the Western tradition, identified with the vessel of Truth. On the opposite side, Orthodox theologians such as Vladimir Lossky and John Meyendorff built on Jugie's conclusions, arguing that this incompatibility proved the superiority of the Orthodox tradition over the Catholic one, and justified the rejection of Catholic efforts to assimilate "Oriental Christianity." (3) More contemporary theologians and scholars on both sides seem to oscillate between two mutually exclusive positions: a rediscovery of the dimensions of Palamas's theology that could eventually be received in the West, and a more radical interpretation of this teaching that continues to pit the Latin West and the Byzantine East against each other.

Let us review Russell's narrative step by step.

I. THE LONG HISTORICAL "SILENCE"

Russell takes the silence into which the discussions around the teaching of Palamas fell as a fact that does not require special explanation.[2] Is it not natural that one would discuss a dogma before it is officially proclaimed rather than after? For instance, after the *homousios*-theology got the upper hand over Arianism at the end of the fourth century, the thrust of theological discussions shifted to Mariology and Christology in the fifth and sixth centuries. But is the silence that Russell has in mind *this kind of silence*, namely, the silence that follows a dogmatic victory?

Russell dedicates much attention to the discussions that preceded the canonization of Palamas in 1368, namely, the criticism of his ideas by Baarlam of Calabria, Gregorios Akyndinos, and Nikeforos Gregoras successively, as well as the various responses of Palamas to his opponents. In all fairness, one can only pay homage to the elegance and virtuosity with which Palamas crushed his adversaries. However, what I would call the *real problem* associated with the teachings of Palamas has little to do with these attempts to demonstrate that they contradicted the tradition of the Fathers. It surfaces for the first time with the *megas domestikos* Demetrios Cydones's discovery of Aquinas. After what Gerhard Podskalsky called the "breaking-in" (*Einbruch*) of Thomism in Byzantium,[3] the whole configuration of the issue regarding the orthodoxy of Palamas changed. This major epistemological shift seems to have evaded Russell's

[2] Russell is too vague in this regard: "For historical reasons [the teaching of Palamas] was inhibited after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 until it was resumed again in Russia towards the end of the nineteenth century and was brought to the West after the Revolution of October 1917" (212). For what reasons? The desire of the Orthodox hierarchy not to antagonize its Latin counterpart? One can only speculate.

[3] *Theologie und Philosophie in Byzanz: Die Streit um die theologische Methodik in der spätbyzantinischen Geistesgeschichte (14.115. Jh.), seine systematischen Grundlagen und seine historische Entwicklung* (Münich: C. H. Beck, 1977), 180-230. This most remarkable study is absent from Russell's bibliography.

attention.[4] The issue ceased to be *primarily* about the correct interpretation of the Fathers and the limits of the human understanding of God. What came to the fore was the alleged incompatibility between the teachings of Palamas and a thoroughly consistent theological system that had hitherto remained foreign to the Byzantine tradition. Content-wise the "real problem" could be formulated in the following manner: If God is *essentially* simple, as Aquinas argued on sophisticated philosophical premises, how could one accept the distinction that Palamas drew between the divine essence and energy (or energies)? Of course, Demetrios's intention was to show that Aquinas's thinking more faithfully reflected the consensus of the Fathers than did that of Palamas. But if this Western theologian sounded more Greek than Palamas, Aquinas remained notwithstanding a Westerner.[5] What I am calling the real problem involves a tension between the Latin West and the Byzantine East, respectively represented by Aquinas and by Palamas. In its original form, this tension was purely theological. It had nothing to do with the political tensions between the Church of Rome and that of Constantinople following a last attempt at recovering a degree of ecclesial unity (Second Council of Lyon, 1274). Russell pointedly reminds us of the fact that Palamas himself showed an exceptional openness to the Church of Rome.[6] When

[4] See *The Making of Palamism*, 4-5.

[5] Hence the famous exclamation of Scholarios in the margins of his translation of his abridged version of the *Prima secundae*: "If only, most excellent Thomas, you had not been born in the West! Then you would not have been obliged to justify the errors of that Church concerning, for instance, the procession of the Spirit and the distinction between the divine essence and operation. Then you would have been as infallible in theological matters as you are in this treatise on ethics!" (L. Petit, X. Siderides, and M. Jugie, eds., *Oeuvres complètes de Georges Scholarios*, 8 vols. [Paris: Maison de la bonne presse, 1928-36], 6:1, translation in M. Plested, *Orthodox Readings of Aquinas* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012], 132). Russell neglects the most remarkable contribution of Scholarios—an unrepentant admirer of Aquinas who became an advocate of Palamas under the influence of Mark Eugenikos—to the debate.

[6] See *The Making of Palamism*, 212. The very first sign of the "real problem" is the embarrassment of Paul of Smyrna, the pontifical legate in Constantinople, invited by the basileus John Kantakuzenos to witness his dispute with Nikeforos Gregoras in 1355. Even if Paul's letter to the pope denouncing Palamas's distinction between essence and energies

endeavoring to discard Palamas's theological claims through Thomistically shaped types of arguments, the brother of Demetrios Cydones, the Athonite monk Prochoros, was speaking in the name of the true tradition of the Fathers, just as Barlaam, Akyndinos, and Gregoras had done before him. It is the interference of Thomism as a theological system, not political tensions between East and West, that generated the "real problem." If anything, *it is because this purely theological issue involved an unexpected but genuine theological tension between the Latin West and the Byzantine East that it became a matter of Church politics at a later point.*

Indeed, the attraction exerted by Aquinas's theology, combined with the steadily increasing influence of Palamites within the Church and the imperial administration, induced Demetrios Cydones and a number of his disciples to convert to Catholicism.[7] The *Tomos* of 1368 not only proclaimed Palamas a saint, it also sealed the defeat of Prochoros Cydones.[8] As a result, several talented disciples of Demetrios fled to Italy and parts of Greece under Latin rule, among them Manuel Kalekas and the brothers Chrysoberges, Maximos and Andreas, who entered the Dominican Order.

(*PL* 154:835-38) is spurious (Jean Meyendorff, *Introduction à l'étude de Grégoire Palamas*, Patristica Sorbonensia 3 [Paris: Les Éditions du Seuil, 1959], 166 n. 54), the authenticity of the letters of Kantakuzenos to the legate in the wake of the *Tomos* of 1368 can hardly be disputed (see E. Voordeckers and F. H. Tinnefeld, eds., *Refutationes duae Prochori Cydonii et Disputatio cum Paulo Patriarcha Latino epistulis septem tradita*, CCSG 16 [Turnhout, 1987]). Kantakuzenos would not have defended the conformity of Palamas's distinction with the tradition of the Fathers had the legate not openly voiced doubts in this regard. Russell does not mention the episode except to signal a slight inaccuracy of Meyendorff regarding Kantakuzenos (*The Making of Palamism*, 78 n. 12—without reference to the critical edition of Kantakuzenos's letters).

[7] See Demetrios's depiction of the "bearded ones" that behave as the masters of the capital: R. J. Loenertz, *Les recueils de lettres de Demetrius Cydones*, Studi e testi 131 (Vatican City: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1947), Letter 50, pp. 36-37.

[8] Elsewhere I have tried to show that the "Thomism" of Prochoros was superficial, its philosophical substance coming from Akyndinos: see "The Transfiguration in 14th Century Palamite Controversies and the East/West Line of Separation," *Nicolaus* 40 (2013): 139-57.

It is at this point, and only at this point, that the theological issue became part of Church politics. The Latins were largely unaware of the Byzantine debates around Palamas's teachings. But Greek converts—most especially Demetrios's disciples—were aware. As the matter of the day yet again turned out to be the reunion with the Church of Constantinople (Council of Ferrara-Florence, 1438-45), Cydones's disciples thought it was their duty to alert the authorities of the Roman Church about a new stumbling-block that needed to be added to the list of old controversial topics such as the *filioque* and the supreme authority of the bishop of Rome. Upon the request of Bessarion, still metropolitan bishop of Nicaea at the time and one of the main protagonists of the council, Andreas Chrysoberges wrote a treatise against the doctrine of Palamas.[9] On the other side, a theologian such as Mark Eugenikos, who was concerned most of all to oppose reunion with the Latins, was equally eager to submit the teachings of Palamas to public discussion since he knew that the Latins would not be able to accommodate such discussion. Russell does not dedicate much attention to all these developments.[10] Without them, however, the five hundred years of so-called silence that ensued is incomprehensible.

The fact is that this silence did not arise out of the absence of a purely theological problem, all issues having been happily resolved in the Byzantine context. The *real problem* was at the Council of Florence, hiding in plain sight. More than sixty years after the *Tomos* of 1368, it brought to the fore one more dividing issue between the Latin and the Byzantine traditions. If Church politics played a role here, it was not by inventing a theological problem that did not exist, but, on the contrary, by artificially silencing a lively theological issue that a number of theologians on both sides were eager to see discussed. The geostrategic calculations behind the proceedings of the council were of such

[9] "Andrea Rhodiensis Archiepiscopi, de divina essentia et operatione ad sanctissimum Dominum Bessarionem, Metropolitam Nicaeae, ex commentariis beatissimi Thomae apodictica explicatio," ed. Manuel Candal, *Orientalia christiana periodica* 4 (1938): 329-71.

[10] See *The Making of Palamism*, 5 and 24-25.

pressing importance (the Ottoman threat for John V, the Byzantine *basileus* in search of military support, creating an opportunity for the pope to recover authority over the Eastern part of the *Oikumene*) that nonessential bones of contention such as the status of the essence/energy distinction were deliberately left aside.[11] From this perspective, the nonartificial silence that followed the council, or rather the fall of Constantinople in 1453, is easy to understand. All hopes—or fears—of reunion of the two parts of the Church having subsided due to the nonreception of the Council of Florence in Constantinople and the political disintegration of Byzantium, the need to bring up theological issues that stood in the way of ecclesial reconciliation became much less vital. The resulting five hundred years of relative silence did not mean that Palamism as a theological issue had gone away, or that it had never really existed. It only meant that the opportunity for discussing it had been lost. The "real problem" was only waiting for a new opportunity to resurface.[12]

[11] Ibid.

