# HOW CAN WE LEARN WHAT *VERITATIS SPLENDOR* HAS TO TEACH?

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*VERITATIS SPLENDOR* can be read in two very different ways. It can be read, and of course it should be read, as a papal encyclical, a piece of authoritative Christian teaching. As such, it is addressed to the Catholic bishops and its subject-matter is not only Christian moral teaching in general, but more particularly the present condition of the academic discipline of moral theology. I of course am neither a bishop nor a theologian, so it might seem that all that I can be asked to do in reading *Veritatis Splendor* is to listen quietly to what is being said in a conversation between others. Yet the complexity of the experience of reading *Veritatis Splendor* makes it impossible for me to restrict myself to this role of a more or less innocent bystander. For *Veritatis Splendor* is not only a work of authoritative Christian teaching about moral judgment and the moral life, it is also a striking contribution by the Polish phenomenological and Thomistic philosopher, Karol Wojtyla, to ongoing philosophical enquiry, one in which an incisive account is advanced of the relationship between biblical and other Christian teaching, the various moralities of the various cultures of humankind and the argumentative conclusions of moral philosophers. (I am well aware that generally several anonymous writers contribute to the drafting of encyclicals, and doubtless they did so on this occasion. But any reader of Karol Wojtyla's major philosophical writings, from his doctoral dissertation onwards, will recognize, both in the style of arguments and in the nuances with which particular arguments are developed, a single nameable authorial

presence in this text.) The central theses of this encyclical thereby challenge a range of rival philosophical accounts of that relationship: Kantian, utilitarian, and Kierkegaardian, to name only the most important. But how can any one text perform both of these very different tasks? Insofar as *Veritatis Splendor* genuinely contributes to argumentative moral philosophy, must it not be precluded from presenting itself as authoritative teaching? And insofar as it is authoritative Christian teaching, how can it possibly be a contribution to the contentious debates of moral philosophy? Part of what is impressive about *Veritatis Splendor* is that in the course of answering a number of other questions, it also answers these questions about itself.

Even so, any philosophical discussion of this encyclical which finds its argumentative conclusions compelling will be committed to an acknowledgment that philosophy itself, what it is and what it can legitimately hope to achieve, has to be understood in the light afforded by the Christian gospel. *Veritatis Splendor* never lets us forget this, so that even if I begin from the philosophy in the encyclical, I do so already knowing that it is going to direct me beyond philosophy. Nonetheless this is where I do have to begin, and this for two reasons. First of all this encyclical has an important argumentative structure and arguments are always matter for philosophy. Secondly, quite apart from any concern with *Veritatis Splendor* itself, what is inescapable for moral philosophers who are also Catholics, such as myself, is a strongly felt need for some definitive answer to the question of how their own peculiar philosophical conclusions about the nature of moral judgment and the moral life are related both to the dominant moral theories and practices of their own culture and to the biblical and Christian teaching by which they have been instructed. Each of these three presses upon us its own type of claim to our attention and allegiance and these sometimes conflicting claims define the situation in which and formed by which each of us encounters the theses and arguments of *Veritatis Splendor.* What then is my particular situation in these three respects, as Thomistic Aristotelian, as North American immigrant, and as Catholic?

Thomists do of course quarrel a good deal among themselves. But there are two distinctive sets of conclusions which many of us take to be of crucial importance in the practical life. What are they? A first set concerns those rules which we take practical reason to apprehend as precepts of the natural law. Those rules enjoin and prohibit certain types of action as such. It is only insofar as our actions conform to what those precepts require, and do so just because those precepts require it, that we can become the kind of people who are able to achieve that final good towards which we are directed by our nature. So the human good can be achieved only through a form of life in which the positive and negative precepts of the natural law are the norms governing our relationships.

Thomists support this first set of conclusions by a variety of arguments drawn from Aristotle, Aquinas and others. These arguments can be reinforced by a second set of considerations which concern not so much the theories, but rather the practices of their anti-Thomistic philosophical critics, whether these are Humeans, Kantians, utilitarians, existentialists, relativists, or what you will. For it is a Thomistic contention that such anti-Thomistic philosophers inadvertently give evidence by and in their activities of the truth of just that Thomist view of the practical life which as theorists they suppose themselves able to refute. What is it about those activities which warrants this conclusion? Such philosophers generally and characteristically pursue the truth about moral and philosophical matters in a way and with a dedication that acknowledges the achievement of that truth as one aspect at least of what seems to be being treated as a final and unconditional end. They do so moreover generally and characteristically under constraints imposed by rules which prescribe unqualified respect for those with whom they enter into debate, precisely as enjoined by the primary precepts of the natural law. So we find that relationships within philosophical debate about morality are themselves governed to a surprising extent among a variety of non-Thomists and anti-Thomists by a practical recognition of exceptionless norms whose point and purpose is the achievement of the final end of that activity, thus exemplifying

something that Thomists take to be characteristic of well-ordered human activity in general. For it is indeed a Thomist thesis that all practical reasoners, often unwittingly and often very imperfectly, exhibit in significant ways the truth of the Thomist account of practical reasoning by how they act, ·even when, as in this case, they are engaged in the enterprise of constructing anti-Thomistic philosophical theories.

That this is so would of course be strenuously denied by such anti-Thomistic moral philosophers, moral philosophers who not only are in a large majority among our academic colleagues, but who enjoy one great advantage over us in contemporary debate. For they, unlike us, generally represent in their theories the standpoints of the dominant moral culture of everyday life in modern North America. Even in their fundamental disagreements with ·each other-Kantians against utilitarians, both against Humeans, all three against Nietzscheans-they articulate at the level of theory standpoints and disagreements which inform a good deal of everyday practice in our culture. This is after all a culture in which there is an unusual degree of awareness that moral thought and practice have varied from one culture to another and that disagreement between and within cultures has often been intractable. So that a Thomistic Aristotelian, unlike most of her or his philosophical colleagues, must in certain respects find her or himself at odds with this dominant North American culture, involved in recurrent argument and contention at the levels both of philosophical debate and of everyday practice. We are participants in a conversation with many disputing voices.

Yet as Catholics we have to listen first to what a very different set of voices have to say to us, those inspired and authoritative voices which declare the Word of God concerning those same moral matters about which our own culture speaks to us so vociferously and about which we have arrived at our own philosophical conclusions. Part of what we have to learn, or rather to relearn, from *Veritatis Splendor* is that, at least so far as the fundamental and central precepts of the moral law are concerned, the truths about those precepts declared to us by God through Moses

and the prophets, in the revelation by Jesus Christ of the New Law and in the teaching of the Catholic Church, culminating in this very encyclical, are no other than the truths to which we have already assented as rational persons, or rather to which we would have assented, if we had not been frustrated in so doing by our own cultural, intellectual, and moral errors and deformations. Yet the encyclical also teaches us that what we encounter in Jesus Christ is immeasurably more than this. We also have to learn of our forgiveness and our redemption and of the transformation made possible in our acknowledgment of law when we come to understand it in the light afforded by Jesus Christ. Nonetheless the law declared to us by God in revelation is the same law as that which we recognize in the moral requirements imposed by our own human practical understanding and reasoning, when they are in good order. So that when we become able to hear and to respond to what Jesus Christ has to say to us, we do not have to leave behind or discard anything that we had genuinely learned concerning the moral law through reasoning. Grace often corrects, as well as completes, what we have so far taken to be conclusions of reason, but, when grace does so correct us, it is always because we have in some way failed as reasoners. And therefore *Veritatis Splendor,* just because it is true to this biblical teaching, will be grotesquely misunderstood if it is understood as an act of coercive imposition by an external authority, rather than an invitation to become more thoughtful and more perceptive. It does indeed speak in the name of an authority external to us, God, but that to which it invites us-that to which He invites us-is in part an act of moral and rational self-recognition. And *Veritatis Splendor* as a work of philosophy does itself exhibit just that moral and rational awareness to which as an encyclical it invites its readers.

What then are those truths to which we are invited to attend? In *Veritatis Splendor* we are presented not only with a reassertion of central truths, but also with a characterization of a number of types of contemporary error-philosophical, theological and moral. It would be a great mistake to treat this focus upon errors as merely an irritable expression of the censoriousness of

authority. It is rather that unless and until we have understood these particular errors, and why they are errors, we shall have failed to grasp important features of the relevant set of truths. So, we cannot begin by attending exclusively to the statements of the truths and only afterwards go on as a secondary matter to that of the errors, for the exposition of the truths will remain radically incomplete until the four types of error have been characterized. What then *are* these truths which we shall sufficiently understand only by considering some mistakes about them into which we and our contemporaries are peculiarly liable to fall? *Veritatis Splendor* begins with biblical and Christ-centered meditation and exegesis, as all Christian theology must begin. But, because my commentary is that of a philosopher, I take the liberty of beginning elsewhere-in fact at a middle point in the encyclical's argument. I begin with the encyclical's creative and constructive restatement of what I have already noticed as the Thomistic account of natural law, an account which, as the encyclical stresses, the Church has included " in her own teaching on morality" (Section 44, p. 59; page references are to the Vatican translation into English, Boston: St. Paul Books and Media, 1993). And here in consequence there is a tension and a danger peculiarly for Thomists. We, like all other Catholics, have to receive this teaching with attentive obedience, and we must not be misled into thinking that our own philosophical conclusions, *as* philosophical conclusions, can make *our* attentive obedience unnecessary. Indeed, we, more than anyone else, may be tempted into treating *Veritatis Splendor* as a restatement of what was already sufficiently known, so deceiving ourselves about our own need to learn. What then is it that we do need to learn?

"The *negative precepts* of the natural law," the encyclical reminds us, " are universally valid. They oblige each and every individual, always and in every circumstance. It is a matter of prohibitions which forbid a given action *semper et pro semper*, without exception, because the choice of this kind of behavior is in no case compatible with the goodness of the will of the acting person, with his vocation to life with God and to communion with his neighbor " (Section 52, p. 70). The examples given are from

Jesus' reaffirmation of the Decalogue (Matthew 19: 17-18): "... You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness" (p. 71). What we are told in these and other passages is that we cannot adequately characterize-adequately, that is, for practical life, let alone for theory-that good towards the achievement of which we are directed by our natures and by providence, except in terms which already presuppose the binding character of the exceptionless negative precepts of the natural law. And correspondingly we cannot characterize adequately that in our natures which alone makes us apt for and directed towards the achievement of that good except in the same terms. Unless our passions, habits, motives, intentions, and purposes are ordered by the negative as well as the positive precepts of the natural law, they will not be ordered towards our own good and the good of others. For the negative precepts structure or fail to structure our relationships with others as well as our characters. " They oblige everyone regardless of the cost, never to offend in anyone, beginning with oneself, the personal dignity common to all" (p. 70).

Obedience to these negative precepts is then enabling, both individually and communally. It frees us from a variety of hindrances and frustrations that would otherwise bring to nothing the pursuit by each of us of our own positive good and that of others. And they can be universally apprehended by rational persons as at once required and enabling, for they are " valid for all people of the present and the future, as well as those of the past " (Section 53, p. 71). They belong to "the permanent structural elements " of human beings. What God commands of us in commanding these precepts is therefore what we already knew or could have known for ourselves as required for our good. What God asks of us, both in the Old Law and in its reaffirmation by Jesus Christ, is what, if we were adequately rational, we would ask of ourselves. God's commands are to be and do what will restore us to our freedom and the Church's teaching concerning the divine commands has the same aim and content. " Hence obedience to God is not, as some would believe, a *heteronomy* . . ."

(Section 41, p. 57). We are not to have divided wills, divided minds, or divided hearts.

The use of a Kantian idiom in this passage is instructive. For the encyclical is both in agreement and in disagreement with Kant. It is in agreement in understanding the negative precepts of the moral law as exceptionless prohibitions. It is in disagreement in its assertion that human reason needs to be instructed and corrected by this revelation of God's law. For not only is it the case that what God commands coincides with what is demanded of us by our own rational natures-that is something to which Kant could have assented-but to act in some particular way, just because God commands us so to do, is always to conform our wills to *the* good will, knowing that what His goodness requires of us is what goodness requires of us. So the " self-determination " of human beings is compatible with a " theonomy " of the reason and will, since "free obedience to God's law effectively implies that human reason and human will participate in God's wisdom and providence" (p. 57). But this is not the only difference from Kant.

According to Kant we are to do our duty by obeying the moral law for its own sake. The doctrine of the encyclical is that we are also to obey that law for the sake of the further good of ourselves and of others. The natural law teaches us what kinds of actions we need to perform, what kind of actions we need to refrain from performing, and what kinds of person we need to become, if we are to achieve our own final end and good and to share with others in achieving our final end and good. In achieving that good we shall be perfected, something possible for us sinful human beings only by grace. And what we shall lose, if we fail to achieve it, will, Jesus taught us, be God Himself " who alone is goodness, fullness of life, the final end of human activity and perfect happiness" (Section 9, pp. 19-20). *"To ask about the good,* in fact, *ultimately means to turn towards God,* the fullness of goodness " (p. 19).

What this underlines is that the conception of a final good for human beings is that of a good that cannot be weighed against any other, a good whose loss could not be compensated for by

any other. It is not merely that of some good which contingently happens to outweigh all other goods, so that one might intelligibly ask about it how far it outweighs them and whether or not some combination of other goods might not possibly outweigh it. But, if obedience to the precepts of the natural law, including the negative exceptionless precepts, is necessary for the achievement of a final good of this kind, is indeed partly constitutive of a life whose choices are directed towards that good as its end, then it makes no sense to ask whether some particular violation of one of those negative precepts might not be justified, because some good to be brought about by that particular violation in these circumstances on this occasion would or might outweigh the good to be achieved by conformity to that particular precept. The notion of outweighing cannot have this kind of application.

It may be instructive to consider-the example is mine, not that of the encyclical-the difference between St. Thomas Aquinas's view of why I may not be guilty of murder, even if, in the course of defending myself as a private person from a murderous onslaught by someone else, I happen to kill the aggressor, and a utilitarian view of why in those same circumstances I may not be guilty. The utilitarian will weigh the consequences of my undertaking an effective defence of myself or others-let us suppose that we are dealing with a case in which the only available effective defence will as a matter of fact result in the death of the aggressor-against the consequences of my failing to do so. If, as will commonly be the case, the benefit to be produced by an effective defence will in fact outweigh the harm of killing the aggressor, then, so the utilitarian will conclude, it will be right for me to mount an effective defence and I will do no wrong, if I intend, because of having so concluded, to kill the aggressor as the means of producing this balance of benefit over harm.

Aquinas's view is importantly different *(Summa Theologiae* Ila-Hae, 64, 7). I may not, whatever the predictable outcome in terms of a balance of benefit over harm, *intend* the death of the aggressor. What I may and should intend is only to defend myself-or other innocent persons-by using the minimum force necessary, even if in the course of so doing I do have to act so

as to bring about the aggressor's death. The intentional killing of another by a private individual is prohibited by the natural law as a wrong which cannot be outweighed by any benefit whatsoever.

One recurrent source of error here has been too simple a view of what some of the negative precepts of the natural law require and a consequent misunderstanding of how certain practical conclusions follow from them. For some negative precepts of the natural law have a certain complexity. Consider the act of theft. "The primary and decisive element for moral judgment is the object of the human act, which establishes whether it is *capable of being ordered to the good and ultimate end, which is God"* (Section 79, p. 100). St. Thomas first identifies the object of the act of theft as to take possession of what is the property of another where what is taken is a thing possessed (and not the other's person or some part of it) and to do so secretly (this distinguishes *furtum,* theft, from *rapina,* robbery). But a right understanding of what the precept of the natural law forbidding theft requires is therefore impossible without a right understanding of the concept of property. To own something is not, as in some views, to have inviolable rights over it. Owners hold their property as stewards for those in need, and in cases of extreme and immediate need, need which can only be met by taking what is otherwise to be regarded as your property, I do no wrong in taking what, because of that need, has become my property as much as yours, common property, and my taking is not rightly to be called theft or robbery, even if you have not consented to it *(Summa Theologiae* IIa-IIae 66, 7).

Compare this mode of argument once again with an erroneous method which might in some particular situations lead to the same practical conclusion. A utilitarian might suppose that what has to be done is to weigh the good of upholding property rights against that of aiding this particular individual in need, in each case taking the relevant set of consequences into account, and perhaps arriving at the conclusion that, on balance, good will be maximizing by aiding the needy individual. Two *prima facie* moral principles are in conflict and the utilitarian's conclusion re-

solves the dilemma by appeal to the principle of utility. But of course some change in contingent circumstances, such that the upholding of property rights became of greater and more urgent importance, might well lead by the same utilitarian mode of argument on another occasion to the conclusion that the needy person should be allowed to starve to death. The consistent utilitarian has to deny that it could be right to hold that no one should ever be allowed to starve to death, when there are any resources available to prevent this, whatever the consequences. But just what the utilitarian denies the natural law affirms.

So even when in particular cases and circumstances what the negative precepts of the natural law enjoin does coincide with what a consequentialist would prescribe, they do so on a basis that is deeply at odds with all notions of weighing and balancing consequences or of giving proportionate weight to different considerations. It is not of course that there are not greater and lesser goods. To do evil is always to prefer a lesser good to a greater. But the good at stake in all situations in which obedience or disobedience to the natural law is in question is such that no other can be weighed against it. Hence, when the encyclical explains the mistake made by those consequentialists and proportionalists who have supposed that somehow or other some good *can* be weighed against the evil of violating some particular negative precept, this identification of error is not just one more addendum to an exposition of God's law, whether understood as the natural law or as received through revelation from Moses and Jesus Christ. It is rather that recognizing that and why this is an error is itself a *sine qua non*, a necessary condition, of any well-founded understanding of the natural law and of our human relationship to it.

This is also true of a different, but not unrelated, error concerning the intentions of agents. It has been sometimes supposed that an intention or purpose can be good prior to and in independence of the character of the actions in which it is embodied, and that the goodness of that intention or purpose can make the acts that flow from it good, independently of their character in respect of the precepts of the natural law. Here the mistake is to

suppose that the agent's willing, expressed in the formation of its intentions and purposes, can derive its goodness or badness from any source except the object of the act deliberately chosen in that willing. The object of each particular action is the proximate end of that action, embodied in that action, and unless that action so characterized, accords with the precepts of the natural law, the action cannot be good and the willing cannot be good either. And to will badly, as to act badly, is to fail in the achievement of human freedom. In making this claim about freedom *Veritatis Splendor* challenges a good deal of what is commonly received nowadays as wisdom.

There is in the dominant moral culture of our particular time and place a widespread and influential conception of human beings as individuals who initially confront a range of possible objects of rational desire, a range of goods, among which each of them has to make her or his own choices, and which each individual has to rank order for her or himself, in accordance with her or his set of preferences. It is in accordance with those choices and that rank ordering that individuals formulate their principles, attempting in so doing to arrive at agreement with other rational persons, so that each in affirming and implementing her or his own preferences and choices may do so in a way consonant with those of others. Hence it is on the basis of individual preferences and choices that values and norms, including those of morality, come into being and from those preferences and choices that they derive their authority. Different versions of this view have been presented in the idioms of more than one type of philosophical theory. But the view itself is tacitly presupposed by many people who are quite unaware of themselves as having any philosophical commitments. And such people have often come to believe that this purported ability to create moral values and norms is central to their freedom. Their choices and preferences are to be treated as sovereign and their liberty consists in the exercise of this sovereignty. Hence any assertion of the objective authority of norms and values seems to constitute a serious threat. So, for example, during the Senate Judicial Committee's hearings on the nomination of Mr. Justice Thomas,

Senator Joseph Eiden expressed a fear " that natural law dictates morality to us, instead of leaving matters to individual choice" *(Washington Post,* September 8, 1991). But this conception of moral freedom as a power in each of us to make our own fundamental premoral choice of moral norms and values is illusory and deceptive.

What freedom is for human beings depends upon what their capacities are, upon what difference it makes to them how they set about actualizing those capacities, and upon what success they are able to have in so doing. To have become free is to have been able to overcome or avoid those distractions and obstacles which frustrate or inhibit the development of a capacity for judgment by standards whose rational authority we are able to recognize for ourselves and for action in accordance with such judgment. To have failed to become free is to have rendered oneself subject to frustration or inhibition in respect of such development. And the exercise of choice as such may contribute as easily and as often to failure as to success in becoming free. What we all have to learn is how to make right choices, on the basis of judgments that are genuinely rational and genuinely our own, so that our choices contribute to the development and exercise of our capacities. The virtue which we need if we are to become capable of right choice is the Aristotelian virtue of *phronesis, prudentia.* The acquisition of that virtue is impossible without a recognition of the rational authority of the precepts of the natural law, most of all perhaps of the negative exceptionless precepts. Thereby we become able to choose in a way that is not self-frustrating, but liberates our capacities for judgment and action directed towards our good. This is why the negative precepts are what I called them earlier, enabling, and why acknowledgment of their rational authority is a constitutive element of human autonomy. But just how is this so? We can usefully begin by considering first how they structure our relationships to others and then how they correspondingly structure our relationship to ourselves and so our selfhood.

We find ourselves engaged with others in a variety of ongoing institutional and informal enterprises and projects, through which

we and they seek to achieve a variety of goods, goods of enduring relationships in the family and in friendship, goods of productive work, of artistic activity and scientific enquiry, goods of leisure, goods of communal politics and of religion. In each of these projects and types of activity individuals have to learn how to discern and to order the specific goods of each area and how to make those choices through which they can be achieved. How those goods are understood and what means there are for achieving them will of course vary a good deal from culture to culture. What will not vary is two-fold: the need for a presupposed understanding that such goods will contribute to the achievement of *the* human good and the need for recognition of a set of requirements which enable human beings to benefit from the disciplines of learning. Those universal and invariant requirements specify the preconditions for the kind of responsiveness by one human being to others which makes it possible for each to learn from the others' questioning. They are the preconditions of a kind of rational conversation in which no one need fear being victimized by others as the outcome of their engagement with those others. Without acknowledgment of them, implicit or explicit, there would be lacking the basis for rational conversation about goods and about the good and for rational cooperation in achieving good and the good either within cultures or between cultures. They are definitive therefore of what human beings share with one another by nature, as rational beings. And they are in fact the requirements imposed by the precepts of the natural law.

What is true of relationship with others also holds of our relationship with ourselves. The same preconditions necessary for rational conversation with others are necessary also for rational deliberation with and by myself. My ability to learn from my own experiences in a way that will conduce to the achievement of my good depends upon my adopting a certain standpoint toward myself, a standpoint in which I am able to evaluate myself as a rational agent with, so far as possible, the same objectivity that I would evaluate another. Truthfulness, the courage of endurance and the courage of patience, a considerateness and a generosity

which avoid both mean-spiritedness and self-indulgence, are as necessary in my treatment of myself as they are in my treatment of others. And the minimal requirements of those virtues are none other than the precepts of the natural law.

If then conformity to the precepts of the natural law is a precondition of the kind of learning, both for oneself and in relationship to others, which develops maturity of rational judgment, any attempt to locate human freedom in a freedom to make choices which are prior to and independent of the precepts of the natural law is bound to be not only theoretically mistaken, but also practically misguided. Theoretically those who accept such a view understand law as primarily a constraint upon, rather than an enabling condition of freedom. And this is why they suppose that acknowledgement of the natural law is incompatible with freedom. As the encyclical puts it, they posit *"an alleged conflict between) freedom and law,"* supposing that individuals and social groups have a " right *to determine what is good or evil"* (Section 35, p. 51). Their belief has practical consequences. It leads them on to a reformulation of moral rules, so that no moral rules are held unconditionally and unqualifiedly. The rule about truth-telling, for example, becomes "Never tell a lie, except when ... " and there then follows a list of types of exception, a list which will vary from person to person and group to group, except that all their lists are apt to end with an "etc.," and, as with the rules about truth-telling, so also with other moral rules. The social and political consequences are those described in Sections 100 and 101 of the encyclical.

What this erosion of rules is always apt to lead to is a surrender of human relationships to competing interests, economic interests which, if not shaped by temperateness and justice, will reduce persons " to use-value or a source of profit " (Section 100, p. 122, quoting the *Catechism of the Catholic Church 2407),* political interests which, if not likewise shaped, will threaten integrity and legality. These are evils not only of totalitarianism. They may also result from " *an alliance between democracy and ethical relativism"* (p. 123), a relativism according to which each

individual was treated as free to decide upon her or his own moral rules.

One strong contention of the encyclical is that the only barrier to such an erosion and its consequences is a recognition of the objective authority of the precepts of the natural law, a recognition not only of the significance of the content of the natural law, but also of its function in structuring human nature. Each individual human being is a unity of body and soul and the body is to be understood in terms of this soul-informed unity. Bodily inclinations are of moral significance and bodily movements give expression to meanings. Human bodies are more than physicochemical and biological structures, although they are both these things. This conception of the body as primarily a bearer of meanings links Aristotelian themes in the philosophy of mind and body with perspectives developed within Polish phenomenology by, among others, Karol Wojtyla, but also, of course, by a variety of followers of Husserl, there and elsewhere, most notably perhaps by Merleau-Ponty, but also, earlier and as strikingly, in her dissertation by Edith Stein. It is " in the body," the encyclical declares, following both St. Thomas and Stein, that the person discovers those " anticipating signs " which are " the expression and the promise of the gift of self " (Section 48, p. 66). Moral direction therefore is not something to which the body is merely subjected as something alien and external. Physical activity is intelligibly structured towards the ends of the whole person, something that is rendered invisible by any reductive physicalism. It is the whole human person as a unity of body and soul which is ordered to its ends by the natural law, when the human being is in good functioning order. The truth that it is by being so ordered that the person is enabled and empowered-a bodily enabling and empowerment-is among those truths without a grasp of which an understanding of freedom cannot be achieved (Section 50, pp. 67-8).

The concept of truth here invoked is, in some sense of that variously employed adjective, a realist one. Our judgments about how it is right for us to act and about how human nature is structured have authority only in virtue of their conformity to

standards independent of and prior to judgment, desire, choice and will, standards of truth as well as of rational justification. Conscience has no authority in and by itself, but only insofar as its subjective deliverances conform to those objective standards. "Once the idea of universal truth about the good is lost, inevitably the notion of conscience also changes" (Section 32, p. 48). And it is not just that conscience is thereby accorded a false self-sufficiency and a misleading authority, important although that is (pp. 48-9). There is also a consequent failure in our self-knowledge, a failure to identify and to recognize that in our human nature which makes our freedom a real possibility, and beyond this sometimes a denial of the reality of a determinate human nature. An inadequate conception of truth is thus not just a source of failure in semantics or epistemology. Both the relationship of our understanding of truth to our understanding of freedom and the relationship of our capacity for achieving truth to the actuality of freedom make it crucial for moral philosophy and also for moral theology that we should have an adequate conception of truth. But the required standard of adequacy is of course compatible with more than one philosophical theory of truth.

What *is* required is that truth should be understood to be something other and something more than warranted assertibility. What we take to be warrantedly assertible is always relative to the standards of warrant presently upheld in our particular time and place, in our particular culture. But in asserting that something is true we are not talking about warrant or justification, but claiming rather that this is in fact how things are, whatever our present or future standards of warrant or justification may lead us to state or imply, that this is in fact how things are, not from the point of view of this or that culture, but as such. Such assertions of course often turn out to be false, but once again what they turn out to be is not false-from-a-point-of-view, or false-by-this-or-that-set-of-standards, but simply false. Without this culture and standpoint transcending aspect of the true and the false, those twin concepts could not play the part that they do in our lives. Without them we could not be the culture-transcending rational animals that we are.

It is only of course in terms provided for each of us by our own culture that human beings can initially formulate whatever truths we may apprehend about human nature and about the natural law. And it is from the resources provided by our own culture that we first set about trying to provide " *the most adequate formulation,,* for those truths (Section 53, pp. *71-2).* But insofar as the conception of human nature which we arrive at is indeed that of human nature as structured by the natural law, we will have succeeded in transcending what is peculiar *to* our own or any other culture. It will have become a conception of that which " is itself a measure of culture," of that in human beings which shows that they are " not exhaustively defined " by their culture and are not its prisoner (Section 53, p. 71). So once again a connection between truth and freedom appears. Just as we are not to be explained as wholly determined by our physical and biological make-up, so we are not merely products of our cultural environment, but actual or potential creative shapers of it, precisely insofar as we can evaluate its perspectives in terms which are nonperspectival, the terms of truth.

What I have tried to do so far is no more than *to* sketch the philosophical content of *Veritatis Splendor,* and I hope that something at least of the coherence and the complexity of that content has emerged. But, if the encyclical is not *to* be seriously misrepresented, another dimension needs to be added. Someone might well remark that, if and insofar as the encyclical is philosophy, it does indeed have one characteristic property of philosophy: every thesis thus presented is one treated as contestable within contemporary academic philosophy and denied by the protagonists of one or more influential philosophical standpoints. Moreover nothing in the encyclical's presentation is going by itself to change the philosophical convictions of any of those engaged in the debates of contemporary moral philosophy. The question therefore arises : Is anything achieved by the encyclical other than a salutary reminder both to Catholic philosophers and to others of some of the philosophical commitments and presuppositions of Catholic Christianity? The answer is: a good deal more is achieved, both at and beyond the level of philosophy, for

the encyclical not only spells out the philosophical commitments and presuppositions of Catholic Christianity, it also explains just why these commitments and presuppositions are going to be regarded as contestable, at what points their rejection is of the greatest significance, and what the intellectual and moral costs of such rejection are. It does so by presenting us with what is in effect a theology of moral philosophy embedded in a theology of the moral life.

The starting-point for the reflections which yield that theology is a meditation on the conversation of Jesus with a rich young man in the nineteenth chapter of Saint Matthew's gospel (Sections 6-27). We are to recognize in that young man " every person who, consciously or not" (p. 17) poses to Christ the Redeemer questions about morality which are in fact questions about the meaning of one's own life. This is a form of unquiet questioning, present in everyone, to which each significant action and decision implicitly or explicitly proposes an answer. The rich young man makes explicit both the question and his own answer.

Jesus redirects the young man's questioning from the law to God, who is not only the author of the law, but is Himself the final end of the law, "the final end of human activity" (pp. 19-20). What is required of the rich young man, and so correspondingly of each of us, is that he give up everything to God, so that by holding back nothing he will acknowledge that God, the supreme good, his supreme good, cannot be weighed against any other good. He must go beyond mere conformity to the law to a kind of obedience which understands the point of the law as an expression of God's love. But it is not in the young man's power to achieve this by himself. That is a possibility opened up to him and to others " exclusively by grace" (Section 24, p. 37), grace which Jesus offers as a gift to the young man, who, even although he has observed all the commandments, " is incapable of taking the next step by himself alone " (Section 17, p. 29). But the young man refused Jesus' invitation and " went away sorrowful, for he had many possessions" (Mt. 19:22). What did the young man lose by preserving his attachment to his possessions? *Veritatis Splendor* does not answer this question directly

in the sections which bring this initial scriptural meditation *to* a close. But in an important way the whole of the rest of the encyclical constitutes an answer to it.

Unless, unlike the rich young man, we respond *to* God's offer of grace by accepting it, we too shall be unable fully to understand and to obey the law in such a way as to achieve that ultimate good which gives to such understanding and obedience its point and purpose. But unless we can understand and obey the law adequately, we will be unable *to* recognize the truth concerning our own natures and to realize their potentiality for an exercise of rational freedom through which we can perfect our individual and communal lives (Section 38-40). This inability would constitute a loss in ourselves of that which is of most value *to* ourselves and to others. What we have *to* learn from the story of the rich young man is that attachments to what it seems to us that we cannot bear to lose-in his case his possessions-may, if they come between us and the possibilities that obedience to the law and grace together open up for us, that is, if they come between us and God, result in a far more radical loss to and of the self. But what has this to do with the philosophical parts of the encyclical?

Each of the errors about the natural law and its relationship to the human good identified in the encyclical is a dangerous obstacle to the achievement of right understanding of and fruitful obedience to the law. It is not too much to say that each represents an attachment comparable to the rich young man's attachments to his possessions. But how can this be so? I have so far presented these errors very largely as philosophical errors-although I have at certain points gone a little further than this-and we are generally unaccustomed in our culture to think of philosophy as having so interesting a potentiality as that for moral danger. But in fact those errors identified in the encyclical which I catalogued earlier are not *only* philosophical mistakes. They are the articulation at the level of moral philosophy, at the level, that is, of rational and reflective argument, of everyday practical, moral errors and ones that are peculiarly influential in our own particular culture. They can be usefully classified under three headings. And in each of the three types of case particular

mistakes are symptomatic of some more general habit of mind and practice.

First then there are those mistakes which derive from distorted conceptions of the freedom and autonomy of the individual self, mistakes which involve a repudiation of the Kantian standpoint just as much as of the Thomistic. One expression of these conceptions is attachment to some notion of the self as constituted in key part by its prerational and premoral choices, an attachment sometimes expressed in resentment and indignation that moral standards should be thought to have any other authority than those choices. From this point of view claims about the objectivity of the natural law are construed as attempts at an alien imposition upon the self of something that it has not chosen. Another expression of this distorted view of the self is the conferring upon the individual conscience of a sovereign independence of *any* standards external to its own judgments. Both these distortions are commonplaces of the justifications for actions and judgments often offered in the everyday life of our culture, in families, in workplaces, and in schools. What each presupposes is a denial of just that connection between the objectivity of the law and the autonomy and freedom of the self which is asserted in the encyclical. And therefore any philosophical theorizing which seems to afford sufficient rational grounds for denying this connection lends dangerous credibility to everyday error.

Secondly there are those mistakes which derive from the tendency in our culture to conceive of all practical situations as ones in which it is appropriate for rational agents to weigh benefits and costs, and in which every benefit and every cost can be weighed against every other, so that each may achieve for her or himself the greatest possible, or at least a satisfactory, balance of benefits over costs. This generally has two bad consequences. If and whenever changing social circumstances alter the balance of costs and benefits, so that what was hitherto a profitable principle for me to live by becomes an unprofitable one, then it also becomes, on this view, rational and right for me to exchange that principle for another. So it comes about that no principles are held unconditionally, no commitments are unqualified. But, insofar

as this is so, human relationships are fundamentally altered. Unconditional trust in another becomes a form of moral superstition. Temporariness becomes a crucial feature of the moral life and the virtue of integrity, of a willingness and an ability to stand by one's central commitments, whatever the consequences, becomes thought of not as a virtue, but as a piece of moral irrationality. So a consistent consequentialism in everyday life would entail the loss of what is from the standpoint of the natural law a constitutive virtue of the mature self.

Another consequence of this same attitude, according to which all rational decision issues from this kind of calculation of benefits and costs, is that what is in fact incommensurable is too often treated as though it were commensurable and, when this is so, what is presented in the guise of rational calculation in fact conceals, usually unwittingly, an underlying set of evaluative judgments of quite another kind. The apparently rational may thus disguise, and often enough does disguise, arbitrariness of preference and power. And the self is once again injured by such concealment and deception.