[12] The silence was far from complete. Between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, interest in Palamas's works arose every time the reasons for the division between the Church of Rome and the world of Orthodoxy were investigated and discussed anew (as by Denis Petau, Leo Allatius, and Francois Richard, among others); see *The Making of Palamism*, 26-29. As Russell shows, widely relying on the works of Antonio Rigo, the harsh assessments of Palamas's distinction originating from the West are what triggered the printing of works by Palamas and his disciples (John Kantakuzenos, Philoteos Kokkinos) in Europe. These publications featured the main response of the "Greek Church" to the anti-Palamite considerations developed by Catholic scholars. Learned confessional controversies did happen at the periphery of the Catholic and Orthodox worlds. But one should refrain from making the mistake of Jugie and interpreting a widespread ignorance of Palamas's teachings in the "Église Greco-Russe" as a *de facto* dismissal of these teachings ("Palamisme (controverses)", *Dic. theol. cath.*, vol. 11 [Paris: Letouzey et Ane, 1932], 1810). By his own admission, Palamas had a purely defensive understanding of the use of concepts, as the heart of the matter was not speculative theology but hesychast practice as a concrete experience of deification. In a situation where discussions about Palamas's teachings were no longer topical, the embrace of the Athonite practice of hesychasm by the wider Orthodox world manifested the most eloquent form of approval of these teachings. From this point of view, Russell's claim that "Russians were slow to receive Palamas" (*The Making of Palamism*, 6) makes little sense. The hesychasm of Nil Sorsky (+1508) was only the culmination point of a process initiated by Cyprian (+1406), metropolitan of Kiev and direct disciple of the Patriarch

II. The Invention of "Palamism"

As mentioned earlier, Russell's central claim is that what broke the long silence was the publication of Martin Jugie's articles on Palamas and Palamism in the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* (1932). But, according to Russell, this gesture was no going back to square one. If he speaks of a "making" of Palamism "in the modern era," it is because he depicts Jugie as the one who gave to Palamism the character of a "system" for the first time in history: "Palamism as a 'system' was thus invented by Jugie as part of the armoury of weapons he could use against the Orthodox Church in order to undermine confidence in it as a reliable vehicle of salvation and so encourage conversions to Catholicism" (49). Let me briefly explain why I regard this statement, which summarizes the whole argument of the book, as inaccurate.

There was no "invention" of a system because there was no "system." It might well be the case, as Russell claims, that the

Philoteos Kokkinos a good hundred years before. Russia's fourteenth and fifteenth centuries witnessed a prodigious circulation of treatises related to hesychast spirituality translated from Greek (including a few works by Palamas himself) as well as the efflorescence of monastic life according to the Athonite pattern. Even before Cyprian, the *Synodikon* issued after the defeat of Barlaam and Akyndinos in 1352, which stated the main theses of Palamism, was almost immediately translated and integrated into the Russian *Tshin Pravoslavia* (see Gelian M. Prokhorov, "Hesychasm and Social Thinking in 14th c. Eastern Europe" ("Исихазм и общественная мысль в Восточной Европе в XIV в"), *Trudy Otdela Drevnerusskoj Literatury* 23 (1968): 86-108; "The Hesychastic Literature from the Cells in Ancient Russia—The Transfer to the North," in *Ancient Russian as an Historical and Cultural Phenomenon* (Древняя Русь как историко-культурный феномен) (Saint Petersburg: Olega Albyshko, 2010), 215-42. These elements, overlooked by Russell, explain the discrepancy in the Orthodox world between the concrete spiritual integration of Palamite teachings and the obsolescence of a dogmatic reflection on Palamism. Here lies the origin of the surprising debates among Orthodox theologians regarding the validity of Palamas's distinction in eighteenth-century Greece (*The Making of Palamism*, 27) and nineteenth-century Russia (ibid., 34-35). But with the development of Russian Orthodox historical scholarship (a genre borrowed from the West and Germany in particular) towards the end of the nineteenth century, the interest in one of the main doctrinal authorities of the Byzantine tradition was rekindled (ibid., 33-37). As Russell shows, this rediscovery came into focus during the discussions on *Imiaslavie* or the theological status of the name of the Savior (ibid., 37-44).

term "Palamism" is a neologism forged by Jugie.[13] But nothing prevents a new name from designating an old reality. If what defines a theological "system" is a "set of propositions, a coherent body of thought" that should be judged according to the standards of reason and Tradition (47), was Palamas not the first to give such a form to his teaching? Did not all his adversaries, beginning with Barlaam, continuously try to reduce his teaching to a "(pseudo-) coherent body of thought," so as to single out its logical inconsistencies and its nonconformity to the tradition of the Fathers with more ease? At times it seems that Russell borrows his understanding of "system" from the theology that he contrasts with what he calls "Palamism," that is, Thomism.[14] Let us therefore ask: In what way does Jugie's treatment of Palamas's teachings differ from traditional Catholic anti-Palamite argumentation, starting from Andreas Chrysoberges's treatise "ad sanctissimum Dominum Bessarionem"? The dogmatic heart of Jugie's argumentation is identical to all the previous treatises

[13] However, the claim that the opponents of Palamas had no term to designate his teachings other than "innovations" or "heresy" (see *The Making of Palamism*, 45) is inaccurate. Barlaam was the first to refer to these teachings as "Messalianism" (from the ancient heresy claiming that the physical perception of God's essence was within the reach of ascetics).

[14] See ibid., 45: "The term 'Palamism' has a ring to it, suggesting a system of thought, a counterpart to 'Thomism', which is precisely why Jugie adopted it." It is true that Palamas "had no intention of constructing a finished systematic theology in the manner of his Western contemporaries" (ibid., 210). Scholasticism certainly implies systematization. But if coherence is what makes a "system" according to Russell, there are many "systems" that owe nothing to Scholasticism. Furthermore I am puzzled by the notion that Palamas's teaching was originally so fluid and "unfinished" that it never became "mandatory" for the Orthodox Church in the way Aquinas's teaching became so after Leo XIII's *Aeterni Patris* (ibid). In any Church, nothing is mandatory to the degree that dogmas are. *Aeterni Patris* did not proclaim any dogma. It solemnly stated the intrinsic affinity of the mind of the Church with the theology of Aquinas. Meanwhile, through the inclusion of decisions of the 1351 Council of Blachernae into the *Synodikon* and the 1368 *Tomos* canonizing Palamas and his teachings, the Church of Constantinople proclaimed dogmas of universal validity (this part of the *Synodikon* is still supposed "to be read" in all churches on the Lenten "Sunday of Orthodoxy" every year, one week before the "Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas"). Assuredly, the Church of Constantinople did not need the help of Scholasticism to transform the teachings of Palamas into fixed points of belief, echoing the holiness ascribed to Palamas himself.

pertaining to the same category: the essence of God being simple, a distinction between essence and energies is unthinkable. One could accuse Prochoros Cydones or Denis Petau of articulating Palamas's teachings along the pattern of Aquinas's *quaestiones* and *articuli*, but surely not Jugie. Actually, the originality of Jugie's treatment of Palamas derives from the fact that it is *not* purely systematic. Indeed, it owes its enduring quality to the amount of historical information it provides.

The intention of Jugie was not to instrumentalize Palamism against the Orthodox Church. It was just the opposite. From the time of the brothers Cydones and the brothers-friars Chrysoberges to that of Jugie, Catholic dogmaticians would argue that Palamism—*pace* Russell—being one more heresy among all the errors contained in the Orthodox tradition, the only way Orthodox believers could be saved was to convert individually and join the Catholic Church. I readily admit that this attitude shows little consideration for the venerable character of the Orthodox tradition. But Jugie, a distinguished member of the Assumptionist Fathers' "Oriental Mission," belonged to another generation, which arose in the wake of Catholic unionism and *Orientalium dignitas* (1894), Leo XIII's encyclical on the legitimate diversity of rites and jurisdictions within the one Catholic and Apostolic Church. As Russell himself points out, Jugie's goal was not the conversion of individuals but the (re-)union—whatever be the adequacy of its terms—of the Catholic Church with Orthodox Churches as a whole.[15] Describing Palamism as a forgotten and obsolete doctrine in the Orthodox Church, Jugie was therefore doing just the opposite of pitting the "authentic" Catholic tradition against the "deviant" tradition of Orthodoxy. By arguing that Palamism was an accidental and therefore expendable feature of the Orthodox tradition, Jugie

[15] See *The Making of Palamism*, 45-46. The same attitude transpires in Jugie's correspondence with Sergius Bulgakov: "With a little good will, [Jugie] feels, and sympathetic reciprocal study, Catholics and Graeco-Russians can easily be reconciled" (quoted in ibid., 53). By bringing members of the Orthodox Church closer to Catholicism, Jugie entertained the hope of exerting an influence on Orthodoxy as a whole for the sake of union.

thought he was working to eliminate a substantial obstacle on the way towards the (re-)union between the Latin and Byzantine ecclesial traditions.

To summarize: (a) Jugie did not invent the problem associated with Palamism, and (b) Jugie's reconstitution of Palamism does not hide some anti-Orthodox agenda. On the contrary, if Jugie's articles incidentally reawoke the "real problem"—the theological one—that had been more or less forgotten since the Council of Florence, it is because, just like the Council of Florence itself, Jugie's contributions were dictated by the desire to see the Latin West and the Orthodox West recover their ecclesial unity. But if there is no trace in Jugie of an artificial "making" of Palamism driven by base considerations of rivalry between the Latin and the Byzantine traditions, what remains of Russell's claim that the modern approach to Palamas has been somehow biased from the start?

Russell argues that the contributions of Jugie forced Orthodox theologians to reply along similar apologetic and ideological lines. Of course, Jugie's input proved to be fruitful to some extent as it spurred scholars such as Basil Krivoshein, Dumitru Stăniloae, Vladimir Lossky, and Kiprian Kern to rediscover the legacy of Palamas (56-74). The problem, according to Russell, is that these theologians approached Palamas's legacy through the eyes of Jugie, that is, with attention to the rivalry between Catholicism and Orthodoxy. From this point of view, Russell's emphasis on the significance of John Meyendorff's works on Palamas and Palamism (75-78) is probably due to the fact that, while not directly engaging in apologetical work on behalf of the Orthodox tradition, Meyendorff delivered a most remarkable defense of its legitimacy through the scientific probity of his studies on Palamas's historical context.[16]

[16] Given his marked emphasis on Meyendorff, Russell's minimization of the significance of Vladimir Lossky's works, especially his *Essai sur la théologie mystique de l'Église d'Orient* (1944), is puzzling. Russell seems to think that Lossky failed to be a perfect representative of militant Orthodoxy due to his circle of Catholic acquaintances. The claim that, especially in his later writings, Lossky does not conduct polemics "across an East/West divide" (66) is hardly comprehensible. There is not a line written by Lossky that does not reflect the issue of the East/West divide, most often in a polemical way. If

Undoubtedly, the ideological agenda of these theologians was symmetrically opposite to that of Jugie. As much as Jugie was striving to hasten the reunion between Catholicism and Orthodoxy, they were bent on rejecting forms of uniatism that would dissolve the authentic and original character of the Orthodox tradition. This common conviction led them to overturn Jugie's judgment on the place of Palamas within Orthodox tradition: in contrast to Jugie's claim that Palamism was an "accident" in the development of this tradition, they put forward the claim that it was connected to its very heart, so that Orthodoxy would be unthinkable without Palamas's teachings. This stance was accompanied by a dismissal of the Western idea that Palamism is a heresy. While refraining from throwing back the accusation of heresy at Western theology in general and Thomism in particular, they argued that the Latin tradition, entangled in its narrow rationalism, was incapable of grasping the superior, "antinomic" truth of Palamism.