To this someone may respond that I-and by implication the encyclical-seem to have contradicted myself. I insisted a little earlier, as does the encyclical, that the precepts of the natural law are to be obeyed, whatever the consequences. But now I am emphasizing, as also does the encyclical, the bad consequences of certain errors which both derive from a disregard for and serve to obscure the character of the natural law. How can I first deny the relevance of consequences and then assert it? The answer is that consequences are wholly irrelevant to the prohibitions of the negative precepts of the natural law. The rational justification of those precepts is not a matter of the consequences of disobeying them and to justify my actions and omissions by reference to what those precepts forbid is not to appeal to consequences. Among the positive precepts of the natural law however is that we should all have an abiding concern for the flourishing of our families, our social and political order, and our culture. Here right action does involve the promotion of certain consequences and the avoidance of others, so far as that is possible. Some goods

in these areas are indeed greater than others. Hence derives the moral relevance of the consequences for familial, social, and cultural life of widespread disobedience to and confusion concerning the natural law. There is no inconsistency.

It is just this type of concern for the condition of our culture, as well as for individuals, which receives expression in the encyclical's insistence that for any culture to flourish those whose culture it is must recognize the need to call upon those intellectual and moral resources which belong to human beings as such and not only to what is specifically its own. The belief that our only resources are those provided by and specific to our own particular culture and the corresponding belief that the highest standards that we can know are the highest standards of that culture sometimes present themselves in our own culture in the form of a crude relativism. But even the sophisticated who disown any such relativism in theory often behave in practice as if something very like it were true, by their attitude to alien cultures, engaging with those cultures only on assumptions that take for granted the superiority of the dominant standards of our own culture. So far too often, for example, North Americans treat human beings everywhere as though it could be taken for granted that they are primarily consumers of whatever the most advanced technology is able to supply.

This attitude allows people to conceal from themselves what they are and have become, for they lose sight of any standard more fundamental than those upheld in their own culture by which important aspects of that culture might be judged defective. And without an adequate acknowledgment of the natural law, which provides just such a standard, we can have no sound basis for the kind of conversation with the representatives of alien cultures in which we might learn how to see ourselves from their point of view and so learn further about ourselves. Such failure can "eliminate awareness of one's own limits and of one's own sin" (Section 105, p. 127), so leading to a further deprivation of the self. We can avoid such failure not only by calling upon what is already ours, but also by recognizing what is to be learned from a variety of other traditions, " the great religious and sapi-

ential traditions of East and West, from which the interior and mysterious workings of God's Spirit are not absent" (Section 94, p. 116).

Relativism is then a third type of error identified in the encyclical which appears both in everyday life and as a contending position in the enquiries of moral philosophy. The importance which attaches to the identification of all three kinds of error is thus both moral and intellectual. And, if moral philosophers are to dispose themselves rightly in relation to those errors, they need not only what can be afforded by their own enquiries, but much more than this, that grace necessary for the redirection and restoration of the self of which the gospel speaks. Each of these three kinds of error turns out to be an attachment to something which in the end deprives us not only of our good, that is, of God, but also of something crucial in ourselves, something without which we will become incapable of achieving that which alone in the end gives point and purpose to our activities. One central moral and theological lesson of the encyclical is that, without understanding of and obedience to God's law, we become self-frustrating beings.

Yet, if this is so, if, that is to say, both our moral lives and our philosophical enquiries are bound to be ultimately frustrated, unless we are able to learn what the gospel has to teach, then it would be tragic and seemingly paradoxical, if what interposed itself between us and the gospel, obscuring what the gospel has to say about these errors, was some aspect of the discipline of Catholic moral theology. The history of Catholic theology suggests however that this can indeed happen and in two ways. One is by some theologians making themselves independent of authoritative Catholic teaching, so that for premises derived from that teaching they substitute premises of their own. And this is most notably and harmfully the case when they try to make themselves the authority which declares what authoritative Catholic teaching is. The other is by theologians deriving from such premises particular erroneous conclusions. How the pope and the bishops should respond is for them and, happily, not for me. But were they to have failed to respond, this would itself be a failure quite

as great as that of any theological error. Even so, the significance of theological errors becomes somewhat different, when those errors providentially provide matter and occasion for a declaration of the truths of the gospel. One way of missing the point of *Veritatis Splendor* would be to tie its reading too closely to the work of those particular moral theologians whose writings may have been the occasion for its composition. For, quite apart from any errors that they may have committed, *Veritatis Splendor* is and will remain a striking Christian intervention in moral debate, at once authoritative teaching and a voice in that continuing philosophical conversation between Christianity and modernity to which Pascal and Kierkegaard, Newman and Barth and von Balthasar, have all been contributors. *Veritatis Splendor* continues the same evangelical and philosophical conversation with secular modernity, and the appropriate initial response of each of us to it should concern our own past and present defects and errors rather than those of others. There is much work to be done.[1]

[1] I am indebted for very helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper to my colleagues Alfred J. Freddoso, Ralph M. Mcinerny, and W. David Solomon, as well as to the participants in a discussion sponsored by the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family, *Communio, The Thomist,* and the American Maritain Society.

# THREE NOTIONS OF *RESOLUTIO* AND THE STRUCTURE OF REASONING IN AQUINAS [1]

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*RESOLUTIO*, better known by the English transliteration of its Greek counterpart, "analysis," has been touted as " the conceptual model for some of the most important ideas in the history of philosophy, including the history of the methodology and philosophy of science." [2] But while resolution/analysis may be important in the histories of philosophy and science, its own history is, to say the least, confused. A Renaissance commentator, Jeremias Triverius gives some sense of this when, after giving a list of four methods of dialectic (division, definition, demonstration, and resolution) ,[3] he writes,

1 I have used the following abbreviations for works by Thomas Aquinas. All translations of Aquinas are my own. *Commentum in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum* (ed. Busa): *In Sent; Compendium Theologiae* (ed. Busa): *Comp Theo!; E:rpositio Super Librum Boethii De Trinitate* (ed. Decker): *Exp de Trin; In Aristotelis Libros Posterium Analyticorum* (ed. Marietti) : *In Anal Post; In Duodecem Libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis E:rpositio* (ed. Marietti): *In Meta; In Librum Beati Dionysii De Divinis Nominibus E:rpositio* (ed. Marietti): *In Div Nom; Sententia Libri Ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nichomachum: In Ethic; Sententia Libri Politicormn Aristotelis* (ed. Leonine): *In Pol; De Substantiis Separatis* (ed. Busa): *De Sub Sep; Summa Contra Gentiles* (ed. Leonine): *SCG; Summa Theologiae* (ed. Leonine): *ST; Questiones Disputatae de Veritate: QDV.*

2 Jaakko Hintikka and Unto Remes, *The Method of Analysis* (Boston: D. Reidel, 1974), p. 1.

3 These four methods of dialectic are also given by a number of ancient commentators, for example, Ammonius *(In Porphyrii Isagogen,* in *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* [hereafter, *CAG],* ed. Maximilian Wallies [Berlin, 1891], vol. IV, pt. 6, p. 34, 11. 19-20) and a later commentator, David *(Davidis Prolegomena et in Porphyrii Isagogen Commentarium, CAG,* ed. Adolf Busse [Berlin, 1904], vol. 18, p. 88, 11. 6-10).

Now anyone who has some knowledge of dialectical matters knows what Definition, Division, and Demonstration are. There is no general agreement, however, so far as I can see, on Resolution. Some identify it with Division. Others regard it as contrary [to Division], ...[4]

Triverius, like many modern commentators, adds to, rather than sorts out, the confusion, continuing, "And since each one is entitled to his opinion, I am now maintaining that Resolution is contrary to Demonstration ...."[5] Many centuries before Triverius we find a similar ambiguity in Greek commentators on Aristotle, who outline several types of analysis. Unlike Triverius, however, most seem untroubled by the multiple types; Ammonius and David, without puzzlement, explain carefully that analysis is the opposite of *each* of the other three methods.[6] The lack of

[4] Jeremias Triverius, *In texnhn [sic] Galeni clarissimi commentarii* (Lyon, 1547), p. 14; cited and translated in Nea! Gilbert, *Renaissance Concepts of Method* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 106. Galen's opening remarks of the *Ars medica,* giving three methods of teaching (analysis, synthesis, and definition) is a common locus for the discussion of resolution/analysis in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Galen's contribution, at least for Aquinas, seems to have been completely mediated by Medieval Arabic commentators. Galen's own discussions are either incomplete, as in the opening passage to the *Ars medica* (in *Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia,* ed. C. G. Kiihn, [Repr. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1965], vol. I, pp. 305-306), which merely mentions the word, or are unclear accounts of analysis (Cf. Galen's discussion of analysis in *De Peccatorum,* in *Opera Omnia,* vol. 5, ch. 5, pp. 80-81). On two of the Arabic commentaries' descriptions of analysis *to* accompany medieval translations of Galen, see below, nn. 80 & 83. On Galen's supposed contribution to the notion of resolution and method in the development of experimental science, see A. C. Crombie, *Robert Grosseteste and the Origins of Experimental Science* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), especially pp. *76*-80, and Gilbert, *Renaissance Method,* pp, 13-27, 44-46.

[5] Triverius, *In texnhn,* p. 14; Gilbert, p. 106.

[6] For analysis as the opposite of division, definition, and demonstration, see Ammonius, *In Aristotelis Analyticorum Priorum Librum I Commentarium, CAG,* ed. Maximilian Wallies, (Berlin, 1891), vol. IV, pt. 6, p. *7,* !. 29-p. 8, l. 9, and David, *In Porph,* p. 90, 11. 4-24. For other descriptions of multiple types of resolution often named "physical," "geometrical," "syllogistic," etc., see Alexander of Aphrodisias, *In Analyticorum Priorum Librum I Commentarium, CAG,* ed. Maximilian Wallies, (Berlin, 1883), vol. II, pt. 1, p. *7,* 11. 12-27; Ammonius, *In Anal Pr,* p. 5, 11. 10-34; Idem., *In Porph, CAG,* vol. IV, pt. 6, p. 36, 11. 1-9; David, *In Porph,* p. 103, 11. 23-32; Ioannis Philoponi, *In Aristotelis Analytica Priora Commentaria, CAG,* ed. Adolf Busse, (Berlin 1888), vol. XIII, p. 5, 11. 16-19.

"general agreement" Triverius mentions, however, whether explicitly articulated or not, whether seen as a problem or not, runs throughout the history of resolution. Though unarticulated by Aquinas and only seen as a problem by his commentators, Aquinas's use and discussion of resolution are a mirror of this complexity and a mark of the importance and resilience of the notion.

The choice of this particular chapter in this extraordinarily complex history is, I think, defensible on several fronts. First, most of the contemporary secondary literature on analysis ignores medieval uses of resolution. It either leaps from ancient to modern sources, or mentions thes·e medieval uses as " pale reflections " of its use as the " opposite of demonstration " (to use Triverius's categories) originating in early Greek geometry; it is this latter sense that seems to have most interested contemporary scholars.[7] When apparently different ancient uses or sources of the term are mentioned, they are often only incidentally brought forward as examples of " misunderstandings " of true analysis.[8] On the other hand, as I will try to show below, those

[7] Hintikka and Remes, *Method of Analysis*, p. 11. For references to other recent discussions of geometrical analysis, see below, section III. A. C. Crombie's discussion of Robert Grosseteste's use of the resolutive method in *Robert Grosseteste and the Origins of Experimental Science* (pp. 61-90) is an exception to the silence about medieval uses, but Crombie's understanding of resolution is subordinated to and slanted by his attempt to read into Grosseteste the beginning of a scientific method of falsification. L. Oeing-Hanhoff's article "Analyse/Synthese," in the *Historisches Worterbuch der Philosophie* I (Darmstadt, 1971), pp. 232-248 gives a history which goes from Plato to the 20th century and discusses some medieval uses. It is an amazing effort, mentioning a huge number of authors, but it is a descriptive rather than critical survey. I will discuss Oeing-Hanhoff's views of analysis in Aristotle and Aquinas below.

[8] See, for example, Thomas Heath, *A History of Greek Mathematics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), vol. I, pp. 291-292. Heath takes Proclus to be "confused" for calling a method associated with Platonic dialectic *analysis.* On Proclus's view of analysis and its connection to geometry, see below, sections II and III. Again, two exceptions are F. M. Cornford's "Mathematics and Dialectic in the *Republic* VI-VII," *Mind,* vol. 41 (1932), pp. 37-52 and Norman Gulley's "Greek Geometrical Analysis," *Phronesis,* vol. 3 (1958), pp.

who discuss resolution in Aquinas seem to have little sense of the long and vexed tradition of the term to describe reason's movement, and hence give incomplete accounts of the notion in Aquinas. Aquinas's understanding of resolution is rich and his use varied, drawing on most of the major strands in the complicated fabric of the history of the idea; thus, to understand his uses and sources is to understand much about the history of resolution. Secondly, this episode serves as an example of the coexistence and almost seamless intertwining of philosophical terminologies in medieval and specifically Thomistic texts.[9] It reminds us of the complex nature of Aquinas's relationship to his many sources, named and unnamed. Though his notions of resolution are drawn from diverse accounts of reasoning and reality, they are not set in opposition to one another; rather the dissonances between the multiple strains in the tradition Aquinas inherits he exploits to his own ends by contextualizing and ordering the different senses.

Lastly, while traditionally resolution/analysis has not been seen as a major category in Aquinas, it is important in two respects. First, Aquinas describes the path of reasoning in metaphysics as resolutive, and in this context describes two types of resolution corresponding to the two different names and tasks of this science as "metaphysics" and "divine science."[10] As such, to understand what Aquinas means by resolution is a key part of understanding what he means by metaphysics and its task. Thus discussions of resolution are an obligatory part of discussions of the nature of metaphysics.[11] My interest here is to provide back-

1-14. Cornford tries to connect analysis as a method of Platonic and Neoplatonic dialectic with geometrical analysis, and Gulley includes a survey of texts on analysis from the Greek commentators and Albinus and Proclus. For further discussion of these two interpretations of geometrical analysis, see below, section III.

9 For this way of thinking about this issue I am indebted to Mark D. Jordan's "The Plurality of Technical Terminologies in Thomas Aquinas," a paper given at the University of Notre Dame.

10 See *Exp de Trin,* q. 6, a. 1, sol. c, discussed below, in section II.

11 See for example John Wippel, "'First Philosophy' According to Thomas Aquinas," in *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1984), pp. 55-67; *J.* Doig, *Aquinas*

ground and context to this description of metaphysics as proceeding according to two kinds of resolution, in the form both of a discussion of the other senses of resolution, and of the sources and implications of metaphysical resolution. Secondly, resolution or analysis is one of the most consistent terms Aquinas uses to describe the path of reasoning *(ratio)* from one thing to another, and, along with composition, division, and abstraction, is one of the most important ways Aquinas specifies the essentially discursive character of human reason. Hence Aquinas's account of resolution is an important aspect of his account of human knowledge, and affords an interesting perspective on that view of knowing because resolution/analysis is, as we will see below, a part of many different philosophical traditions. Thus, a grasp of how analysis works in Aquinas brings him into conversation with those traditions in a way that an examination of other aspects of his description of reason, because they are not as widely and diversely (and almost equivocally) used, might not.

It is exactly this complicated background and diversity of uses which causes a fundamental textual problem in the Thomistic corpus : the starting and end points which define resolution change dramatically and without notice when we move around in Aquinas's texts in much the same ways described by Triverius as well as ancient commentators. In some passages Aquinas defines *resolutio* as the movement from something complex to its simple components. In these places, *resolutio* is the *first* movement of reason which is followed by *compositio,* the movement from components to compound. In this sense, resolution seems to be a breaking down into parts, and, thus, a kind of *division,* like the first description given by Triverius. [12] Though I **will**

*on Metaphysics: A Historico-Doctrinal Study of the Commentary on the Metaphysics* (The Hague, 1972), pp. 64-76; Cornelio Fabro, *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione secondo S. Tomaso d'Aquino,* 3rd. ed. (Turin: Societa editrice internazionale, 1963), pp. 80-81, and "The Intensive Hermeneutics of Thomistic Philosophy," *Review of Metaphysics 2713* (1974), pp. 463, 486-489; Jan A. Aertsen, "Method and Metaphysics: The *via resolutionis* in Thomas Aquinas," *Modern Schoolman* 63 (1989), pp. 405-418.

12 E.g., *In Pol,* I, lee. 1.

argue below that the root sense of this kind of resolution is the physical division into independent and atomic parts, e.g., of a sentence into its words and letters, this sense also includes the division of a thing into its logical or metaphysical " parts," e.g., of a genus into its species, of an essence into genus and differentia, and of a thing into its essence, properties, and accidents or into matter and form. These are also " parts " of a whole, but not parts into which a thing can be actually divided.

In other places, Aquinas describes *resolutio* as the movement from effects, conclusions, and particulars toward causes, premises, and universals and as following the opposite path of *compositio.*[18] This usage seems roughly equivalent to the view of resolution that, again using Triverius's categories, *opposes* it to division because, unlike Platonic/ Aristotelian division, which moves " down " from genus to species, this movement goes back " up " from particular to general, species to genus, and effect to cause, following the path in Neoplatonism of the return of all things to the One.[14] In still other places, Aquinas describes counsel as proceeding " resolutively " since it assumes the end and works backward from it toward what can and should be done immediately.[16] This last type seems to mirror Triverius's own preference, i.e., resolution as opposed to demonstration or, as its opposite is sometimes called in geometrical texts, " synthesis." As the opposite of demonstration/synthesis, which moves from premises (ideally, axioms, postulates, definitions) to conclusions, this resolution moves from conclusions to premises. Translated into the realm of practical reasoning, then, it moves from the end to be achieved, a " conclusion " in the realm of doing rather than knowing, toward "premises," i.e., actions which will *precede* that end.

While I agree with others who have examined the role of resolution in Aquinas's thought that a common thread ties all his uses of the term together, I want to insist that those threads are drawn from truly diverse sources and that the fabric Aquinas

is E.g., *Exp de Trin,* q. 6, a. 1, sol. c.

1. For Plato's description of division, see *Sophist* 253b-d; *Phaedru.s* 265d-266b; *Philebus* 18b-d. For Aristotle's, see *Posterior Analytics,* II, 5, 13.

15 E.g., *ST* I-II, q. 14, a. 5.

weaves from them gains its interest and character from these differences. Edmund Dolan, for example, concludes that " there is a resolutive mode in a general or loose sense every time there is a movement from what is complex or composite to what is simple, or from effects to causes." [16] But if one fails to distinguish between the different ways in which things can be related as simple and complex and between the different ways in which one can move from conclusion to premises, it is very difficult to reconcile various texts in Aquinas. Dolan himself notes that while Aquinas claims that the speculative disciplines are "resolutive" in mode and the practical sciences "compositive," Aquinas nonetheless maintains that taking counsel, an undertaking of practical reasoning, is " resolutive " and that perfect demonstrative syllogisms, surely a speculative use of reason, are " compositive." [11] In his paper on analysis and synthesis, Louis Regis juxtaposes without comment texts from both Aquinas and his apparent sources in which resolution is described both as a method of *discovery* and as *preceding* composition with others in which he sees it as a way of *judgment*, *following* composition and confirming what has already been discovered. [18] Jan Aertsen's recent article

[16] Edmund Dolan, " Resolution and Composition in Speculative and Practical Discourse," *Laval Theologique et Philosophique,* vol. 6 (1950), p. 62.

[17] Dolan, pp. 10-12. Dolan calls demonstrative syllogisms "compositive" because, like composition, they proceed from causes to effects. For descriptions of composition in these terms in Aquinas see, for example, *Exp de Trin,* q. 6, a. 1, sol. *3* and *ST* I-II, q. 14, a. 5. Dolan discusses many Thomistic texts in detail and concludes that the contradiction disappears when one distinguishes between "strict " and " loose " senses of resolution and composition. Practical discourse is only resolutive in a loose sense because its formal object is the operable and is, hence, complex; speculative discourse is compositive only in a loose sense, on the other hand, because its object or "end" is always simpler causes (pp. 61-62). While there are elements of Dolan's explanation that are helpful and convincing, in order to make his case Dolan is required to work very hard to develop a very complex set of senses and their interrelationship, the very complexity of which seems problematic and still leaves unexplained why Aquinas would develop such an elaborate set of uses for the term. Cf. Oeing-Hanhoff, p. 238, who repeats but passes over in complete silence the apparent contradiction implicit in these two claims.

[18] Louis-M. Regis, O.P., "Analyse et synthese dans !'oeuvre de saint Thomas," *Studia Medievalia* (Bruges, 1948), pp. 303-330. Regis cites a passage from Calcidius in which resolution is clearly the *first* movement and one

distinguishes between "judicative" resolution, and resolution *secundum rem* and *secundum rationem*, but also states that resolution " is always directed to a terminus which in a certain respect is first," without explaining the differences in those " respects." [19]

First, then, I will delineate what I take to be Aquinas's three main sources: 1) Calcidius's *Commentary on the Timaeus* and its 12th century commentators (in turn based on certain texts in Aristotle) ; 2) Neoplatonism, most notably Proclus and Scotus Erigena; and 3) Greek geometry, filtered through Aristotle. I will in the process describe how these sources would most likely have been transmitted to Aquinas-Calcidius through 12th century physical texts and commentaries on Boethius, reiterated in Bonaventure and Albert; Greek geometrical method through Aristotle and Albert the Great; and Proclus through Pseudo-Dionysius, Erigena, and again, Albert the Great. I contend that

from Scotus Erigena where it clearly *follows* composition. See especially pp. 305-307, 308-309. I am indebted to Regis for locating these and other mentions of *resolutio* by Boethius and Albert the Great. Cf. Isaac's account of resolution in Aquinas which attempts to get around differences in the descriptions of resolution by arguing that there are two resolutions of the same type, resolutions of judgment which seem to differ only in producing varying degrees of certainty. See J. Isaac, "La Notion de Dialectique chez Saint Thomas," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et thealogiques* 34 (1950), pp. 486-493.

[19] Aertsen, p. 408. I find Aertsen's interpretation of the text in the commentary on Boethius's *De Trinitate* (q. 6, a. 3, sol. c) which distinguishes between whether the simpler, more universal principles reached by resolution are intrinsic *(secundum rationem)* or extrinsic causes *(secundum rem)* helpful. However, I argue below that these two kinds of resolution are different versions of only one of the types of analysis I will discuss here, Neoplatonic analysis. Aertsen, perhaps because concerned with the method of metaphysics, does not discuss any of the passages that articulate the other two senses which I have found in the Thomistic corpus. See also L. Oeing-Hanhoff, "Die Methoden der Metaphysik im Mittelalter," in *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter, !hr Ursprung und ihre Bedeutung* (Berlin, 1963), pp. 71-91, to whom Aertsen is primarily responding. Oeing-Hanhoff argues for two types of resolution in Aquinas, " conceptual " and "natural " resolution, corresponding to resolution *secitndum rationem* and *secundum rem.* Aertsen objects to the association of "conceptual " analysis (begriffs-analyse) with *resolutio secundum rationem* because he thinks it implies that the categories resulting from this analysis are merely logical and not real (Aertsen, pp. 412-414).

Calcidius, Proclus, and Greek geometry are the main sources for Aquinas not so much because they would have been his immediate sources, as because they are the originators (or at least the clearest proponents) of these distinct senses of analysis as a technical term describing a path of reasoning which reappear in Aquinas. Though there are similar uses in Aristotle, I do not take Aquinas's debt to be mainly or directly to Aristotle because such an appeal would not explain Aquinas's more systematically technical use of analysis, nor the more sharply different versions of analysis which occur in the long tradition of analysis and in Aquinas's text but not in Aristotle.

One might think that there is some pattern of change discernible from a chronological consideration of Aquinas's works for the diverse uses of analysis. But even a cursory juxtaposition of senses and texts reveals that certain senses are not restricted to certain periods of Aquinas's work. The Neoplatonic sense appears in the early exposition of Boethius's *De Trinitate* (1258-1259), in *De Veritate* (1256-1259), and the later *Summa Theologiae* (1268-1272) and *Commentary on the Divine Names* (1265-67); the Calcidian/ Aristotelian sense is found in the later commentaries on the *Metaphysics* and on the *Politics* (1269-1272), and in the *Compendium Theologiae* (1269-1273); lastly, the geometrical sense occurs in both the *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics* (1271) and the *Summa Theologiae.*[20] Thus all three senses seem to have been retained until the end of Aquinas's career. If there is any pattern here, it seems rather to be that Aquinas was more influenced by the language and metaphysical and noetic assumptions of the texts on which he was commenting; he gives strongly Neoplatonic descriptions of analysis commenting on Boethius and Dionysius, and strongly Aristotelian/Calcidian accounts while commenting on Aristotle. Notwithstanding this, however, all three senses occur in Aquinas's autonomous works.

[20] These dates are taken from James Weisheipl, O.P., *Friar Thomas d'Aquino: His Life, Thought, and Work* (GMden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974)' pp. 355-405.

Since I do not, however, take Aquinas's account to be merely syncretistic, I want to argue, secondly, that what ties the different processes together for him is more than the term, or even that in some vague sense the different traditions all describe resolution as movement from simple to complex or "last" to "first."[21] While there seem to be no grounds for associating different senses with different periods in Aquinas's work, there is a coherent way to understand the apparent inconsistency in Aquinas's texts. I want to suggest, first, that the different uses Aquinas makes of *resolutio* are each different specifications of the nature of human reason as discursive designed for distinct contexts. But each type reiterates this discursive and dialectical structure, beginning from and returning to a "starting-point" known incompletely and confusedly at first, and returned to with more distinct and complete knowledge. Secondly, I will argue that behind this rather loose commonality, the various types are ordered in terms of the type of discourse with which they are associated, practical or theoretical, physical or metaphysical, and the ontological structure they uncover and imply.

## I. Aristotle and Calcidius: *Resolutio* as Division

The first sense of resolution as a kind of division or reduction is derived most purely from Calcidius's *Commentary on the Timaeus*, which in turn (and less purely) seems to be derived from Aristotle. Let me begin with Calcidius and then proceed to Aristotle and Aquinas. Calcidius's clearest account of resolution occurs during his discussion of the methods or theories which will bring us to a discovery of principles. He writes,

> If, by means of our intellect, we wish to take away these qualities and quantities, these shapes and figures, and then consider what keeps all these things inseparably together and contains them, we shall find that there is nothing else than that which we are looking for, i.e., matter, and herewith we have found the material principle. This then is one of the two possible methods of arguing, called *resolutio*.[22]

[21] Cf. Dolan, p. 9, and Aertsen, p. 408.

[22] "Si ergo has qualitates et quantitates, etiam formas figurasque volemus

The opposite movement, *compositio,* which " follows *resolutio* as union follows separation," works by reconstructing the object, by adding back in, if you will, the genera, qualities, and forms which have been separated from it.[23]

This type of resolution is mentioned by Alexander of Aphrodisias and Ammonius commenting on the *Prior Analytics;* these two commentators, like others, insert a discussion of " analysis " into their introduction to the *Analytics* under the rubric of explaining Aristotle's titles to the two *Analytics* (an explanation Aristotle himself never gives).[24] Among several senses, they describe an *analusis* (which Ammonius calls *physiological* analysis) of complex living beings into the elements and into matter and form.[25] The same process, I think, reappears in Thierry of Chartres and Herman of Carinthia's *De Essentiis* to describe a *physical* process analogous to reason's taking away of forms until one arrives at matter; Thierry, commenting on Boethius's *De Trinitate,* describes resolution as arriving at matter, and com-

ratione animi separare, tum demum deliberare, quid sit illud, quod haec omnia inseparabiliter adhaerens complexumque contineat, inveniemus nihil aliud esse quam id quod quaerimus, silvam; inventa igitur est origo silvestris. Et hoc quidem est unum duarum probationum genus, quod resolutio dicitur." Calcidius, *Timaeus a Calcidio translatus commentarioque instructus,* eds. W. J. Verdenius and J. H. Waszink, in *Plato latinus,* vol. IV (London & Leiden: Warburg Institute and E. J. Brill, 1962), sec. *303,* p. 305; translated by J. C. M. Van Winden, O.F.M. in *Calcidius on Matter: His Doctrine and Sources* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959), p. 132.

[23] Calcidius, *In Tim,* sec. 304; eds. Verdenius and Waszink, p. 305; trans. Van Winden, p. 134.

[24] Aristotle does use analysis in reference to the titles of the *Analytics* but without further explanation. On the explanations offered by Boethius, Albert the Great, and Thomas for the title of the *Analytics,* see below nn. 70-71.

[25] Cf. Alexander, *In Anal Pr,* p. 7, 11. 17-20: "alla kai ho ta suntheta somata anagon eis ta, hapla somata analusei chretai kai ho ton haplon hekaston eis ta, ex hon autois to einai, hoper estin hule kai eidos, analuei "; Ammonius, *In Anal Pr,* p. 5, 11. 14-19: " estin de kai para tois phusiologois sunthesis kai analusis, . . . analusis de kath' hen apo ton suntheton epi ta hapla erchontai, oion ho anthropos ek ton tessaron chumon, oi tetra chumoi ek ton tessaron stoicheion." Oeing-Hanhoff refers to this as "natural analysis" (" Analyse/Synthese," p. 247).

position arriving at God and form.[26] *De Essentiis* describes resolution as follows: "Every resolution of a composite thing is a resolution into mixtures and finally of the mixtures into the four general principles [i.e., the elements], which, because they are simple, cannot be resolved further."[27]

Explaining that it is very difficult to come to a clear conception of matter since matter *per se* does not exist, Calcidius states that in order to arrive at such a conception. "... one eliminates all bodies which, in the womb of matter, are formed in a rich variety by *resolutio* from one to another ...."[28] Even though Calcidius is describing the same *rational* process of elimination he calls resolution elsewhere, here he uses *resolutio* to describe the *physical* transformation of one body or element into another, the same process for which the related term, *dissolutio,* is sometimes substituted in 12th century texts.[29] Both the easy shifting from *resolutio* to *dissolutio* and a strongly Calcidian description of analysis also occurs in Bonaventure. Bonaventure describes two ways in which a thing may be corrupted: "by *dissolution,* or

[26] Thierry of Chartres, *Commentum super Boethii librum De Trinitate II,* in *Commentaries on Boethius by Thierry of Chartres and His School,* ed. Nikolaus M. Haring (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1971), sec. 23, p. 75. Thierry writes, "Per resolutionem invenitur materia, per compositionem vero Deus et forma."

[27] "Omnis autem compositi resolutio in commixtiones, commixtionum demum in generalia .iiii. principia, que, quoniam simplicia sunt, ulterius resolvi non possunt." Herman of Carinthia, *De Essentiis,* ed. and trans. Charles Burnett (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982), p. 60vD.

[28] "... hoc est ut universis corporibus, quae intra gremium silvae varie formantur mutua ex alio in aliud *resolutione,* singillatim ademptis ...." Calcidius, fo *Tim,* sec. 274b; eds. Verdenius and Waszink, p. 279; ed. Van Winden, p. 49. Rather than use Van Winden's translation of *resolutio* as "transition," I have retained the Latin *resolutio.*

[29] See, for example, Clarenbald of Arras's *Tractatus super Librum Boethii De Trinitate,* in *Life and W arks of Clarenbald of Arras,* ed. Nikolaus Haring, S.A.C. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1965), sec. 21, p. 93, in which the process of abstracting qualities is described as *dissolutio.* Cf. Clarenbald, *Tractatus super librum Genesis,* also found in Haring, *Commentaries on Boethius by Thierry of Chartres,* sec. 21, p. 235. Here Clarenbald writes, "Quicquid enim est ultimum in *dissolutione,* primum est in conpositione."

the separation of the principles of its composition or its parts, and by corruption of the form " ; the same passage goes on to describe, in contrast to the corruption of the form, the *resolutio* of an animal into the four elements or of the elements into one another. [30] It is an instructive variation since it captures the main force of this kind of resolution as the dissolving of a composite and as closely associated with physics and physical change.

This notion of resolution seems in part to be derived from Aristotle's discussion in the *Metaphysics* (1029al0-15) of the " taking away" (*aphairesis)* of all forms and qualities until one arrives at matter, and later on of the *analusis* of material compounds into their ultimate matter or original constituents (1044a22-25). [31] I say it is only " in part " derived from these passages in Aristotle for three reasons. First, Aristotle uses the term *analusis* and its derivatives in many contexts; his understanding of it is fluid and non-technical (except when referring to geometrical analysis), showing in these different passages a kinship with each of the three senses.[32] Secondly, an examination of the context of these passages in the *Metaphysics* shows that Aristotle himself rejects this "method" as the way to arrive at metaphysical principles. In this passage Aristotle is in fact outlining the *aporia* that results from attempting to arrive at primary substance by this kind of mental decomposition or " taking

[30] Bonaventure, *In Sententiarum Lib. IV,* d. 43, a. 1, q. 4. "Et propter hoc dicunt alii aliter, quod duplex est corruptio: quaedam per *dissolutionem* sive separationem *principiorum componentium* sive partium; quaedam per *corruptionem formae. ...* Certum est enim, quod forma carnis humanae *corrumpitur,* generatur inde vermis et serpens; et sicut potest corrumpi in carnem serpentis vel alterius animalis, sic *resolvi* potest, sicut et illus animal, etiam in quatuor elementa, et unumquodque elementorum corrumpi in aliud, et ita corrumpuntur formae mixti et elementi." Cf. Bonaventure, *In Sententiarum Lib. II,* d. 8, dubia 3; d. 21, a. 1, q. 3.

[31] Cf. Stephen Gersch, *Middle Platonism and Neo-Platonism: The Latin Tradition,* 2 vols. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), I, p. 438, n. 70.

[32] For a very thorough and persuasive account of the richness and fluidity of Aristotle's uses of analysis, see the forthcoming book by Patrick Byrne, *Analysis and Science in Aristotle,* especially chapter one which examines many of these passages.

away " of forms until one reaches matter. The paradox that would result, Aristotle argues, is that the substance of a thing would be itself completely undetermined and incapable of separate existence (1028b35-1029a30).[33] And even though analysis as division or decomposition is used without such qualifications in Aristotle, these uses occur in the context of physical and, even more specifically, elemental change, not change in more complex, animate beings.[H]

Though I cannot fully defend this here, it seems to me that in the context of Aristotle's larger theories of physical change and metaphysical principles, analysis as decomposition or division is rejected as the path to ultimate principles and explanations; this kind of analysis is the sort offered by the ancient physicists who arrived at the various elements as the ultimate principle of things, views Aristotle consistently rejects, both as physical and metaphysical theories. This, of course, is the ultimate direction of Aristotle's search for principles in books seven and eight of the *Metaphysics.* After abandoning matter as the primary substance, Aristotle continues his search for substance and principles, by examining form and the " parts" of form which are contained in the definition. The material principles, Aristotle argues, are that into which the concrete thing is " analyzed " or " resolved," but only the parts of the form are included in the definition (1034b20-1035b2). Further, returning in book eight to the issue of parts and definition, Aristotle argues that these principles, form and matter, are not really "parts" because they form a real unity in the concrete thing, not the unity of a mere heap (1045a5-1045b7). Calcidius, however, extracts the notion of analysis or resolution into material parts and elements from Aristotle and pairs it with composition, a process which " reconstructs " the complex out of its parts.