The ball was thrown into the Western camp, and it was not long before it was kicked in the opposite direction again. Taking their cue from Charles Journet's review of Meyendorff's magisterial study of Palamas, a group of Dominicans led by Marie- Joseph Le Guillou and Jean-Miguel Garrigues published a series of articles that questioned the concept of participation in Palamas's writings, and the fidelity of his thought to that of the Fathers (see 24 and 88-91). The heated discussion regarding the status of Palamas's teachings had begun. It is still very much raging.[17]

The fundamental question is this: Should we say with Russell that, due to its being connected with specific ecclesiological agendas, the reviviscence of the controversy between Catholic

anything, it is precisely Lossky's plea for the irreducible otherness of the Orthodox tradition that drew Catholic intellectuals to him. The admission that Lossky is a "towering figure" comes only briefly at the very end of the book (239).

[17] I will discuss several other more or less contemporary contributions to the debate in the third and last part of this review.

and Orthodox theologians regarding the doctrine of Palamas is likely to limit or distort our access to his authentic thought?[18]

The notion that, when dealing with the issue of Palamism, the rivalry between the Latin West and the Byzantine East indicated a new parameter, artificially introduced by Jugie, is misleading. As mentioned earlier, the entanglement of Palamism with the rivalry between East and West preceded the contributions of Jugie by more than five hundred years. The fact is that, far from concealing the thought of Palamas, this rivalry pertains to the heart of the problem. Palamism as a theological issue is about the nature of the distance between Byzantine tradition and Latin tradition as essentially represented by Thomism. The most fundamental mistake of Russell's book is the confusion between what *reveals* the issue of Palamism and what *creates* it.[19] Merely delving into the writings of Palamas, as Russell does in the second part of his book ("Raising the Wider Issues"), will not offer a solution to a problem that involves as much the content and method of Thomism as the teachings of Palamas. It takes two to tango, just as to provoke a clash. In addition to understanding

[18] See *The Making of Palamism*, 212: "The main obstacle [to understanding Palamas' true thinking] is the polemical use which has often been made of Palamas by both pro-Palamite and anti-Palamite scholars. In many cases, this is based on the persuasive constructions of Palamism by Jugie, Lossky, or Meyendorff rather than on a first-hand acquaintance with Palamas himself."

[19] This confusion is manifest in Russell's analysis of Stăniloae's attitude towards Palamism. In the preface to his *Dogmatic Theology* (1938), Stăniloae writes: "The hesychast controversy was the most important episode in the history of Orthodox spirituality after the patristic era. This controversy came about through a collision between Western scholasticism, which had already reached its final form in the fourteenth century, and traditional Eastern religious thought, and led to the final sharpening and formulation of Orthodoxy's doctrinal characteristics and its position in relation to the new thinking of Western Europe" (quoted in *The Making of Palamism,* 61). Russell speaks of the "apologetic intention" that Stăniloae betrays here when he "portrays the hesychast controversy in ideological terms as a clash between Western scholasticism, as personified by Barlaam, and the Eastern patristic tradition, as summarized by Palamas" (ibid., 62). But how could a *theological problem* (the apparent incompatibility between Aquinas's and Palamas's respective understandings of divine simplicity) be discarded as an *ideological construct*? The problem is that this specific theological problem is at the core of the nonreception of Palamas in the West since the time of Demetrios Cydones. Denying its authenticity is hardly compatible with the attempt at making this reception any easier.

Palamas, one must understand Aquinas as one strives to get to the bottom of the discrepancy described by the Orthodox theologians who opposed Jugie and his followers. At no point, however, does Russell show willingness to elaborate on the original thought of Aquinas. This oversight is a major problem, for one cannot try to bring Palamas closer to the Western tradition, establishing his teachings as an "inheritance for all Christians," as Russell claims to do, if at the same time one shies away from looking into what makes it so difficult for this tradition to accept Palamas's teachings.

In summary, there is no denying that the confrontation between the position of Jugie and those of his Orthodox opponents is what sets the scene for contemporary research on Palamas. But this confrontation is certainly not about an artificial problem that would be the product of these authors' antithetic ecclesiological visions and goals. It is about a "real theological problem," going back to the latter part of the fourteenth century. And it is the authenticity of this problem that makes the results of modern research on Palamism so interesting to assess.

III. Reflecting on the Conclusions of Modern Scholarship on Palamas and Palamism

New editions and translations of Palamas's works (98-101) and of treatises written by his teachers, disciples, and adversaries (on the penetration of Thomism into the polemic among other topics, see 108-11), as well as research on the historical context of the quarrels around Palamism in Byzantium (for Rigo on fourteenth-century Bogomilism and the condemnation of Prochoros Cydones, and Nadal on Akyndinos, see 101-7), on the intellectual environment (Pachymeres, Metochites, Chumnos, etc.), and on the philosophical structure of Palamas's thinking (112-20) owe their origin, at least partly, to the curiosity generated by the revival of the Palamitic quarrel during the first half of the twentieth century. Russell does not argue that these scientific works necessarily partake of what he describes as the biased, ideological approach associated with the revival of an ancient theological dispute. On the contrary, to the extent that

they are scientific, these editions and studies should help us to unveil the real doctrine of Palamas beyond confessional prejudices. But in what sense do they effectively fulfill their promises? In order to answer this question, one needs to recount the evolution of this *disputatio rediviva* in recent literature.

It is not until the end of the book (chap. 8, "Could Palamas Become 'The Inheritance of All Christians'?" and the "Concluding Reflections") that Russell delves into the substance of the most recent discussion on Palamism. He goes in search of a "translation into modern concepts" of Palamas's "distinctions" in the hope of transcending ecclesial controversies and opening even non-Orthodox minds to the theological and spiritual riches of Palamas's teachings (213). The postulate is that a "translation" faithful to the original will eventually overcome the theological prejudices of non-Orthodox readers of Palamas.[20] But what if it does not? What if faithfulness to the original only deepens the gap between the Orthodox tradition and the Western theological tradition(s)? However much Russell tries to justify his postulate, there is no evidence that he succeeds in rebutting the opposite claim.

The praise of Palamas's teachings as essentially superior to the narrow horizon of Scholasticism is not the prerogative of Orthodox theologians such as Christos Yannaras (92, 221-23, 239-40) or David Bradshaw (12, 116, 227-28). It is also the position of several Western philosophers and theologians such as Georges Barrois (91) and Manuel Sumares (217-18). But how can the dismissal of the Western tradition in the name of Palamism bring Palamas closer to the Western tradition?

Conversely, criticism of Palamas's teachings, coming either from Catholic and Anglican theologians such as John Milbank (223-25) or from a Greek philosopher such as Stelios Ramfos

[20] At any rate, Torstein Tollefsen's suggestion to translate Palamas's *energeia* as "activity" or "operation" will not solve the issue associated with the distinction between the latter and the divine essence (see 16 n. 64).

(218-21), are unlikely to make these teachings more palatable to Western Christians.[21]

Orthodox theologians (Amphilochios Radović on the Trinity [121-24], Stavros Yangazoglou on communion and *theosis* [126-28]) and Catholic scholars (Louis Bouyer on Palamas's connection with patristic tradition [81-84], Jacques Lison on the Holy Spirit [124-25]) might have interesting things to say about specific aspects of Palamas's theology. But bluntly reaffirming the supreme relevance of Palamas's distinction, or ignoring its problematic aspects from a Western point of view, will not answer the question raised by Iltyd Trethowan regarding Palamas's energies being "severally and individually the whole God, *God in his entirety*," namely, "Must we accept these paradoxes?" (93).[22]

Kallistos Ware may argue that any language about God is "by way of symbol, image and analogy" (95), and John Zizioulas may minimize the importance of Palamas's distinctions in Orthodox tradition seen as a whole (240). But how is this toning down supposed to bring the teachings of Palamas any closer to a tradition that has developed its own language about God, a language apparently at odds with the Byzantine Doctor's dogmatic distinctions?

Russell's final proposal consists of a plea in favor of theological pluralism—a pluralism that "does not necessarily entail relativism" (241). Non-Orthodox Christianity should see in Palamas's teachings one way among others of accounting for

[21] Milbank's attempt to contrast the merits of Sergius Bulgakov's sophiology with the problematic character of Palamas is futile, in spite of what Russell claims. Sophiology is not an alternative to the faithfulness to Palamas professed by the whole of Orthodoxy. As noted in the book, Bulgakov himself acknowledged the legitimacy of Palamas's distinction, considering it as a preparatory step to the advent of sophiology (51). One should add that Bulgakov's sophiology, unlike Palamas's doctrine, failed to become part of the official teaching of the Orthodox Church. Moreover, it became the object of two solemn condemnations: once by the Moscow Patriarchate (August 1935) and once by its dissident branch, the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia (October 1935).

[22] This is also the point of view of Rowan Williams, who holds that the Orthodox "ontologization" of the distinction presents an irreducible logical paradox (*The Making of Palamism*, 93-94).

salvation in Christ, one that has many spiritual riches to share. The last sentence of the book reads, "If Western Christians could learn likewise to see Palamas as a particular attempt within a specific context to articulate a vision of divine-human communion, he would enter more fully into Western debates on the relationship between divine transcendence and divine immanence, freed from the ideological constructions placed upon him in the past" (242). A "particular attempt" that is valid for "a particular context": how does such a pluralism differ from a flatly self-contradictory type of relativism? If Palamas's vision of God and divine participation claims to be true, how could this be a "particular truth" that would somehow coexist with other "particular truths" incompatible with it? A universal Truth that admits of the simultaneous coexistence in itself of incompatible truths is no Truth at all. If A and non-A can simultaneously be said to be true, nothing—no single proposition in the world—can be said to be true. Honoring Palamas's authentic vision, freed from "ideological reconstructions," can hardly consist of minimizing its claim to be unequivocally true.

Russell unfortunately fails to distinguish between the notion of pluralism and that of complementarity. The principle of pluralism implies that incompatible doctrines or theories can be true at the same time. By contrast, the principle of complementarity claims that two doctrines or theories can point to an identical truth described from two different angles (one might think of Ernest Bohr's "complementary principle" applied to the wave/particle duality). Already in 1970, the Anglican theologian Eric Mascall observed that Aquinas and Palamas had two of their main "bêtes noires" in common, namely, essentialism and nominalism (83). However, there was a priori little to justify the equivalence Mascall established between Aquinas's notion of Being and Palamas's concept of energy. Without bringing forward a better principle of equivalence, André de Halleux, a Catholic patristic scholar, was the first to theorize the "complementarity approach" (87). Anna Ngaire Williams, Bruce D. Marshall (215), and I (228) have followed in de Halleux's footsteps. The question is, how can this fundamental coincidence between Thomism and Palamism be demonstrated? It is at this

point that the scientific studies of Palamas's writings and the context of Palamitic quarrels have a role to play in providing a solution to what I am calling the "real problem."