[aa] Aquinas makes an even stronger argument for the same conclusion on the basis of our inability to understand matter by trying to arrive at it in this fashion. See *De Substantiis Separatis,* c. 6.

[84] See for example, *Meteorology,* 339a36-b2; *On the Cosmos,* 394b17-18; *On the Generation of Animals,* 724b27-28 and 726b25-29. I am indebted to Patrick Byrne for these passages. See his *Analysis and Science in Aristotle,* ch. 1.

The blurring of the distinction between Aristotle's more complex use of analysis and Calcidius's literal interpretation of it is evident in some of Aquinas's uses of analysis in this sense. On the one hand, the descriptions of *resolutio* in Aquinas which most closely resemble those of Calcidius occur in his commentaries on Aristotle and Aquinas attributes this notion of resolution/analysis to Aristotle. On the other hand, the passages Aquinas explains and refers to in Aristotle do not exactly articulate this sense of analysis. Both these elements are present in a passage commenting on Aristotle's *Metaphysics.* Noting the difficulty of knowing whole and part simultaneously, Aquinas describes two ways of arriving at truth, the first of which is resolution " by which we go from what is comr,lex to what is simple or from a whole to a part, as it is said in Book I of the *Physics* that the first objects of our knowledge are confused wholes." [35] Aquinas then describes a second, complementary path of composition, by which we move from simple parts to complex wholes. First, Aquinas is describing the breakdown of a whole into its actual parts, while Aristotle in the opening of the *Physics* explains that moving from " confused wholes " is like the process of specifying and clarifying our perceptions (184a25). For example, Aristotle explains, children first call all men " father " or all women " mother " and later they learn to distinguish individuals (184b13-16). This process seems to be different from Calcidius's notion of analysis as the stripping away of forms to arrive at matter. First, Aristotle does not call this process "analysis," and he clearly has in mind the movement from *general* to *particular,* not literally that from *whole* to *part* or from form to elements and matter. Secondly, Aquinas adds what we do not find anywhere in Aristotle, the notion of a complementary process of recomposition, which seems to be Calcidius's contribution.

[35] "Est autem duplex via procedendi ad cognitionem veritatis. Una quidem per modum resolutionis, secundum quam procedimus a compositis ad simplicia, et a toto ad partem, sicut dicitur in primo *Physicorum,* quod confusa sunt prius nobis nota." *In Meta,* II, lee. 1. Cf. Aristotle's *Physics,* I, 1, 184a22-b10.

Perhaps the most striking passage in which Aquinas takes his source to be Aristotle but in which he articulates a Calcidian sense of analysis is in the opening *lectio* on the *Politics.* Here Aquinas elaborates Aristotle's claim that governments really differ in kind:

> Just as in other things in order to know the whole, it is necessary to divide the composite until one arrives at incomposite things, i.e., until one arrives at indivisibles which are the smallest parts of the whole: for example, in order to know sentences, it is necessary to divide until [one arrives] at letters, and to know natural, mixed bodies, it is necessary to divide them until [one arrives] at the elements.[36]

So also, then, Aquinas continues, in political science one must divide the state into the basic units of which it is composed, an analysis which will reveal the differences between one constitution and another. This process of dividing a composite until one reaches its indivisible elements Aquinas calls *resolutio* and the *"first* work" necessary for knowledge of composite things; it is followed by the *via compositionis,* in which "from indivisible principles already known we judge of those things which are caused by the principles."[37] Thus "composition" follows resolution in this sense, which in light of the simple components/principles we now understand the complex *as* complex. This analogy between analysis and the breakdown of sentences into words and letters is not used by Aristotle, but is by his commentators, Alexander and Ammonius, and, again, it makes of analysis a

[36] " Quad sicut in aliis rebus ad cognitionem totius necesse est dividere compositum usque ad incomposita, id est usque ad indivisibilia quae sunt minime partes totius : puta ad cognoscendum orationem, necesse est dividere usque ad litteras, et ad cognoscendum corpus naturale mixtum, necesse est dividere usque ad elementa." *In Pol* I, lee. 1. Cf. Alexander of Aphrodisias's example of the analysis of a *logos* into syllables and letters (Alexander, *In Anal Pr,* p. 7; 11. 20-22) and Ammonius's example of analysis of a body into its elements (Ammonius, *In Anal Pr,* p. 5; 11. 14-19).

[37] My emphasis. " Ad cognitionem compositorum *Primo* opus est via *resolutionis,* ut scilicet dividamus compositum usque ad individua; *postmodum* vero necessaria est via *compositionis,* ut ex principiis indivisibilibus iam notis diiudicemus de rebus quae ex principiis causantur." *In Pol* I, lee. 1.

*literal* division or decomposition, a notion of analysis which has no clear and unambiguous parallels in Aristotle. Further, the coupling of resolution with recomposition is never found in Aristotle, but only in Calcidius and in some of the Greek commentators on Aristotle; hence, there must be a source additional to Aristotle himself.

Though the issue of whether Aristotle or Calcidius is the true " parent" of this notion of analysis in Aquinas is complicated, I would like to put forward the following compromise answer. The formulae Aquinas uses to describe this sort of resolution (the examples, and coupling resolution with composition) are clearly indebted not directly to Aristotle but to Calcidius (or to someone who read him, or someone whom Calcidius read), but the way in which Aquinas understands these formulae owes more to Aristotle. This follows, I think, from the passage in Aristotle with which Aquinas associates this type of analysis, the opening of the *Physics.* The opening chapter of the *Physics* introduces Aristotle's search for the "elements and principles" which will explain nature and, more specifically, change (184a22-184bl4). Nature and change are the "confused wholes" which Aristotle will bring into focus by specifying their elements/principles, which turn out to be matter, form, and privation. Aristotle is engaged in intellectual analysis to arrive at principles which are not physical parts into which a thing can be actually divided, but which are nonetheless constitutive of a thing's nature; this process does not, as it does for Calcidius, follow the steps of physical dissolution.

Aquinas's analogies for this process are physical dissolution or literal division, but his meaning seems to be broader, and to apply to Aristotle's search for principles, in which one is involved in conceptual analysis rather than a literal reduction to elements or components. That Aquinas grasps this broader notion of this type of resolution is clear from his use of resolution at times as the equivalent of abstraction. In the *Summa Theologiae,* Aquinas describes the process of abstraction, whereby the intellect can ascend to a higher level of understanding than the senses which

cannot sense anything but the individual, concrete object, as involving the *resolution* of the concrete thing into form and matter : " For while [the intellect] knows the thing as having a form in matter, it nonetheless resolves the composite into these [form and matter], and considers this form in itself." [38] Further equating abstraction as the grasp of the *form* with resolution, Aquinas continues, our intellects " apprehend the concrete form and concrete *esse* by abstraction, by a kind of *resolution."* [39] Thus Aquinas holds the view that the reasoning process is the same in structure, whether the components one reaches by this type of analysis are or can be actually distinct (like material parts or elements) or are real but not independent (like matter and form; species and difference). [40]

Whether this breakdown of a complex is literal or conceptual, this sense of *resolutio* shares two elements with the Calcidian/ Aristotelian account-one metaphysical, one epistemological- which, we will see below, are not present in other accounts of resolution in Aquinas. First, the examples used to illustrate the method of resolution Aristotle will follow-the breakdown of a sentence into letters and a body into elements-manifest the process as a *division* of a whole into its constitutive parts. Thus, metaphysically one is moving " down " the ontological ladder to-

[38] *ST* I, q. 12, a. 4, ad *3.* Cf. *Comp Theol,* c. 62. "Una quidem secundum abstractionem formae a materia, in qua quidem proceditur ab eo quod formalius est ad id quod est materialius: nam id quod est primum subiectum ultimo remanet, ultima vero forma primo removetur." Aquinas continues with a second sense of resolution, which he describes as " the abstraction of universal from particular, which is in a way the opposite in order from the first, for first the material, individuating conditions are removed, so that one arrives at that which is common [Alia vero resolutio est secundum abstractionem universalis a particulari, que quodam modo contrario ordine se habet: nam prius removetur conditiones materiales individuantes, ut accipiatur quod commune est]." See also Dolan's discussion of these passages, pp. 21-31. Cf. *SCG* II, c. 100 n. 4.

[39] *ST* I, q. 12, a. 4, ad *3.*

As we will see below, Aquinas distinguishes between resolution *secundum rem* and *secundum rationem* within which what I will call the second sense of resolution, the Neoplatonic sense. See *Exp de Trin,* q. 6, a. 1. What I am essentially arguing for here is that he implicitly makes the same distinction for this sense of resolution as well.

ward the parts of a complex whole, whether those " parts " are literal parts, like letters in relation to words, or conceptual parts, like form and matter. And for Aquinas, even when resolution *qua* abstraction arrives at form rather than matter or material parts or elements, it is still a breakdown of what is " higher" ontologically into what is lower because all created forms are composed with matter and/or *esse* and are the incomplete " parts " of a more complete, subsistent whole.[41] At the farthest remove from *literal* division, this sense stretches to include the movement from general to specific, i.e., the process described at the opening of the *Physics* as focussing on and specifying "confused wholes," which is still a kind of movement down the conceptual ladder. Secondly, *resolutio* is clearly viewed as a *preliminary* movement of reason, a first sorting out of a complex and indistinctly known whole. As such it is not an end in itself but a preparation for the rebuilding, the *compositio,* of the whole out of its parts.

## II. Neoplatonism and *Resolutio* as Reversion : *Resolutio* Opposed to Division

When we move to another set of passages describing the movements of reason as resolution and composition, we notice that this second sense is the *opposite* of the first in terms of its implications for metaphysics *and* knowledge. Unlike the first sense, in the order of knowing this resolution *follows* its complement, *compositio,* and its movement in metaphysical terms is not *downJ* the ladder of being toward simple components, material or formal, but rather *upward* toward higher, more complete, and more general causes and principles.

The peculiarities of this sense of *resolutio* are peculiarities which, I think, flow from its connection with a Neoplatonic metaphysics and epistemology. In Proclus and Scotus Erigena *resolutio* takes its place along with the other methods or movements of reason as imitating the movement of being to and from the

[41] On the fundamental incompleteness of all simple " parts " of created beings see I *Sent* d. 8, q. 5, a. 1 and *SCG* I, c. 17.

One. In the *Platonic Theology* Proclus introduces the dialectical method of *resolution* (*analusis)* as follows : " Our dialectic makes great use of division and *analysis* as the principal means of knowledge and as *imitating* the *procession* of beings from the One and their *reversion* back again . . . . " [42] What is here formalized by Proclus and, as we will see below, Erigena, seems to draw on Plotinus's less technical description of dialectic as first dividing to reach the forms, then "weaving together" the intelligible universe from these primary genera, and finally *resolving* or *analysing* back to the starting point. [43]

Scotus Erigena gives a more complete description of the task of *resolutio* as the return and collection of what has been divided:

> There is no rational division, whether it be of essence into genera or of genus into species and individuals or of the whole into its parts . . . or of the universe into those divisions which right reason contemplates therein, that cannot again be brought back again by the same stages through which the division had previously ramified into multiplicity, until it arrive at that One which remains inseparably itself from which that division took its origin. [44]

[42] My emphasis. "he de par' hemin dialektike ta men polla *diairesesi* chretai kai *analusesin* os protourgois epistemais kai *mimoumenais* ten ton onton *proodon* ek tou henos kai pros auto palin epistrophen." Proclus, *Theologie Platonicienne,* ed. H. D. Saffrey and L. G. Westerink (Paris: Societe d'Edition, 1968), vol. I, Bk. I, 9, p. 40. On the relationship between division and procession see A. C. Lloyd, " Procession and Division in Proclus," *Soul and the Structure of Being in Late Neo-Platonism: Syrianus, Proclus and Simpliciits,* ed. H. J. Blumenthal and A. C. Lloyd (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1982), pp. 18-45.

[43] "Tei diairesei tei Platonos chromene men kai eis *diakrisin ton eidon,* chromene de kai eis to ti esti, chromene de kai epi ta prota yene, kai ta ek touton noeros plekousa, heos an dielthei pan to noeton, kai *anapalin analuousa,* eis ho an ep' archen elthei . . . . " Plotinus, *Enneads,* I, 3, 4; ed. Loeb, vol. I, p. 158, ll. 12-17.

[44] " Nulla enim rationabilis divisio est sive essentiae in genera sive generis in formas et numeros sive totius in partes . . . sive universitatis in ea quae vera ratio in ipsa contemplatur quae non iterum possit redigi per eosdem gradus per quos divisio prius fuerat multiplicata donec perveniatus ad illud unum inseparabiliter in se ipso manens ex quo ipsa divisio primordium sumpsit." Iohannis Scotti Eriugenae, *Periphyseon,* ed. and trans. I. A. Sheldon-Williams, 4 vols. (Dublin: The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1968), II, 526a-b. Cf. Erigena's *Expositiones super hierarchiam caelestem* S. *Dionysii,* in *Patri-*

Since *resolutio* parallels the return of diverse and complex things into their higher and simpler causes and ultimately into the One, its movement is from what is more particular, specific, and complex, to the universal, generic, and simple. It is in one sense like the first type of resolution in that it moves from complex to simple; however, the metaphysical character of that simplicity is different in each case; one is the simplicity of parts, the other the simplicity of seamless unities. What is at work here is really a difference over the nature of metaphysical principles. For the Neoplatonists, A. C. Lloyd explains, "[a principle] must not be deficient in any respect ... consequently it must not be *in a subject* . .., nor (rather surprisingly) [can it] be an *element* or *composed of elements,* since elements require each other as well as the

*logia Latina,* vol. 122, VII, col. 184C12-185A3: "Duae quippe partes sunt dialecticae disciplinae, quarum una *diairetike,* altera *analutike* nuncupatur. Et *diairetike* quidem division is vim possidet; dividit namque maximorum generum unitatem a summo usque deorsum, donec ad individuas species perveniat, inque eis divisiones terminum ponat; *analutike* vero ex adverso sibi positae partis divisiones ab individuis sursum versus incipiens, perque eosdem gradus quibus illa descendit, ascendens cumvolvit et colligit, eosdemque in unitatem maximorum generum reducit, ideoque reductive dicitur et reditiva." For further discussion of the dialectical methods in Erigena, one of which is *resolutio,* see Giulio d'Onofrio, " ' Disputandi Disciplina ': Procedes dialectiques et ' logica vetus ' dans le langage philosophique de Jean Scot," *Jean Scot: Ecrivain,* ed. G.-H. Allard (Montreal: Editions Bellarmin, 1986), pp. 229-263, and Jean Trouillard, "La Notion d'analyse chez Erigene," *Jean Scot Erigene et l'histoire de la philosophie* (Paris : R. Roques, 1977), pp. 349-356. It is worth noting, as a measure of just how intertwined these various traditions become, that Erigena himself does not always keep them straight. In Erigena's *Versio Maximii* Sheldon-Williams relates that *resolutio* is connected to procession, a kind of Neo-Platonic *division,* as the overflowing from the One which is also its fragmentation, rather than with reversion, as it is in the *Periphyseon* and Dionysius commentary; Erigena writes, "divina in omnia processio *analutike,* dicitu, hoc est resolutio; reversio vero *theosis,* hoc est deificatio." (PL 122, 1195C6-1196A2). See Sheldon-Williams's translation of the *Periphyseon,* vol. II, nn. 11, 15, pp. 214-215. Though Sheldon-Williams refers only to "different derivations " of *analusis* without explanation, Erigena seems to be aware at least of the geometrical sense of analysis, for he distinguishes between *analusis* and *analutike,* the former "used in connection with the solution of set problems," the latter "used in connection with the return of the division of the forms to the origin of that division." Erigena, *Periphyseon,* trans. Sheldon-Williams, II, 526B6-8.

whole; finally it must *revert to itself* and consequently be *separable."* [45] Since resolution moves to principles which are *not* elements but which are simple, for Proclus the direction of this movement, like that of reversion, is *upward* toward higher and simpler causes, unlike Aristotelian/Calcidian *resolutio,* which moves *down* the ontological ladder from the complex to its components because it envisions those elements as principles.

Further, because in Neoplatonism being and intelligibility originate from and reside in the simpler causes and principles, for Proclus and Erigena the overall pattern of reason must follow the same path, originating from and returning to an understanding of those simpler causes.[46] Hence, as Erigena's description of *resolutio* as "returning again" to the One makes clear, within such a context not only does *resolutio* mirror the return to the One, it also must *follow* its complement, just as reversion follows procession. Again in contrast to Calcidian resolution, here the order of being and knowing are the same; while in Calcidian resolution simples are at some level discovered in their complexes, in Neoplatonic resolution the simpler, higher causes can only be returned to with greater knowledge, and never discovered absolutely from that which derives from and returns to them. The overall picture of the movement of reason in Calcidius is from complexes, something "first" only *quoad nos,* to that which is first *per se,* i.e., simples, and back again to complexes; in the Neoplatonics it is from what is first both *quoad nos* and *per se* to lower, complex objects, returning to simpler and higher causes.

[45] My emphasis. A. C. Lloyd, "The Later Neoplatonists," in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 308. Lloyd is here describing what he calls " the formal requirements " of principles put together by Damascius in *Dubitationes et solutiones de primis principiis,* ed. C. A. Ruelle, 2 vols. (Paris, 1889), I, pp. 19-21, 23. What surprises me is that Lloyd is "surprised" at the Neoplatonic rejection of elemental principles.

[46] Cf. Aquinas's agreement as he comments on Pseudo-Dionysius: "Inquisitio enim rationis ad simplicem intelligentiam veritatis terminatur, sicut incipit a simplici intelligentia veritatis, quae consideratur in primis principiis." *In Div Nom,* c. *7,* lec. 2.

In his commentary on Euclid's *Elements* Proclus applies this emanative schema to the " unfolding " of the mathematical sciences from *nous.* The " elements " of geometry are, for Proclus, "those theorems whose understanding *leads* to the knowledge of the rest and by which difficulties in them are *resolved."* [41] The task of Euclid's text, then, Proclus continues, is "to select and arrange properly the elements out of which all other matters are produced and into which they can be resolved." [48] Here Proclus seems to be thinking of the " elements " not as the parts out of which more complex figures are composed but as the simpler sources from which the complex figures "proceed." For Proclus, the line is simpler than the plane; the genus, simpler than the species; common notions and general principles simpler than more determinate notions and propositions. [49] These simples are also-and this is the unusual part-in some sense "causes" of their more complex counterparts. All the movements return ultimately to the One, which is both the simplest and highest cause. For Proclus the movement of reason mirrors the order of being, i.e., its conclusions flow from and return to a single most simple principle, the One. This structure organizes Proclus's *Elements of*

[41] My emphasis. " Stoicheia men oun eponomazontai, hon he theoria dukneitai pros ten ton allon epistemen, kai aph' hon paraginetai hemin ton en autois aporon he dialusis." *Commentary on the First Book of Euclid's Elements,* trans. Glenn R. Morrow (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), Prologue, Part II, p. 59. Greek text: *Procli Diadochi in primum Euclidis Elementorum librum commentarii ex recognitione Godofredi Friedlein* (Leipzig, 1873), p. 72. Though Proclus's term here is not *analusis* but the related *dialusis,* Proclus uses analysis in exactly the same sense; see the passage quoted below, n. 48.

[48] " kai to eklexasthai kai taxai kata tropon ta stoicheia kath' hekasten epistemen, aph' hon ta alla proagetai panta kai eis ha ta alla analuetai." Proclus, *On Euclid;* Murrow, p. 60; ed. Friedlein, p. 73.

[49] On the relationship of genus to species, see Proclus, *Procli Commentarium in Platonis Parmenidem,* ed. Victor Cousin [Hildesheim: Georg Olms, col. 981; English version, Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides,* trans. Glenn R. Murrow and John M. Dillon (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 335]. On the relationship of general notions and principles to more determinate ones, see Proclus, *Plat Theo,* I, 10, ed. cit., n. 42.

*Theology* and the *Liber de Causis* based on it.[50] It would have made its way to Aquinas not only through the *Elements of Theology* and the *Liber de Causis* but indirectly through Pseudo-Dionysius and Erigena's commentaries on Dionysius, which accompanied the Dionysian corpus in the 12th and 13th centuries, and through Albert's lectures on Dionysius which Aquinas is known to have heard.[51]

The Latin term *resolutio* occurs in a number of Albert's works, but it occurs most frequently in his Dionysian commentaries, especially on the *Divine Names.* What is most interesting about these passages is that Albert seems to confront directly (though not quite solve) the conflict between what I have here called the Calcidian and Neoplatonic senses of analysis and between the two notions of simplicity and the principles they imply. Albert raises a series of objections to the "resolution" in the Dionysian text, which arrives not at a single, first principle but rather seems to re-

[50] For a description of this model of science and its influence on medieval thinkers, see Charles H. Lohr, "The Pseudo-Aristotelian *Liber de Causis* and Latin Theories of Science in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," in *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages: The Theology and Other Texts,* ed. Jill Kraye, W. F. Ryan and C. B. Schmitt (London: Warburg Institute, 1986), pp. 53-62. Cf. A. C. Lloyd, "The Later Neoplatonists," in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 306. W. J. Hankey's "Theology as System and as Science: Proclus and Thomas Aquinas," *Dionysius* 6 (1982), pp. 83-93 argues for many connections between Aquinas's and Proclus's theology, but attributes the structure of emanation and return present in Aquinas's *Summa* as a whole only indirectly to Proclus and more directly to Dionysius, Boethius, and Erigena (pp. 86-88).

[51] See H. F. Dondaine, *Le Corpus dionysien de l'Universite de Paris au xiii*[0] *siecle* (Rome, 1953). Dondaine also gives the locations of the six percent of the *Periphyseon* which glossed Erigena's Latin translation of the Dionysian texts. Though the passage from the *Periphyseon* describing analysis quoted above is not among them, Erigena's translations, commentaries, and the 12th century figures influenced by the then banned *Periphyseon* are, I think, sufficient to guarantee Aquinas's familiarity with Erigena. On Erigena's influence, see I. A. Sheldon-Williams's discussion of Erigena in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy,* ed. A. H. Armstrong (London: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 532-533. According to William of Tocco's *Vita s. Thomas,* Thomas read Dionysius's *Divine Names* and Aristotle's *Ethics* with Albert at Cologne. See below, n. 80.

solve to two separate principles.[52] All resolution, the objections argue, " must be to one, as all multiplicity comes forth from one."[53] One objection considers the possibility of resolution to two rather than a single principle: " one can resolve to many principles, for example to *matter and form and other causes";* however, Albert counters this possible solution by arguing that Dionysius assumes a single process of resolution which retraces the steps of a single *e:ritus,* a view inconsistent with resolution to multiple principles.[54]

Later in the commentary, Albert articulates a whole series of objections drawn from Aristotle's *Metaphysics,* introducing the view that the single first principle to which we must resolve is matter; Albert's response distinguishes between different kinds of first principles, one passive (matter) and another active.[55] The implication, though not explicitly drawn, is that there must be two resolutions as well to these different kinds of principles. This implication becomes explicit later in the text, which distinguishes between " the resolution of composite things in the simple parts of which they are composed" and "resolution into the more universal."[56]

52 Alberti Magni, *Super Dionysium de Divinibus Nominibus, Opera Omnia,* vol. 37, pt. 1. (Ashendorff, 1972), c. 4, p. 230, ll. 21-71.

53 Ibid., ll. 33-34.

54 Ibid., ll. 36-40: " Si dicatur, quod aliquid potest resolvi in plura principia *sicut materiam et formam* et alias causas, contra: non est unius modi resolutio in diversas causas, sicut nee unus exitus ab eis; sed ipse intendit unius modi resolutionem; ergo non debuit reducere in duo." Albert does not respond directly to this objection and so never confronts the real opposition between the different kinds of resolution his objections describe; instead he refers the reader to another response as sufficient: " quod resolutio non est nisi in unum sicut in ultimum, potest tamen esse in plura citra ultimum, ita tamen quod etiam ilia non sint unius ordinis, sed unum ordinetur ad alterum, et sic est in proposito" (Albert, *De Div Nom,* p. 231, ll. 28-33).

55 Albert, *De Div Nom.,* p. 235, ll. 13-60.

56 Ibid., c. 5, p. 314, ll. 65-77. "quod esse non sumitur hie pro actu essentiae in supposito, sed pro ipso ente, in quo stat resolutio intellectus. Quamvis enim resolutio compositi in simplex stet in partes componentes, tamen resolutio in magis universale stat in eo quod praedicatur. Illud autem quod praedicatur, est forma totius hoc modo significata; forma enim partis non praedicatur, ut anima, sed tantum forma totius, ut animal, quod est potentia totius. Omnis

Though there are a number of other relevant passages in Albert, certain things important for understanding Aquinas's use of resolution emerge from those discussed here which are confirmed by those other uses. First, these passages from Albert's *Divine Names* and other Dionysian commentaries confirm the Neoplatonic origin and context for Aquinas's similar uses; the description in the *Divine Names* repeated elsewhere is of resolution as retracing the emanation of all things from the One.[51] Secondly, Albert seems aware of a competing notion of resolution, i.e., resolution to matter or to matter and form, which he sets up in explicit opposition to the N·eoplatonic resolution to the first cause. Thirdly, even when Albert is commenting on Aristotle, his account of resolution, when explaining the title of Aristotle's *Analytics,* for example, is tinged with this Neoplatonic understanding.[58]

Lastly, Albert also raises what becomes an important issue for the assimilation of Neoplatonic resolution into Thomas's metaphysics. The resolution Albert finds reflected in the Dionysian texts is the resolution to a single formal principle, to the *forma*

autem forma significata ut in abstracto significatur per modum formae partis, quia animalitas secundum rationem est partis habentis animalitatem. Animal autem <licit utrumque, et ideo resolutio non stat in essentia, sed in ente, et propter hoc ens est primum."

[57] Cf. Albert, *De Div Nom,* p. 179, *Super Dionysii Mysticam Theologiam, Opera Omnia,* ed. cit., vol. *37,* pt. 2, p. *467; De Caelesti Hierarchia, Opera Omnia,* ed. Vives, v. 14, pp. 192-193.

[5]s See, for example, *Liber de Praedicabilibus,* tr. 1, ed. Vives, v. 1, pp. 4-5, and *Commentary on the Prior Analytics,* tr. l, c. 1, ed. Vives, v. 1, pp. 159-160. In the latter, Albert describes the two parts of logic, discovery and judgment, and as Boethius did before him and Aquinas after, associates both the *Analytics* and analysis/resolution with judgment (on Boethius and the association of resolution with the judgmental part of logic, see below, n. 63). He distinguishes between two kinds of analysis/resolution corresponding to the *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics;* the first, found in the *Prior Analytics,* is the resolution of arguments into their principal syllogistic forms; the second is the resolution of the things concluded into their principles and causes. All resolution, Albert writes in this context, " is toward that which is prior by nature, since there is no resolution except of the posterior into the prior, either of the composite into the simple, or of the material into its formal principles." Cf. Albert, *In De Anima,* ed. Aschendorff, vol. *7,* pt. 1, Bk. I, Tr. 1, c. 2, p. 29.

*uwiversalis,* which is not, for Albert or Thomas, identical to the first cause, God.[aP] In other words, Albert quite correctly finds in Dionysius what seems also to be true for Proclus : that these more universal and general principles-being or *esse* in general, the *forma universalis-to* which one resolves are not merely conceptual but are the causes of the *being* of their effects and of their *being knJown.* J. N. Findlay describes the lack of this distinction in the Neoplatonists as part of " the peculiar logic of Neoplatonism," which is one in which

> substantiality and agency reside in the generic or specific pattern and never in the poor instance, and it is, moreover, a logic in which the hierarchical rise from the more specific to the more generic; though it may lessen determinateness, it also deepens and widens power. The true genus . . . contains all its subordinate species *dunamei* or in power, and holds together in a rich unity what must necessarily fall apart in the species and the instance.[60]

Albert is careful to prevent precisely this identification of the most general conception and the first, efficient cause, between what Albert calls the *forma universalis* and " the first principle of all effects," Le., God. As we will see below, Aquinas also distinguishes between them by distinguishing between the order of *extrinsic* and *intrinsic* causes. Following the order of *intrinsic* causes, reason moves up to greater levels of generality but not to greater and higher levels of efficient causality. However, though the two orders of intrinsic (formal and material) and extrinsic (efficient and final) causality are not identical for Aquinas, the

[aP] Albert, *De Div Nom,* c. 4, p. 179, II. 6-16.

[60] J. N. Findlay, "The Logical Peculiarities of Neoplatonism," in *The Structure of Being: A Neoplatonic Approach,* R. Baine Harris, ed. (Albany: SUNY, 1982), pp. 6-7. A. C. Lloyd argues that for Proclus the distinction between the causes of being and of being known would not arise; it is, according to Lloyd, the materialism of the Stoics which raises the question about the ontological status of non-empirical principles, placing them in the realm of the conceptual *rather than* the real, a move which Proclus realizes is " contrary to the spirit of Platonism," when he (Proclus) writes that "the principles are principles *per se* and not through our concepts." Lloyd, " Later Neoplatonists," p. 308, quotes Proclus here from the *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides,* VI, 23, ed. Cousin, col. 1054, 11. 27-31.

structure of the path for *reason* as moving " up" to higher levels is the same in both orders.

Despite this important difference to which we will return below, Aquinas, like Albert, in a way clearly indebted to Proclus and Dionysius, describes the *via resolutionis* as the path of all things returning to their first cause, and the path of reasoning which resolves things into their principles. In the *Commentary on the Divine Names,* Aquinas notes that things strive for the good by a process of resolution, in which "from composition things aim toward the simple, which is found in the highest degree in God." [61] Again, as for Proclus, this ontological process is mirrored in human reasoning, which moves from and returns or *resolves* back to its principles what unfolded from them. In the *Summa* Aquinas writes,

Since movement always proceeds from something immovable and ends in something at rest, hence, it is that human reasoning, according to the path of inquiry or discovery, proceeds from certain things simply understood, which are the first principles; and on the other hand, according to the path of judgment returns by *resolutio* to first principles, in which it examines what it has discovered.[62]

Here, as opposed to the Calcidian/ Aristotelian sense of resolution we have seen elsewhere in Aquinas, *compositio* is linked with the path of *discovery* and *resolutio* with that of the *judgment* that follows on and confirms discovery. [63] As Aquinas remarks more

[61] *De Div Nom,* c. I, 1. 2, n. 51. It is noteworthy that Aquinas argues that things tend toward the good "by the way of composition " as well; the " composition " he goes on to describe seems to be the composition which is the counterpart of Calcidian/ Aristotelian analysis; this process " moves from multiplicity to unity, until from many one is made."

[62] " Et quia motus semper ab immobili procedit, et ad aliquid quietum terminatur; inde est quod ratiocinatio humana, secundum viam inquisitionis vel inventionis, procedit a quibusdam simpliciter intellectis, quae sunt prima principia; et rursus in via iudicii, resolvendo redit ad prima principia, ad quae inventa examinat." *ST* I, q. *79,* a. 8.

[63] The association of judgment and discovery, the two parts of logic given by Cicero, with resolution and composition, respectively, seems to originate with Boethius's *In Ciceronis Topica,* Bk. I, PL 64, col. 1074A-B; cf. Regis, p. 308. Boethius associates analysis/resolution and judgment with the subject matter of Aristotle's *Analytics,* which he understands as the relationships be-

than once using resolution in this sense, we have *science,* i.e., certain, necessary knowledge, only when we have resolved to first principles; [64] in the *Summa,* emphasizing the sense in which resolution is the *later* movement of reason, Aquinas writes, "the end of discursion is when the second is seen in the first, by resolving effects into causes; and thus discursion ceases." [65] Further, the confirmatory movement of *resolutio* is understood to terminate not in simple components, such as the four elements and matter, but rather in higher and more universal causes and general principles.

Thus, in contrast to Calcidian resolution, which involves the breakdown of a complex into its parts and thereby displays its connection to physics, this type of resolution is especially associated with the metaphysical search for and examination of the highest causes and principles. Aquinas's most eloquent description of resolution in this sense occurs in the context of explaining the sense in which metaphysics is both the beginning and the end of reason's journey toward *intellectus* and thus is said to proceed *intellectualiter.* Aquinas writes,

> Thus it is clear that rational consideration *ends* in intellectual consideration, following the process of *resolutio,* insofar as reason gathers one simple truth from many things. And conversely, intellectual consideration is the *beginning* of rational thinking, following the process of *compositio* or discovery, in so far as the intellect comprehends a multiplicity in unity.[66]

Here Aquinas depicts the other sciences as originating from the simplicity and unity of metaphysics and metaphysics as gathering

tween propositions and their composition, the analysis of which into propositions and terms allows one to judge arguments. Thus, Boethius seems to explain the title *Analytics* with the Calcidian/ Aristotelian notion of analysis as the breakdown into components. See also below, n. 71.

64 *In III Sent.,* dist. 23, q. 2, a. 2, sol.i & iii; *QDV,* q. 15, a. 1, ad 4.

65 " Terminus vero discursus est, quando secundum videtur in primo, resolutis effectibus in causas: et tune cessat discursus." *ST* I, q. 14, a. 7.

66 My emphasis. " Sic ergo patet quod rationalis consideratio ad intellectualem *terminatur* secundum viam *resolutionis,* in quantum ratio ex multis colligit unam et simplicem veritatem. Et rursum intellectualis consideratio est *principium* rationalis secundum viam *compositionis* vel inventionis, in quantum intellectus in uno multitudinem comprehendit." *Exp de Trin,* q. 6, a. 1, sol. c.

together and unifying their many and diverse conclusions and principles, just as Proclus envisioned the diverse mathematical sciences as emanating from and resolving into a higher and more general science of mathematics. Not only is the movement always "upward," it is always toward principles which are simpler and higher in a peculiarly Neoplatonic sense; the sciences and principles to which one resolves are simpler not because they are parts of some complex whole, as for example meteorology is a part of physics and the elements parts of a body, but rather because they are the higher, more unified, and powerful sources for the diverse and fragmented consequences which flow from them.

As I mentioned above, these higher and more universal principles may, for Aquinas, either be extrinsic causes or intrinsic causes; the movements following these orders end in the separate substances and the properties of being *qua* being, respectively.[67] This distinction is important because it allows Aquinas to relate and distinguish aspects of metaphysics not clearly distinguished in Aristotle, i.e., metaphysics as natural theology and as ontology.[68] It also allows Aquinas to absorb this Neoplatonic notion of reason's movement without taking on a metaphysics which does *not* distinguish between the order of intrinsic and extrinsic causality, in which, in other words, the more common or generic is also the more powerful and real. For Aquinas, God, who is being *per se*, and being-in-general are clearly different and are the termini of resolution *secundum rem* and *secundum rationem*, respectively.[69]

[67] Ibid.

[68] Cf. Aertsen, pp. 415-416 and Wippel (op. cit., above, n. 11).

[69] Cf. the criticisms of Cornelio Fabro, "Platonism, Neo-Platonism and Thomism: Convergencies and Divergencies," *New Scholasticism* 44 (1970), pp. 69-100, and John Wippel, "Thomas Aquinas and Participation," in *Studies in Medieval Philosophy*, John Wippel, ed. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1987), pp. 136-137, of the argument of Klaus Kremer's *Die Neoplato1iische Seinsphilosophie und ihre Wirkung auf Thomas von Aquin* (Leiden, 1966). Kremer claims that Aquinas does identify God and *esse commune*, despite Aquinas's numerous statements to the contrary. See, for example, *SCG* I, c. 26; *QDP*, q. *7*, a. 2, ad 6; *ST* I, q. 3, a. 4, ad 1.

As with the Calcidian sense of analysis, here, it seems, we have a "conceptual" version of the literal sense of this analysis. Just as analysis considered as the literal division into physical parts was transformed by Aquinas, following Aristotle, into an analogous process of analysis into conceptual and formal parts (a process not unlike abstraction), here analysis as following the return of all things to the one is given a less literal, more conceptual counterpart in the resolution to highest principles. One form this type of analysis takes, according to Aquinas, is the analysis or reduction of syllogisms to the first figure, which grounds their validity. In his *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics* Aquinas gives this description of analysis, and then adds, "and since certain judgment concerning effects cannot be achieved unless they are resolved into first principles, this part [of Aristotle's logical writings] is called *Analytics,* i.e., resolutive." [70] This is an explanation for the title of Aristotle's two *Analytics* found in some Greek commentators as well as Albert, that the " analysis " of syllogisms consists in " reducing " them to the first figure in virtue of which they are judged to be valid or invalid. [71] Aristotle himself seems to use analysis in this sense, and to equate it with *anagein* which means to " lead up " or " elevate," a Greek verb that seems to capture the sense of analysis as movement "upward" to higher causes and principles. [72] Further, this logical sense belongs with the Neoplatonic sense, I think, because both are movements of confirmation or judgment rather than discovery-which is what the Calcidian sense of analysis is. The " reduction" of syllogisms to the first figure is just one kind of "judgment"; when the subject is arguments, one "resolves"

[10] *In Anal Post* I, lec. 1.

*n* On Albert, see above n. 58. On Boethius's explanation, see above n. 63. Cf. Alexander, *In Anal Pr,* p. 7, 11. 25-34, who gives the same explanation and Oeing-Hanhoff (" Analyse/Synthese," p. 233) who attributes this view to Aristotle even though not explicitly found in Aristotle. Aertsen makes of what I have described here as a logical application of Neoplatonic analysis a separate sense of analysis, "judicative analysis" (Aertsen, pp. 407-409).

[72] See *Prior Analytics* 46b40-47a21 and 50al6-32. I am indebted to Patrick Byrne for supplying these references, and the connection between *analuein* and *anagein.*

to the first principles of argumentation (the first figure), but when the subject is physics or metaphysics, one "resolves" to the first principles of those disciplines.

Hence, resolution *secundum rationem* does not, as Aertsen claims, move in a different *direction* from resolution *secundum rem* and in effect make the former equivalent to Calcidian resolution.[73] Even if there are ways of construing both types of resolution to terminate in the same things, i.e., being, matter, form, act, and potency, one would still be arriving at those notions by a different kind of reasoning, i.e., by breaking "down" vs. generalizing "up," and would be thinking about them as related differently to that of which they are principles, as wholes to parts vs. particular to general. Whether following the chain of intrinsic or extrinsic causes, reason is still moving toward what is higher, simpler, and more universal, not downward to parts of some whole. That is, we can resolve to the principle of non-contradiction for propositions, the first figure of the syllogism for arguments, and being and the properties of being, and God and the separate substances within metaphysics. For Aquinas, in all these orders, having *scientia* of something consists not merely in knowing it but rather in knowing it in or *resolving* it into its higher and simpler principles and causes; when we resolve into higher causes and principles not merely relatively but *per se*, i.e, to God, we have not mere *scientia* but rather wisdom.[74]

## III. Greek Geometry and *Resolutio* as Opposed to Demonstration

Like the first two senses of resolution, this third sense, described as the method of taking counsel by Aristotle in the *Ethics*,

[73] Aertsen, p. 414. Aertsen is arguing against Oeing-Hanhoff when he writes that the distinction between resolution *secundum rem* and *secundum rationem* "is not the distinction between analysis of concepts and natural analysis; it concerns rather the different direction of the discursive movement." I agree with Aertsen that there are two types of analysis/resolution in Aquinas which move in opposite directions but disagree that the distinction in the Boethius commentary between resolution *secundum rem* and *secundum rationem* corresponds to this distinction.

[74] *QDV*, q. 22, a. 2. Cf. *ST* I-II, q. 57, a. 2; *ST* II-II, q. 9, a. 2; *QDV*, q. 12, a. 1.

is one of a *pair* of movements. Like resolution as the division of a whole, it is *followed by* its complement, also called *compositio* (synthesis) ; like resolution as reversion or return to the One, this type of resolution involves returning to the end or goal of action. One taking counsel " resolves," according to Aristotle, by assuming the end to be achieved and reasoning back from this end, considering the various means until one arrives at an action that can be undertaken immediately toward that end *(EN* III, 1112bl6-20). This process, Aristotle continues, is analogous to the analysis or resolution of a geometrical construction *(EN* l 112b20-25) .[75] The reference to geometrical constructions links the description of counsel in the *Ethics* to the geometrical method known as analysis. The *locus classicus* for the description of this method is the Greek geometer, Pappus of Alexandria, who, though he lived well after Aristotle, gives the earliest full description we have.[76] According to Pappus,

> [A]nalysis is the way from what is sought-as if it were admitted-through its concomitants *[to akolouthon]* in order to attain something admitted in synthesis. For in analysis we suppose that which is sought to be already done, and we inquire from what it results, and again what is the antecedent of the latter, until we on our backward way light upon something already known and being first in order.[77]

[75] "ho gar bouleuomenos eoike zetein kai analuein ton eiremenon tropon hosper diagramma . . . kai to eschaton en tei analusei proton einaien tei genesei."

[76] Oeing-Hanhoff dates Pappus in the 3rd century A.D. (p. 234). Cf. Hintikka and Remes, *Method of Analysis,* p. *7.*

[77] "Analusis toinun estin hodos apo tou zetoumenou hos homologoumenou dia ton hexes akolouthon epi ti homologoumenon sunthesei. En men gar tei analusei to zetoumenon hos gegonos hupothermenoi to ex hou touto sumbainei skopoumetha kai palin ekeinou to proegoumenon, heos an houtos anapodizontes katantesomen eis to ton ede ynopizomenon he taxin arches echonton." *Pappi Alexandrini Collectionis Quae Supersunt,* ed. Hultsch (Berlin, 1876-1877), vol. II, pp. 634-635; trans. Hintikka and Remes, in *Method of Analysis,* p. 8. I have used Hintikka and Remes's translation because of their rendering of *akolouthon* as the vaguer "concomitants" as opposed to the usual translation of it as " consequences." This is crucial for whether we understand analysis to consist in strictly deductive steps or not; see below for my discussion of this issue.

In other words, working from the conclusion to be proved rather than the premises and axioms which will form its proof, one assumes the conclusion proved and asks what else we would know if it were proved (i.e., what would follow from the conclusion and what steps would have led to it) until one reaches something which does not depend on the assumption of the conclusion but is known independently to be true, e.g., an already proved theorem. The point of the process is not to discover the premises and axioms but to discover the *path* from those premises to the conclusions. This discovery of the path the proof should take is then followed by the proof itself, which Pappus calls synthesis, the Greek equivalent of *compositio.* It works in the opposite direction from the analysis, forward from the premises and axioms, like a traditional proof or Aristotelian demonstration, which is why Triverius opposes analysis in this sense not to synthesis or composition but to demonstration ; demonstration has the same form as geometrical synthesis.

In his *Commentary on the Ethics,* Aquinas elaborates Aristotle's allusion to geometry as follows:

> He says that the cause that is first in operation is the last in discovery because one who deliberates seems to inquire, it is said, by a kind of *resolutive* method, just as one who wishes to prove a conclusion by a diagram, i.e., a geometrical representation, must resolve the conclusion into principles until reaching the first indemonstrable principles.[78]

Thus, it seems, just as one can solve a geometry problem *not* by working from the premises and axioms toward the conclusion to be proved, but from the conclusion by constructing a diagram of it, so one can decide what to do, *not* by working forward from present circumstances, but by working backwards from the end to be achieved. Though Aquinas drops explicit reference to the

[78] " Et <licit quod ideo causa que est prima in operatione est ultima in inventione, quia ille qui consiliatur videtur inquirere sicut dictum est per modum resolutionis cuiusdam, quemadmodum diagramma, id est descriptio geometrica in qua qui vult probare aliquam conclusionem oportet quod resolvat conclusionem in principia quousque perveniat ad principia prima indemonstrabilia." *In III Ethic,* lee. 8.

geometrical method in the *Summa,* he retains its structure, characterizing counsel in exactly the same way: "Hence the inquiry of counsel must be *resolutive,* namely beginning from that which is intended in the future, until it arrives at that which is to be immediately done." [79]

While the geometrical method later given canonical form by Pappus seems to be the ultimate source for both Aristotle's and Aquinas's descriptions of counsel as resolutive, Aquinas's access to accounts of the geometrical process seems to have been indirect and incomplete. The evidence which would support Aquinas's having had a detailed understanding of this process is ambiguous. On the one hand, there are examples of roughly contemporary texts which reveal a relatively complete understanding of geometrical analysis. Albert the Great's commentary on the *Ethics,* written while Thomas was Albert's student, gives a specific example of geometrical analysis; also, a description very closely paralleling that of Pappus was inserted by an Arab commentator into Galen's *Ars Medica* or *Tegni* in the translation of Gerhard of Cremona. [80] Oeing-Hanhoff cites Galen as contributing heavily

[79] " Et secundum hoc, oportet quod inquisitio consilii sit resolutiva, incipiendo scilicet ab eo quod in futuro intenditur, quousque perveniatur ad id quod statim agendum est." *ST* I-II, q. 14, a. 5.

[80] See Albert, *Super Ethica,* ed. Aschendorff, vol. 14, pt. 1, Bk. III, lee. V, p. 163. Albert writes, " Sicut si volumus ostendere, quod triangulus habet trcs . . ., accipiemus, quod angulus extrinsecus valet duos intrinsecos sibi oppositos, et ad hoc necessario ostendendum sumimus, quod si linea recta cadat super duas aequidistantes, facit angulos coalternos aequales, et ad hoc iterum probandum, sumimus aliud, et sic, quousque veniamus ad primas propositiones. Ita si aliquis vult ditari, invenit, quod potest fieri per negotiationem et noc per navigationem, et ad hoc quaerit navem et ad hoc ligna." The preface to this critical edition (pp. V-VI) gives the argument for the 1250-1252 date, based heavily on William of Tocco's *Vita s. Thomae,* in which William relates that Thomas read Dionysius's *Divine Na.mes* and Aristotle's *Ethics* with Albert at Cologne. See also Gerhard's translation, *Liber Tegni cum Commento Hali,* MS Vat. Pal. Lat. 1102, f. 117; ed. 1487, ff. 151r-152r. 'Hali' is Ali ibn Ridwan or Haly Rodohan, an 11th cenutry Egyptian physician. This passage is given in both English and Latin by A. C. Crombie, *Grosseteste and Experimental Science,* pp. 77-78. The description of resolution (called *solution* here) is as follows: "Una earum est que fit secundum viam conversionis et solutionis, et est ut statuas rem ad quam intendis et cuius inquiris scientiam in mente tua

to the tradition of analysis by applying this method to medicine,[81] and Aquinas seems to know something of the medical, as well as the ethical, application of the mathematical method, though he does not go quite so far as to call the medical version *resolutio.* Aquinas describes the process of producing health as reasoning back from the definition and requirements of health, i.e., the balance of the four humors, to that which is necessary to maintain that balance, i.e., heat, " and so on always proceeding from the posterior to the prior, one understands that which produces heat, and that which produces this, until one is led back to something ultimate which can be done immediately, such as giving a certain potion . . . . " [82] On the other hand, an earlier translation of the same Galenic work by Constantine the African, with a different accompanying commentary, glosses Galen's mention of resolution as dissolution or division, the sense of analysis found

secundum finem complementi eius. Et deinde consideres in propinquiori, et propinquiori ex eo sine quo non stat ilia res ; neque completur usquequo pervenias ad principium complementi eius." Crombie claims that " Gerhard's translation was certainly well known by the end of the thirteenth century and probably by a much earlier date " but gives no specific evidence for the earlier date. This passage continues by associating demonstration *quia* with *resolutio* and demonstration *propter quid* with *compositio,* but though Aquinas certainly knows and uses the distinction between the two types of demonstration, I have found no passages where he makes them equivalent to resolution and composition, though Dolan's account of resolution in Aquinas assumes that Aquinas associates these two pairs (Dolan, "Resolution and Composition," pp. 10-12).

s1 Oeing-Hanhoff, "Analyse/Synthese," p. 238. Cf. Galen, *Opera Omnia,* ed. C. G. Kiihn, I, 305; 5, 224ff.; 10, 39-44. This view of Galen is shared by Crombie (cf. *Grosseteste and Medieval Science,* pp. 27-28; 76-79) and Gilbert *(Renaissance Met hods,* pp. 13-24). Oeing-Hanhoff distinguishes between the " analysis of a goal " and geometrical analysis, though it seems to me that these differ only in subject matter, not in structure; Oeing-Hanhoff also claims, despite the (at worst) mixed evidence, that Aquinas seems not to understand the geometrical sense of analysis (" Analyse/Synthese," p. 238).

82 " Et ideo necesse est, si sanitas debet contingere, quod hoc existat, scilicet regularitas vel aequalitas humorum. Et si regularitas vel debeat esse, oportet quod sit calor, per quern humores reducantur ad aequalitatem; et ita semper procedendo a posteriori ad prius, intelliget illus quod est factivum caloris, et quod est factivum illius, donec reducatur ad aliquod ultimum, quod ipse statim posset facere, sicut hoc quod est dare talem potionem." *In Meta,* VII, lee. 6.

in Calcidius, not Pappus.[83] These two versions of the same text, one with and one without a reference to the geometrical method, and the uneven use of the terms " resolution " and " composition " to describe like processes, might be evidence of a certain uneven and superficial knowledge of it in the 12th arid even 13th centuries, though there are references to geometrical analysis in the Greek commentators.[84]

My own sense is that Aquinas lacked (and was perhaps uninterested in) a technical knowledge of this process which would have given him a sense of how complicated and sophisticated its actual use in geometry could be, but that he had an accurate general grasp of its structure and purpose, enough to allow him to use the notion and fit it into his larger picture of the various forms discursivity could take. Hence, I would like to take a nontechnical look at geometrical analysis in order to ·examine how Aristotle and Aquinas thought it might work analogously in practical reasoning. While there are longstanding and complicated debates about the character of the particular steps *of* geometrical analysis-whether one *deduces* consequences from the conclusion or looks for possible *antecedents* of the conclusion, for example-Pappus's description is clear enough to allow us to see why Aristotle and Aquinas saw the structure of searching for the correct course of action as symmetrical to this search for the right way to the conclusion.[85] As all remember from geometry class, it

[83] Constantine's *Pantegni theorica* gives Galen five methods: "secundum dissolutionem, aut secundum compositionem, aut secundum dissolutionem termini, aut secundum notationem, vel descriptionem, aut secundum divisionem." It goes on to describe "dissolutio" *per se* as the dissolution of a body into its elements, and the dissolution of terms as the breakdown of a definition into genus and specific differences. I wish to thank Mark Jordan for giving me drafts of a critical edition of this text he is working on.

[84] See for example, Alexander, *In Pr Anal,* p. 7, 11. 15-18; Ammonius, *In Pr Anal,* p. 5, II. 26-31.

[85] For the debate on analysis, see F. M. Cornford, op. cit., n. 8, for the view that the steps are the " intuitive" search for antecedents, according to a method connected to Plato's description of the upward movement of dialectic in the *Republic;* see Richard Robinson, "Analysis in Greek Geometry," *Mind,* vol. 45 (1936), pp. 464-473, for the view that the steps are deductions from the

is inefficient, if not impossible, to solve a geometry problem by beginning from what is given, and trying to find one's way to the conclusion to be proved without being directed by and in some sense working back from that which is to be proved. The method known in geometry as analysis is ultimately, I think, the formalization and sophistication of this process in which one examines the conclusion in light of both what might lead to it and follow from it in order to avoid striking out aimlessly from the premises.[86] Similarly in practical reasoning, beginning with the end rather than with its equivalent of the given, present circumstances, excludes from the outset of the inquiry that which will not bring it to the desired conclusion, i.e., possible courses of action which are irrelevant to the end for which action is undertaken. Such a process must involve in practice keeping both extremes (the given and conclusion, present circumstances and the end) in mind and working between them. Even though analysis is described only as working from the *end,* the inquiry must still be constrained at the other end; in geometry, one must also exclude paths to the conclusion which premises and axioms will not allow, and in action we must exclude those acts that would achieve the end but which are neither immediately nor mediately possible to us.

conclusion; this view is repeated by Michael Mahoney, " Another Look at Greek Geometrical Analysis," *Archive for the History of the Exact Sciences,* vol. 5 (1968), pp. 318-348, who also develops the view that analysis is not so much a set *method* as a set of techniques, a " mathematical toolbox," for solving problems. See also Norman Gulley, op. cit., n. 8, who, in a way, splits the difference, arguing that there are *two* kinds of analysis in Pappus, one corresponding more closely to Cornford's view, the other to Robinson's et al. I discuss Hintikka and Remes's view below.

86 I take from Hintikka and Remes the notion that analysis moves to things that " go with" or are concomitant with the conclusion, whether logically consequent, antecedent, or parallel to the conclusion. They remark, quite correctly, in response to the objection (made by Mahoney in " Another Look") that looking for antecedents is " aimless," that " looking for antecedents is not an intrinsically more 'aimless' procedure (nor a less aimless one, for that matter) than casting about for suitable consequences" *(Method of Analysis,* p. 19). My view, perhaps not shared by them, is that it is exactly this possible aimlessness of inquiry that analysis is meant to mitigate (though not eliminate) by giving the inquiry direction from the conclusion.

Especially for thinkers not completely familiar with geometrical uses of analysis, this type of analysis shares certain resonances with the other two meanings, which helps explain why it is so often confounded and conflated with the other two notions outlined here. It is, first, in an extended sense at least, a *division* of a complex whole and thus like Calcidian resolution. We " breakdown " or reduce a complex practical problem (like a complicated geometry problem) into its smaller parts, moving from the complex, "What should I do ?" to more workable chunks, "What do I want to achieve ?," " How can this end be achieved ?," " What are the possibilities at present which will move me in that direction?," and " Which of those paths will bring me most surely and completely to that end ?" These are exactly the steps or parts of taking counsel that both Aristotle and Aquinas describe immediately before calling counsel " resolutive." [87]

However, as is clear from Aquinas's description of taking counsel, the breakdown of a problem is meaningless unless done in light of the end or conclusion and, hence, as Pappus notes, "in order"; secondly, then, because the Neoplatonic notion is grounded in the direction of reasoning to the first principle, the resolution of counsel/ geometry is in an equally important sense aligned with this sense. There are ultimately two " ends " in the resolution of a practical problem : the final end to be achieved, which serves to direct reasoning, and the "end" in the sense of the conclusion of a resolution as it returns to present circumstances from the end to be achieved. Both are analogous to the " end " of Neoplatonic resolution in the first, highest, and simplest cause. Just as a geometrical resolution ends when one reaches the simpler axioms and premises from which one began

[87] *EN* 1112b16-20; *In III Ethic*, lee. 8: "Ostendit de quibus et quomodo sit inquisitio concilii. Circa quod tria ponit. Quorum primum est quod, supposito aliquo fine, prima intentio consiliantium est qualiter, id est quo motu vel actione possit perveniri ad illum finem. . . . Secunda autem intentio est quando ad finem aliquem per plura potest perveniri, ... per quid eorum facilius et melius perveniatur. . .. Tertia autem intentio est, si contingat quod per unum solum instrumentum vel motum, vel per unum optime, perveniatur ad finem, ut procuretur qualiter per hoc ad finem perveniatur."

and from which the more complex conclusion is now understood to follow, so in practical reasoning one's resolution ends where it began, from the present from which, by the discovered series of steps, the end will follow. Moreover, that end of action, notably for Aquinas the same as the goal of Neoplatonic resolution, i.e., the divine, is that in terms of which action is both possible and intelligible; it is the origin to which we are by action and in inquiry returning. Aquinas, indeed, makes the analogy between the "end" of speculative reason in higher principles and the " end " of practical reason in the final goal of action : " In the speculative sciences the judgment of reason is not perfected until conclusions are resolved into first principles; hence, neither in practical matters is [judgment] perfected until a reduction is made to the last end." [88] Like the simpler, higher causes to which Neoplatonic resolution returns, the final end of action contains in a unified way all the steps taken toward it.

As applied to action, even while this sense of resolution has connections to the other two, it is, I think, unique. In Aquinas (if not in others describing this type of resolution), it points not, as the other types do, to different kinds of metaphysical principles, but rather primarily to the *process* of acting and reasoning to reach those ends or principles. [89] To put it another way, while the other senses focus on the first principles which reason discovers (Calcidius) or to which it returns (Proclus), this notion

[88] "In speculativis autem scientiis non perficitur iudicium rationis nisi quando conclusiones resolvuntur in prima principia; unde nee inoperabilibus perficitur nisi quando fiat reductio usque ad ultimum finem." *QDV,* q. 15, a. 3.

[89] This type of analysis/resolution is not metaphysically neutral or ambiguous, for example, in Proclus ; his descriptions of analysis in the context of Euclid is shot through with his own metaphysics, with a Neoplatonic conception of science as mirroring the emanation and return to the One. In the Renaissance, this conception of resolution/analysis is formulated to serve a quite different notion of science. According to J. H. Randall resolution becomes an important " method " in a fledgling experimental science searching for explanations of phenomena in the Renaissance; it is sometimes equated with demonstration *quia* and even with induction. See above, n. 80 and J. H. Randell, Jr., " Scientific Method in the School of Padua," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 1 (1940), pp. 177-206, and Crombie, *Grosseteste and Experimental Science* (cited inn. 4 above).

focuses on the process of *connecting* principles and conclusions. For Aquinas, this is the essence of a *discursive* rather than a wholly intuitive or synthetic reason, i.e., one that *moves* from one thing to another but does not grasp everything at once.[90] We need geometrical analysis and its analogues not only because we do not synthetically grasp principle and conclusion together, but because we cannot even always see the direct and necessary path from one to the other, *from* principles *to* conclusion; instead we sometimes must work backward *from* the conclusions *to* the principle, or back and forth between them.[91] Our actions are, for Aquinas, equally discursive, i.e., our ends are achieved piecemeal rather than instantaneously, and only when directed by that end. Moreover, because both reasoning and action are achieved in stages, the possibility of failing to reach that end is essentially and constantly present; for Aquinas, it is of the nature of our intellect and will that we can grasp premises without reaching the right conclusion, and that we can will ends without willing the means and achieving our end.[92]

## IV. Conclusion

This conclusion about the ultimate incompleteness and intrinsic possibility of failure of human action and reasoning brings us, or rather returns us, to what these three types of resolution share in Aquinas : their expression of human reason as discursive. The metaphor Aquinas uses to illustrate the structure of reason's discursive path, moving from and toward principles, is that of a circle:

[90] For one of several places where Aquinas gives this definition of *reason* as opposed to *intellectus,* see *Exp in Trin,* q. 6, a. 1.

[91] Cf. *ST* I-II, q. 14, a. 5: "Quod quidem si, sicut est prius in cognitione, ita etiam sit prius in esse, non est processus resolutorius, sed magis compositivus, procedere enim a causis in effectus, est processus compositivus, nam causae sunt simpliciores effectibus. Si autem id quod est prius in cognitione, sit posterius in esse, est processus resolutorius; utpote cum de effectibus manifestis iudicamus, resolvendo in causas simplices."

[92] " Unde intellectus aliquando intelligit medium, et ex eo non procedit ad conclusionem. Et similiter voluntas aliquando vult finem, et tamen non procedit ad volendum id quod est ad finem." *ST* I-II, q. 8, a. 3, ad 3.

The circularity [of reason] is observed in this, that reason arrives at conclusions from principles according to the way of discovery, and examines discovered conclusions according to the way of judgment, resolving them back into principles.[93]

Even though in this particular passage Aquinas uses resolution in the Neoplatonic sense, in one way or another all the types of resolution fit into the pattern of reasoning outlined here. Though whether resolution precedes or follows its complement changes, in each case resolution is seen first as a *movement* and second as a movement which is *never complete* in itself; it requires its complement, *compositio,* to form a "circle" of reasoning which begins from and returns to that from which it started with greater understanding. Calcidian resolution, the breakdown of a complex whole, is followed by the recomposition of the complex from its parts. Thus reason is led back to the object from which it began, now understood more completely both as a whole and in its parts. Resolution, as a problem-solving technique derived from Greek geometry, in which one moves from conclusions to premises, is also followed by an opposite movement. Just as the resolution of geometry is followed by the actual proof of the conclusion moving forward from the premises, the resolution of counsel, which works back from the end, is followed by a judgment of those connections and the actual execution of that course of action moving forward from the present. Lastly, in the Neoplatonic sense, resolution is the return to simple and unified principles and causes which is preceded by *compositio,* the movement from principles and causes, less than completely understood, to conclusions and effects. In each case *resolutio* fits into this dialectic or circle of understanding as the movement from those things better known to us to those things better known *per se.*[94] However, *how* it fits in, as the *first* movement of reason in *discovery* or as the *last* movement of reason confirming and *judging,*

93 " Haec autem circulatio attenditur in hoc quod ratio ex principiis secundum viam inveniendi in conclusiones pervenit, et conclusiones inventas in principia resolvendo examinat secundum viam iudicandi." *QDV,* q. 10, a. 8, ad 10.

94 See *ST* I-II, q. 14, a. 5, quoted above, n. 91.

as movement toward parts, causes, or present and immediate circumstances, differs depending upon the needs of the inquiry at hand and the sort of principles it seeks.

In fact, the different sources I have argued for here and the diverse contexts in which Aquinas makes use of these different senses suggest different, though not exclusive, realms of discourse for which the different types of *resolutio* are appropriate. The Aristotelian and Calcidian sources for the divisive/reductive sense align this type of resolution especially with physics and its need to begin from and break down the complex objects and processes with which we are confronted in our experience of the world. Hence Aquinas, explaining resolution in this sense, refers us back to the opening of the *Physics* and Aristotle's reminder that we begin inquiry with confused wholes whose parts we will analyze. Moreover, analysis in this sense is combined with and followed by a compositive movement back toward the complex from which the original resolution began. This accords with Aquinas's frequently stated view that it is the particular character of natural science to return to the sensible object from which it began.[95] The source of the third sense in a set of problem-solving techniques called *analusis* in Greek geometry suggested to Aristotle and Aquinas an analogy with ethical discourse. Ethical reasoning, though perhaps only in a more immediate sense than other types of reasoning, has a special need for direction toward an end, for a technique that allows one to narrow down the possible options so that one can more quickly and efficiently come to a decision, i.e., for a way of thought that will connect present circumstances and final ends. Finally, the sense of the term I have traced to Neoplatonic thinkers, the resolving of effects into higher causes and principles, Aquinas associates with metaphysics' consideration of things in light of their highest causes and most universal principles. Hence, though these notions of

[95] See, for example, *Exp de Trin,* q. 6, a. 2 and *ST* I, q. 85, a. 8. It is important to note that in both these places, Aquinas makes it clear that the return to the sensible object is the end of *natural* science, and in *De Trinitate* explicitly sets up this endpoint in contrast to the termini of mathematics and metaphysics.

resolution are truly different in terms of their origin and their use by Aquinas, all the senses are retained and used strategically in association with different uses of reason; what we have, then, in Aquinas's notion of resolution is the coexistence of terminologies from different epistemological traditions which have been appropriated, rather than merely borrowed, and reshaped by their placement within his notion of human reason and its sciences.

There is also, I think, a deeper but less explicit division among these types of resolution/analysis in Aquinas. Geometrical and divisive resolution are initial movements of reason which understand reason to begin from the complex conclusion or a compound substance. Neoplatonic resolution, on the other hand, follows a process which is understood to begin with some implicit grasp of simple principles. Thus their respective epistemological implications are different, one envisioning knowledge as grounded in and made possible by a knowledge of principles, the other two describing knowledge as beginning in our experience of the composite being. In the *Summa* Aquinas confronts the dilemma implied by the opposition between the processes' beginning points, asking whether the "universal" is first in our knowledge. Aquinas's response carefully places *both* pictures of the beginning of knowledge within his own view. He argues that if we take sensation and intellectual comprehension separately, the more common and universal is first, as each moves from a general but confused grasp to a defined and distinct knowledge of the thing; thus we move from the grasp of a thing as a being to a grasp of it as possessing a specific nature. However, if we take the process of knowledge as it moves from sensation through intellection, the particular, complex individual is " first " in knowledge because knowledge begins with sensation, which apprehends the individual. [96]

But these processes not only " begin " differently, they " end " differently as well. Resolution as division and resolution in the geometrical sense are both halves of processes which " end"

[96] *ST* I, q. 85, a. 3.

with composition, i.e., by returning to conclusions and complexes, not to the principles they began by seeking. Neoplatonic resolution, by contrast, is the second half of a process whose ultimate direction is toward principles, not conclusions. In this sense, Neoplatonic resolution is different from the other two, and for Aquinas is a more perfect representative of human reason, whose ultimate goal is the understanding of things in the highest and most universal causes. It is only resolution in this sense that Aquinas calls *wisdom;* wisdom " judges all things and sets them in order, because there can be no perfect and universal judgment that is not resolved into first causes." [97] Wisdom, it is worth noting, is not *just* the grasp of principles but of all things *resolved* into principles, understood as grounded by those principles.[98] Thus though both of these processes " end " with principles or with conclusions, neither consists in only the grasp of one or the other, but of one *in* the other. And this is exactly the problem for the human knower, i.e., that our reason is always attempting but never quite succeeding in holding together the grasp of principles and conclusions by knowing one *in* the other.

Though this would in some sense have to be qualified and expanded by a study of the other terms and other ways Aquinas uses to describe the movement of reason, the theme of the ultimate incompleteness of human reasoning, of its failure to grasp things completely in a unified fashion, appears in two important passages dealing with resolution and composition, one in the relatively late *Commentary on the Metaphysics* in a discussion of Calcidian/ Aristotelian analysis, and the other in the early *Commentary on De Trinitate* expanding on the Neoplatonic resolution of multiplicity into unity. In the first passage, Aquinas in-

[97] " Et circa huiusmodi est sapientia, quae considerat altissimas causas, ut dicitur in I *Meta.* Uncle convenienter iudicat et ordinat de omnibus: quia iudicium perfectum et universale haberi non potest nisi per resolutionem ad primas causas." *ST* I-II, q. 57, a. 2. Cf. *ST* II-II, q. 9, a. 2.

[98] Cf. *ST* I-II, q. 57, a. 2, ad 1 where Aquinas describes wisdom as the grasp of principles and conclusions.

terpolates the discussion of *resolutio* and *compositio* into an explanation of Aristotle's remark that "we cannot simultaneously grasp a whole and its parts (993b5-7)." After describing *resolutio* and *compositio,* Aquinas writes, "Thus the fact that a human being is unable to know perfectly in things a whole and a part shows the difficulty involved in knowing the truth by both of these methods." [99] Though the resolution described here is the division of a whole into its parts, his point seems to apply to all three types, i.e., that these two halves of the movement of reason have as their goal either the whole or the part, the simple or the complex, the conclusion or the principles, but reason by its very nature as discursive cannot grasp *both* equally well at the same time. In the *Summa* Aquinas explains that "the intellect can indeed understand many things at one time, but not *as many."* [100] Our choice is either to know many things at once but only indistinctly *as one,* or to know things or multiple aspects as multiple but not *at once,* but only sequentially, under different intelligible species.[101] The problem is not quite that we are absolutely incapable of knowing part and whole, premise and conclusion together, but that we can only grasp them together by knowing one *in* the another, always "losing" in a sense the whole when focused on the part, and the part when focussed on the whole. Thus reason's dialectic is never completely resolved, never reaches complete closure and rest.

In the description of resolution and composition in his *De Trinitate* commentary, as in *De Veritate,* Aquinas likens our reasoning to this circle. *Ratio* as movement and *intellectus* as rest, Aquinas cites from Boethius, are related to each other "as time

[99] "Sic igitur hoc ipsum, quod homo non potest in rebus perfecte totum et partem cognoscere, ostendit difficultatem considerandae veritatis secundum utramque viam." *In* II *Meta.,* lee. 1.

[100] "Intellectus quidem potest multa intelligere per modum unius, non autem multa per modum multorum." *ST* I, q. 85, a. 4.

[101] "Quod partes possunt inte!ligi dupliciter. Uno modo, sub quadam confusione, prout sunt in toto : et sic cognoscuntur per unam formam totius, et sic simul cognoscuntur. Alio modo, cognitione distincta, secundum quod quaelibet cognoscitur per suam speciem: et sic non simul inte!liguntur." *ST* I, q. 85, a. 4, ad 3.

to ·eternity and as a circle to its center." [102] The metaphor is apt because, like the circular path of the heavenly bodies imitating the first mover, the " circular " path of reasoning is for Aquinas the human imitation of the *intellectus* of God and the angels, who comprehend immediately and intuitively a multiplicity in unity and a unity in multiplicity. Ultimately and in all senses the need for resolution and composition, the movements describing and circumscribing the dialectical structure of our reasoning, is a mark of the *imperfection* of our imitation of the divine *intellectus,* of human reason as sequential rather than synoptic, as discursive rather than intuitive, in short, as incomplete yet directed from and toward principles.

[102] " Quod similiter se habent ratio ad intellectum et tempus ad aeternitatem et circulus ad centrum." *Exp de Trin,* q. 6, a. 1, sol. c.