According to Russell, "one of the most striking new discoveries" coming from the research on Palamitic quarrels is the integration of Thomistic argumentation into the works of Palamas's disciples (109). Indeed, the first reaction of pro-Palamite theologians like Neilos Kabasilas (+1363) was to disprove Aquinas, a stance that was later embraced by many other pro-Palamite thinkers (Demetrios Crisoloras, Kallistos Angelikudes, Matteos A. Panaretos, etc.). From this point of view, Ioannis Polemis's exploration of the thinking of Theophanes, metropolitan of Nicaea, led to very remarkable conclusions (see *The Making of Palmaism*, 109-10) Writing against Prochoros Cydones a few years before, and after, the latter's condemnation (1368), Theophanes turns the whole line of argumentation of his opponent upside down, showing that the writings of Aquinas could be used to justify Palamas's distinctions. According to Theophanes, the divine energies of God are perfectly compatible with the temporality of their created productions, since they reflect God's βούλησις (deliberative agency that fixes a beginning and an end) and not his θέλησις (the eternal expression of his will).[23] Meanwhile, Theophanes claims, in a very Thomistic

[23] Russell writes: "Theophanes' distinction between an absolute non-relational energy and a finite relational energy (finite because it ceased to operate on the seventh day of creation) is not found in Palamas" (111). Coming from a Palamas scholar, statements of this kind are perplexing. In the *Triads*, one finds the well-known passage that reads as follows: "The wise Maximus [the Confessor] thus rightly says that 'existence, life, holiness and virtue are works of God *that do not have a beginning in time*'. . . . We say [God] is life, goodness and so forth, and give Him these names, because of the revelatory energies and powers of the Superessential. . . . *There are, however, energies of God which have a beginning and an end,* as all the saints will confirm . . . we for our part know that while all the energies of God are uncreated, not all are without beginning. Indeed, beginning and end must be ascribed, if not to the creative power itself, then at least to its activity, that is to say, to its energy as directed towards created things" (*The Triads* 3.2.7 and 8 [ed. J. Payne J. Meyendorff (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1983), 96, emphasis added]). The expression κατὰ τὰ δεδημιουργημένα ("directed towards created things") in the last sentence is particularly remarkable. The preposition implies both "motion from above" and "in relation to," "after the fashion of" (Liddell and Scott). Energies that "have a

manner, that God's intellect and God's essence are one. It seems that, according to Theophanes, the distinction-separation between God's essence and energies has to do with the manner in which God produces a temporal cosmos.

This position would be in line with the tendency, analyzed by John Demetracopoulos, of the disciples of Palamas to conceive Palamas's distinction as a *diakrisis kat' epinoian*, a conceptual distinction associated with the finiteness of created minds as they approach the nontemporal, uncreated infinity of their Creator (118-20).[24] In this sense, the distinction would derive from the manner in which Palamites envisage the interaction between God and the cosmos, the uncreated Creator and creatures elevated to the vision of the Uncreated. It can be argued that Palamas conceives this interaction in a manner opposite to that of Aquinas, theocentrically and not anthropocentrically. A *diakrisis kat'epinoian* would of course exculpate Aquinas from introducing composition within God himself. But can one ascribe this position to Palamas? Demetracopoulos argues that Palamas's disciples watered down the objective, ontological character of the distinction in his thinking. However, as Russell points out, Palamas himself denied that his distinction would imply the possibility of a "severance or division" between energy and essence and that speaking of a "lower divinity" and a "higher divinity" entails composition in God (119).[25]

beginning and an end" are relative to the *diastema*, the spatio-temporal dimension of created things, in contrast to the absolute and eternal emanations from God's essence that correspond to the divine attributes (Goodness, Life, etc.).

[24] Demetracopoulos writes: "the Palamites felt it necessary to soften the harsh Palamite distinction between God's essence and 'energies' as well as between the various 'energies' themselves and adopted the Patristic idea that God is simple *ex parte objecti* but multiple *ex parte subjecti* κατ' ἐπίνοιαν or λογῷ (i.e., conceptually or by reason); and they interpreted Palamas' distinctions this way" ("Palamas Transformed: Palamite Interpretations of the Distinction between God's 'Essence' and 'Energies' in Late Byzantium," in *Greeks, Latins, and Intellectual History, 1204-1500*, ed. M. Hinterberger, C. D. Schabel, and P. Kyprou [Leuven and Walpole, Mass.: Peeters, 2011], 263-372, at 264).

[25] Among contemporary Orthodox theologians, Torstein Tollefsen (117) and Nicholas Loudovikos (224) emphasize the aspect of real ontological continuity between divine essence and energy in Palamas's writings.

Besides, it is not true that Palamas's disciples were satisfied with borrowing from Demetrios Cydones's translations a notion of *diakrisis kat'epinoian* that corresponds to Aquinas's *distinctio rationis*. The formula that one finds in the writings of Nilus Cabasilas, Philoteos Kokkinos, Johannes Kantakuzenos and others is more complex: "the distinction [between the essence and the energy] is notional whereas the union [between the same] is real, ἡ μὲν διάκρισις ἐπινοίᾳ, ἡ δὲ ἕνωσις πραγματική."[26] Union implies the distinction of the two parts that unite, but this union is real; distinction implies the possibility of separating between two elements, but this distinction is merely in the mind. In point of fact, Palamites do not borrow this definition from Cydones, but from sixth-century dyothelite Christological treatises.[27] The notion that the distinction refers to a reality in God, while any sort of separation derives from the finiteness of the created minds considering God, corresponds literally to Aquinas's notion of *distinctio rationis cum fundamento in re*, a distinction that Aquinas applies to God's eternal attributes.[28] That Palamas's emphasis on the *distinction* between God's essence and energies derives from a theocentric account of God's interaction with the temporal world, while Aquinas's emphasis on the *unity* between God's essence and action *ad extra* has to do with an anthropocentric understanding of the same, is a hypothesis that could provide a solution to what I am calling the "real problem" of Palamism. What matters is that Aquinas does not conceive this unity without a distinction inscribed in the reality of God, while Palamas believes that any composition in God derives from the finiteness of created minds considering the divine reality.

[26] Nilus Cabasilas, *Λόγος σύντομος*, 12, line 9 in M. Candal, "La 'Regla teológica' de Nilo Cabásilas," *Orientalia christiana periodica* 23 (1957): 240-56; Philoteos Kokkinos, *Antirrhetici duodecim contra Gregoram*, Or,5, line 1305, in D. V. Kaimakes, ed., Φιλοθέου Κοκκίνου δογματικὰ ἔργα Μέρος Α΄, Thessalonian Byzantine Writers 3 (Thessalonica: Centre for Byzantine Research, 1983), 19-515.

[27] See my "Lost in *Translation*: *Diakrisis kat'epinoian* as a Main Issue in the Discussions between Fourteenth-Century Palamites and Thomists," *The Thomist* 76 (2012): 431-71.

[28] See I *Sent*., d. 19, q. 5, a. 1 regarding the distinction *cum fundamento in re* itself; I *Sent*., d. 2, q. 1, a. 3 regarding the distinction as applied to divine attributes.

At any rate, Russell's book offers the proof that theological pluralism is incapable of bringing Jugie's "Palamism" closer to the Western tradition. Continuously straddling the fence between faithfulness to the "purity" of Palamas's thinking and loose formulations that might sound amicable to Western theologians is not a win-win but a lose-lose undertaking, at least from the standpoint of conceptual coherence. The future belongs to rigorous theological inquiry—more than it ever did in the past.

BOOK REVIEWS

Dieu, "Celui qui est" (De Deo ut uno). By SERGE-THOMAS BONINO, O.P. Paris: Parole et silence, 2016. Pp. 922. €39.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-2-88918-772-0.

Written by the current secretary of the International Theological Commission and president of the Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas, this immense book on the treatise *De Deo ut uno* of Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* is one of the most important advances of Thomistic scholarship and analysis to appear in recent decades. The book consists of five sections, encompassing nineteen chapters. The first section consists of a methodological prologue of three chapters on, respectively, the God of the Old Testament, the natural knowledge of God, and the place of the treatise *De Deo ut uno* within Aquinas's larger speculative work of Trinitarian theology. The second section consists of two chapters that examine Aquinas's arguments for the existence of God in question 2 of the *Prima pars.* The third section consists of five chapters that cover the divine attributes from questions 3-11: simplicity, perfection, goodness, immutability, eternity, and so on. The fourth section consists of two chapters that examine Aquinas's doctrine of knowledge of God, the beatific vision, divine naming, and analogy in questions 12-13. The fifth section consists of seven chapters that examine the life of God, namely, his knowledge, will, love, mercy, justice, and power, topics covered in questions 14-21 and 25. The book is simultaneously historical and analytic, in the sense that it seeks both to depict the nature of Aquinas's understanding of God within his medieval theological context and to interpret and analyze the content of the Thomistic positions in view of making normative truth claims.

The book is obviously extensive in scope and impressive in this respect. It does manage to treat effectively and in depth the whole treatise *De Deo ut uno*, and frequently includes encyclopedic references to historical context and secondary literature. (Providence and predestination are omitted from the book, seemingly because they enter so deeply into other theological contexts, particularly regarding grace and free will.) More significant to this reader, however, is the methodology. The author's treatment of Aquinas is historically nuanced, but even in being so, it seeks above all to be analytically compelling. That is to say, Thomistic arguments about God are consistently presented as intellectually compelling and rationally warranted in a contemporary context. To seek to interweave the historical and analytic elements in this way is clearly quite ambitious. Furthermore, the author engages with a number of classical

and contemporary debates while conducting his commentary. Significant examples include Barth on natural knowledge of God, Rahner's critique of the treatise *De Deo ut uno* in Thomistic theology, the critique of metaphysics as ontotheology in Heidegger and Marion (to which strong rejoinders are offered), Scholastic discussions of God's omnipresent immediacy (Bañez's theory in relation to Scotus, Cajetan, and Ferrara), criticisms of divine immutability in modern process theology, tactful criticism of de Lubac on the natural desire for God, Aquinas's use of analogical terms to name God (the diverse views of Montagnes, Gilson, and Maritain), problems with Molina on "middle knowledge," and soteriological responses to contemporary criticisms of divine omnipotence (only an all-powerful God can save us). This list is more indicative than exhaustive. Clearly, the book is primarily an exposition of the teaching of Aquinas on God, but the author's interlocutions along the way frequently contribute to the cumulative integrity of his argument for Thomistic veracity, rather than detracting from it.