# *SUMMA CONTRA GENTILES* III, CHAPTERS 131-135: A RARE GLIMPSE INTO THE HEART AS WELL AS THE MIND OF AQUINAS

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## *Introduction*

BERNARDO GUI, Saint Thomas's thirteenth-century biographer, relates in his *Legenda S. Thomae* the story of how once upon a time Saint Thomas was seated at the table of King Louis IX of France. Far removed from mere dinner conversation, the scholar was absorbed in profound rumination on no less a problem than the existence of evil. Suddenly in the midst of the meal Aquinas came to an insight and " he struck the table, exclaiming : ' That settles the Manichees ! ' " [1] More than a century later Fra Angelico presents us with a comparable image of the saint though in an appreciably different setting, not a royal dinner table but a cloister walk. If the reader were to walk in the cloister garden of the priory of San Marco in Florence, he or she would eventually come upon a portrait of Saint Thomas painted by Fra Angelico (in the lunette above the door to the right of the entrance on the south side of the cloister). The saint stands erect facing the viewer, holding open upon his chest a book with the pages facing us so that we might read them. Saint Thomas is looking off into space, not distractedly but with concentration, with arched eyebrows and fixed gaze. It is as though he sees directly what we can only read about in the text of his open book.

[1] " The Life Of Saint Thomas Aquinas by Bernard Gui," in *The Life of St. Thomas Aquinas: Biographical Documents,* trans. and ed. Kenelm Foster (London, 1959), pp. 44-45.

The image of Saint Thomas presented in these hagiographic and iconographic traditions is distinctly that of an intellect-at one time engrossed in speculative thought, at another time in mystic contemplation-but it is always the mind that is foremost engaged. The image is always that of the intellectual genius entirely taken up with recondite or divine ideas, far removed from this-worldly concerns or domestic distractions. These images cannot be easily dismissed, nor indeed should we want to do such a thing, for there is much truth in these images. Certainly Thomas was at times a mystic, and his powers of abstraction and concentration were nothing less than extraordinary. His own writings are the best witness to this. The method displayed therein-the dispassionate objectivity, the unrelenting logic, the economy of expression, the precise and telling distinctions, not to mention his encyclopedic knowledge of scriptural, mystical, and philosophical sources-makes for the impression of an almost disembodied intellect at work. No wonder he was given the title "angelic doctor" ! However, the problem with such images and titles is that they never allude to the fact that Saint Thomas also had a human heart and human feelings, and that these, too, could at times have had an effect upon his thinking, especially when his feelings had been hurt.

To illustrate this thesis, I propose to examine the interplay between thought and emotion, history and analysis, in the *Summa Contra Gentiles III,* especially as concerns Chapters 131-135. Chapters 131-135 constitute a small treatise on religious poverty and as such appear as a peculiarly recondite consideration amid Aquinas's much more general treatment there of the themes of divine providence and human freedom. I believe this peculiar feature can only be understood in relation to an historical controversy of the times, namely, the attack upon the new mendicant orders by the secular clergy. Indeed, I believe the true nuances of this small treatise can best be understood when it is seen more as the heartfelt response of Aquinas to a slur upon his dignity rather than as his dispassionate or purely reasoned response to a contest of ideas. Aquinas was once personally embarrassed **dur-**

ing his professorship at the University of Paris when a student demonstration broke in upon a Sunday sermon of his with pamphlet literature that poked malicious fun at his considerable body size and privileged social status. And I believe it is this more than any logical considerations that dictates the theme and character of the treatise on religious poverty in Chapters 131-135 of the *Summa Contra Gentiles III.*

In order to make clear the precise offense and the precise quality of emotion in Aquinas's response, we must first survey here several analytical and historical themes. First we shall consider the character of the *Summa Contra Gentiles III* in general and the position and character of Chapters 131-135 in particular; there follows a treatment of the novelty of mendicant poverty in Saint Thomas's time, the attack upon the. mendicants, and Aquinas's larger, more general defense of the mendicant way of life; finally, the more personal attack upon Aquinas is investigated in order to gain insight into the precise emotion in his final response in the mendicancy debate.

## *The Intellectual Proportions of the Summa Contra Gentiles III*

As a piece of moral literature, Book III of Saint Thomas's *Summa Contra Gentiles* can be considered among the foremost works of ethical analysis produced by Western culture. The reasons for this are the breadth of its moral vision and the thoroughness with which that vision is articulated. Book III of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* sets forth a comprehensive vision of moral order embracing God and the universe as well as humankind, and elaborates that vision with logical consistency and precision of detail. It does this as a work of apologetical theology, that is, it presents itself as a rational defense of a principal tenet of Christian faith, namely, the Christian belief that existence-the world -is neither haphazard nor perverse but the creation of an intelligence and will that informs and gives meaning to all its movements.

To grasp something of the proportions of the task which Saint

Thomas had set for himself in Book III of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* we can compare it with Dante's *Comedia.* Dante's poetic vision of the three moral orders, heaven, hell, and purgatory, concludes with these lines :

High phantasy lost power and here broke off;
Yet, as a wheel moves smoothly, free from jars,
My will and my desire were turned by love,
The love that moves the sun and the other stars. [2]

What Dante proclaims with artistic genius in language and images that delight the senses and stimulate the imagination, Saint Thomas must explain by means of rationally comprehensible terms and intellectually *cogent* arguments. And this is a most vital task; otherwise for a Christian to preach that it is love that moves the sun and the stars will sound like little more than mere poetic fantasy.

Saint Thomas's method is first to place at the head of his treatise the thesis to be demonstrated. The thesis is presented there in the form of a selection of Old Testament texts illustrating the essential points in the doctrines of providence and creation :

"The Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods" (Ps. 94:3). "For the Lord will not cast off His people" (Ps. 93:14). "For in His hand are all the ends of the earth, and the heights of the mountains are His. For the sea is His and He made it, and His hands formed dry land" (Ps. 94:4-5). [3]

These Scripture passages dictate the outline of the treatise. Chapters 1-63 might well be called "the morality of God," for as an exposition of Psalm 94:3, "The Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods," it sets forth an image of God as a sovereign of omnipotent power and universal rule, but a power and rule that are without arbitrariness or oppression. God indeed has the power to move all, but He does this with eminent justice, setting forth an appropriate end for all things. With re-

[2] Dante, *Paradise,* trans. D. L. Sayers and B. Reynolds (London, 1962), Canto XXXIII, vs. 142-145.

[3] *Summa Contra Gentiles, Book III: Providence,* trans. V. J. Bourke (Notre Dame, 1956), Vol. I, p. 31.

spect to the human person this means God has the power to move by being an object of desire, thus respecting human freedom. Chapters 64-110 might well be called Saint Thomas's essay on "the morality of the universe or nature," for here he must reconcile the apparent randomness of nature with the Biblical text "For in His hand are all the ends of the earth, and the heights of the mountains are His. For the sea is His and He made it, and His hands formed dry land" (Ps. 94:4-5). Here the moral question reaches something of a high point in the problematic posed by natural disasters or the irrational processes of nature. In response, Saint Thomas poses the concept of secondary causality, that is, not everything that happens in this world can be blamed on God. An earthquake, for Saint Thomas, is not necessarily an act of God (insurance agents take note). Rather it is due to natural, that is, secondary causes. Finally, Chapters 111-163 demonstrates the thesis of Psalm 93:4, "For the Lord will not cast off his people." Accordingly, its sections demonstrate the means which God has provided for human moral action: the moral law (chs. 114-129), moral precepts (chs. 130-138), and punishment of moral transgression (chs. 147-163).

Here Saint Thomas's thought is, however, more than just an apologetics. It is also a theology of correlation, that is, a theology in genuine dialogue with sources other than revelation. Indeed, we would be misrepresenting Saint Thomas's thought here if we gave the impression that it was merely an exposition of Scripture. If this treatise can be understood as an exposition of the biblical texts cited in its prologue, we must also acknowledge there are long stretches of the *Summa Contra Gentiles III* that make little or no reference to Scripture and read more like a footnote to Aristotle's *Physics.* Even so, this fact requires careful qualification. Saint Thomas's appropriation of classical philosophy is no gross and simple importation or "baptizing" of pagan thought. The god of Aristotle and the God of the Sermon on the Mount have little if anything in common and Saint Thomas knew this. David Knowles observes:

Aristotle, had he been restored to life to read the *Summa Contra Gentiles,* would have had difficulty in recognizing the thought as his. . . . While Aristotle, the empiricist, looked most carefully at the universe of being as it was displayed to the senses and intelligence, and explored in his *Metaphysics* the veins and sinews of substance, he became imprecise when he rose to consider mind and soul, and hesitant when he looked up towards the First Cause of all things. His God is a shadow, an unseen, unknown, uncaring force and reason necessary to give supreme unity to the Universe. . . . With Thomism, on the other hand, the infinitely rkh, dynamic existential reality is God, the creator and source of all being by power and essence, holding and guiding and regarding every part of creation.... [4]

Thus in Book III of the *Summa Contra Gentiles,* biblical faith is informed and rendered intellectually incisive by a raid upon, a selective appropriation of, the rich wealth of wisdom of pagans such as Plato and Aristotle.

But there is more to Book III than philosophy and theology; there is also history. Not everything here can be explained by recourse to philosophical or theological appraisal. For example, from the perspective of logical development, the subject matter of chapters 131-135 is quite gratuitous. Chapters 131-135 comprise a treatise on religious poverty. As a discussion of an appropriate Christian attitude toward material wealth they can stand on their own apart from their place in this treatise. But more importantly, for a reader contemporary with Saint Thomas, these chapters would have read more like a report on a contemporary debate, even a summary, erudite though it be, concerning one of the great social novelties of the day. For these chapters deal with one of the great, burning social issues of the time: whether there is any place for mendicancy, that is, pious beggars, in a Christian society. [5]

[4] David Knowles, *The Evolution of Medieval Thought* (New York, 1962), pp. 257-258.

[5] The English word " mendicant " comes from the Latin *mendicant, mendicans* which is the present participle of *mendicare,* "to beg," from *mendicus,* "beggar."

### *Mendicant Poverty* [6]

The twelfth century in Europe witnessed the advent of something like a spiritual awakening in parts of the Church. A peculiar characteristic of this new spirituality was its emphasis upon evangelical or religious poverty, that is, a simplicity of life in imitation of the Sermon on the Mount's "Look at the birds of the air, they neither sow nor reap . . . . " The phenomenon exhibited itself in various and at times bizarre expressions. But two expressions-the Franciscan and Dominican orders-found not only legitimation but powerful approval from the highest authority within the Church. These were called mendicant or begging orders, because, unlike traditional religious orders (monastic communities), these new religious orders put aside manual labor, after the initial Franciscan venture, so as to dedicate themselves exclusively to evangelical work. Thus they depended upon the charitable support of others for their sustenance.

The Dominican Order to which Saint Thomas belonged had been originally conceived as a response to the Albigensian heresy, a medieval expression of dualistic Manicheism in the south of France. The Dominican order embodied a two-fold tactical response to the heresy: first, Dominic recognized the need for intelligent and articulate, well-educated preachers to combat the intellectual sophistries upon which the heresy was based-an elaborate, rationalistic explanation of the universe. However, Dominic also saw that intellectual arguments would not be enough. The Cathari or Albigensians were moral rigorists and thus had to be responded to not only on the level of ideas but also that of moral example. In fact, Dominic surmised that the failure of previous missionary efforts against the Albigensians had been **in** great measure due to the fact that the monks who preached against them represented the power and wealth of great monasteries, the intellectual refinement of a genteel culture. Thus Dominic formed the idea of a community of religious men who

[6] For the history of the foundation of the Dominicans I have followed principally M. H. Vicaire, *Saint Dominic and His Times*, trans. K. Pond (New York, 1964).

were not only well-educated, eloquent preachers, but whose personal lifestyle was one of austerity and discipline.

When we come to Saint Thomas however, we are now at least two generations removed from Saint Dominic's historical situation. The Dominicans are no longer a strategic missionary effort but a more general phenomenon in the church. In addition to disputing with heretics in the hinterland, they had now come to the great cities and were making a name for themselves as theologians in the great universities. But their general success had been much wider than this. At first these itinerant preachers were welcomed by bishops and local clergy for the assistance which they provided in the general ministry of preaching and cure of souls. But soon after these mendicants settled in a place problems arose : as preachers and counsellors, their learning made them more attractive than their diocesan or parochial counterparts; secondly, their mendicant or begging status meant they needed financial support which their numerous clientele were willing and grateful to supply. But this was support which normally would have gone into the local churches to the benefit of the local clergy. Such a situation was volatile and bound eventually to find a response. The response came from one who was both a university professor and a secular priest.

### *Attack upon the Mendicants* [7]

Guillaume de Saint-Amour was a priest of Grenville and a regent master at the University of Paris. When Guillaume became regent master, that is, full professor, in 1250, the Dominicans held two professorial chairs in the university faculty, one more than the early statutes of the university had allowed. Guillaume set about to amend this situation. But his aim proved to be more than just that of controlling the number of mendicant professors in the university. Rather he worked up a polemic that challenged

[7] For the history of the controversy I have followed the chronology in J. A. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas d'Aquino* (New York, 1974); A. J. Heinan, "William of Saint-Amour" in *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* 14 (New York, 1977), pp. 936-937; and D. L. Douie, *The Conflict between the Seculars and the Mendicants* (London, 1954).

the very right of such religious orders to exist, arguments that portrayed these friars as a threat to the organizational structure of the entire church.

On February 4, 1254, the university, at Guillaume's instigation, declared the two Dominican professors suspended for not having participated in a general strike the previous year. The Dominicans had been able to continue teaching because their order conducted private *studia* or " colleges " at the university for the training of their own men. These *studia,* though within the university environs, were administratively independent, and thus during a general strike they could continue their schedule unimpeded. About the same time as this formal expulsion, Guillaume produced his *Liber de Antichristo et eius ministris,* written ostensibly against the radical " Spiritual Franciscans," an apocalyptic and arguably heterodox offshoot of Francis of Assisi. But Guillaume's *Liber* was written in such a way that the "false teachers" and "false prophets" which he railed against bore an amazing likeness to contemporary Dominicans and Franciscans, the mainline mendicant orders.

In March of 1256, Guillaume followed up his first, oblique attack with a more precise and direct indictment in his *De periculis novissimorum temporum.* Here he argued quite openly and directly that these mendicants were a threat not only to the ecclesiastical order but to the general social order as well. These mendicants were interlopers in the vineyard usurping the proper functions of bishops and pastors. Guillaume argued that the office of preaching was given to bishops and pastors and that hearing confessions is of paramount importance to a pastor if he is to know his flock and their needs. However, Guillaume's most lethal shot was reserved for last. He argued that only those who have no other means to sustain themselves should be allowed to beg; any who are able should work for their living. Such reasoning, quite correct in itself, could only lead to the death of a religious order that depended upon the charity of the people for its sustenance and its labors. Guillaume's arguments were not without effect. They could not help but raise the thought on the part of bishops and parochial clergy that perhaps their prerogatives were

indeed being usurped, their authority undermined; what place was there in the community for a group of men with such a life-style and ministry? Moreover, if one's own ministry was failing or less than it should be, here to hand was an easy explanation.

Within a few months of its publication, King Louis IX forwarded a copy of the *De periculis* to the papal curia for scrutiny of its arguments. However, mendicant representation at the curia was strong and Guillaume's work was condemned on October 5, 1256. The papacy was too convinced of the value and achievement of the mendicant orders to allow them to be impeded, much less suppressed. Even so, this did not stop Guillaume. In Paris, he continued to preach against the mendicants until in early 1257 the king exiled him from the city to his native village. Throne and papacy together were too much to battle and so the polemic subsided for several years until a change in the occupant of the papal throne seemed to proffer new hope.

In 1265 a Frenchman, Guy Foulques, cardinal archbishop of Narbonne, succeeded to the papal throne as Clement IV. Guillaume obviously felt a pope who was a native Frenchman might be more receptive to a complaint from native French clergy. In October of 1266 he sent the pope a new work entitled *Collationes catholicae et canonicae Scripturae.* It was really not so much a new work as a revision of Guillaume's *De periculis* though now expanded with more canonical and Scriptural citations. The work failed to convince, however, even with a French pope. But more importantly, the battle back in Paris had not been left leaderless. Gerard d'Abbeville, likewise a secular priest and professor at Paris, attacked the mendicants in a public disputation at about the same time that Guillaume was appealing to the new French pope. But the real battle did not begin until after Clement's death in November of 1268. A three year interregnum passed before the election of another pope and the anti-mendicant forces seized upon the opportunity which this vacuum of power seemed to create. In December of 1268, Guillaume railed against the mendicants in his sermons while Gerard d'Abbeville drew up his attack in another academic disputation in Paris. From

here on, however, it was really Gerard who carried the brunt of the battle. And he did this with bold determination.

On New Year's day, 1269, Gerard preached from the pulpit of the Franciscan church in Paris. Before the assembled Franciscan community, which probably included Saint Bonaventure, Gerard proceeded to defend the wealth of the church in the face of what he claimed was a prominent and pernicious theory of evangelical poverty. The theory of poverty which he denounced was one of several interpretations given to religious poverty after the death of Francis and a subject which was hotly debated among his followers. It is obvious that Gerard hoped to stir up controversy among the Franciscans and defeat his enemies by dividing them against themselves.

Gerard's efforts soon turned literary. A few months later he published *Contra adversarium perfectionis christianae,* arguing that mendicant spirituality denigrated the status of laity and regular clergy. Gerard had written it twelve years earlier in the first phase of the conflict, but decided not to publish it at that time because of the condemnation of Guillaume's work. But now with no pope reigning, he could publish it with impunity. The work renewed the earlier polemic regarding the place of the mendicants in the church, repeating much of Guillaume's arguments from *De periculis.* However, it was innovative in two senses. It dropped the attempt to identify the mendicants with kindred though heretical spiritualist movements, only to add a new argument against them. While the Dominican constitution of the day had forbidden the reception of young men under the age of eighteen, the popularity of the mendicant vocation had become such that boys younger than this were in fact being admitted. But there were papal decrees, and recent ones at that, restricting the age at which a youth might take religious vows. Gerard accused the mendicants of gross violation of papal directives.

### *Defenlse of the Mendicants*

The mendicant orders responded to all this with the considerable intellectual talents which were theirs, the most important

contributions being made by Bonaventure and Aquinas. Guillaume's *De periculis* was published in March of 1256, at about the same time as Thomas' s promotion to full professor of theology. Within weeks of Guillaume's publication, in April or May of 1256, Thomas chose the topic *De opere manuali religiosorum* for his first academic disputation as full professor. In this work he refuted Guillaume's contention that mendicants should perform manual labor like monks instead of preaching and teaching like secular clerics. A few months later, b_etween September and October of that same year, Thomas produced his more formal reply to Guillaume's work.

*Contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religion'em*[8] was the work of a young professor who had arrived only recently in his academic position, a self-conscious work adhering strictly to proper academic style. Thomas was careful to restate all of Guillaume's arguments, after which he proposed possible counter arguments, and finally delivered a lengthy determination to the question, much in the manner of a master deciding an academic debate. The work is full of very careful distinctions, for Thomas was attempting to do two things at once: to make a place for the mendicants in the church while at the same time not appreciably altering the existing structure. Thus he conceded the point that no one has a right to preach without permission of the bishop, but at the same time he insisted this does not prevent the bishop or the pope from extending this privilege to others.

When the second phase of the assault broke out in 1268, Thomas was no longer at Paris. He was at Viterbo, Italy, working on the first part of the *Summa Theologiae.* He had been assigned there just the year before when the Dominican general chapter decided there should be a suitable group of friars in residence at the papal curia (Pope Clement and his curia resided at Viterbo). But the master general of the order decided the trouble brewing in Paris required nothing less than the talents

[8] English translation in J. Proctor, *An Apology for Religious Orders* (Westminster, Maryland, 1950).

of Thomas, and thus he returned. For the next three years (1269-1272), the term of his second professorship in Paris, Saint Thomas would be much taken up with the anti-mendicant controversy. In fact, the principal burden of the controversy would be borne by the Lenten and Advent disputations between Thomas and Gerard d'Abbeville. This time, however, Saint Thomas was a much more self-confident and seasoned scholar.

Upon arrival in Paris, Thomas set about composing his reply to Gerard's *Contra adversarium perfectionis christianae.* Thomas's answer was no cautious point by point review and criticism but a formidable and organic treatise setting forth a complete theology of Christian perfection. For Thomas, "perfection" is nothing else than charity, and he was quick to insist this perfection is demanded of all Christians clergy and laity alike. However, he argued, there are some who freely vow themselves to such perfection by professedly denying themselves such things in life as make the attainment of perfection difficult, namely, wealth, the concerns of spouse and family, and one's own willfullness: the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Thomas was careful to note that the Lord *counseled* these; he *demanded* them of no one. Those who take such vows are considered to be in the "state of perfection," not that they have attained it but that they are formally bound to it. Not only was Thomas's conception thoroughly conceived and well argued, but it was also very generous: "Thus it is evident that some people are perfect, who do not have a state of perfection, while others have the state of perfection, but are not perfect" (ch. 15).[9]

Chenu rightly judged this work to be "the most important and best constructed document of the whole debate."[10] But not only was it a work of serene intelligence and high theology, it was also as clever and calculated a ploy as Gerard's sermon with its intent to divide the Franciscans. The -great part of the treatise is given over to an exposition of a theology of perfection, but in the final

9Leonine edition of the *Opera Omnia,* Vol. 41, B (Rome, 1969).

10 M. D. Chenu, *Toward Understanding St. Thomas,* trans. A. M. Landry and D. Hughes (Chicago, 1964), p, 342.

section Thomas, by a maneuver arguably more politic than theological, grants that bishops, too, are in a state of perfection. Such a thesis, with its omission of any reference to the secular clergy, could not help but be seen by Gerard as a provocation. And sure enough Gerard grabbed at the bait. In a rapidly written reply, Gerard labored theologically to claim the perfection of the secular clergy. And thus with a stroke of the pen Thomas had put his enemies on the defensive and diverted attention from the mendicants.

This method of diverting attack away from the medicants seems to have been the tactic which Saint Thomas decided to pursue from that point on. At the beginning of Lent, 1271, in the academic disputation *De ingressu puerorum in religione,* Saint Thomas gave his answer to the question of admitting young boys to religious life before puberty. In this work he never mentions the mendicant orders but instead considers the " immemorial custom of the Benedictines " by which he himself had been entrusted by his parents to the monks as a child. However, Thomas was not trying to win solely by means of diversion or changing the subject; quite the contrary, during this second phase he followed up his " serenely " theological works with vehemently polemical replies.

In January or February of 1270, Thomas came out with a new edition of his *De perfectione spiritualis vitae.* This time six new chapters had been appended in response to Gerard's criticism of the first edition. Here Saint Thomas's style was thoroughly polemical, as was the case in his *Contra doctrinam retrahentium* [11] of summer 1271, wherein he answered specifically and point-for-point Gerard's accusations regarding the admittance of boys under-age to the mendicant communities. Here Thomas even resorts to the sort of tactics he might have seen in Jerome's *Contra Jovinianum,* labelling his enemies derisively as " the Gerardines " and suggesting that Gerard himself was a corruptor of youth by poisoning their minds against the mendicants.

[11] See Proctor, *An Apology for Religious Orders.*

### *Popular Hostility* [12]

If we stopped here in our account of the secular/ mendicant controversy at the University of Paris we would be telling but half the story. The controversy was not fought solely in the academic arena, and the disputants were not limited to professors armed with treatises. The secular clergy pursued an assault upon the friars from several strategic points at once. We have seen something of the intellectual and legal aspects of this assault in the appeals to reason and authority (the hierarchy). But there was yet a third point of attack: an attempt was made to arouse popular hostility against the friars, and for this effort there was ready to hand a man of appropriate talents.

" Rustebeuf" is the pseudonym of a French medieval *trouvere* (fl. 1245-85). A characteristic element in his work was the incisive and often humorous depiction of the various social classes. In his satirical works his principal theme was the iniquities of the friars. Therein, he not only championed the cause of the university but he defended Guillaume of Saint-Amour when he was condemned and driven into exile. Nine of his poems were directly connected with the quarrel and may well be described as political pamphlets: *La Discorde de l'Universite et des Jacobins, La Dit de Guillaume de Saint-Amour, Du Pharisien, Complainte de Guillaume, Des Regles, La Dit de Sainte Eglise, La Dit d'Hypocrisie, La Bataille des Vices contre les Vertus,* and *Des Jacobins.*

These poems were copied as handbills and distributed at the taverns in and about the university. There they were read to the amusement of students and non-university people alike. That they were effective in their appeal is obvious :

> The winter of 1255-56 was the severest the Dominicans at Paris had to endure. William and his colleagues ... had aroused not only the secular students of the university, but a section of the laity as well, to physical violence. No sooner was a friar caught sight of, wrote Humbert of Romans in April 1256, than he was surrounded

[12] For the description of Rustebeuf and his poetry I am indebted to N. F. Regaldo, *Poetic Patterns in Ritstebeitf* (New Haven, 1978).

by the human swarms that poured forth from every house and hostel in the narrow street, hurrying as if to a spectacle. Instantly the air was full of the " tumult of shoutings, the barking of dogs, the roaring of bears, the hissing of serpents," and every sort of insulting exclamation. Filthy rushes and straw off the floors of the dwellings were poured upon the cowled head from above; mud, stones, and sometimes blows greeted him from below. Arrows had been shot against the priory, which had henceforth to be guarded day and night by royal troops.13

Thomas himself was not free from such harassment. We have a letter of Pope Alexander IV written on June 26, 1259, to Reginald Mignon of Corbeil, Bishop of Paris, wherein the pope condemns recent turbulence and scandal among the students of Paris prompted by " wretched little pamphlets, renowned for their infamy and slandering these same friars ... both in literary and vernacular language, in indecent rhymes and songs." [14] The pope singled out for censure a student leader, one Guillot of the Picard Nation (the French and Italian contingent of the University), who got up in the middle of a Palm Sunday (April 6, 1259) sermon by Saint Thomas and started to peddle pamphlets against the mendicants right there in the church.

Henry Denifie, in his edition of the letter, notes at this point that it is not easy to say precisely which pamphlet was distributed. However, there is one poem of Rustebeuf's which if it had been distributed that day would have been a particularly indicting one as regards the preacher. And since the leaflet was distributed so as to interrupt the sermon it might be argued there was some personal affront to Thomas intended.

The poem *Des Regles,* [15] written early in 1259, has as its theme how the friars have enriched themselves at the expense of the parish priests. The poet illustrates his theme by means of a comparison of the library of a devout cure with that of the friars.

1a Weisheipl, p. 93.

14 H. Denifle and E. Chatelain, *Chartulariimi Universitatis Parisiensis* (Paris, 1889), pp. 391: "alias libellos famosos in infamiam et detractationem eorundum fratrum ab eorum emulis in letterali et vulgari sermone necnon rismis et cantilenis indecentibus."

15 See *Oeuvres Completes de Rustebeuf,* Vol. I, ed. A. Jubinal (Paris, 1874), pp. 224-232.

It is a scene of high melodrama: the one little book the devout cure needs to say his evening prayers is denied him, while the friars, who do not labor long at pious tasks, have many and well-edited texts. The cure must struggle just to get enough bread to eat, while the friars have fat bellies below their plump and rested faces. Rustebeuf exclaims, so as to be sure no one misses the point, " Without work they have wealth! "

The portrait drawn of the friars certainly would not apply to all-not all would have books, not all would be fat-but it is a portrait that would have applied all too accurately to the preacher that Palm Sunday. Surely every effort was made to supply Thomas with whatever texts he needed and his corpulent physique of ample proportions was well known. But Rustebeuf's poem becomes even more pointed when he proceeds to develop his contrast of friar and parish priest by a description of the visit of one of the fat friars to the home of a poor parish priest.

The friar is haughtily condescending while the anxious parish priest does his best to serve up the meal in style. The friar's regal arrogance is contrasted with the truly apostolic if involuntary poverty of the priest. Is this an even more pointed satire of Thomas's noble lineage and the fact that even now as a mendicant friar he was the table guest of wealthy and powerful men such as the King of France? This portrait of a friar makes for an interesting contrast with Bernardo Gui's anecdote of Thomas's visit with King Louis for supper. Could Gui's stress upon Thomas's unwillingness to go-" Thomas wished to decline the invitation on the plea that he was busy with study and writing; but his prior, on behalf of the king, made him accept "-and the Saint's mental abstraction from the dinner be the hagiographer's attempt to repair the portrait of Saint Thomas popularized by Rustebeuf? Perhaps I am playing these materials for more than they will allow; however, there is evidence that Thomas was aware of the applicability of such a caricature to himself.

Thomas's pamphlet war with the secular priests on the faculty at the University of Paris was not limited in its significance to the small body of minor Thomistic literature which we have sur-

veyed thus far. For example, Thomas's writings during the second phase of the conflict (1269-72), in the words of Chenu, "came to a serene conclusion" [16] in the articles of the *Summa Theologiae* dealing with the religious and pastoral states (2a2ae, 185-189). But the earlier phase of the conflict (1252-59) also had its ultimate fruition in high theology, namely **in** the treatise on religious poverty, chapters 131-135, of the *Summa Contra Gentiles III.*

The title of Chapter 131 is "On the error of the attackers of voluntary poverty." And the catalogue of objections to evangelical poverty listed there is identical with that which Saint Thomas employs in his *Contra impugnantes* in response to Guillaume's *De periculis.* However, the other chapters of this section also betray that earlier historical conflict in a less obvious though perhaps more telling way.

In Chapters 131-135 Saint Thomas is as disciplined and **un-**emotional as ever. Here reason reigns supreme. In reviewing the various defenses given throughout history for a religious sense of poverty, Saint Thomas concedes nothing to history. Instead of listing the arguments in the sequence of their historical development, he lists them according to their intellectual character. Thus he gives first consideration to the arguments of cenobitic monasticism of the patristic era because these are speculative, and he considers Saint Paul's arguments last because they argue purely from convenience and practical concerns. Nor does Thomas concede anything here to authority, dismissing Paul's argument in II Thessalonians (3:8) with the remark, "this way of living does not seem to be appropriate." Nor does Saint Thomas hesitate to quote Scripture against itself, as when he quotes Paul's "the Lord ordained that they who preach the gospel should live by the gospel" (I Cor. 9:13) as a defense of evangelical poverty.

Thomas himself in his own answer to the problematic appeals only to reason, arguing that riches in themselves are neither good

1s Chenu, p. 342.

nor bad, rather it is in how we use them that morality resides. Thus discretion is the important virtue here.

However, the most important point here is that when these passages are read in the historical context we have described, certain words and phrases take on an emotion otherwise not recognizable. For example, in Chapter 132, "On the ways of life of those who practice voluntary poverty," at one point Saint Thomas makes reference to :

> . . . those who have devoted themselves to the pursuit of wisdom, but who have been reared in wealth and comfort, which they have left behind for the sake of Christ.

It is an obvious autobiographical reference, a rare occurrence in Saint Thomas's work! Admittedly, however, it is hardly obtrusive to a modern day reader. Indeed it appears to us so oblique that we might pass it over, except that when the passage is read in the context of the historical drama we have recognized as its background the passage takes on a great precision not only of meaning but emotion.

The moral example offered in chapters 131-135 to illustrate Saint Thomas's teaching regarding human discretion in matters which do not fall under precise moral law is entirely gratuitous. Saint Thomas could have illustrated his point here by many other examples. However, he chose to illustrate it with the example of religious poverty. This was an eloquent tactical response to his enemies' derision of his ideal of religious poverty by means of satirical tavern rhymes. In response, Saint Thomas chose to enthrone, as it were, the doctrine of religious poverty amid his most serious ethical analysis of the human situation. There it stands alongside his doctrines of God and the universe, at the high point of his treatise on the morality of the human person. One can conclude there is poetry and not mere logic or calculation in this design. Indeed, it can be called nothing less than poetic justice. It is something like reparation for injured pride. It shows as much Saint Thomas's heart as his mind.

# THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHIES OF AQUINAS AND AWOLOW0 [1]

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## *Introduction*

WHAT POSSIBLE connection is there between the thought of Aquinas and that of Awolowo? We must first observe a sharp difference in personality and approach to politics between the two men. Obafemi Awolowo (1909-87) was a recent Nigerian philosopher and politician whose works on politics include *The People's Republic* (1968) and *Thoughts on the Nigerian Constitution* (1970), among others. [2] St. Thomas, on the other hand, was a medieval Italian priest who, because of his intensive academic pursuits and religious calling, did not engage in practical politics. In fact, it has been said that St. Thomas was the greatest philosopher that ever lived after Plato and Aristotle, but one without a political theory. This opinion is drawn from the fact that he has left no complete work on politics *to* which we can turn as we do to the *Politics* of Aristotle or to the *Social Contract* of Rousseau. Thomas never completed his Commentary on the *Politics* of Aristotle or his treatise *De Regimine Principum (De regno).*

There is another good reason to say that St. Thomas does not provide his readers with an adequate political doctrine. This is

[1] This is an adaptation of an original lecture titled "Elements of St. Thomas's Politics in Awolowo's Social Philosophy" given to mark Aquinas Day at the Dominican Institute of Philosophy, Ibadan, Nigeria on January 28, 1989.

[2] For other works and writings by Awolowo, see F. Ogunmodede, *Obafemi Awolowo's Socio-Political Philosophy* (Rome, 1986), pp. 269-272.

his " essentially theoretical " [3] approach to the study of politics. Aquinas's political reflections did not arise from any practical issue. The impact of philosophy was the determining factor. His views on state and government were part of a philosophical system. The approach of Awolowo to politics is quite different. It is empirical and practical. For, as D'Entreves says, modern man, unlike his medieval counterpart, has " become so entangled in particulars, in the practical side of politics, that it is only with an effort that we can be brought to realize the existence of the more general issues which lie behind our immediate predicament." [4]

Nevertheless, one can relate the political thought of both men. History is already filled with cases of scientific discoveries made at the same time by men in different places without any prior knowledge of one another's achievements. For instance, the controversy over the discovery of calculus was resolved by crediting both Newton and Leibniz with the discovery at the same time, each in his own country. Perhaps we can add that fundamental ideas about man and society can be shared, because of their universal nature, by people in different ages, places, and circumstances. This is the basis for the present comparison of Awolowo's and St. Thomas's socio-political philosophies.

This position is favored by the fact that, whichever way one looks at it, both have a political theory, a set of propositions systematically related to one another in such a way and manner that it is meaningful and realistic for us to talk of a "theory." Perhaps the contribution of this paper is to demonstrate that Awolowo and Aquinas do share many basic ideas and concepts about reality, about religion, and especially about polity. This view is supported by the fact that, even though Awolowo wrote no treatise on metaphysics, [5] as Aquinas did, he nonetheless built on sound

[3] A. P. D'Entreves, *Aquinas: Selected Political Writings* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1959), p. viii.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Unfortunately, Awolowo died before he could write works setting out his metaphysics systematically. But he gave a very long interview to Dr. Makinde of the 0.A.U., Ile-Ife, just before he died. This gives some insight into his

fundamental postulates and principles which are metaphysical in nature in his thinking about politics.[6]

Now, there are many approaches and methods in the study of any political theorist. According to B. J. Dudley, " we can concern ourselves with the sort of assumptions he makes, how legitimate or realistic these are. Alternatively, we can concern ourselves with the judgments he makes and the compatibility between these and the assumptions he started out with. Or, we can attempt to relate both his assumptions and his judgments to the prevailing circumstances of his time in an attempt at understanding why he said what he did." [7]

While we could take one or all of these approaches, a thematic approach will be adopted here. The aim of this essay is to identify and analyze those themes which are common and which we consider essential to understanding their respective socio-political philosophies. These themes are as follow : Man, Politics, the State, Government, Natural Law, Political Obligation, and Church and State Relations.

## *Man*

It is necessary to point out from the start a common background to Awolowo's and Aquinas's thought. As Christians, both men have certain religious beliefs underlying and guiding their political philosophies. It is in their anthropology, which is essential to understanding their politics, that this fact first manifests itself.

Man is a person, a psycho-physical entity, or a union of body and soul-essential parts which cannot be conceived separately but which always remain together if he is to exist and remain

metaphysical perspectives. See M. A. Makinde, *Awo As A Philosopher,* a paper presented at the National Conference on " Obafemi Awolowo, The End of An Era?," O.A.U., 1987.

s Ogunmodede, p. 45.

7 B. J. Dudley, "The Political Theory of Awolowo and Azikiwe" in Onigu Otite, *Themes in African Social and Political Thought* (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1978), p. 200.

alive. Man is a rational creature of God and is created according to His image and likeness. Aristotle says that nature does not operate without a purpose and goal.[8] Both Awolowo and Aquinas identify the ultimate end of man as God. This is the supreme goal that gives meaning, value, and dignity to human life and existence. As John Abbo says, " any other aim not subordinate to and conducive to this end is to be rejected as derogatory to man's dignity." [9] On the other hand, "any other aim, the fulfilment of which brings man closer to God, may be safely pursued." [10]

While Aquinas begins with this theological tenet as a principle from which he draws political conclusions, Awolowo's politics culminates in it via a psycho-ethical theory he calls " mental magnitude." [11] According to St. Thomas, therefore, the enjoyment of perfect happiness (i.e., the knowledge and love of God) by man is fully possible only in heaven. In the meantime, man engages in politics and moves towards God through the Church established by Christ. This is necessary and legitimate.

Man communes with and knows God through prayer, meditation or contemplation, and other spiritual activities.[12] But, when St. Thomas talks of final happiness or beatific vision of God as He is in Himself, he is also cognizant of the value of the appetitive and voluntary faculties and aspects of human nature. Happiness is equated with the good which is the principle of human activity.[13] Behind love, desires, and the choices of men, there is always the concept of the good.[14] Put differently, while happiness is the subject of the intellectual life, particular goods are the object of the practical life.

[8] Aristotle, *Politics,* Bk. 1, ch. 1, 10.

[9] J. A. Abbo, *Political Thought: Man and Ideas* (Maryland: The Newman Press, 1960), p. 116.

[10] Ibid., p. 116.

[11] Awolowo, *The People's Republic* (Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1986), Chapter 9.

[12] Ogunmodede, pp. 71-72.

[13] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* I-II, q. 94, a. 2.

[14] Ibid.

Man seeks earthly goods and happiness while he lives. They are imperfect and temporal compared with the vision of God, but they are natural, legitimate, and necessary for him according to St. Thomas.

The good that man seeks and desires on earth takes the forms of food, shelter, health, property, friendship, and peace. Man as an individual can seek to attain them, but he needs to live in a community or state if he is to achieve them. In fact, the state exists so that men within it can achieve these goods and enjoy well-being and happiness more abundantly.

While man is secondary to God in the reflection of Aquinas, Awolowo starts with man and then moves on to God. This is why the point of departure of his political philosophy is man. His work *The People's Republic* states this focal point clearly.

> The sole object of our discourse in this work is man.[16]

The reality of man is that he is suffering from several wants. He is underdeveloped and unhappy. If there is anything a politician should do, it is to care for man's welfare in society, to strive to provide for his needs and make him happy on earth. This view, according to Awolowo, is not materialistic but Christian in nature, since it agrees with the plan and command of God-" increase and multiply and fill the earth." [16] Awolowo will, however, qualify the realization of human happiness. It is contingent and feasible only if man conforms to and follows God's law.

### *Politics: Its Role*

The theory of human happiness leads to the role of politics in human life. In the tenth book of his *Ethics*, Aristotle considers politics as the science of statecraft and as the greatest of the practical sciences. Aquinas does not dispute this point. However, he wants the importance of politics understood in the right perspective. Politics cannot be separated from or rated higher than the

15 Awolowo, *The People's Republic*, p. 211.
16 *Genesis* 1 : 28.

ultimate end of man *(perfecta beatitudo).* For politics is about the choice of means which are contingent to attain ends which are moral in nature. The object or end of politics is the common good, an end which is higher in value than that of either the individual or the family.

Awolowo's view of politics is also not one that separates politics from ethico-religious principles and values. He rejects those modern positions which make politics absolute, and is far from the amoral Machiavellian prototype (the means justify the end). Rather, his concept of the nature of politics is a return to the medieval or scholastic position held by St. Thomas. Thus, for the two of them, politics is concerned with the welfare of the people and the office of leadership rather than the person of leadership; it is about service rendered by leaders, rather than the glorification of leaders.

### *The State*

It is in the state, the realm of secular affairs, that politics properly belongs. In this temporal sphere it finds its proper scope, role, and goal. One might expect St. Thomas to follow up his notion of politics with a theory of a theocratic state. This would fit squarely into the Middle Ages considered as the age of faith. But this is where his views and ideas were a bombshell and revolution in politics somewhat as the Copernican revolution was in astronomy in the 17th century. Prior to the thirteenth century, the teachings of St. Augustine of Hippo in the *City of God* had dominated the other-worldly political thought of the medieval world. With his eyes fixed in rapture on the splendors of the heavenly city, the Christian could only look upon his world as a valley of tears. Politics was conceived not as natural, right, and proper to man but as a necessary punishment for his fall and sin. Because of the need for atonement and redemption, the earthly city was recast as a godly theocracy.

This medieval pessimism was challenged by St. Thomas. This challenge was only symptomatic and characteristic of the crisis of thought which had gradually emerged in the heart of medieval society. According to D'Entreves, men were beginning to take

pride in the work of their hands, and to doubt whether all that they did was utterly sinful. Richer blood was beginning to circulate inside the veins of Western Europe. New ideas and modes of thought were shaping the intellectual life which had arisen in the universities. The study of Roman Law, which had spread from Bologna, had disclosed new perspectives upon government and administration. Many of Aristotle's writings which had long been ignored were brought within the reach of the student. A strange and insidious philosophy (Averroism) was percolating through the Iron Curtain separating the Islamic and Christian worlds.

Never had a peril so threatened Western Christianity.[17] As usual, when the basis of any establishment is questioned and shaken, there follows a resort to the same defense-mechanisms or to the same storehouse of ideas. Some believed that the challenges presented by the new political theories could be stemmed with a reinforcement of the doctrine of theocracy according to St. Augustine. This would counterbalance Aristotelianism and Averroism, both of which had disclosed a new conception of the state as a high achievement of man which could well set the stage for the transfiguration of the earthly into the heavenly city.

This uncompromising attitude could perhaps succeed. In later days, after the Renaissance, when a large part of Europe was on the verge of becoming altogether pagan, Protestantism was to find in the theocratic ideal a powerful inspiration for action and reform. Luther restored the fundamental values of Christianity within the sanctuary of the heart. But he also abandoned entirely the realm of politics to the rule of the sword. St. Thomas Aquinas's answer was quite different.

The basis of Aquinas's novel doctrine in politics is expressed in the dictum : " Gratia non tollit naturam sed earn perficit " (grace does not abolish nature but perfects it). In other words, the natural order exists and is distinct and autonomous from the supernatural order and it is good. Man belongs to this order and thus he is good *per naturam.* Original sin does not incapacitate

11 D'Entreves, p. x.

and prevent him from performing good and wholesome acts. Man is still rational and free. The state is his domain, and it is here that he engages in politics and carries out other activities. These are not and should not be seen as evil, but as good. Through them man can realize and develop his potentialities and attain dignity, sanctification, and unification with God if he chooses.

The state is the central theme of Awolowo's socio-political philosophy, and Aristotle and Plato are sources for his work. Like St. Thomas, he employs a combined theory of human nature and human needs to explain the origin of both society and the state. In *The People's Republic* he writes:

> By his very nature, man is a social animal. He was never and could never be solitary.[18]

The great basis and peculiarity of Awolowo's social theory is the fact of the family, a theme Aquinas did not develop. Awolowo uses this to advantage. He claims that everyone is born into a family and that there is nobody without a family,[19] from which man derives love and protection.[20] Thus, the best disproof of the Hobbesian theory of solitary human existence is provided. Now society (and later on, the state) is the union of families rather than atomistic individuals.[21] But need, as observed by Plato,[22] and especially the inability of families to satisfy adequately all basic needs, like peace and protection,[23] is the factor that immediately brought about the existence of society and later of the state.

Aquinas deduces his doctrine of the origin of the state from the nature of man itself. So does Awolowo. Man as a solitary being cannot survive; he lives in community because he is social by nature. In the *De Regimine principum,* Aquinas writes:

18 Awolowo, *The People's Republic,* p. 76.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid., pp. 76-77.
21 Ibid., p. 83.
22 Plato, *The Republic,* Bk. 2, 369B.
23 Awolowo, p. 78.

When we consider all that is necessary to human life, however, it becomes clear that man is naturally a social and political animal, destined more than all other animals to live in community.[24]

Aquinas does not share the contractualist views of Hobbes and Rousseau, who think that the state is solely a product of the human will. Rather, he thinks the element of necessity or need is crucial to the scholastic and medieval view he propounds about the state:

One man alone would not be able to furnish himself with all that is necessary, for no one man's resources are adequate to the fullness of human life. For this reason, the companionship of his fellows is naturally necessary to man.[25]

But Aquinas goes beyond this argument of Aristotle and his contemporaries. He adds another reason for the origin of the state, what might be called the economico-epistemological principle. The mode of human reasoning and knowledge, he claims, is deductive, and as such, it is impossible to know everything there is to know about human well-being. There must be a division of duty or specialization.

Nature has destined him to live in society so that, dividing the labor with his fellows, each man devotes himself to some branch of the sciences, one following medicine, another some other science, and so forth.[26]

It would follow that it is unwise for anyone to refuse to share his knowledge or place it at the service of the community. Also, the well-being of all, or the common good, is the end and purpose of the state. This is what keeps men united and together in the community.

While Aquinas fails to explain the mechanism of the formation of the state, Awolowo made some attempts. In his views, the mechanism of this formation is akin to that of the contract-

[24] Aquinas, *De Regimine Principum*, trans. J. G. Dawson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), p. 2.

[25] Ibid., p. 3.

[26] Ibid.

ualists. For he says that the state was formed by means of negotiation and social contract among various and different autonomous groups of families. Awolowo, like Hume, adds the element of occasional use of force, as in the case of belligerent and expansionist groups, to the factors that brought about society and eventually the state. The process, in his view, was also gradual and evolutionary. Thus, we first had " village states," " city states," "national states," and finally "multi-national states." [21]

One important thing must be mentioned. For both Awolowo and Aquinas, the state is a "welfare state." It is not an end in itself, as Hegel and others contend, but an instrument for the realization of the happiness of all citizens in society.

### *Government*

Both Awolowo and Aquinas believe in the necessity of government as the instrument for realizing people's aspirations within the state. The duty and responsibility of government is the provision of the common good for the welfare of all. However, there is a divergence in opinion as to the best type of government to be chosen. On the basis of dedication to the common good, Aquinas identifies monarchy, aristocracy, and polity as the good types of government in opposition to dictatorship, oligarchy, and democracy. He opts for monarchy as the best type of government.

> So it is better for one to rule rather than many who must first reach agreement.[28] It follows of necessity that the best form of government in human society is that which is exercised by one person.[29]

Awolowo, on the other hand, cannot understand why modern men must continue the practice of the monarchical system which he thinks should be relegated to the political archives. For him, the best form of government is democracy, and, specifically, democratic socialism. This type of government concerns itself with the equitable distribution of resources and the well-being of

[21] Awolowo, p. 81.
[28] Aquinas, *De Regimine*, p. 6.
[29] Ibid., p. 7.

all the people. In a state of democratic socialism, basic needs like food, shelter, health, and employment are provided or the opportunity to attain them is created. To ensure maximum well-being in the state, Awolowo opines that education and health facilities should be free for all. Education will develop the latent potentialities in each person, while good health provides a guarantee and insurance for a maximum tapping, development, and utilization of resources. Universal provision of such goods will offer equal opportunity to all to develop according to their ability and power.

One can explain the diversity of opinion in the choice of the ideal government. St. Thomas was writing and giving personal advice to a prince who wanted to rule well. Besides, he was born into a noble rich family and had never been exposed to the hard life of the masses. Awolowo, on the other hand, had to struggle and fend for himself from childhood.[80] He also lived with the ordinary people throughout his life. In any case, both were one in their concern for the well-being, welfare, and happiness of all. Their welfarist concept of the state is illustrated further by their common opposition to any form of tyranny and oppression. Aquinas was harsh in his denunciation of tyrants. He refers to them as " beasts," irrational, sick, and weak.

> For a man who exercises authority not according to reason, but according to the desires of passion, in no way differs from a beast.[81]

Indeed, history is replete with tyrants and dictatorial rulers. But in contemporary African history, military dictatorship is what particularly plagues our societies. Awolowo is vigorous in his condemnation of tyrants, be they civilian or military. But it is military dictatorship which disturbs him most, and which he most severely condemns. For the worst democracy is, in spite of its inconveniences and difficulties, still better than the best military rule. Military regimes are not only guilty of the crime of

[80] Awolowo, *Autobiography of Chief Obafemi Awolowo* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 34.

[81] Aquinas, *De Regimine,* p. 10.

holding on to power like the civilian dictators, but are even more corrupt.

In the day of foreign rule, corruption was not unknown, but then it was an occasional and isolated rash. Under self-rule, it has become an endemic small-pox in the body politic of every African State. In this matter, the military, Africa's self-proclaimed messiahs, are the worst.[32]

In the making of unjust laws and the use of unnecessary force tyrants show their true color.[33] In order to deal adequately with the nature of government, therefore, it becomes useful to talk about the place of law in society.

## *Natural Law*

For both Aquinas and Awolowo, it is a fact that men in society live under the rule of law. It must be so if there is to be political order and if the welfare and common good of the people are to be realized. The importance that each attaches to law as the basis of the political order is shown by the fact that St. Thomas wrote a treatise on law in his *Summa Theologiae*,[34] as did Awolowo in his reflections on the Nigerian constitution.[35] But whereas the problem Awolowo concerned himself with was that of good government and practice of the rule of law in a democratic but developing state, Aquinas's concern was theoretical, namely, to know the basis of the moral obligation of law itself. He wants to know by what power and warrant the human legislator binds the consciences of men.

First, in scholastic fashion, Aquinas defines law as "the ordinance of reason directed toward the common good and

[32] Awolowo, "Introduction," in Ebenezer Babatope, *Coups: Africa and the Barracks Revolt* (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Ltd., 1981), p. viii.

[33] This illustrates the point that in spite of the human rights posture of the Babangida government, the recent decree No. 2 and the arbitrary arrest of people make it dictatorial and tyranical in nature.

[34] The treatise on law consists of sixteen questions: eleven belong to divine positive law, one to eternal law, one to natural law, and three to human law.

[35] Awolowo, *Thoughts on the Nigerian Constitution* (Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1966).

promulgated by the one who has the care of the community." [36] In other words, law is a rational and moral order and its purpose is to bind the conscience and control human conduct in such a way that the common good of the community can be attained. The question now arises: Where is the source of the power to bind citizens? Aquinas traces the moral obligation to God and his eternal law. The thought leading to this conclusion, though complex in its full expression, can be articulated in three simple and basic propositions:

a) Obligation is a property that inheres in the nature of things. [87]
b) Since man has no control over the nature of things, he has no power to determine the basic outlines of obligation. [88]
c) Since the nature of finite things is not self-explanatory, the ultimate source of obligation must be found in the infinite Being who does determine the nature of things. [89]

It will follow that the source of obligation in the political order is in the divine conception of the order proper to the universe. As Aquinas himself concludes:

> The plan of government is derived by secondary governors from the governor-in-chief. . . . Since then the eternal law is the plan of government in the chief governor, all the plans of government in the inferior governors must be derived from the eternal law.[40]

This is where Aquinas disagrees with Awolowo and Hobbes, who contend that human will is the source of law. In actual fact, Awolowo's *Thoughts on the Nigerian Constitution* fails to define law, but another of his works, *The Voice of Wisdom*, advances the voluntarist definition of law: Law is the overt expression of the will.[41]

This needs a clarification. Awolowo, as a lawyer, knows that the decision to enact any law or even to issue a decree (positive)

86 Aquinas, *ST* I-II, q. 90, a. 4.
87 *ST* I-II, q. 95, a. 2.
88 *ST* I-II, q. 93, a. 5.
89 *ST* I-II, q. 93, a. 4.
40 *ST* I-II, q. 93, a. 3.
41 Awolowo, *Voice of Wisdom* (Akure: Fagbamigbe Publishers, 1981), p. 100.

has to be done through a clear and definite expression of the will of the legislator in an external form dictated by the Constitution. In actual fact, Awolowo, like Aquinas, belongs to the school of natural law which claims that the natural law is a cosmic law and is the basis of any positive or civil law. Indeed, natural law is the immutable law [42] called the "Universal Mind which permeates and pervades all things." [43] The Universal Mind is God Himself according to Awolowo. [44]

Aquinas's analysis of natural law is, however, more penetrating and incisive. First, it is the objective link between the mind of men and the mind of God. Like Awolowo, he says it is not different from eternal law, but a "participation thereof." The human legislator must, however, study to discover the mind of God [45] before enacting any law in the state.

It is clear for Aquinas then that eternal law, natural law, and positive law are distinct. Eternal law is the plan of divine wisdom directing all actions and movements of creatures to their proper end, namely God Himself. Natural law is the participation in the eternal law by creatures according to the dictate of natural reason. Positive law is the law enacted by legitimate authority in conformity to natural law and according to the specific needs of the community.

## *Political Obligation*

Thus, a civil law is deemed just only if it conforms with natural law, and thereby with eternal law. But what if the law is unjust?

Aquinas says that one may continue to obey the ruler, although under certain conditions disobedience may be permitted. In such a case, the ruler would have already lost every moral right to allegiance on the part of his citizens. But all the same, caution is required so that greater evil does not befall the community.

42 Awolowo, *The People's Republic*, p. 186.
43 Ibid., p. 206.
44 Ibid.
45 Aquinas, *ST* I-II, q. 92, a. 2 & 3.

Awolowo also advocates non-violence under any circumstance. Instead of violence, constitutional means of resistance such as political boycott and "constructive agitation"[46] should be adopted. If everything else fails, then prayer, fasting, resignation, and appeal to the Lord, who is the Supreme Judge,[47] should be our recourse. Awolowo believes that God does not fail his people when they really need his help; the messiah comes when the conditions are ripe.

### *Church and State Relations*

Earlier on, we noted the part played by the religious factor in explaining the similar views held by both Awolowo and Aquinas. Before we end our discourse we should examine the attitude of the two thinkers towards religious belief and practice in the political society.

St. Thomas and Awolowo once again agree on the separation of the religious institution from the political institution because they belong to two distinct realms which, however, in the final analysis are not unrelated. It is in the explanation of the relationship between the Church and state that St. Thomas betrays his medieval outlook. He claims that the Church is superior to the state even in temporal matters. This, he says, is because the supernatural end of man, which is the care of the Church, is superior to the natural and temporal ends of man, which are the concerns of the state. So when the Pope speaks *e.x- cathedra* on matters of faith, people should obey. But what if Archbishop Okogie asks the people to overthrow President Babangida? Ought they also obey in this matter?

It would seem that St. Thomas may not go so far. For he denies the direct power of the Church in temporal and secular affairs, a position defended by John of Salisbury and Giles of Rome, and so leans rather towards the theory of indirect power later propounded by Cardinal Bellarmine.

46 Awolowo, *Autobiography,* p. 297.
47 Awolowo, *UPN Presidential Address* (1983), pp. 20-22.

Awolowo, for his part, is very blunt in stating that the Church and other religious bodies should keep out of politics. It is even dangerous for the clergy to support government in power, especially if it is corrupt. But this does not mean that they should not cooperate and collaborate with the government in providing social services to the people. The welfare of the people is the concern of both the Church and the state; each is concerned, however, in its own way.

At a time when Nigeria is engulfed in the Shariia controversy, many might be repelled when they learn that St. Thomas also subscribes to the doctrine of the confessional state. To those who have never received the faith, the ruler must be tolerant and kind. But it is not so, he maintains, for those who have changed their religion or have lapsed into heresy and apostasy, or even engaged in rebellious activities towards the Church. They should be punished.

## *Conclusion*

In this paper we have, through the thematic method, identified the salient elements in the political philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas and related them to the socio-political philosophy of Obafemi Awolowo. What remains now is an overview of the two philosophies on the basis of what has been established.

St. Thomas has been described as the best interpreter of the spirit of his age and of its deepest aspirations. His philosophical victory over the Averroist interpretation of Aristotle has been compared to the victory of Charles Martel over the Moors five centuries earlier, and the crusaders' halting of the Turks at the battle of Lepanto in 1571.[48] In the realm of political philosophy in particular, his distinction between the two ends of man enabled him to distinguish the spiritual order from the temporal order, and to affirm the status and dignity of politics and political activity in the state as "holy " and " worthy" of divine favor. Here Aquinas won a significant victory over the rigid Augustinianism of many of his predecessors and contemporaries.

[48] D'Entreves, pp. x-xi.

Thomas lived at the ·end of an era in history and his ideas live on and have been propounded in another period of history and by another thinker of a different race and culture, namely, Awolowo of Nigeria. But Awolowo has analyzed the same political problems which confronted St. Thomas from a fresh African angle and with new insights. This explains Awolowo's pragmatic democratic socialism and his penchant for detailed analysis of politico-economic problems. What we insist upon is that the same principle of human welfare as the end of the state guided their political thinking. And, given the factor of Christian religious influence on both of them, we can infer that St. Thomas would approve much, if not all, of the political manifesto and program of Obafemi Awolowo if he were living in Nigeria today.

One must not be carried away by emotions and feelings in philosophy, however. Philosophy requires a critical and objective analysis and impartial evaluation. After all, both Awolowo and Aquinas are rational and intellectual in their approach to things. So it remains to consider some of their shortcomings. One point that we should mention right away is the lack of a clear distinction between society and the state, especially in St. Thomas. A society, like the "family," " community," or " nation," is not necessarily a state or polity, according to Maritain. [49] To be one, it must have a central and highest power and authority [50] to unite the heterogenous and diverse groups of people who may not even share originally the same history, culture, and language, as in the case of Nigeria. With regard to the state, Aquinas's recourse to " human nature" involves too great an abstraction upon which to build a political theory, and points to an incompleteness in his work. Here, Awolowo has an advantage with his non-Hobbesian type of social contract theory and his emphasis on gradualism and evolutionary development.

[49] See J. Maritain, *Man and State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 1-15.

[50] Onigu Otite, "Issues in African Socialism," in *Themes in African Social and Political Thought,* pp. 151-152.

The issue of government and the use of political power will always be a subject of controversy, but one thinks that the age of monarchy has passed as society becomes more complex and diversified. The trend is towards democracy, the defects of which are apparent, though, if we take cognizance of the many forms of human rights violation that exist even in the most democratically developed nations like Great Britain and the United States. What we then mean to say is that the issue of human welfare within the confines of the state is not assured by St. Thomas with his acceptance of monarchy as the superior form of government. Nor is the common good assured by Awolowo with his democractic socialism as a blueprint. But the common good is something for which we today must continue to search and hope to find.

# MORE THAN METAPHORS: MASCULINE-GENDERED NAMES AND THE KNOWABILITY OF GOD

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WHAT WAS ONCE a phenomenon confined to advocacy groups has appeared in ordinary Catholic parishes. Priests celebrating liturgies offer blessings "In the name of the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Holy Love." Such invocations of Persons of the Trinity by names indicative of divine action, as well as the "naming" of God with either gender-combined (Mother-Father) or gender-neutral (Friend) designations of personal relationships, suggest that the way in which God is addressed need not be different from the way in which one describes divine actions. Many argue that since one may refer to God's specific act as "Creator," characterize God's eternal and temporal activity as "Love," or note that in certain ways people experience God's care as that of a "Friend" or "Mother," these terms are suitable for addressing a divine Person. In early 1992 the Catholic Church's International Commission on English in the Liturgy endorsed non-gendered invocations by proposing that English language liturgical texts delete all masculine pronouns referring to God and replace "Father" in several prayers with gender-neutral names.

Willingness to depart from the Father/Son/Holy Spirit terminology found in scripture and the Church's creedal statements is often grounded in the belief that God does not merely excel beyond human comprehension the fatherhood and sonship traditionally attributed to divine Persons, but rather that God, as transcendent being, is essentially unlike any quality that can be named. Those who define transcendence in this "epistemologi-

cal" way maintain that God is free of definition or distinction and that Persons of the Trinity negate and contradict, in their acts of existence, any permanent identity that the human mind may have " attributed " in scripture or Church doctrine to divine Personhood. Theologians such as Karl Rahner and David Tracy see no departure from the Church's authoritative theological teachings in their definition of transcendence as God's existential freedom from the limitations of eternally existing attributes of Persons. According to Rahner the names most indicative of who God is as God are " ineffable one," " nameless one," " silent one." For Tracy, the central " metaphor " and " doctrine" of Christianity is a " triune understanding" of the words " God is Love." [1]

For theologians who define transcendence as God's being unconfined by categories, names by which divine Persons are addressed in Scripture are merely ways in which inspired communities or individuals likened God's dealings with them to life-affirming actions or admired personal qualities. If traditional names for God were " revealed" in this way, modern worshippers could reasonably address God in terms of likenesses to other, more

1 Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, tr. William Dych (NY: Crossroad, 1982), pp. 46-71; David Tracy, "The Hermeneutics of Naming God," *The Irish Theological Quarterly*, 57 (1991) : 253-264. For an analysis and defense of the concept of transcendence as absence of metaphysical reality see Mark I. Wallace, "Can God Be Named Without Being Known?: The Problem of Revelation in Thiemann, Ogden, and Ricoeur," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 59/2 (1991): 281-308. Although the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) listed "ineffable " among the attributes of God, God was not named in this way and, moreover, the context of other listed attributes (omnipotence, eternity) suggests that " ineffable " does not mean God is without anything that can be described but that descriptions of God are not comprehensible to humans [H. J. D. Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 30th ed., trans. Roy Deferrari (London: Herder & Herder, 1955), # 428]. This point is illustrated by the First Vatican Council (1869-1870) which refers to God as "ineffably most high above all things " and then proceeds to list a series of attributes (Denzinger, # 1782). In the Council of Toledo, "ineffable" was used as a modifier ("ineffable Trinity," "ineffable substance," "ineffably begot") for terms that were defined in the Council's creed (Denzinger # 275-276). Further discussion of " ineffable" is in note 6, below.

inclusive, human qualities. Invoking, rather than merely describing or praising, God with names derived from creative/redemptive/loving acts or from divine likenesses to abstractions/combinations/contradictions of human qualities, seems, to those who equate transcendence with undefinability, an appropriate way to name God.

Nevertheless, to say, as does I John 4.7-21, that "God is Love " after twice placing this predication in the context of the " love of God " that is manifested in the " Father " sending the " Son " is, according to most exegetes, a declaration that love is an eternal activity essential to the divine Persons, not an assertion that "love" identifies who these Persons are. To say, as Tracy does, that the central Christian metaphor is " God is Love " or to invoke a divine person as " Love " suggests that God's central act of existence is not as Persons but as an activity "like" that of Persons. [2]

[2] Although the word " love" in I John 4.8, 17 is a noun denoting essence, the declaration that " God is love " is set within the context of thought of union with God's action rather than knowledge of who God is. A. Wilder, "Introduction and Exegesis of the First, Second and Third Epistles of John," *The Interpreter's Bible* (NY: Abingdon, 1957), 12: 284. Raymond Brown also holds that the author of I John is not naming God as " love" but rather using a formula (as is done in the " God is light " reference of I John 1.5) to indicate that by knowing the love that is revealed, one knows the Person/ s who are the source of this love. Thus Brown maintains that he is in line with other commentators on the Johannine Epistles such as A. E. Brooke (1912) and A. Plummer (1886) who maintain that the "God is Love/Light" formulae in John are not statements of identity but descriptions of a quality of God. See *The Epistles of John,* vol. 30, *Anchor Bible,* ed. William Albright and David Freedman (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982), pp. 549-553, 560-561, 195. Brown also argues that I John uses the word "love" to describe the unity of God's being, not as a metaphor for God's act of personhood. See *The Gospel According to John,* vol. 29a, *Anchor Bible,* eds. William Albright and David Freedman (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), 2:681. C. H. Dodd also notes that " God is love" is not a reference to God's identity, but refers to a characteristic that qualifies all of God's activities: He creates in love, judges in love, etc. See *The Johannine Epistles* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1946), pp. 110-118. See also Andre Feuillet, *La m.ystere de !'amour divin dans la theologie johannique* (Paris, 1972), pp. 194 ff. A major error in terminology was made by Pope Paul VI, who in an otherwise careful de-

The equation of divine transcendence with the idea that God is unbounded by objective qualities of personhood is also an element in " metaphor theology." Originating in Protestant traditions, metaphor theology holds that any name ·expressing human experiences of God's loving acts is valid for addressing divine Persons. Whereas theologians such as Tracy and Rahner who focus, respectively, on act or on negation/ contradiction as the source of names for God, metaphor theologians often choose names such as " friend " or " mother " to stress that God is revealed in the human experience of personal relationships with no one relationship being a more real expression of divine activity than another. [3]

Despite the acceptance by many Catholics of metaphor theology and other " epistemological " notions of transcendence, the implication of the Church's formal teaching is that God does not existentially negate all attributes and analytical categories. Instead, Church pronouncements suggest an " ontological " notion of transcendence as God's infinite, eternal, and substantial perfection of certain attributes which are revealed to, not merely by, created intellects and are understandable, though not fully comprehended, by finite minds. The Council of Toledo, XI (675)

scription of the Persons of the Trinity, declared that " two names, Being and Love, express ineffably the same divine reality of him who wished to make himself known to us." Paul VI's statement carried no doctrinal authority. See "Credo of the People of God," June *30,* 1968.

[3] Specific applications of "metaphor theology " to the naming of God may be found in Sallie McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), p. 182: Sallie TeSelle, *Speaking in Parables* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), pp. 43-65; and Warren McWilliams, "God the Friend: A Test Case in Metaphorical Theology," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 16 (1989) : 109-120. Critical of "metaphor theology " for producing a feminist God-language that fails to account for the full scope of metaphor is Garret Green, " The Gender of God and the Theology of Metaphor" in *Speaking the Christian God: The Holy Trinity and the Challenge of Feminism,* ed. Alvin Kimel, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), pp. 44-66. Several essays in *Speaking the Christian God* address issues discussed in this essay. Since the anthology was published after this article was completed and accepted for publication, references to ideas parallel to those in this essay are noted in footnotes.

declared that in biblically revealing the names Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the " Trinity itself has so deigned to show " to created intellects knowledge about the relationships of divine Persons, the unique " property " of each Person, the distinctions of Persons, and that the Son being from the "viscera " (not " womb " as in some inaccurate English translations) of the Father is of the same inseparable substance.[4] Pope John XXII affirmed in 1329 that human minds could understand distinctions in the divine essense and condemned the theory that " every distinction is foreign to God, either in nature or in Person." In 1887 the Church's Holy Office again stressed the knowability of God by repudiating the theory that God could not " communicate his essence . . . except in that way which is accommodated to finite intelligences." The same decree declared that God is not manifested only through " relations " with human beings " as their creator, provider, redeemer, and sanctifier." [5]

[4] Council of Toledo, XI, Denzinger # 275-282. Some argue that Toledo XI, in declaring that the Son is "from the womb of the Father " to clarify that the Son is begotten from the substance of the Father, endorses a "motherly " reference to God. But the " maternal " language comes from an inadequate English translation, not from the original Latin decree. In Latin the words are "de Patris utero." The Latin word uterus, -i (m.) or uterum, -i (n.) does not specifically designate what English speakers would call the " womb " or "uterus." Instead it is a more general reference to "viscera," "abdomen," or "belly." The Latin Vulgate uses "in utero" of Elizabeth's pregnancy to translate Luke's original Greek phrase "en te koilia" (Luke 1:42, 44). In biblical Greek these words refer to the whole contents of the abdomen of any male or female creature (eg. Matt 12.40; 15.17), not specifically to a female organ of generation. On the other hand, when " womb " or "uterus " is specifically designated, as in Paul's reference to Sarah, the Latin word is "vulva" not "uterus" (Romans 4.19). The Greek text and Vulgate translation are from *Novum Testamentum Graece et Latine,* ed. A. Merk, S.J. (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1957). Misunderstanding of the nature of God caused by mistranslation of "uterus" characterizes Jiirgen Moltmann, "The Motherly Father: Is Trinitarian Patripassianism Replacing Theological Patriarchalism," in *God as Father?,* ed. J.-B. Metz and Edward Schillebeeckx, English editor, Marcus Lefebure, *Concilium* 143 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1981), p. 53 and Elaine Pagels, "What Became of God the Mother? Conflicting Images of God in Early Christianity," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society Z* (1976) : 293-303.

[5] Pope John XXII, Errors of Meister Eckart, "In agro dominico," (1329), # 524. Errors of Antonius de Rosmini-Serbati (1887), # 1930).

The Church's consistent emphasis on God's knowability as Person/sand on certain names correctly expressing what ought to be known is developed systematically by Thomas Aquinas. For Aquinas, God, though not comprehensible, is " supremely knowable." Human minds can know God as God not merely by likenesses but in the divine essence itself *(Summa Theologiae* la.12.1 and 9). Consequently, certain names properly designate the divine substance *(ST* la.13.2). In the Church's formal decrees and in Aquinas's reasoning, transcendence is God's freedom " in," not freedom from, certain Personal attributes. Liturgical and theological use of names that abstract from or offer gender-free or female-gendered alternatives to biblical names contradict Catholic traditions of exegesis and worship by precluding ontological exploration of divine Personhood and denying that divine attributes are eternal realities understandable to human reason.