Detailed commentary on each section of the book is not possible, but some sections merit particular mention so as to indicate typical characteristics of the whole. The second section of the book is especially significant. Bonino's treatment of Aquinas's famous five ways is 101 pages long and constitutes, in this reader's opinion, one of the finest historical and analytic treatments of the arguments available in recent scholarship. The text treats the notion of a "demonstration" first within the medieval context by distinguishing Aquinas's approach from that of Anselm or Bonaventure and then by looking at the structure of the Aristotelian demonstration as Aquinas intends it (*quia a posteriori*). In his treatment of the first way, Bonino considers an array of technical textual and historical questions: Is the argument derived from Aristotle's *Physics* 7 or 8 or *Metaphysics* 12, and is it a metaphysical argument as such or one pertaining to the philosophy of nature? Does it seek to terminate in the knowledge of God as pure actuality—and if so, how? What is the medieval and philosophical notion of change under consideration, and why ought we to countenance it? How should we understand the principle of nonregression to the infinite as Aquinas employs it? The analysis of secondary literature and of parallel texts in this treatment of the *prima via* is impressive. In his treatment of the second way, the author argues that the efficient causality in question pertains to existence, so that the closest parallel to the argument of *De ente et essentia* from the real distinction of *esse* and *essentia* in creatures is the second way, not the third. In the treatment of the third way, he debates against those commentators who take the argument to be concerned with metaphysical contingency in all created realities and sees it instead as concerned with the possible and the necessary, beginning with the experience of material contingency in physical realities that by nature are not ontologically necessary. The fourth way is treated in some detail, as concerned with the transcendental features of being, which of themselves imply no necessary sense of limit or finitude. The scale of perfection in the order of being, truth, and goodness implies a primary measure that does not fall within the register of finitude itself. In his treatment of the fifth way, the author

offers a prolonged historical explanation and philosophical defense of the metaphysical notion of natural appetite in things and examines the relation of the four causes to one another, so as to argue that efficient causality in nature implies an intelligible form of teleology present in various ways in all things. As he treats these various arguments, Bonino engages reasonably with the interpretive views of modern authors such as Gilson, van Steenberghen, Wippel, Elders, and Dewan, but also of classical commentators such as Sylvester of Ferrara and Bañez.

The section on divine naming and analogy (chap. 12) is also conceptually dense. Having examined Aquinas's interpretation of Denys the Areopagite on threefold naming in its historical context as well as Aquinas's doctrine of signification, Bonino traces Aquinas's distinction between negative, relative, and positive absolute terms for God. He then goes on to consider the medieval polemical concern, in which the threat Aquinas perceives regarding divine discourse is more properly the equivocity theory stemming from Maimonides than univocity theory, which comes into ascendancy only after Aquinas's death. Bonino posits a genealogical development in analogical predication for God from the *Scriptum* (I *Sent*., d. 35, q. 1, a. 4) to *De veritate* (q. 11, a. 2) to the *Summa* (I, q. 13, a. 5). He sees a gradual evolution from analogy *duorum ad tertium* to the privileged use of the analogy of proper proportionality (in *De veritate*) to the mature decision to emphasize analogical proportion between effect and cause. In all three instances, however, Aquinas is sensitive to the importance of effectuating a procedure of divine naming that allows one to respect the utter transcendence of God, while still maintaining the possibility of proper attribution of terms to denote God's very essence. We do not have quidditative (a priori) knowledge of God, but we do have knowledge of God's quiddity. The chapter concludes with a nuanced examination of the analogical naming of God in Gilson and Maritain and a summary of the author's views, derived from the textual and historical analysis of the chapter.

Although each of the chapters on divine attributes are substantive as textual commentaries and engage in modern debate, we may highlight chapter 17, which treats the love and mercy of God. Following Aquinas, Bonino examines why mercy is best understood as a dimension of love, insofar as God in his goodness takes account of the finitude, limitation, and suffering of his creatures. This notion of mercy has sufficient analogical amplitude that it can be applied in some way to all the works of God in regard to creatures. However, understood in this light, mercy is not a pure perfection of God, as John of St. Thomas notes, since it is foregrounded in the effects of God's love in creatures (708). This analysis, which underscores the maximal sense in which God is merciful in all things, is a prelude to the examination of modern theories of divine suffering, which the author subjects to criticism, treating Moltmann in particular as a test case. As Bonino notes, modern passibilist discourse often fails to understand the classical function of impassibilist discourse in the patristic tradition. It effectively undermines the integrity of the Chalcedonian confession of faith regarding the two natures of Christ since it ignores the Church's doctrinal affirmation of the immutability (and

therefore real presence of!) the Trinitarian God present *as God* in Christ crucified. It leads to the attribution to God of economic-historical attributes from creatures and, in this sense, refabricates mythological conceptions of the divine. Finally, it risks divinizing suffering as something pertaining essentially to love, even within God, and as a condition of his eternal perfection. Bonino is effectively critical of the late views of Maritain on this point (714-15).

If I have any reservation about this book, it has mainly to do with the first chapter, which examines the question of the historical revelation of God to Israel. There, the author adopts a conventional account of recent continental Old Testament exegetes, marked by a sharply developmental understanding of ancient Israelite religion, in which a primitive Yahwism elaborated within a polytheistic matrix eventually gave rise through a religious society of prophetic leaders to a tribal Yahwism, one that eventually only in the Deuteronomic reform was thematized in terms of exclusive worship (monolatry), and only after the Exile evolved into theoretical monotheism. Modern scholars like de Vaux have articulated a version of the developmental thesis that is compatible with belief in the historical election of Israel. Nevertheless, one can wonder about the epistemic warrant for the contemporary trend, which tends to create Israel virtually out of nothing at the Exile. Genetic hypotheses of this kind are by their very nature highly conjectural, and tend to have tenuous academic staying power. Ancient Israelite religion cannot be explained merely as a gradual development of the surrounding cultures, even from a merely rational point of view, since Israelites clearly came over time to differentiate their views systematically and critically from those of their neighbors, precisely in terms of prophetic revelation. Most fundamentally, from the standpoint of theological discourse, no modern reconstruction will allow us adequately to grasp the proper object of revelation in the Old Testament other than the inspired text itself, which serves as the unique supernatural witness to a concrete history of prophecy, one that is normative for the faith.

This unique reservation aside, Bonino's book constitutes a major accomplishment. It is no doubt the most important and comprehensive commentary on Aquinas's treatment of the divine attributes written in quite some time. Anyone interested in medieval philosophy and theology generally, in the study of Aquinas specifically, or in the viability of Thomism as a living tradition of thought will profit greatly from reading this book.

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Aquinas on Transubstantiation: The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. By REINHARD HÜTTER. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2019. Pp. viii + 129. $34.95 (paper). ISBN: 978-0-8132-3177-8.

The aim of this "small book" by Reinhard Hütter is to offer an answer to the "widespread, albeit mainly soft, agnosticism" regarding "this most central mystery" (2) of the Catholic faith. The root causes for this agnosticism lie, according to Hütter, in the uncertainty regarding the fundamentals of Catholic theology (Scripture, Fathers, dogma, Magisterium) as well as in mistrust about the intellect's ability to contemplate, with the light of faith, the revealed mysteries. If this insight is correct, and I think it is, it indeed offers an intrinsic reason to return to St. Thomas (*Ite ad Thomam*) in order to find an "integral unity of the positive and the speculative components of sacred theology" (5). Central to such a unity is a robust, realist metaphysics able to receive natural and supernatural reality.

The book contains five chapters, dealing with (1) the scriptural foundations of the mystery of the Eucharist, (2) the Magisterium, (3) the Eucharistic conversion, (4) Christ's passion and its extension by way of sacramental signification, and (5) friendship with Christ through the Eucharist. All this is supplemented with four appendices dealing with historical and systematical objections, followed by some twenty-five pages of often extensive endnotes (81-116). As a whole, the book can be read as detailed analysis of and commentary on questions 75-77 of the *Tertia pars*.

Sacra doctrina is founded upon the act of faith resting on divine authority and embracing the truth as proposed in sacred Scripture. Only after "being taught by divine revelation" (*STh* I, q. 1, a. 1)—not by human conjectures on cultural, societal, psychological, and other determining conditions—only after having listened to God through revelation, is one then able to do theology. In the first chapter, Hütter brilliantly connects these insights from the opening question of the *Summa* with question 75, article 1 of the *Tertia pars*, where St. Thomas begins his argument for the Real Presence by considering first the salvific significance of that presence. This comparative analysis reveals that "*sacra doctrina* is first and foremost the act of faith adhering to the first truth (God) in the concrete instance of its self-communication as apostolically mediated and interpreted by the *doctrina Ecclesiae*" (14-15). This is the foundation for Hütter's dismissal of modern quests for the historical words of Jesus during the Last Supper (13). While I agree on this specific point, it would be unfair to both St. Thomas and Hütter if this dismissal leads to the suggestion that St. Thomas or medieval biblical exegesis in general is not aware of or does not engage in textual criticism. His biblical commentaries contain numerous instances of such an engagement.

The second chapter discusses recent magisterial texts, in particular Paul VI's encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* (1965) and John Paul II's encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (2003) and their continuity with Trent. Of central importance here is Hütter's argument that these magisterial texts presuppose a

"prephilosophical apprehension of reality" (24) and in particular a "common knowledge of substance" (25).

This brings us to the *pièce de résistance* of the book, chapter 3 on "Eucharistic Conversion and the Categories 'Substance' and 'Quantity.'" In less than thirty pages (27-56) Hütter fully displays his well-known ability to provide a careful reading of St. Thomas's text in light of modern and contemporary objections. He first defends the naturalness of the subsistence of contingent substances and their accidents. Next, he discusses the question of whether bread is a natural substance and provides the insightful analogy of cloning to argue that an artificial thing in which human intervention is not essential but merely conducive for its existence is a natural substance. The real distinction between substance and the first accident of quantity provides the argument for the nonidentity of substance and quantity and therefore the possibility of conversion of the former and not the latter. In the next section, he discusses real concomitance in order to bring out Christ's personal presence. This brings us to the presence of the dimensive quantity of Christ's body and the real distinction between the two formal effects as developed more explicitly by the Thomist tradition. It is this latter distinction—or, more precisely, the logical separability of the two effects of dimensive quantity—that enables a noncontradictory account of Eucharistic conversion. At this point Hütter leads the reader to an insightful remark by Garrigou-Lagrange warning against wanting to arrive at an excessive explication of this mystery (n. 118).

The next chapter takes up sacramental signification as applied to Eucharistic conversion. The Eucharistic species indicate Christ's real and substantial presence when they are gazed upon by the intellect commanded by the will to assent to the truth of the words of consecration. Because the intellect is directed to knowledge of the nonsensible substance, such an intellect is not deceived by faith but is rather preserved from deception. The fifth and final chapter deals with the mystical body of Christ as the primordial effect of the unifying presence of Christ in the faithful. The first appendix examines the absence of the Fourth Lateran Council's decree *Firmiter* in question 75 of the *Tertia pars*. The second appendix explores the relation between fidelity to God and obedience to the teaching authority of the Church. In the third appendix, Hütter argues that Trent accepted not only the terminology regarding transubstantiation but also its underlying metaphysical principles. The final appendix expands on this claim in so far as it is argued that without the metaphysical notions of and principles of being, of form and matter, of substance and accident, it becomes almost impossible ("it is very hard, if not impossible" [79]) to give expression to the Eucharistic mystery in a coherent and intelligent way, so that the contemplative gaze of the eyes of faith is strengthened and nourished. The same would be the case in Christology regarding the notions of person, relation, nature, and so on. This claim is less controversial than it seems if one holds to the Thomistic idea of theology as *sacra doctrina* and if one understands these notions and principles as making explicit man's natural intelligence.