It is the contention of this essay that the gendered "names" by which God is addressed in the biblical canon and from which Councils have derived precise, consistent Trinitarian and Christological meaning, convey the reality of God's eternal act of existence as three infinite Persons. The names given to God in the Bible and in the Church's doctrinal statements present God's transcendence not as a negation, abstraction, composition, or contradiction of the qualities attainable by human persons but as an absolute perfection-beyond what would constitute perfection in a finite person-of certain qualities that distinguish the eternal nature of the divine Persons. If certain attributes of God are real and eternal, one cannot equate divine transcendence with an absence of specificity in the divine essence nor can one say that attributes are merely human designations of ways in which God can be metaphorically " like" any admirable human quality.

Instead, it may be more accurate to maintain, as does Aquinas, that there is a difference between "metaphorical" names that "signify" a way in which a divine act is like a human act and " analogical " names that reveal that some quality found in human persons exists in infinite perfection in God. What Aquinas designates as an " analogical " or " proportional " name

is one that indicates that an eternal reality in the divine substance is related to something imperfectly found in the created order. In other words, God is wise not " as " a human being but human wisdom is analogous to the wisdom that has real and perfect existence in God. Such perfection is not inconsistent with "limits" that distinguish ·even an infinite being's separate substance (*ST* la.5.5 and la.13.5-6). A God who can be described as "living" and "just" is a more perfect being than one whose act of existence transcends life and whose act of will is not limited by a standard of justice.

The idea that divine attributes are not abstractions of admirable human qualities which are attributed metaphorically to God, but instead are eternally real and revealed to human reason in certain analogies found in scripture and created natures, suggests that God's act of existence is properly designated by some attributes but not others.[6] Just as God is eternal and not changeable (though certain changes are good in humans), three-personed and not four-personed, active and without potential, simple and without admixture or complexity, so too does God's perfection consist in being Spirit and not matter (though it is perfection in a human to be both), Father and not Mother (though among human persons spiritual or physical motherhood is as much a perfection as spiritual or physical fatherhood), One who eternally loves but who cannot be metaphorically named "Love."

Before tracing the biblical and theological basis for liturgically addressing the God of the Judeo-Christian tradition with names that designate only certain specific attributes, it may be useful to consider how non-biblical religious traditions may appropriately invoke or address a deity by names suggestive of either the consequence of divine action in time or by metaphor. In the Hindu Vedas and Upanishads, for example, ultimate reality does not exist eternally and substantially as person or persons but as an imper-

[6] Aquinas rejected Maimonides's negative interpretation of divine attributes because there would be no basis for using some words rather than others in describing God. See Neil Stubbins, " Naming God: Moses Maimonides and Thomas Aquinas," *The Thomist* 54 (1990) : 232.

sonal cosmic substance that transcends personhood and, therefore, transcends the attributes (will, intellect, goodness, gender) that distinguish persons from other entities. Random expansion of the eternal substance produces a spiritual universe of deities who, through the acts by which they bring themselves into being, give existence to physical phenomena. Ensuing relationships among the gods and the objects or forces produced by their actions establish what kind of identity each deity acquires in the course of time. " Creator" or " Breather" (Brahma) suitably invokes the deity whose identity results from bringing brightness, water, and earth into existence and whose anguished interaction with these temporal forces yields heat, fire, and life. Similarly, the deity Vishnu, by governing the temporal order, attains existence as " Preserver " and becomes a variety of persons (avatars) shaped by the needs of the moment. Thus divine persons can be addressed by the name " Father," " Mother," or any other personal identity the believer chooses to name.[7]

In Hindu, Buddhist, and other Vedic traditions, personhood is not eternal. When a deity's acts produce personhood, it is a quality subordinate to existence and subject to process and change. Divine persons are, therefore, indefinite, transitory, and characterized not by perfection of absolute qualities but by relationships that emerge in the course of time.

Christians, of course, reject the idea of a God whose existence is less than eternal. Yet in the course of history, some who approach the Gospel message from certain philosophical perspectives and methods of spirituality have proposed that God's eternal existence transcends the categories with which the human mind invests personhood. Consequently, they avoid addressing God with names that designate the permanent identity of eternal Persons in God and prefer invocations which, like those used in Vedic religions, designate actions that establish God's personality and identity in relation to the temporal world.

[7] Rig Veda, 10:129; Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, 1:2.1-7, Bhagavad-Gita, 9, in *Sacred Texts of the World: A Universal Anthology,* ed. Ninian Smart and Richard Hecht (NY: Crossroad, 1986), pp. 182-183, 219.

In the second through third centuries, theorists such as Noetus, Praxeas, and Sabellius denied that the Personhood of Jesus was that of the eternal Second Person. Their followers, though regarding themselves as Christians, expressed their denial that God existed as three eternal, distinct, knowable Persons by invoking the deity as " Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier." The idea that God's temporal acts revealed modes of divine existence rather than God's eternal act of existence as Persons came to be called " modalistic monarchianism." Although some orthodox thinkers had, prior to the rise of modalism, used names such as " Creator " and " Sanctifier " in praising God, such usage ceased entirely or was applied only in certain appositions after such terminology became associated with modalism. By the middle of the third century the condemnation of Noetus by the presbyters of Rome and the excommunication of Sabellius by Pope Callistus limited modalism's influence.[8]

[8] Archibald Robertson notes that although some orthodox writers in the subapostolic era (90-150 CE) were "naively monarchian" in their language, the official condemnation of modalistic monarchianism and the early creeds rejected this use of terminology for invoking God. See "Prolegomena," *Select Writings and Letters of Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria,* ed. and pro!. Archibald Robertson, vol. 4, *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church,* second series, ed. Philip Shaff and Henry Wace (reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), p. xxiv. See also J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (revised, San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), pp. 120-123, and Philip Hughes, *History of the Church,* 3 vols. (revised, NY: Sheed & Ward, 1949), 1:100-103. In an effort to refute post-Nicene Arians who argued that the work of sanctification was not the work of Persons, liturgists like Ambrose of Milan stressed the operation of all three Persons in consecrating Eucharistic elements. As a result some liturgies invoke at the offertory the power of the Son and sometimes the Holy Spirit to change the elements. This is why the Holy Spirit is invoked as " Sanctifier" at the offertory in the Tridentine Rite, but this is done not as a separate address but in apposition to an address of the triune God. See Paul Palmer, S.J., *Sacraments and Worship: Liturgy and Doctrinal Development of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1963), pp. 61-62. The modalism present in many non-gendered substitutions for "Father" and "Son" has been noted by J. A. DiNoia, O.P. in "Knowing and Naming the Triune God: The Grammar of Trinitarian Confession," in *Speaking the Christian God,* p. 170.

A more persistent influence on theories of divine Personhood and attribution came, according to Bernard Lonergan, from speculation that the basic categories designated by biblical names are not those of being or substance but place or time. As Lonergan points out, Tertullian (d. 230) correctly held that divine Persons were not separate substances but failed to conclude, as Aquinas would eventually do, that although the names Father and Son are relational, relationship in God is not " accident " **but** the divine essence itself and, therefore, subsistent. " Divine paternity," said Aquinas, "is God the Father" *(ST* la.29.4 ).[9]

The idea that God is not eternally characterized by qualities which identify human persons appears not only in the writings of pre-Nicene apologists like Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria but also among proponents of Neoplatonist philosophy. In Neoplatonism, any quality or attribute indicates limit (a person who is Father is not Mother) and since a transcendent God would not be subject to limit, God exists at a level of abstraction devoid of the qualities of Persons that divine acts might suggest. The resistance of Church leaders to Neoplatonist concepts of personhood was apparent in the second century when the bishop and martyr Irenaeus of Lyon rejected as heresy Valentinus's view that God transcends personal attributes and could be addressed only as " Ineffable " and " Silence." In Valentinus' s mind, the creation of the temporal world or "pleroma" enabled an eternal but inchoate being to become the persons of " Father " and " Mother" who in turn produced the more temporally involved persons revealed in the Gospel as " Christ " and " Holy Spirit or Truth." [10]

[9] Lonergan, *De Deo Trina,* 2 vols. (Rome: Gregorian, 1964), **1**:93, 197-198.

[10] Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses,* 3.4-15. On Valentinus, see J. Quispe!, "The Original Doctrine of Valentine," *Vigiliae Christianae* **1** (1947) : 43-73. Note the similarity of Valentinus's names to those used by Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith,* p. 46. Irenaeus also criticized the concept of God as being *anousias* or beyond substance in *Adversus haereses,* 1.14.1. Such ideas were common in Gnosticism as evidenced by the apocryphal *Gospel of Truth* (especially 39.12) which declared God to be beyond names *(akatonomatos).* Such notions were refuted by Bishop Hippolytus, who maintained that God's "ineffability" was not a matter of God's being without qualities that could

Despite Irenaeus' s argument that the abstract, change-oriented names used by his opponents displayed the weakness of their understanding of divine Persons, Neoplatonism in modified forms survived and influenced otherwise orthodox Christians. In the twelfth century, Alan of Lille argued that although almost any name given to God describes some aspect of God's relationship to the created world, no name conveys God's ·eternal nature, which is beyond existence. In a similar way the Augustinian cleric Giles (Egidio) of Viterbo, in speaking to the Fifth Lateran Council (1512), reflected his education at the University of Padua under Neoplatonist Marsilio Ficino by designating the three divine Persons as " Parent, Child, and Love." [11]

The idea that God is not knowable as eternal Person/s but only in the personalities expressed through divine action in time has also been accepted by proponents of certain forms of spirituality. Many who adopt what George Lindbeck calls an " experiential-expressive " rather than " cognitive-propositional" approach to Christian faith view biblical texts not as narratives of divine acts that reveal eternal truths but as expressions of human experiences

be objectively named but rather being "above" every name that could be named. See *Elenchos,* 7.20.3. See Jean Danielou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture,* tr. John Austin Baker, vol. 2, *A History of Early Christian Doctrine Before the Council of Nicaea* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973), p. 339; Gerard Vallee, *A Study in Anti-Gnostic Polemics: lrenaeus, Hippolytus, and Epiphanus* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier, 1981) ; Lonergan, *De Deo Trina,* pp. 100-104.

11 Alan is cited in Etienne Gilson, *Elements of Christian Philosophy* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960), p. 140. Alan held that only negative statements may be properly made about God; thus one could not even say that God "exists." Many of Alan's ideas were grounded in Neoplatonism acquired through reading of the *Asclepius,* a hermetic writing of the 2nd/3rd centuries which combined Platonism, mysticism, and the idea that humans were deified by knowledge. See G. R. Evans, *Alan of Lille: The Frontiers of Theology in the Later Twelfth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 32, 53-57; Giles of Viterbo, "Address to the Fifth Lateran Council, 1512," in *The Catholic Reformation: Savonarola to Ignatius Loyola,* ed. John Olin (NY: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 46. For discussion of medieval ideas related to names given to God, see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California, 1982).

of God's acts in the temporal world.[12] This Christian experientialism affirms that there is one God who has existed from all eternity. But because this God is transcendent, and because transcendence is defined not as God's infinite perfection of "attributes " consistent with reason and scripture but as the fundamental contradiction in God's true nature of every "attribute" or ontological category traditionally assigned to the deity, God is best recognized in the changes and contradictions in the way devout people experience God.

For many modern Catholics, acceptance of an experiential-expressive idea of God comes not from acquaintance with theological writings that imply attributes are inconsistent with transcendence but from what appears to be an ancient, Church-approved, mystical tradition. Often cited as exemplifying this tradition is the anchorite Julian of Norwich (1342-1416/23). With publication in 1978 of an authoritative text of Julian's *Showings of Divine Love* and promotion of her ideas by Catholic publishers and authors of scholarly, popular, and even high school level publications, many Catholics have developed or refined a belief that names for God reflect shared, subjective, experiences of human communities rather than anything inherent in God's eternal nature.[13]

Although Julian believed in the eternal God of biblical revelation, she took an almost Vedic approach to divine Personhood in her concept of "substance." Instead of viewing God as an eternal being whose unique substance exists as three Persons and who created a universe by bringing other substances (including each one-personed human substance) into existence, Julian thought of substance as an impersonal property of God that was expanded

[12] George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), p. 16.

[13] Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, tr. and intro. Edmund Colledge, O.S.A. and James Walsh, S.J. (NY: Paulist, 1978). Promotion of Julian's ideas as consistent with Catholic theology is found in Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Dare We Hope "That All Men be Sa'l}ed,"* tr. David Kipp and Lothar Krauth (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1988), pp. 101-102; and Gloria Durka, *Praying with Julian of Norwich* (Winona, MN: St. Mary's, 1989).

by creation to produce entities that remain, to greater or lesser degree, substantially one (" knit in this knot ") with God. " [O]ur substance" wrote Julian "is a creature in God" and, since the God who creates is "nature's substance," divine Personhood is experienced by human beings not because divine Persons reveal what is eternal and objective in the divine nature but because there is " no difference between God and our substance." [14] For Julian, personhood, whether divine or human, is not a substantial identity as rational being but the result of temporal actions and relationships within an eternal substance. Consequently, Julian addressed God by names suggesting the deity's substantial oneness with creation: " Maker, Protector, Lover." [15]

Although Julian writes of three " Persons " of the Trinity and often uses the names (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) found in scripture and creed, she adds, from her mystical experience, the name " Mother." In doing so, Julian assigns the name arbitrarily: sometimes to the creator, sometimes to the redeemer, sometimes to the whole Trinity. [16] Julian associates God's triunity not with eternal relationships in the Godhead but with modes of operation. God's creative, sustaining, and perfecting acts ("I may," "I can," " I will") in the temporal world are unified in the " I shall" that expresses God's eternal intention to eliminate the created entities that appear to be separate from God by completely reabsorbing them into the divine substance. Just as the divine substance does not, in Julian's experience, exist as eternal and distinct Persons, neither do human persons exist as separate substances. Instead, the redemptive act of Christ joins human persons within "each person" of the Trinity. [17]

Neither Julian nor many of those who apply her mystical experience to liturgical expression systematically discuss the implications of her idea of divine and human personhood being

[14] Julian, *Showings,* (long text, chs. 56, 54), pp. 290, 285.

[15] Ibid., (long text, chs. 53, 4, 5, 60), pp. 284, 181, 183, 297-299.

[16] Ibid., (long text, chs. 52, 58, 54, 62, 51, 52), pp. 279, 293-294, 285, 303, 278, 279.

[17] Ibid., (long text, chs. 31, 51, 73), p. 229, 270-271, 323.

transitory. Nevertheless, Julian's concept of divine personhood is not only modalistic, but akin to a particular form of modalism developed in the third century by the Bishop of Antioch, Paul of Samosata. According to Paul, God not only transcended Personhood but infused the temporal world with divine substance. The perfect degree to which this substance was contained in Jesus was, in the bishop's estimation, the reason scripture called Jesus the "Son" of the Father. This Christology (called "dynamistic modalism" or "dynamistic monarchianism") along with its corollary notion that divine substance expanded in the course of time was rejected as heresy in 268 by a synod at Antioch.[18]

Julian's expression of similar ideas, because they were presented privately, did not receive formal censure. Yet Julian's theory of substance was a naive formulation of heretical theories that were often advanced publicly and, therefore, consistently rejected by the Church. The Council of Toledo declared in 400 that "the human soul is not a divine substance." In 1864 Pope Pius IX repudiated contemporary expressions of the theory that created things have the same substance as God.[19] Meister Eckart's (d.1328) theory that creatures are "nothing" because they have no substance separate from God and will ultimately be absorbed by God-a formulation strikingly similar to Julian's-was declared in 1329 to be inconsistent with Catholic faith.[20]

Although conceiving of God as transcending personhood seems to show reverent awareness of God's otherness, it raises several problems. For example, a God who cannot be confined to "Person" and in whom gender, like other aspects of personhood, is merely an attribution made by humans, is a God who is "essentially" unknowable. The moral commands of an unknowable,

[18] Dynamistic Monarchianism is discussed by Karl Adam, *The Christ of Faith*, tr. Joyce Crick (NY: Pantheon, 1957), p. 20.

[19] Creed of the Council of Toledo, (400), Denzinger, # 20, 31. Pius IX, Syllabus of Errors (1864), # 1701.

[20] Pope John XXII, "In agro Dominico" (1329), Denzinger, # 526, 510. Julian's view of personality is quite different from that of Thomas Aquinas who holds that personality means completeness, not particularity, in a common nature. See I *In Sent.*, 23.1. 2 ad 4.

changeable God are easily viewed not as expressions in time of what God eternally wills and loves but as standards arbitrarily chosen by God for the utilitarian needs of creatures. Julian, for example, assumed that, " a man regards some deeds well done and some as evil, and our Lord does not regard them so for everything that exists in nature is of God's creation, so that everything which is done has the property of being God's doing." [21] Accordingly what people call God's goodness is also a metaphor rather than a designation of what is real. So although Julian referred to God's "forgiveness," since this quality of God is mentioned in scripture and experienced by believers, she held that God can neither forgive nor be angry because the human soul is "united to him who is unchangeable goodness." [22] Julian concluded that all people attain a salvific blending with God and that "sins" would "be rewarded with various joys ... to the degree in which the sin may have been painful and sorrowful to the soul on earth." [23] This notion of sin as inconsequential was similar to the idea, attributed to Eckart and condemned by the Church in 1329, that a person ought not wish that the sins of his life had not been committed. [24]

Leaving aside the moral implications of eliminating "anger" or " forgiveness " as acts flowing from a distinctive, eternal Personality, one needs to return to the fundamental issue of whether transcendence limits what can be named in the divine essence. As far as biblical texts are concerned, it is God's essence, not God's actions, that are the source of " addresses " for God. In both Old and New Testaments, God is not addressed, but only described, by names derived from time-bound acts. On the other hand, the names with which biblical figures address God or are asked to address God suggest something of the divine personality that intends and wills certain actions.

Consider, first of all, the biblical description of the act of creation. The emphasis in the Book of Genesis is not only on

21 Julian, *Showings,* (long text, ch. 11), p. 198.
22 Ibid., (long text, chs. 46, 49, 50), pp. 258-259, 263, 265.
2a Ibid., (long text, ch. 38), p. 242.
24 Pope John XXII "In agro dominico," (1329), Denzinger, # 515.

God's timeless existence prior to creation (" In the beginning, God ... ") but also on God's act of evaluating what is created (God saw " that it was good "). The suggestion in Genesis that God evaluates the created world according to an eternal, not created, standard indicates that God's personal identity and even the relationships appropriate to that identity are only revealed, not established, by the act of creation.

Accordingly, in Exodus, the Person who creates offers deeper insight into the divine nature by telling Moses that " I am " is the identity by which human beings can know God. It is out of this eternal personhood that transcends the role of " Creator " that God interacts with those who develop their wills and intellects by obedience and worship. In other words the God who gives laws in the Torah or Pentateuch, who plays favorites to " chosen " people in the historical narratives, and whose Prophets speak of divine "jealousy" and "forgiveness," is a God who emphasizes not his role as creator but his identity as person. [25]

Since ancient Judaism, awed by the identity conveyed in the sacred " I Am," restricted its use as an appellation to the Day of Atonement when the high-priest entered the sacred part of the Temple to invoke the deity, readers of the Torah and writers of prophetic and wisdom books substituted the name " Adonai " or "Lord." This appellation by which believers called on the eternal, unspeakable " I Am" was not a description of God's role in the universe but a reference to who God eternally is. When people call another human being " lord " they refer not to what the " lord " does but to a person whose existence establishes the terms in which they develop and express their own identities.

[25] According to the Bishop Athanasius, " if so be the same terms are used of God and man in divine Scripture, yet the clear sighted, as Paul enjoins, will study it and thereby discriminate and dispose of what is written according to the nature of each subject, and avoid any confusion of sense so as neither to conceive of the things of God in a human way nor to ascribe the things of man to God." "Defense of the Nicene Definition," (3.10) in *Select Writings and Letters of Athanasius,* p. 156.

Accordingly, Psalms and wisdom literature emphasize "fear of the Lord " as the source of wisdom-not in the sense that one wisely fears an unknown power but in the sense that recognizing the perfect beauty and goodness of another Person inspires awe and provides a standard of evaluation (Sirach 1.5-12 and Psalm 22.24). Wisdom, that pattern that God <:stablishes even before the initiation of acts in the temporal realm, is the means by which human beings can understand God as a Person "because God is the witness of his inmost self" (Wisdom 1.66). [26]

Of significance to Christians is the way in which the gospels indicate the names by which Jesus is addressed. As important as the role of messiah or redeemer may be, these roles do not generate the title by which petitioners and members of the Twelve reportedly invoke Jesus. Matthew's Gospel, for example, distinguishes between "crowds" and officials who addressed Jesus by his function as " teacher " and the seekers of mercy and members of the Twelve who consistently called him " Lord." [27] Mark's Gospel similarly suggests that Christ's primary role is not redemption but, revelation of the personal identity of the one whom David addressed as "Lord" (Mark 12.35-37). More evocative is John's Gospel which reports that those who see Jesus benefit not only from redemption, friendship, or love, but from having "seen the Father" (John 14.8-12). It is the Person of Jesus who reveals divine Personhood.

The gospels, of course, also emphasize the human nature of Jesus and his existence in a particular time and place. Consistent with this focus the evangelists record names for Jesus that, unlike

[26] For a discussion of early Christian views of Wisdom books see Jean Danie!ou, *The Origins of Latin Christianity*, tr. David Smith and John Baker, vol. 3, *A History of Early Christian Doctrine* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), pp. 367-368.

[27] William F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, vol. 26, *Anchor Bible*, ed. William Albright (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), p. clv. Raymond Brown observes that gnostics apparently disliked the name "Lord" and substituted " Savior" as the faithful person's address for Jesus. In the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas* 10, Jesus is praised as "the Savior of all creation, the one who gives life to the world." *Epistles of John*, p. 558, note 47.

names for the Father and Spirit/Paraclete, include references to relationships outside the Trinity. Thus Jesus describes himself as the" Son of Man" (Matthew 11.19; Mark 9.31; Luke 6.22; John 3.14) and John the Baptizer addresses Jesus as "Lamb of God" (John 1.29 and 36). Yet in both of these phrases there is a connection of temporal action that Jesus undertook in time (life as a man, life as a sacrificial offering) with his eternal Person (He is God's Son, not a man's son, and he is God's sacrificial offering, not the worshipper's lamb). As Karl Adam has noted, when Jesus used the phrase " Son of Man," it was already known to those familiar with Prophetic writings as the way in which God addressed those who conveyed his " word" and as the name given in the Book of Daniel to one who "comes on the clouds of heaven" to receive dominion from the "Ancient One" (7.13). In other words, the name " Son of Man " suggests the coming of what is eternal into what is temporal. The " hypostatic " union suggested by these phrases has been affirmed by Conciliar definitions and thus "Lamb of God" is an address that is used prominently in authorized liturgical practice.[28]

Even if one leaves aside the issue of Christ's Personhood being that of the eternal Second Person and considers only the New Testament descriptions of Christ's salvific role, one finds that canonical texts subordinate the effect of Christ's action to how " seeing " his action enhances human understanding of God. In developing the question of how Christ's actions affect the temporal world, Paul's Epistles propose that Christ's death and resurrection redeems human beings from sin but also makes them adoptive sons and daughters who can appropriately address God as "Abba, Father" (Romans 8.3-4 and 11-17). What St. Paul implies is that, although God is unchanging, Christ's action has not just mended but perfected the human understanding of God's personal identity so that believers can recognize that the " Lord " can be approached and, more importantly, named in a way that

[28] Adam, *Christ of Faith,* pp. 107-114. According to the Council of Toledo, " This Son of Man is called [named] also the Son of God but the Son of God, God, is not likewise called the Son of Man." Creed of the Council of Toledo, 400 [additions in 447], Denzinger, # 20.

recognizes who the Lord is as Person/s. The Person who was always known to the Son as "Father" also becomes known to the adoptive children as "Father."

In both Old and New Testaments, one's relationship to God is expressed by invoking the deity by names that designate essential qualities rather than by ways (creator or redeemer) in which God acts "upon" us. Even the man or woman who rejects not only the existence but the conceptual plausibility of an eternal Person can conceive of something that "creates," " saves," or is " prime mover." But for the person who loves God, loves an idea of God, or even rages against God for seeming not to exist or act, only vocatives such as " Lord !" or " God !" or, for the Christian, " Abba !" express the human awareness that the anguish, anger, happiness, or love in the exclamation mean something to the One whose name is called.

What troubles some people is that in the Hebrew scriptures the masculine connotations of " Lord " can always be referred back to the unspoken and, apparently, ungendered " I Am" whereas in the New Testament the ultimate reference is the gender-specific invocation of God as " Father." Jesus not only tells disciples to address God as " Father" (Matthew 6.9; Luke 11.2) but also addresses God as " Father" in his personal prayers (Matthew 11.25-27 and 26.39; Luke 10.21-22; John 17.2ff) and as "Abba, Father" at Gethsemane (Mark 14.36).

Some exegetes like Robert Hammerton-Kelly propose that the combination of the word " Father" with "Abba" in Mark's Gospel and in Paul's Epistles (Romans 8 :15 and Galatians 4.6), along with gospel passages that reject the paternalism of the scribes and Pharisees, indicate that New Testament authors thought of God as transcending the role of " Father." According to Hammerton-Kelly, the intimacy conveyed by the child-like pellation " abba " promised a relationship with God devoid of the formality and submissiveness demanded by fathers in the Greco-Roman world and suggested a young child's dependence on a mother's leniency and tenderness. Moreover, Jesus' admonition to "call no man 'father' " is interpreted by Hammerton-Kelly

not only as rejection of rigidity and authoritarianism but as a warning against limiting one's understanding of God to masculine images.[29]

Hammerton-Kelly is, however, incorrect in assessing the role of a father in first-century Judean culture. As James Barr observes, "abba" was not, as well-meaning but poorly instructed homilists and educators propose, a child's appellation equivalent to the modern "daddy." Instead, "abba," in the vocative form attributed to Jesus and cited by Paul meant "the father" or "my father" and was used by Hebrew as well as Aramaic speaking adults to address a father with whom a relationship of trust and affection had developed.[30] Since Judean fathers were involved intimately and affectionately in the lives of their children (Matthew 7.9-10; 9.18), "abba" does not suggest a mother-child relationship. Moreover, Jesus' criticism of scribes and Pharisees was not a rejection of paternalistic religious leadership since the gospels report Jesus' acceptance of religious authority (Matthew 8.4 and 23.2).

But the issue is larger than possible shaded meanings of the names found in scripture. Even if we grant that names should refer to who God is rather than what God does, do these names signify the real and eternal essence of God? Or are the names given to God merely symbols which do not tell us what the "thing in itself" (God) is but show only how God's relationship to us is comparable to what we experience in the physical world? When we address God through metaphors that compare the deity to other beings, can we say that some metaphors are not only more experientially understandable but more "real" than others?

This brings us back to the matter of metaphor. Part of the difficulty many modern Catholics have with conceiving of distinct attributes of God is that much of their thinking about scripture and liturgy has been shaped by scholars whose ideas were

[29] Robert Hammerton-Kelly, *God the Father: Theology and Patriarchy in the Teaching of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), pp. 70-81.

[30] James Barr, "'Abba' Isn't 'Daddy'," *Journal of Theological Studies* 39 (1988): 28-47.

formed in certain branches of the Protestant theological tradition. Some aspects of Protestant Christianity systematized older theological perspectives which emphasized scripture as the source of knowledge of God's relationship with believers rather than as the basis for rational analysis of the eternal nature of God.

It was the contention of the early Protestant Reformers that all language referring to God is merely metaphorical. John Calvin, Philip Melanchthon, Martin Luther, and Theodore Beza, for example, maintained that the way in which God chooses to be known through creation and scripture does not reveal the true nature of God. Like Julian's mysticism and Giles's Neoplatonism, foundational Reformed theology defined transcendence not as God's perfection of knowable attributes but as God's negation of even the metaphysical existence of such categories. The Reformed theology unequivocally insisted that God, infinite being, could not be limited by the personality traits that would express themselves as mercy, justice, fatherliness, or forgiveness. Instead God arbitrarily chose to act in this way toward human beings and covenanted to do so consistently.[31] Consequently, the Lutheran theologian Melanchthon denied the validity of speculation on Persons of the Trinity or on divine purposes, and the Calvinist theologian Beza maintained that it was improper to think of God as " just " or "merciful " since all that could be objectively attributed to God was that he punished sin and freely bestowed gifts of saving grace.[32]

[31] Elimination of metaphysics from theology was apparent by the thirteenth century. Dorothea Sharp, *Franciscan Philosophy in the Thirteenth Century* (London: Oxford, 1930), p. 287. For discussion of Reformation theology's rejection of " attributes " in God and denial of the metaphysical reality of divine Personhood see Lynne C. Boughton, " Supralapsarianism and the Role of Metaphysics in Sixteenth Century Reformed Theology," *Westminster Theological Journal* 48 (1986): 63-96. See also Gerhard O. Forde, "Naming the One Who is Above Us," in *Speaking the Christian God,* p. 113.

[32] Philip Melanchthon, *Loci Communes Theologici* (1521) in *Melanchthon and Bucer,* ed. Wilhelm Pauck, vol. 19, *Library of Christian Classics* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), p. 21; Theodor Beza, *A Book of Christian Questions and Answers* (London, 1572), Rare Book Room, Northwestern University, Evanston. Cf. Aquinas, *ST* la.31.1-4 and 32.1.

Although foundational Protestant thought did not suggest that the masculine identity attributed to God in scripture was metaphorical, many twentieth-century Protestants accept the metaphorical character of God as " Father " or " Son," although they disagree over how this idea should be reflected in public worship. Some, like John Miller and Eve MacMaster, propose remaining faithful to the masculine terminology found in the Bible and accepted by the Reformers because addressing God as "Father" encourages reflection on the way God has, in the Biblical record, acted in the fatherly role of provider and protector. Yet Miller and MacMaster also insist that the title "Father" is no more indicative of something in the divine nature than any of the other entities, e.g., " rock" or " shepherd," to which Biblical authors compare the deity.[33] Other Protestant theologians, like Paul Tillich, reject even the consistent use of biblical metaphors. Tillich warns that to use metaphors is to employ " symbols " as a way of understanding God and yields " idolatrous " notions that such symbols participate in the identity of God.[34]

Tillich's dialectic, which confines knowledge of God to metaphors and regards metaphors as " symbols " by which humans represent God rather than as revelations of mysterious realities, has influenced Catholic theorists who choose to discard or counterbalance masculine names for God. Anne Carr, for example, draws directly on Tillich in arguing that it is as appropriate to call God " mother " as " father " since the concept of parenthood in God is by " attribution " rather than through definable reality. For Carr, as for Tillich, all biblical names are metaphors and as such do not reveal the nature of a transcendent God.[35]

[33] John W. Miller, *Biblical Faith and Fathering: Why We Call God "Father"* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1989) and Eve MacMaster, "Is 'Inclusive Language' Theologically Sound or Just This Year's Fashion? " *America,* Feb. 2, 1991, p. 90.

[34] Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture,* ed. Robert Kimball (NY: Oxford, 1964)' pp. 53-67.

[35] Anne E. Carr, *Transforming Grace: Christian Tradition and Women's Experience* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), p. 141.

In traditional Catholic and some Protestant exegesis, however, a presumption that God reveals the divine nature analogically allows exegetical distinction between biblical texts in which metaphorical language is used to show how God is " like " some reality in natural human experience and other texts where something experienced in the natural world is analogically "like " something that is real only in God.

Certainly God, as infinite being, transcends the phenomena in created nature that scripture uses to represent the divine nature. But transcendence does not mean, as metaphor theologians, foundational Reformers, disciples of Tillich, or students of pre-Reformation mystics presume, a negation of any logical continuity with created phenomena. Instead, certain elements in the created world are designated by scripture as giving insight into the divine nature.

Moses, for example, confers with a bush that burns but is not consumed. In this respect the burning bush is a symbol that is " like " an attribute that fully exists only in God : The divine being, as pure act, is the source of other beings without change in his own nature. But God is certainly not " like " a burning bush. He is not a created object of temporary duration. In a similar way Jesus calls God " Father " not to indicate that the holy one in heaven is merely "like" a father: Nowhere does Jesus indicate that the heavenly " Father " is older than his son, or works for a living, or has a wife "like" an earthly father.

Instead of God being " like " a father or a son, fatherhood and sonship are " like " something in the eternal relationship of the divine Persons. As Paul tells the Ephesians, the " Father of our Lord Jesus Christ " is the one " from whom all fatherhood takes its name" (Ephesians 3.14). For Paul, God is not "like" a father. Rather, fathers in relation to their genetic or spiritual (in Acts 22.1, Paul calls Jewish religious leaders " fathers ") offspring are in some way " like " an eternal divine Person. That mothers, genetic or spiritual, do not also imitate a distinguishing, relational, eternal act of a divine Person is no more an indication that mothers are inferior to fathers than is God's being a Trinity an indication of the inferiority of the number four.

Many people are perplexed by passages like Isaiah's comparison of God to a woman crying out in labor or Jesus' declaration that he would like to gather and protect the people of Jerusalem as a hen gathers her chicks. Are these texts suggesting that motherhood is like God too? Apparently not, because in these passages the comparisons are cast differently. Created qualities are not compared to God. Instead God's response to human persons is compared to phenomena in the created world. Such phenomena are certainly good but there is no suggestion that the actions involved imitate the eternal divine nature. In similar metaphors, God longs for the sinner's reformation as the husband in Hosea's parable yearns for his unfaithful wife or the woman in Jesus' parable misses a lost coin. In these passages it is not the femininity of the searching woman or the masculinity of the disappointed husband that is compared to something in God. Instead, the focus is on how God's efforts to reclaim a lost soul are like those undertaken by people \Vho have lost something they value highly. The metaphor is not an exploration of God's identity as Person/ s, since no divine Person is lonely like the husband or impoverished like the searching woman. Only God's patience is " like " that of a loyal spouse; only God's effort to restore what is lost is "like" that of a careful housekeeper.

For the Christian who takes seriously the reference Jesus makes in John's Gospel to himself, the "Father," and the "Paraclete/Spirit" (14.15-26), the expectation is that knowledge of the relationships among the three Persons "in" God is expected of believers.[36] One needs to begin with an understand-

[36] In its usual translation as " advocate," the name " Paraclete " seems to suggest a temporal action as one who reconciles created beings to God. But as a Semitic language loan word in biblical Greek, the noun, which is masculine in gender, designates one who speaks through another. Since the Father speaks eternally and the Word who becomes man is eternally with God, so too would the one who " speaks through " be a Person whose act of speaking through indicates eternal identity and an eternal act of existence. Aquinas noted that in humans a "word" is not a substance but a divine "Word" is subsistent in the divine nature (*ST* la.33.2 ad 3). The Gospel of John indicates that Jesus' eternal Sonship makes him a " paraclete" and that everything that the Son is also exists in the one whom Jesus calls " another Paraclete," Brown, *Gospel According to John,* 2;1140-1141.

ing of these eternal relationships to understand the eternal identities of the three persons. If, as Aquinas maintains, God is pure act (*ST* la.14.2), it is eternal activity that defines relationships among the members of the Trinity, not temporal acts which seem to us "like" the acts of shepherds, mothers, or eagles, that offer a correct way of addressing God in public worship.