One could quibble about the claim that in describing substance and accidents St. Thomas departs from the central tenets of Aristotle's metaphysics of substance in favor of a metaphysics of creation (30-31), but a short review is not the place to go into St. Thomas's reception of Aristotle on this matter.

Hütter's "opuscule" requires patient and diligent reading, not only because of its density but also because of its aim, which is to provide both a robust defense and an intellectual *manuductio* towards a prayerful gaze at the Eucharistic mystery and its relation to the whole of the Catholic faith. In arguing for a specifically Thomistic *intellectus fidei* on the basis of Aristotelian principles, Hütter's arguments are both passionate and lucid. He also brings to the table an important number of often-forgotten authors from other languages. His mastery of these texts and the theological stakes are impressive. In short, the book has all the hallmarks of what one has come to expect from such a distinguished Thomist. Undoubtedly, many students and teachers will intellectually and spiritually profit from the book, not at least in a time when faith in the Real Presence is declining, and many are, due to circumstances, forced to revisit their active participation in the Eucharist. This reviewer would welcome, by way of a follow-up, a similar volume on Aquinas on the Eucharistic sacrifice. It is fitting to conclude here with St. Thomas himself, that is to say, with a quotation that exemplifies the same biblical, systematic, and spiritual density and passion as the book under review. Commenting on Hebrews 10:20, "A new and living way which he has dedicated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh," St. Thomas writes: "For faith in the godhead is not enough without faith in the Incarnation: you believe in God, believe also in me (John 14:1). Or, through the veil, i.e., through his flesh given to us under the veil of the appearance of bread in the sacrament" (*In Hebr.*, c. 10, lect. 2).

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Thomas Aquinas on Bodily Identity. By ANTONIA FITZPATRICK. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. viii + 203. $90.00 (hard). ISBN: 978-0-19-879085-3.

A substantial debate has been prolonged in recent years over Aquinas's theory of the continuity between (a) the human being in this life, (b) her soul surviving death, and (c) the resurrected human being in the *eschaton*. Regarding the transition from (a) to (b), is Aquinas a corruptionist (holding that at death one kind of substance is replaced by another), or a survivalist (holding that the human person survives but in a radically mutilated state)? Even more

puzzling, and correspondingly less studied, is the relationship between (a) and (c). What does it take for the resurrected human being to be authentically *me*?

The difficulty for readers of Aquinas is this: His hylomorphic metaphysics seems to entail that having the same substantial form (soul) should be enough to preserve the numerical identity between my body now and my resurrected body in the future. Yet Aquinas insists that, additionally, my resurrected body must contain at least some of the "numerically same matter" as it has now. But what could possibly guarantee the sameness of the matter, if not its form? The question of what identifies a body as numerically one across time is important not only for resurrection, but also for other areas of Aquinas's metaphysics of bodies, including the status of prime matter as opposed to "proper matter," the role of "indeterminate dimensions" in individuation, and his rejection of a so-called form of bodiliness (*forma corporeitatis*) in favor of a single substantial form for a single body.

With *Thomas Aquinas on Bodily Identity,* Antonia Fitzpatrick has written the first book devoted to this problem of "bodily identity" in Aquinas. The book's appeal consists in the refreshingly context-sensitive lens it brings to these topics. Fitzpatrick contextualizes Aquinas's account of bodily identity in relation to the sources (especially Aristotle and Averroës) that helped shape that account. She also introduces problems such as embryology and generation, whose relevance to his account of bodily identity has generally been overlooked. This approach generates big expectations: Fitzpatrick claims to discover in Aquinas a movement toward a kind of quasi-mathematical structure to matter. This movement, she claims, shows Aquinas's keenness to give the body its "autonomy" from the soul.

These promises, however, are not fully borne out. Interpretively, the book actually hews quite close to the standard scholarly understanding of Aquinas's account of individuation and identity. With respect to the overarching narrative concerning the body's "autonomy" from the soul in Aquinas—a puzzlingly sociopolitical formulation of a metaphysical problem— the author fails in the end to provide real supporting evidence for such a strong claim. At the same time, however, some good scholarly work is done in individual sections, including an important account of how Aquinas dramatically reinterprets Averroës's terminology of "determinate vs. indeterminate dimension."

The first two chapters lay out the Aristotelian debates that frame Aquinas's treatment of bodily identity. Chapter 1, "The Aristotelian Tradition (I): Individuality and the Individual Body," lays out some basic concepts from Aristotle, including form and matter, substance and accident, human generation, and individuation. The discussion of embryonic development from *De generatione et corruptione* here is especially valuable, since this material is highly relevant to the question of bodily identity, but seldom considered.

Chapter 2, "The Aristotelian Tradition (II): Bodily Identity," turns to the main topic of the book, bodily identity. Aristotle holds, Fitzpatrick points out, that remaining numerically the same body requires having the same matter and the same form; conversely, when one substance is corrupted and a new one is generated, the new substance does not have the same matter and form

as the old one. Fitzpatrick wonders how Aristotle reconciles this claim with his view that some "substrate" must endure through any change (60-62). But there is no puzzle here: For Aristotle, the matter that does not endure through change is *proper matter* (e.g., the different kinds of fleshy mass that make up the body, and whose nature depends on the body's substantial form, such that some fleshy mass is horse-muscle due to its belonging to a horse), but he posits some *prime matter* (the universal substrate) precisely to answer the question of what endures through every substantial change.

The ensuing section, on Averroës, is particularly useful. He is one of the most important influences on Aquinas's reading of Aristotle, and Fitzpatrick provides an especially clear overview of how his conception of prime matter invests body as such with a mathematizable structure. According to Averroës, she explains, prime matter is invested with indeterminate dimension, that is, "dimensionality or continuous spatial extension in three dimensions." This dimensional prime matter, not prime matter as such, is the ultimate substrate (72-73). Drawing on the work of Silvia Donati, Fitzpatrick notes that dimensionality for Averroës is an accidental form, so that dimensional prime matter is not a substance in its own right; nonetheless, it maintains numerical identity across change (75-78). Averroës's view provides an important contrast with Aquinas's own view in the later chapters.

The two remaining chapters (chap. 3, on "Individuality and the Individual Body," and chap. 4, on "Bodily Identity") are occupied with Aquinas's own view. The results here are mixed. Both chapters cover an assortment of topics ranging from Aquinas's hylomorphism, to his theory of universals, to his embryology and theory of monsters, which are meant to provide conceptual background for the chapters' main contributions. While these sections are individually largely well-researched and useful, the sheer quantity is distracting and delays the distinctive contributions of each chapter until relatively late. As a result, those contributions, while having some merit, remain underdeveloped.

For instance, when chapter 3 finally arrives at its namesake topic of "the individual body," it begins to become clear that Fitzpatrick understands "individuality" somewhat anachronistically in the sense of "personal uniqueness." The term thus covers everything from metaphysical individuation, to hereditary disabilities, to personality traits and preferences, to self-actualization through free will. Now it is surely intriguing to compile the different respects in which Aquinas recognizes that one human can be distinguished from others. But it is unhelpful to carry out that investigation under the single heading of "individuality"—not only because the ambiguous use of a single term here gives the misleading impression of a unified account, but also because the term "individual" is already loaded in the scholarship on medieval philosophy with strong, specific metaphysical connotations. These metaphysical themes had dominated the first part of the book, leading the reader to expect that a treatment of "the individual body" would be focused on the metaphysics of individuation. The latter, however, appears only as a "final point to consider" (118) at the very end of the chapter. Again, the

question of how Aquinas accounts for the various factors that characterize us as personally unique is an interesting one. Nonetheless, the evidence provided does not justify the sweeping assertion, made in the book's conclusion, that "It was the material part of each human, and not their soul, which ultimately determined the particular concrete characteristics that were their own and nobody else's" (172). (Intellectual and volitional habits, for instance, seem to be clear counterexamples.)

I likewise have reservations about Fitzpatrick's answer, in chapter 4, to the guiding question of the book: that is, why Aquinas takes himself to be entitled, metaphysically, to claim that one "chunk" of matter can be re-identified as "mine" despite having passed through a series of bodies since my death, and having been restored to me in the resurrection. Fitzpatrick nicely lays out the problem, as follows. For Aquinas, the principle of individuation is signate matter, that is, prime matter plus dimension. But dimension is an accidental form, and accidental forms are identified in relation to the substantial form of the substance. What makes this particular shape Fido's is that it modifies the substance Fido; when Fido dies, this shape is no longer numerically the same shape, because it is no longer the shape of Fido (even if the shape is exactly similar to the one that Fido had). So the numerically same accident of dimension does not persist across change.

From this account, which accords with standard readings of Aquinas, Fitzpatrick arrives at the opening problem of the book, which she had pledged to solve: How then can Aquinas consistently hold that my resurrected body must retain some of the "same matter" as I had during life? But by now there is almost no space left to solve the problem. Fitzpatrick merely suggests that Aquinas "may have been moving" toward the following solution:

> Because the dimensive quantity belonging to Socrates' body is a quasi-mathematical structure, its parts (or 'dimension') are objects which can themselves survive in separation from the complex pattern of the whole that was built out of them. These parts, which are radically or in themselves individual, remain in a potential or virtual, if not in an actual way, in the matter that formerly belonged to Socrates' body. . . . They serve as traces, in Socrates' matter, of Socrates' whole, actual, three-dimensional bodily structure, and they allow Socrates' matter to be tracked by God across any sequence of substantial changes. (164)

This is an intriguing remark. There are in reality two distinct possible strategies here: (1) the idea that there is a kind of mathematical identity of dimension, besides the ontological identity of a dimension as belonging to this or that substance; (2) the idea that Socrates's dimension remains in the subsequent (numerically different) dimension "in potency" given that God could one day reactualize it as Socrates's. Both would have been interesting avenues to explore further. But unfortunately the excerpt cited above is all Fitzpatrick says on the topic. She neither develops the philosophical significance of either solution, nor cites any textual evidence to show that Aquinas was "moving" toward any such solution.

These suggestions, alas, wreak havoc on Fitzpatrick's attempt to specify the historical relationship between Averroës and Aquinas on bodily identity. She emphasizes that Aquinas never adopts the view of Averroës, for whom the accident of dimensivity is more basic than the substance and persists across substantial change. But by the end of chapter 4 she is suggesting that in reality Aquinas is closer to Averroës than he appears, being pushed "in the direction of at least partially breaking with the Aristotelian principle of the ontological priority of substance to accident" (165). But there is no room here for "partial" breaks: Either bodily substance is prior to the accident of dimension, or it is not. Aquinas says it is prior; Averroës says it is not. If Aquinas had intended to weaken his commitment to the priority of substance by making an exception for the accident of dimension, that is not a "move toward" Averroës's position, but a wholesale adopting of that position.

On the whole, I do think there is something partly right about the narrative that Fitzpatrick is advancing. Aquinas's position on the "sameness of matter" in the resurrected body does put him at odds with his own position on the ontological priority of substance to accident. In order to resolve the inconsistency without endorsing a plurality of substantial forms, it looks as though Aquinas *should* have taken a position that would effectively commit him to a quasi-mathematical structure in prime matter, by adopting either (a) Averroës's view on which the accident of quantity is prior to substance; or (b) a notion of mathematical identity that might have allowed him to assert that dimensions can be mathematically if not metaphysically identical across substantial change, thus reaping the conceptual benefits of Averroës's view without denying the priority of substance over accident. Still, not all the alternative solutions here involve the mathematizing of prime matter: Another avenue open to Aquinas would have been to rely on divine power. For instance, one might assert that some chunk of formed matter has the potency to regain the numerically same dimensions that had formed some previous chunk that is in historical continuity with it, simply because God has the power to achieve that effect.

What Fitzpatrick does not show is whether Aquinas actually followed, or intended to follow, any of these paths for reconciling the inconsistency. Thus in the end the very good historical work that this book does only reinforces its opening problem, which still remains to be solved.

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Beyond the Self: Virtue Ethics and the Problem of Culture. Edited by RAYMOND HAIN. Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2019. Pp. 296. $49.95 (hard). ISBN 978-1-4813-1041-3.

Beyond the Self is a collection of twelve essays, written by different authors, which displays the contributions of the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition of virtue ethics to contemporary moral philosophy. The collection originated in a 2014 conference celebrating the career of University of Notre Dame Associate Professor of Philosophy W. David Solomon, now emeritus. Seven of the essays are versions of papers that were delivered at the conference; most of them were written by past graduate students of Solomon who are now accomplished scholars themselves. Four of the essays were commissioned separately. The collection has three main sections: Historical Themes, Normative Ethics, and Ethics and Culture. It concludes with an essay by Solomon in which he seeks to weave together and extend some of his previous work on the historical and conceptual development of twentieth-century virtue ethics.

The essays in this volume are uniformly interesting and excellent in quality. Some of the arguments may not be convincing to some readers, even to those who work in the same intellectual tradition. One reason for this may be the Notre Dame factor—that is, the mostly implicit theological commitments that shape several of the essays. In any case, the arguments are serious and expressed with admirable clarity. Readers are thus spurred to sharpen their own arguments through active and critical engagement with the text. It is a pleasure to read the book from cover to cover, which is rare among edited volumes; the editor deserves praise. Several additional features of the book stand out and give it special value. I can touch on only a few of these. In the process, I will indicate a portion of the range of topics and some of the modes of analysis that readers can expect to find in the text.

Beyond the Self reflects Solomon's career-long interest in the work of British analytical philosopher G. E. M. Anscombe. The editor's introduction and several of the essays signal broad agreement on the importance of Anscombe's scholarship to the recent history of philosophical ethics. More specifically, the contributors agree that the publication of Anscombe's 1958 article "Modern Moral Philosophy" was a watershed event in twentieth-century Anglophone analytic ethics. The questions that Anscombe raises and the bold theses that she puts forward are clearly part of the undercurrent of *Beyond the Self* and periodically bubble up for explicit treatment. Anscombe's textual presence gives the volume added cohesion. It also encourages readers to place familiar metaethical and normative debates in historical perspective.

Solomon's essay is directly concerned with Anscombe's way of conceiving the relationship between deontological, consequentialist, and virtue-theoretical approaches to ethics. He argues that "Anscombian virtue ethics" is "radical," as opposed to "routine," in ways that distinguish it vis-à-vis many other ethics of virtue. What makes it radical, in his judgment, is that (among other things) it minimizes the differences between deontological and consequentialist moral theories by noting that both focus intently on moral

obligations to act according to principles while following prescribed decision-making procedures. On Solomon's reading, Anscombe sets virtue ethics up, not only in distinction from these other approaches, but in "opposition" to them—a move that Solomon affirms. "Opposition" in exactly what sense, and in what respects, are topics that need further clarification.

Thomas Hibbs's essay critiques Solomon's conception of, and his advocacy for, "radical" virtue ethics, focusing especially on the matter of "opposition." Hibbs turns to Aquinas and argues, much like Alasdair MacIntyre, that virtue and law both play critical roles in Aquinas's account of morality, most notably in his analysis of the virtue of justice. Virtues and action-guiding principles or precepts—most notably, moral prohibitions—are not antithetical for Aquinas; they are interdependent, and both are necessary parts of a complete moral theory. Thus, argues Hibbs, it is important to distinguish between different sorts of principles and laws, and the ways in which they are grounded. Anscombe argues that modern conceptions of the moral law and "the moral ought" make little sense and have no force apart from their contingent psychological resonance with historical experiences of living under the authority of divine commands. Hibbs focuses more on the role that natural law plays, for Aquinas, in establishing the parameters within which virtues operate. The Thomistic "moral ought" is self-consciously grounded in a substantive account of the sorts of beings that humans are, in relation to God and to the rest of creation, the capacity that humans have to flourishing in the exercise of virtue, and the dignity that makes all humans worthy of principled protection. For Hibbs, Aquinas's virtue ethic is "radical" partly in that it "returns" people to the philosophical and theological "roots of the moral life." Further comment is needed, however, to clarify why such a "return" is not simply conservative. Granted, "radical" is a relative term.

Another reflection of Anscombe's influence on *Beyond the Self* is evident in Candace Vogler's essay, which picks up on Anscombe's "radical" thesis that the idea of moral obligation as such, as it is conceived by many of the philosophers in her professional circle, ought simply to be jettisoned, partly because it makes no sense apart from a divine command theory of ethics, which these philosophers reject. Vogler focuses on David Velleman's neo-Kantian account of the ground of morality, according to which our moral obligations to others have their basis in a fundamental moral obligation that we have toward ourselves. As Vogler interprets Velleman, the obligation is the same for all persons, namely, to act for reasons that can be provided to others who, as fellow persons, recognize the same "framework for practical reasoning" or the same rational requirements for action. Vogler's critique of this view is relentless. Another notable feature of her essay is her exploratory analysis of why people might posit duties to govern themselves even though it does not make sense, philosophically, to do so. Vogler's idea is that perhaps the intuition that I have duties to myself rests on an impression that what I do as a person is, in some respects and to some extent, "up to me." Nobody else is going to hold me accountable for my becoming my own best self. Hence, it will have to be me. But this sense of holding myself accountable does not

require a reference to self-duty; it requires only the indication of an intention to promote my own well-being, based in an unproblematic sort of self-concern.

A second valuable feature of *Beyond the Self* is that it offers close analysis of primary texts of the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, even as it treats the work of contemporary scholars and particular normative issues such as physician-assisted suicide. Christopher Toner's essay, for example, addresses a series of dilemmas associated with Aristotle's conception of *eudaimonia* concerning the dependence of humans on "external goods" for their flourishing. Toner draws on the work of David Russell to advocate for a conception of Aristotelian *eudaimonia* that is Stoic in holding that virtue is sufficient for happiness, but Peripatetic in nonetheless acknowledging the importance that a person's projects and relationships can have for making her who she is and delimiting how it is possible for her to thrive. On Toner's view, projects and relationships are not merely instruments that provide opportunities to exercise virtue for the sake of one's own happiness; nor are they simply goods of themselves which, when present, add something to a person's stock of goods. Rather, they are—or can be—integral aspects of a person's active, embodied life of virtue. Toner clarifies that a virtuous person is not necessarily self-centered in pursuing projects and relationships that contribute to her well-being. Many relationships are "intrinsically demanding" in that they create obligations for other-centered action that can, in some cases, require self-sacrifice and may not seem at all rewarding. While "part of the good life," he says, "may involve giving to oneself a gift; much of it will involve giving of oneself as a gift" (21). Both modes of gifting can comprise forms of virtuous activity that contribute to *eudaimonia*.

Also in a historical, as well as a textual, vein, Kevin Flannery advances a defense of Aristotle's theory of justice by way of an analysis of Aquinas's commentary on book 5 of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, which concerns justice, and Aquinas's own account of the virtue of justice in his *Summa theologiae*. Flannery analyzes, more specifically, the conceptual relationship between Aristotle's two types of justice (distributive and "corrective") and Aquinas's two types (distributive and commutative). Flannery shows that "corrective" is too narrow a rendering of Aristotle's διορθωτικόν δίκαιον. This becomes clear when we consider Aquinas's use of the broader term *commutativus* to refer to the form of justice that is paired with distributive justice, and we examine his rich discussion of arithmetic and geometrical proportionality. Flannery concludes that a better way to parse Aristotle's διορθωτικόν δίκαιον is much as one would parse Aquinas's *commutativus*, which refers to something like corrective justice plus correct common dealings between persons. Flannery's analysis of Aquinas's treatment of Aristotle's concept of justice shows that Aristotle's account is more coherent than it is often thought to be. This sort of fluid movement of the mind, within and between ancient texts, medieval texts, medieval treatments of ancient texts, and contemporary analyses of the same—across the various essays—are part of what create the unique character of this volume.

Finally, it is of special value that this book includes an essay written by Solomon's colleague Alasdair MacIntyre. If Anscombe generated an initial push to recover the ethics of virtue for modern moral philosophy, MacIntyre's *After Virtue* opened the floodgates of scholarship on classical virtue ethics and its relevance for a modern, secularized world. MacIntyre's essay argues, in part, that many people today follow the precepts of Thomistic natural law implicitly, by the authority of secular practical reason alone. By implication, these precepts, if made explicit, could form a basis for meaningful ethical discourse across seemingly incommensurable perspectives—at least in cases where people are willing to practice the intellectual virtue of open-mindedness. The essay argues also for the recognition of multiple forms of secularity in modern cultures, including a form in which people do not believe in a divine being but also do not care to deny God's existence. And even where this denial occurs, there can be a concurrent openness to God or the sacred in secular guises. MacIntyre tells a compelling story about the artist and atheist Henri Matisse, who was asked by the Dominican Sisters of Monteil to design a chapel for them. In MacIntyre's judgment, this chapel is a profound expression of Matisse's attunement to the sacred.

This volume is recommended for scholars and students from philosophy, theology, religious studies, cultural studies, and other quarters who are interested in the history of virtue ethics and the challenges that a modern ethic of virtue faces. My one disappointment with the volume is that Solomon does not directly engage the work of the other contributors. However, they engage his work both generously and critically. It is especially in the way that Solomon's students display their independence of thought, their philosophical acumen, and their commitment to keeping the work of analytic ethics tied to big questions of human life and well-being that Solomon is, in my eyes, honored indeed.

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Aristotle and Early Christian Thought. By MARK EDWARDS. Studies in Philosophy and Theology in Late Antiquity. London and New York: Routledge, 2019. Pp. 226. $155.00 (hard). ISBN 978-1-138-69799-7.

This is an important book. Its aim is to establish the relationship between Aristotle, including his philosophical legacy in the Peripatetic school and beyond, and early Christian thought up to the sixth century. Earlier scholars, including Père André-Jean Festugière and myself, have provided brief treatments of the topic, taking named references as the starting point. Mark

Edwards wishes to take the investigation to a deeper level. His main interest is to determine how two bodies of thought, with very different origins and trajectories of development, relate to each other. The connective "and" in the title is thus, one must suspect, deliberately chosen (and also occurs in a majority of chapter headings). The reader is indeed provided with "the vista of a terrain still largely untrodden" (x).

The study consists of nine compactly composed chapters, all about twenty pages in length. Three of the four first chapters do not treat Christian thought at all. They focus exclusively on Aristotle himself, his interpretation in the second century, and the Neoplatonic reaction to him in the third century. In between the second and third of these is the chapter on Aristotle and ante-Nicene Christianity. There follow two chapters on the fourth century, the second of which focuses almost entirely on Gregory of Nyssa. Next there are two chapters on the fifth and sixth centuries in the East, with again an entire chapter on a single thinker, John Philoponus. The ninth and final chapter is the only one to be wholly directed towards a Western figure, namely, Boethius.

The main focus of the book is the treatment of theological and philosophical topics by means of conceptuality and argument drawn from the Aristotelian corpus and its later interpretation. A corollary is that there is less emphasis on genre and reception, though of course the necessary details regarding these are furnished at regular intervals. The treatment of the use of Aristotle up to the end of the third century might seem somewhat cursory, since during this period many of the references to and much of the use of Aristotelian material was drawn from the exoteric corpus which is no longer extant, rather than the more technical works of the esoteric corpus which gradually replaced it and are still in our possession. Edwards emphasizes throughout that the themes that preoccupied Christian thinkers—the nature of God and of the relationships within the Trinity, issues of Christology, the doctrine of creation, the immortality of the soul and its afterlife, the existence of providence and the implications for free will—are not central to Aristotle's philosophy. It is true that by the time of Alexander of Aphrodisias there is already a greater convergence of interests, as can be seen in the comparison with his younger contemporary Origen. But the two traditions follow independent trajectories. One aspect relating to reception that might have received more emphasis is the association of Aristotelianism with dialectic and heretical thinking. For Gregory of Nazianzus Christian thinkers should operate ἁλιευτικῶς ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἀριστοτελικῶς, "in the manner of fishermen, not Aristotle" (*Or.* 23.12). But this of course is a pose since, as Edwards shows, the Cappadocians and other prominent Christian theologians had mastered the subtleties of Aristotelian dialectics and used them with a will, although in service of their own aims.

In order to understand the Christian appropriation of Aristotle, it is thus necessary, as our author believes, to have a knowledge of his key writings and those of his main interpreters that approximates what Christians themselves were acquainted with. This explains a main feature of the book, namely, that

it contains extensive compactly formulated paraphrases and summaries of the works of Aristotle himself, of his interpreter Alexander, and of his Neoplatonist readers Plotinus and Porphyry. When taken together with summaries of key works by Christian authors, notably Gregory of Nyssa, Philoponus, and Boethius, these amount to at least half of the book. Edwards is reviving a practice associated with Oxford and particularly the expositions of W. D. Ross. Paraphrase is by no means an easy art and there is always the danger that it may misrepresent the original. An example can be found in the summary of Boethius's exposition on time and eternity in *Cons.* 5.6. We read, "even if we concede to Plato and Aristotle that the sensible cosmos has no beginning or end, we cannot join them in styling it eternal, for to be eternal is to be exempt from the flow of time" (185). But Boethius's Christian affiliation, which Edwards strongly emphasizes, would surely have prevented him from making such a concession. So we might have expected the formulation "were to concede." But the original in fact reads rather differently: "And therefore those are not right who, when they hear that Plato thought this world neither had a beginning in time nor would have an end, think that in this way the created world is made co-eternal with the Creator" (LCL translation). The formulation is admittedly neutral, but there is certainly no concession. In addition, there is no mention of Aristotle at all. So on points of detail comparison of paraphrase with the original is recommended. I do not criticize the author for including these extended accounts: not only would it have been unwise to assume too much knowledge of Aristotle and his tradition on the part of his reader, but these paraphrases also provide a useful introduction to the development of Aristotelian thought in late antiquity.

A main purpose of the book, we read (96), is to correct the impression that the only intellectual force that could operate on Christianity from the outside was Platonism. Here the genealogy of ancient Platonism is crucial. Plotinus sharply criticized Aristotle's doctrine of the categories of being, but Porphyry rescued them in his *Isagoge* by restricting their application to the realm of physical reality, as opposed to the intelligible world. Thereafter their influence, for example on Christological debates, was fundamental. On the other hand, Plotinus was able to introduce the notion of infinity into Neoplatonic thought, against the strictures of Aristotle, and this exerted an important influence on Christian theology, starting with Gregory of Nyssa for whom it is the "cornerstone of his theology" (102).

Can we then speak of a Christian Aristotelianism in the ancient world? Edwards is adamant that the answer is no. From the fourth century onwards "a cultured acquaintance with the thought of Aristotle is . . . a condition of orthodoxy for the Christian intellectual" (113), but not in the case of John Philoponus, where it led to heresy. There was no need to aspire to technical mastery of Aristotle's thought, and even first-hand knowledge of his works was hardly mandatory. For the most part Aristotle supplies valuable tools to be used in discussion and argument in order to defend beliefs that are held as a matter of faith. Even in his Aristotelian commentaries Boethius was at all times a Christian. It goes without saying that it would hardly have been

possible for those using the resources of Greek thought not to have been influenced by these resources to some degree. Edwards describes the relation between the idiom of the Church and that of the schools as a kind of "dialectic," but of course one very different from the one against which Gregory of Nazianzus railed. Above all, there was never any systematic investigation into what the relationship between reason and revelation (to use later terminology) might be. As Edwards states in the final paragraph of the book, several stages in the reception of Aristotle would have to be traversed before a synthesis of philosophy and theology could be achieved, notably in the writings of Thomas Aquinas and his latter-day followers.

The book is by no means an easy read. Its style is terse and erudite, displaying acuity of mind not always accompanied by a commensurate clarity of expression. Fortunately, the author provides summaries at regular intervals, which allow the trajectory of development through the centuries and the sequence of topics and doctrines to be followed without too much difficulty. Readers will find it very much worth their while to make the effort. Edwards presents an overview of the relationship between two very different bodies of thought with a depth and precision that has not been previously achieved, certainly not in the English language. This important book is highly to be recommended.

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Analogy after Aquinas: Logical Problems, Thomistic Answers. By DOMENIC D'ETTORE. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2019. Pp. 224. $65.00 (hard). ISBN: 978-0-8132-3122-8.

This excellent book traces the history of Thomistic accounts of analogy from the early fourteenth century to Francis Sylvestri of Ferrara and Chrysostom Javelli, writing in the 1520s and 1530s in the light of Cajetan's magisterial *De nominum analogia*. D'Ettore starts with the philosopher who caused such difficulty for the logic of analogy: namely, John Duns Scotus. Scotus argued that both the principle of noncontradiction and syllogistic validity require univocal concepts, such that there is one *ratio* through which a name signifies reality. As the earliest Thomists saw, this directly threatens Aquinas's denial of that very claim, in his assertion that analogy is sufficient for avoiding the fallacy of equivocation. D'Ettore argues that Aquinas's account simply does not evince any awareness of these difficulties, and hence needs supplementation to enable it to provide answers to Scotus's worries. A good part of the exposition is devoted to the divergent interpretations of

Aquinas proposed by the Thomists to shore up Aquinas's position against the Scotist onslaught.

It is fashionable in some theological circles today to urge that Scotus's target was Henry of Ghent, and thus that his criticisms do not touch Aquinas's account. But that was decidedly not the opinion of the early Thomists, and they were clearly right to be worried. As D'Ettore puts it, "If a Thomist insists that Aquinas's model(s) of analogous naming demand more than one *ratio*, then the Thomist must explain how this model dodges Scotus's criticism that, without one and only one *ratio* for a term, demonstration is impossible. If a Thomist argues instead that there is one *ratio* involved in analogous signification, then the Thomist must explain the difference between his own position and that of Scotus, either admitting that analogy reduces semantically to univocity or challenging Scotus's definition(s) of univocity and analogy" (31-32).

D'Ettore groups the philosophical and exegetical problems facing early interpreters of Aquinas under three useful headings: the *rationes* problem (whether analogous terms signify one or many *rationes*); the analogy-model problem (whether the theory of analogy is modeled on the relationship between one thing and another [*unius ad alterum*]—which D'Ettore labels the "Healthy Model"—or of two to a third [*duorum ad tertium*]—which he labels the "Principle Model"); and the equivocation problem (whether the use of analogous terms necessarily generates equivocation, as Scotus held). The discussion is quite dense, and the array of issues treated very complex. A helpful chart (186) aids the reader in tracking the manifold different answers offered by the subjects of this study: the early fourteenth-century thinkers Hervaeus Natalis and Thomas Sutton; the early fifteenth-century thinker John Capreolus; the late fifteenth-century philosophers Flandrensis and Socinas; and from the early sixteenth century Cajetan and the two Thomists mentioned above. All but the first three were associated with the Dominican *studium* in Bologna.

As Joshua Hochschild convincingly argued a few years ago (*The Semantics of Analogy: Rereading Cajetan's "De nominum analogia"* [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010]), Cajetan has a good right to claim to have solved Scotus's objections by appealing to the analogy of proper proportionality. As D'Ettore puts it, "Proportional unity does not eliminate diversity, but it is, nevertheless, a real form of similarity such that whatever properties belong to one thing also belong proportionally to whatever is proportionally similar to it" (139). The different *rationes* have some kind of unity or identity—a *proportional* unity or identity—and as such "whatever belongs to one, belongs also to the other proportionally" (ibid., quoting Cajetan, *De nominum analogia*, c. 10, n. 106). This unity allows Cajetan to circumvent Scotus's claim that syllogisms that include terms whose significations are related merely analogously ultimately have four (or more) terms. What grounds syllogistic validity and theological reasoning is that, in effect, creaturely cases model divine cases in relevant respects. D'Ettore sensibly follows Hochschild's study on this point, and allows his discussion of Cajetan

to be structured simply around the same three questions that guide his account of all the other philosophers he considers.

Cajetan is obviously the touchstone for any discussion of this topic. If another hero emerges in the account, it seems to be Thomas Sutton, one of Scotus's most vociferous Oxonian opponents in the early years of the fourteenth century. Sutton anticipates Cajetan's key insight: "Although it is no longer said through the same *ratio* when the name is extended to God, the *proportio* between the *ratio* of the name said of the creature and the (distinct) *ratio* of the name said of God suffices to preserve valid demonstration" (56). According to D'Ettore, this puts the ball back in the Scotists' court, "who, to preserve their objection, must explain either why proportional unity (which the Scotists themselves acknowledge) lacks the semantic unity necessary for use in demonstrations, or why there is, contrary to Sutton's position, really only a verbal difference between Sutton and Scotus" (59).

All in all, this book offers an insightful account of the history of a vexed concept in the story of Thomism.

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