But even if one addresses divine Persons in terms of an eternal rather than temporal act, should the terms of address indicate, as Mary Daly suggests, an identity " beyond God the Father " as well? [37] Can the " parental " relationship between the First Person and the Second be adequately expressed by referring to the First Person as " Parent " rather than " Father " ? Can we detach the human maleness of Jesus from an eternal identity as Second Person that transcends gender?

In order to consider whether there are valid substitutes for traditional Christian references to God as "Father" and " Son" it may be useful to note the logical and theological difficulties produced by gender-neutral names for God. One influential theologian who has encouraged departure from masculine names for God is Daniel Helminiak, a former student and associate of Lonergan. In an article entitled " Doing Right by Women and the Trinity Too," Helminiak suggests names inclusive of feminine aspects of personality that could be applied to the Trinity without distorting '"distinctions" among the three Persons. [38] He proposes that the First Person be addressed as " Parent " and the Second as " Eternal Offspring " because the fact that " the Eternal Offspring is born of the Parent sets up a relation between them." [39]

To imply, as Helminiak does, that it is the existence of the Second Person that "sets up" a relation and to describe the Second Person as being " born " of the First ignores certain principles that can be logically ascertained about the nature of rela-

[37] Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon, 1973), pp. 33-34.

[38] Daniel A. Helminiak, "Doing Right by Women and The Trinity Too," *America,* Feb. 11, 1989, p. 110.

[39] Ibid., p. 119.

tionships that would exist within an eternal triune being. First of all, it is not the existence of the Second Person that " sets up a relation." Rather it is the eternal nature of God existing as three Persons to act in ways that express the eternal identity of each divine Person. Secondly, use of the verb "born" to describe the relationship of the Second Person to the First evades semantic and logical distinctions between being " born " and being, as careful English translations of the Nicene-Constantinople Creed state, " eternally begotten."

To be truly divine the Second Person would of logical necessity exist eternally and be, as the Creed indicates, of the same eternal "being" as the First. To say that the Second Person was " born " of the First Person is to say that the First Person was at one time not the Father (or Parent) or was only potentially so. Use of the word " born " also suggests that the Second Person emerged in some sort of temporal process. If there were such a process through which the Second Person attained being, then the feminine aspects of procreation might reasonably be included in our notion of divine personality. Yet the idea that the Second Person had a beginning or took form from the first Person violates the eternity and immutability of God and contradicts the eternity of the relationship among the Persons of the Trinity. If the Trinity were at some point not triune, then its becoming so would " change" the nature of God.

It was only the second Person's acquisition of a human nature through Mary that enables one to refer to the temporal process of this person being, as Nicea declared in 325, "born of the virgin Mary." When the Council of Ephesus (431) stated that Mary was " Mother of God " it emphasized that Christ, though fully human and fully God, was one Person not two. This one Person, the eternal Son, did not come into existence by being born or conceived by Mary or by the First or Third Persons.

The willingness of some modern theologians, or even a fourth century apologist like Hilary of Poitiers, to use " born " to refer to relationships within the Trinity results from misunderstandings of the original Greek of the Nicene Creed. In Latin versions, Jesus is spoken of as " Filium Dei unigenitum. Et ex

Patre natum ante omnia saecula." English translations from the Latin often render this as " Only begotten Son of God. Born of the Father before all ages." But although "natum" has been rendered into English as " born " and in that sense is thought of by some English speakers as a more motherly than fatherly act, the Latin participle "natum" actually comes from the verb " nascor." Taken actively, this verb means " to spring" or " to rise." Only passively does "nascor" convey being born or giving birth. [40]

If one returns to the Creed's Greek wording, "ton Yion tou Theou ton monogene ton ek tou Patras gennethenta pro panton ton aion6n," one observes that the verb "gennethenta" (infinitive: *gennao),* in active voice, refers to the act of the father rather than the mother. Although in biblical Greek the verb, in passive voice, can mean " to be born," even this usage usually designates the father's role (as in "Abraam egennesen ton Isaak ") in establishing a child's identity.

That the makers of the Creed intended to refer to identification rather than birth as an analogy of eternal relationship is apparent in the next passage's insistence that the Son is "homoousion to Patri " or " one in being with the Father." Some translators, recognizing that God's substance, since it constitutes God's infinite act of being, cannot be changed, separated, or multiplied, have correctly suggested this implication by translating "homoousion" as "one in substance." The point is that it is logically impossible for the substance of God to exist as persons who are not eternally God. Only an eternal Person can be

[40] For example, the Vulgate rendering of Matt 1.20, in which the angel tells Joseph of Mary's pregnancy, is "quod enim in ea natum est." Douai-Reims translators (1582) rendered this as "For that which is born in her." But this and similar English renderings ignore the distinction between the active and passive use of " nascor" in making sense of the passage. See Cornelius Nary, "Preface to the New Testament" (from his 1718 revision of the *Douai-Reims Bible)* in Henry Cotton, *Rhemes and Douay* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1855), Appendix, pp. 298-304. Hilary uses "born" in *Trinity* (3.4), tr. Stephen McKenna, vol. 25, *Fathers of the Church* (NY: Fathers of the Church, 1954), p. 67.

of divine being and substance. Anyone conceived, generatedi and/or born in the course of time is not of the same being as either parent but is a separate being as well as a separate person. Moreover, temporal beings as a composite of substances can share substance with parents but cannot be one in substance without ceasing to be distinct as persons. What the Creed is describing in its reference to "homoousion" is the eternity and consubstantiality of the Second Person's interaction with the First Person. Thus the most apt English translations of the Creed are those that refer to the Second Person as " eternally begotten " and avoid all suggestion of process, change, or emergence of substance. Since an eternal Person cannot experience a change or growth in substance, the maternal role of giving birth has no analogy in the eternal relationships in the Trinity. [41]

That the First Person is more than a " Begetter " even in eternal relationship with the Second Person has been noted by Aquinas. Any being, Aquinas argued, is properly named " according to its perfection and end." Since generation of the Second Person by the First is eternally complete and brings about no change in the number of beings, the First Person is not addressed as the begetter who is the source of the Second Person but as the Father who is the "principle" of the Second Person's existence and identity. One cannot properly address the First Person as " Genitor or Begetter " since that would designate the " process " rather than the eternal effect of generation. Although credited with composing a hymn that praises the First and Second Persons as " Genitori, Genitoque," Aquinas maintains that Father is the name that properly identifies the First Person and that the Second Person is " properly and not metaphorically called Son." The names " Father " and " Son" are not derived from creatures because a human father exists before his son and the act of paternity increases the number of beings as well as

[41] See note 4 above. Elizabeth Achtemeier notes that maternal imagery, by making the creator one with creation, is contrary to the Biblical focus on God not being part of or changed by the universe. " Exchanging God for 'No Gods': A Discussion of Female Language for God," in *Speaking the Christian God,* pp. 1-16.

persons. In God both Father and Son are eternally existent and numerically the same (*ST* la.33.2, ad 2). The implication in Aquinas is that certain names are appropriate for God not because they are like a created quality (fatherhood) that is somehow better than its complementary (motherhood) or abstracted (begetting) quality. Instead the names Father and Son more accurately convey an eternal act of divine existence that has analogies in some created relationships.

Some who accept the concept of eternal begetting might at this point object to the masculine identity of the eternal begetter and begotten on the grounds that since no divine Person possesses a body from all eternity, God as God " cannot possibly have gender" or must in some way transcend gender by encompassing male and female personality traits. To deal with this issue, it is necessary to explore two areas : the existence of gender in the created order (and the way in which scripture treats gender differences in created beings) and the nature of the divine Person who became man.

Observation of created nature reveals that among higher creatures gender differences make reproduction possible. Consequently many people conclude that where there is no gender there is no reproduction. Yet reproduction does not require gender. Many lower species reproduce effectively without any gender at all. Gender, then, is a quality more complex than, and unnecessary for, the reproductive function. This point is communicated in the Book of Genesis which suggests that gender fulfills its purpose not in allowing reproduction but in expressing personal autonomy. In describing God's gift to gendered, higher animals to " increase and multiply " there is no reference to gender differences. It is only the first humans, made in the "image and likeness " of God, who are described by Genesis as being created male or female. The implication is that gender is most significant in those beings who differ from the rest of physical creation not only in being persons but also in possessing will and intellect so that reproduction is not an irresistible instinct. What human beings have in common with God but not with the rest of nature is that they exist as persons and can exist without a physical

body. It seems then that it is personhood and spiritual existence that are the conditions necessary for the perfection of gender. If gender is a perfection of personhood, then it must exist most perfectly in God.

But would a person, especially a divine one, be more perfect by having two genders? Such a hypothesis is based on the idea that perfection is indicated by quantity. Yet quantity is not, in the natural, or by analogy, supernatural, world an indication of perfection. Perfection in a created species does not consist in members of that species having a larger number or wider variety of qualities in relation to another life form. Mammals, implied by Genesis to be more perfect than " creeping things," have fewer legs than insects and lack the variety of action made possible by having wings or egg-laying capacity. On an entirely different level, but in an analogous way, logic tells us that the First Person of the Trinity is not less perfect than the incarnated Second Person or even ordinary human beings because the First Person does not have physical existence.

And so it is with gender. The individual human person is more perfect in having one gender than in having two genders like some invertebrates or changeable genders like certain fish. In human beings perfection consists of single genderedness. Moreover, a human being's identity as a person cannot be separated from gender. A human being is the same person at different ages of life, or if the skin becomes lighter or darker, or if placed in a different ethnic culture. Only the person's actions or responses might change. But a change in gender would affect more than feelings or actions-it would give an entirely different identity. There would be a " substantial " change.

It is erroneous to suggest as Helminiak does that the term "Father-Mother " is appropriate for the First Person because it " conveys that God is not like us." [42] Of course God is not like us. But this dissimilarity lies in God's infinity and perfection.

[42] Helminiak, " Doing Right," p. 121. For criticism of the combined gendered names for God as having implications of hermaphroditism and for information on Gregory Nazianzen's criticism in 380 CE of such naming among the Gnostics, see Roland M. Frye, "Language for God and Feminist Language: Problems and Principles," in *Speaking the Christian God,* p. 25.

For a person of the Trinity to be called "Father-Mother" suggests not perfection but defect. Although the scriptures remind us that God is incomprehensible, they also reveal a God whose attributes are knowable and analogous to our own. For the human person identity is inextricable from awareness of being male or female. One develops an appreciation of the beauty and dignity of one's own gender, and of the opposite sex, not by thinking of gender as "half" of something but by seeing how personality is enriched by the presence of a distinct gender identity. To call a Person of the Trinity "Father-Mother" conveys to the human mind not the completeness of each gender but the tragic defectiveness of the androgyne. Daughters as well as sons can take delight in defining themselves in relation to their fathers, and wise fathers regard daughters as being as much in their own image as sons. But a parent who is not distinctly male or female -who is Father-Mother-provides no context in which sons and daughters can define their own identities as persons.

If having a single gender constitutes perfection for the human person, and gender in human persons is analogous to something that exists in divine personhood, this analogy would be communicated most effectively through Christological analysis. It must be recognized at the outset that the Person called Jesus, despite his human nature, is not a human person but a divine Person. As previously noted, conciliar formulations insist that the two natures of Jesus, the divine and the human, exist in one divine Person.

Some theorists, apparently believing that human nature is diminished in not being the source of the historical Jesus' personality, have opted for a notion that the historical Jesus was a human person who "became" a divine person through an a-historical Resurrection event. Helminiak, for example, claims that

> "In the Resurrection that human being [Jesus] was raised to divine glory. His human mind came to lmow even as God knows.... In the Resurrection, Jesus, a human being, was divinized."[48]

43 Helminiak, "Doing Right," p. 121.

Such a view produces two logical inconsistencies. The first is that the Person who lived and taught in Nazareth would be a different " person " from the " Person " who now exists in the heavenly realm. The second would be that God did not become man but rather that he made a man into God-a violation of human personal integrity and a logical impossibility since it would involve a change in the divine nature by multiplying the number of divine Persons in the course of time.

The idea that one sees a human, not a divine, person in Jesus supports the implication that male gender in Jesus is an " accident" of his human personhood just as it is an accident for each human person to be either male or female. But thinking of Jesus as acquiring the composite accidents of human personality denies his eternal existence as divine Person. Such denial that the Person of Jesus is the Person of the eternal Son not only produces the logical impossibilities mentioned above but is also the " Adoptionist " heresy condemned in 451 at Chalcedon.[44] Jesus is not a man who became divine but God become man-an event that dignifies rather than diminishes men and women because it shows that God does not change human nature in redeeming and perfecting it. Since human nature was created by God to exist as a multiplicity of male and female persons, God's preservation of this nature in the act of redemption indicates that God wants each human to live eternally as either man or woman. That Jesus became a human male does not indicate that human femaleness is inferior or rejected by God. Instead the manhood of Jesus indicates that some qualities found in created persons are more analogous to what exists in God than others.

The God revealed in the biblical canon intervenes in creation but does not change created natures. Scripture does not record God's changing angels into humans, nor fig trees into junipers, nor lions into lambs. Instead miracles involve controlling the effects of nature (a bush burns without being consumed, a storm produces dry land for the Israelites, lions do not attack Daniel, withered hands and lepers are healed) or bypassing part of a

[44] Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines,* pp. 115-119.

natural process (water that " becomes " wine through the slow process of nature becomes so instantly at Cana). Since natures are not changed, divine acts involve choosing certain natures rather than others as suitable for revealing divine power or the presence of a divine Person. Exegesis of texts dealing with " sacramental signs " has led in Catholic Christianity to certain doctrinal positions. In sacramental theology, the substance of bread and wine became Christ's substance without a change in the nature of bread and wine or a change in the divine or human nature of the resurrected Christ. In the incarnation, there is yet another level of divine intervention in nature. Whereas the divine presence in the eucharist replaces a natural substance with Christ's substance, the incarnation is the act in which divine and human substance are hypostatically united in Christ. As the Council of Constantinople II (553) held, two substances are preserved distinct and " unconfused " yet " without division." [45] Since, as the Council of Ephesus asserted, the Person of the Son has unified by incarnation but has not destroyed the distinction between substance (and nature) of God and the substance (and nature) of a human being, the natural qualities of that individual human nature would be consistent with the divine substance. [46]

In Jesus, since the Person present is the eternal Second Person, all qualities that constitute the acquired human nature are appropriate to the Second Person's divine substance. Since a human nature exists as either male or female, the divine choice of manhood indicates by analogy something about the nature of all three Persons.

If one truly wants to make women feel included in the worshiping community one might follow the example of Jesus. He in no way rejected or trivialized women. Yet in speaking to and of God, Jesus consistently referred to the First Person as Father and designated the Third Person by either the masculine noun "Paraclete" or by masculine pronouns. In stressing his unique

[45] Denzinger, # 216.
[46] Denzinger, # 111a, 115.

identity with the Father, Jesus urged men and women to recognize that their own relationship to the Father, though different from his own, was one that led to a universal, eschatological resurrection that preserves for all eternity each man and woman's physical and spiritual individuality as a person. If, as Catholic doctrine asserts, Mary, along with Jesus, now exists as a gendered human nature in heaven, there is no reason for women to object to God's Personhood being understandable through analogies to human maleness.

# GOD'S KNOWLEDGE OF FUTURE CONTINGENTS: A REPLY TO WILLIAM LANE CRAIG

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IT IS FORTUNATE that other duties kept me from responding to William Lane Craig's "Aquinas on God's Knowledge of Future Contingents" when it came out *(Thomist* 54 [1990]: *33-79),* for my initial perusal found me at once impressed and dismayed, and quite unable to disentangle the two responses. A more careful subsequent reading allows me, I believe, to pinpoint where he goes wrong in reaching the conclusion which he does, yet to do so in such a way as to send readers back to an essay which is otherwise quite remarkable in the way it learns from Aquinas and offers us useful ways to read him on these perplexing issues. In doing so, he corrects many a misreading, and amasses sufficient textual and conceptual clarifications as almost to correct his own misreading. And best of all, I can hope that my rejoinder will send readers back to Aquinas above all. Indeed, one cannot but feel that the current climate of controversy regarding the proper understanding of his nuanced synthesis in philosophical theology would please Aquinas far more than attempts earlier in this century to distill it all into a " doctrine."

Craig's conclusion reads:

> In maintaining that God's knowledge is the cause of everything God knows, Thomas transforms the universe into a nexus which, though freely chosen by God, is causally determined from above, thus eliminating human freedom (79).

I shall claim that he reaches this conclusion only because (1) he presumes God's knowledge to be propositional knowing (52-53),

even though he asserts that it is not (60, n.61); and (2) that such a presumption leads him to overlook the vast difference between *scientia visionis* and *scientia simplicis intelligentiae,* though he insists on the difference and formulates it nicely in parallel with *practical* and *speculative* knowing in God (40). Such presumptions about divine knowing are not uncommon, of course, and what they lead to is one's overlooking what Josef Pieper called the "hidden element in the philosophy of St. Thomas "-creation. Indeed, my critique could begin there, remarking how Craig's careful delineation of Aquinas on God's eternal knowing of contingent things proceeds oblivious of the central fact that God's *knowing* in such cases is that of a creator (" In summary, then, Thomas has appealed *e%clusively* to the tradition of God's timelessness in order to defuse the threat of fatalism" [61, emphasis mine]).

The simple observation that the God in question is always the free creator of all-that-is would have allowed him to see that Aquinas does not make the relation of God to contingents turn solely on that of an eternal knower of temporal things, but that the eternity /time relation subserves that of creator/ creature. (This ordering is the more crucial, we shall see, for its power to correct the endemic tendency to equate " eternal " with " timeless," which Craig manifests throughout.) And despite Pieper's reminder that creation is largely hidden, it remains sufficiently present to a careful reader that Craig must indeed confront it at the end. Yet by the time he does so, his earlier presumptions have led him to complain that Aquinas's insistence that "God's knowledge is the *causa essendi* of the things that are going to happen ... seems nearly unintelligible " (73). Indeed what I shall offer as the key to resolving his crucial dilemmas, and so overturning his stated conclusion, Craig introduces as a " final issue [which] threatens to undermine Thomas's attempt to preserve contingency in the face of divine knowledge, [viz.] his doctrine that God's knowledge is the cause of its objects rather than the objects' being the cause of God's knowledge" (70-71).

The theologian in me would prefer to begin right here, with the radical eruption into an Aristotelian world of a free creator,

whose relation to the universe is indeed such as to turn our sense of *knowing* inside-out.[1] And perhaps something like that is required to challenge philosophers' unexamined presumption that any use of "knows" must be parsed propositionally as a subject knowing that something is indeed the case. That presumption leads inevitably to one's picturing God as a knower alongside a world to be known, and so effectively obscuring the *sui generis* relation of creator to all-that-is. As a result, assertions of Aquinas regarding the causal efficacy of God's knowing will be misread as that knowledge "causally determining" (78) what happens in the world. But just as the creator's knowledge is not one knowing among others, so the *causa essendi* cannot be one cause among others.[2] So let us try to trace how Craig's presumptions about knowing lead him at first to overlook contentions so central to Aquinas, and then to find them " nearly unintelligible " as they press in upon him. This exercise, while critical, will also indicate how instructive the path can be which Craig has taken to familiarize himself with a position as subtle as that of Aquinas on these recondite matters.

He begins by helping readers to see how Aquinas uses divine eternity to correct any mention of "foreknowledge" in God: "in seeing all things as present, God technically foreknows nothing " (47). Yet he goes on to equate that eternity with timelessness, finding that Aquinas "seems compelled to admit that God's knowledge of vision *[scientia visionis]* is exclusively of such tenseless propositions" (53). But neither God's eternity nor God's knowing can be comprehended by " the timeless truth of propositions " (53), for divine knowing is not propositional (as he avers at 60, n.61), nor can the eternity which belongs to God alone *(ST* 1.10.3) be characterized by that timelessness which abstract entities share. The difference lies in God's being "his own invariable existence *[suum esse uniforme]*" *(ST* 1.10.2), so

[1] See my *Freedom and Creation in Three Traditions* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993).

[2] On this crucial point, one may be usefully instructed by the arguments of Kathryn Tanner in *God and Creation in Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988).

that one may not miss an allusion to the source of all-that-is. (Craig confuses himself here by mistaking a thoroughly exceptional prophetic statement [" the Antichrist will he born " *(de Ver.* l.5)] as establishing that there can generally be "truth in the intellect which has formed the future-tense proposition" even when such things do not exist (50). Truth is invariably existential for Aquinas, as Craig manifests in parsing his treatment of Aristotle on future contingencies, as well as in noting his insistence that what will be is eternally *present* to God.)

Similarly, by failing to note Aquinas's crucial premise of God-as-creator, and taking him to have "appealed exclusively to the tradition of God's timelessness" (61), which comprises a double misreading, Craig is led to foist upon him a view of time as unreal (McTaggart's " B-theory ") even when he knows that this contradicts Aquinas's own dicta. (Once again, however, his modesty helps: " Despite this, however, I must admit that I can only make sense of Aquinas's position [in this way].") In the course of this treatment (61-67) he insists on taking what can only be *fafons de parter,* such as the use of *"iam* [already]" in discourse about God's eternal acting, as *prima facie* evidence that "what Aquinas's doctrine of God's eternity and knowledge of future contingents was seen to imply [on Craig's presumptions] seems to be positively affirmed by Aquinas, namely, that the past, present, and future are all ontologically on a par with each other " (66). Again, one can applaud the " seems to be," for any skilled reader of Aquinas cannot escape the power of the present as alone yielding that *existing* of which God alone is the cause and which in created things affords them their constituting relation to the creator. [3]

So far from it being " perplexing [how the understanding of God as creator is related to] God's knowledge of future contingents " (68), that link will provide the key to Aquinas's understanding of the creator's knowing them. But not, as Craig him-

[3] I cannot forbear mentioning here David Braine's exceptional *Reality of Time and the Existence of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), where he speaks of the "dramatic now."

self sees (69) *via* an exemplar-theory of creation ;[4] nor, as Craig feels compelled to read him, as "indirect objects" subsequent to "the proper object of God's knowledge: ... the eternal divine essence " (68). For while it is true that Aquinas insists that God knows all that God knows in God's own essence, it cannot be true that "the divine essence [is] the simple intelligible *species"* by which God knows what God creates, such that they would be known "indirectly," for that would make God's knowing conceptual. And once these mistakings of divine knowing by comparison with our own are exposed, there will be no need to reconstruct Aquinas on creation in the way in which he does (74-76), introducing an alien term *(scientia approbationis),* as well as a hiatus between knowing and willing which greater attention to " practical knowing " could have averted.

In conclusion, then, having failed to exploit the crucial distinction between *scientia visionis* and *scientia simplicis intelligentiae,* which he had ably linked with practical and speculative knowledge, respectively, Craig was unable to see how crucial is the assertion of free creation to understanding the meaning of God's knowing for Aquinas, and especially of God's eternal knowing of things which God creates. (Or perhaps it was his inattention to this crucial premise that made him overlook the distinction in knowing, for Aquinas's treatment is seamless here.) This led him to attempt to construe Aquinas's account of God's knowing of future contingents *e:rclusively* from the inexpressible relation of eternity to time-a relation which he notes that Aquinas can state only in metaphor and image (62). From that base, plus some correlative presumptions about "possibles," Craig had finally to acknowledge the importance of creation, but was impelled to reconstruct it according to a pattern quite foreign to Aquinas, as he himself admits while undertaking it! And out of all this issues the conclusion which I contested at the outset, one which construes Aquinas's account of the practical knowledge by which God creates as a " causal nexus " which must determine the

[4] Cf. James Ross, "Aquinas's Exemplarism; Aquinas's Voluntarism," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 64/2 (1990) : 171-198.

actions of all creatures.[5] It is perhaps telling that the picture he feels compelled to reconstruct is more reminiscent of Scotus than of Aquinas, for the Scotistic notion of freedom as pro-active *choice* seems to be one accepted without criticism by contemporary philosophers of a " libertarian " persuasion. But Aquinas's account of God's freedom is as nuanced as that of God's knowing-indeed, both turn on the elusive key of " practical knowing."

If all this sounds trenchantly critical, it is. But the fact that one can make these points as straightforwardly as I have been able to do here is due to the expository clarity of William Lane Craig's article. He has submitted himself to learn from Aquinas, and in the process illuminates a great deal for today's reader. The points which I have been making require a fresh effort to move beyond current unexamined presumptions to see that there is even more there than he sees; and to begin to savor the fruit of such understanding.

[5] I have shown, in *Knowing the Unknowable God* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), how Aquinas guts the emanation scheme bequeathed to him by Avicenna while continuing to use it as an image for the inexpressible relation of creation.

# SHE WHO IS: WHO IS SHE? *

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WHEN ON AN ordinary Sunday morning in any Catholic church, women sign themselves with the cross, eciting the Trinitarian names of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as they do it, are they unwittingly, or perversely, conspiring in their own oppression and suffering? What of their prayers to God the Father, or to Jesus their Lord and brother, or their communion with him in the sacrament of the Eucharist? Or what of their salutation and veneration of Mary, called the Blessed Mother?

*She Who Is* begs these particular questions because its author has neglected to consider the import of the Christian sacramental life as she forms a theology which primarily aims to benefit women. But the ·entire direction of the work makes it hard to conclude anything but that the answer to the above would be "yes." Women who profess and practice a Catholicism unreformed by feminist theory must by implication be deluded (at best) or malicious (at worst) because they have failed to realize the connection, personal and communal, between a " classical theism " which has produced masculinized language for God supported by a consonantly oppressive institution, and the worldwide political and economic domination which has yielded massive human suffering, most notably among women. Extend the logic, and it is not too much to say that the hypothetical women of the first paragraph might as well consume without objection every papal pro-

*This essay is a review of Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is. The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*. New York: Crossroad, 1992. Pp. xii + 316. $24.95 (cloth).

nouncement along with right-wing political policy: traditional language for the Godhead is an analogue for the politics of imperialism in church and world.

Of course, this connection is only hinted at in the book; references to political *realia* are allusions only, such as in the following evocation of a feminine God's revolutionary power:

> [The theological symbol of] She Who Is challenges every structure and attitude that assigns superiority to ruling men on the basis of their supposed greater godlikeness. If the mystery of God is no longer spoken about exclusively or even primarily in terms of the dominating male, a forceful linchpin holding up structures of patriarchal rule is removed (p. 243).

The book's actual purpose is to promote a revisionist theological (or thealogical) language in order to repair the damage purportedly done to women by centuries of the other. If the pretended area of discussion is the language we employ to designate the mystery of the Godhead, the actual theater of operations is the language used in the church to communicate the faith and to evangelize. Johnson's book wishes to promote, not primarily theological reflection, but a program of revision in which-based on the premise that since God is unknowable, one set of terms is as good as another-" masculine " language for God will give way to feminized language, in which the deity appears in the image of the female human being. As opposed to the projected *imago viri* who presides over creation as a remote and unresponsive God, the mother God of Johnson's proposal is essentially a manifestation of the eternal feminine : in a panentheistic theology, She Who Is both plays and suffers with her wounded creatures.

When She is recognized, Johnson asserts, " theology will have come of age." Not only that, but justice is more likely to be accomplished on earth. But will the faith of those women, not all of whom are subservient, who live and thrive within the Catholic tradition, have been counted? This is unlikely, because those who have not experienced the feminist "awakening" are in the view of this book primarily missionary objects who remain to be converted. Women who are unaware of their oppression by " classi-

cal theism " are presumably afflicted by the " false consciousness " with which leftists of this century have characterized those potentially liberated souls who have not yet realized their enslavement. As Johnson herself says, those who disagree exhibit the symptoms of blindness, or "scotosis" (p. 13). Furthermore,

> Relegating the theological question of God-talk in relation to women's flourishing to the periphery of serious consideration in academy, church and society is an instance of this phenomenon. It is the refusal of insight as a function of group bias. The only remedy is conversion (p. 14).

Such language belies the books' irenic reputation, but it is an important sign of the primary agenda of the author. The criterion by which all theological language-both the terminology of Christian doctrine and theological reflection-must be measured is an external criterion, that of feminist theory. And Christian feminism has become, in the past fifteen years, a largely separate religion from Christianity, a religious exodus for which the agenda of Woman Church could be adduced as primary evidence. Thus Johnson here applies a feminist criterion, with its divergent epistemology and world-view, to the language used in classical Christianity for worship, thought, and expression. It is no wonder that the outcome is so skewed, and no wonder that it must base itself *as a project* in the experience of only a small minority of women. However, Christians should not ignore a feminist project like Johnson's, because it has much to tell them about the aridity-unto-death of much modern religious language.

## The Feminist Proposition of *She Who Is*

Several of the chief contentions of feminism in which this book shares can hardly be doubted. It is incontestible that women have been oppressed and continue to be, in almost all human social arrangements, including institutional expressions of Catholic Christianity. Their extreme vulnerability due to physique and childbearing, and the custom of restriction to the private sphere has until recently rendered them neglected and exploited, or in some cases subjected to gross violence as a class. It is also incontestible that male language used of chief gods, or in the case

of Christianity, the Godhead, can and has been used to justify everything summed up in the familiar term, "sexism." On the level of individual women, as in the case of impoverished human beings generally, it is not going too far to suggest that this state of oppression, apparently justified by the highest celestial powers, has had terrible consequences for women's very survival, let alone energy and creativity.

This feminist critique, familiar now for decades, is taken for granted by many as a just and correct assessment of a sociocultural malfeasance not unlike the instance of racism. Both androcentrism /sexism and racism need correction, although reasonable people may disagree on the means.

Within the Christian religion, and specifically within the American theological profession, the feminist " awakening " to the history and import of sexism has generated a number of projects. These mirror those of the cultural world. One is the programmatic attempt to engender change in church structures, notably by opening the ranks of the ministry to women candidates. Another is the critique of official or unofficial texts for their sexist language, usually leading to the proposed solution of inclusive language. Again, the professional cultures have led the way, and in many forms of literature the inclusive has replaced the once-familiar generic pronoun because the feminist argument has been accepted, namely, that the use of "mankind," "he," and the like promotes a tacit idealization of the masculine form of the total humanity it is supposed to represent.

It is now a moot point whether the generic pronoun was the agent of oppression, because the feminist interpretation largely has won the day. Still under discussion is the related, but much more serious, project in which *She Who Is* participates: to advocate, and even to accomplish, a re-naming of the Godhead which, in the interest of reparations for the ill-effects of supposedly masculine language, will constitute a complete rethinking of what we intend when we utter the word " God," and hence a reorientation of the entire human being who worships that One with a whole heart. It will also require that Christians jettison much of their inherited doctrine.

What earnest American theologian could resist the following *cri de guerre,* with its appealingly therapeutic tone?

> What is at stake is simultaneously the freeing of both women and men from debilitating reality models and social roles, the birthing of new forms of saving relationship to all of creation, and indeed the very viability of the Christian tradition for present and coming generations (p. 15).

For such a goal, whatever practical measures it entails, the adjustment of theological language, at its most metaphysical and at its most scriptural, seems a small price to pay. Throughout the book it is asserted, but not shown, that inclusive language on both levels, the human and the divine, will result in the above goal; and indeed, it is assumed, but not demonstrated, that the amelioration of ecclesiastical and social injustice *should* be the aim of theology.

Here is where secularist, nontheistic feminism and Christian theological reflection intersect with the professionalization of theology to create such a project. Feminism seeks social change, and has accomplished substantial change. Because it is a critique, and an angry one at that, it is primarily a catalyst. It requires a sustained anger and a tragic view of life, i.e., that a true community of males and females is unattainable, and can even be seen to generate both : it proceeds by warfare, and not without a just cause. Christian theological reflection, on the other hand, is a meditation upon Christian doctrine in the light of present conditions, and it takes place within the life of prayer and the sacraments-within the larger life of the religion. Its aim is pastoral, evangelical, and pedagogical. Its practical results may not be immediately apparent, but they exist. Because it is Christian, it promotes hope, among other things hope in the possibility of human community. On yet a third hand, the profession of theology has incorporated the feminist critique because its licensed practitioners have appropriated the norms of any professional society, among which norms are the parity of the sexes, and it seeks action because that is what professionals do, by definition. For professional theologians, theology gains what Johnson calls " practical and critical effects "-the power to promote change in

church and society. The question of *cui bona?* may be raised here profitably.

At this crossroads may *She Who Is* be found. Like other feminist theological writings it criticizes sexism, particularly in church and theology. But it goes beyond that familiar diagnosis rightly to criticize by implication the truly limited, even dessicated, character of much late-twentieth-century theology afflicted with academic myopia. Johnson and others have realized that theology, on the defensive since the Enlightenment, has become increasingly unable to articulate the human experience of yearning for and participating in the divine. Many of its (male) practitioners have either defended traditional dogma in a reactionary way, or abandoned the high ground for some version of Tillichian relativism. The *eminence grise* for modern theology has been the purported scientific world-view with its threats to scripture and tradition, or sometimes the American intelligentsia's contempt for religion and its thought as irrational and rude.

With its insistence on human experience, Christian feminism has sought to participate in the postmodern theological endeavor. *She Who Is* begins with a such a road-marker:

> The present ferment about naming, imaging and conceptualizing God from perspectives of women's experience repristinates the truth that the idea of God, incomprehensible mystery, implies an open-ended history of understanding that is not yet finished (p. 7).

Her own particular task among other feminist theologians is *to* inquire whether there is anything worth saving in classical theology, from the point of view of the feminist hermeneutic. She announces at the outset (p. 9) that the answer is affirmative, and that there is something " in the classical tradition in all of its vastness that could serve a discourse about divine mystery that would further the emancipation of women." As noted above, the author asserts that she would " braid a footbridge " between classical and feminist " Christian wisdom" so that some may

> cross over to the paradigm of women's coequal humanity without leaving behind all the riches of the tradition that has been their intellectual and spiritual home (p. 12).

Here, as elsewhere, the aim of theology is largely that of social amelioration : the parity of the sexes. This is an important goal, but perhaps not the aim of theology as distinguished from legislation or other forms of persuasion.

## The Approach of *She Who Is*

In the service of the feminist goal, then, Johnson constructs a new theology which recovers what it can from prior Christian literature. *She Who Is* contains four sections. The first is a general reprise of the feminist approach, and constitutes what Johnson terms " Background: Speech about God at the Intersection of Mighty Concerns." She concludes the section by considering the logical consequences of her feminist critique for language about God, reviews previous proposals for toning down masculine language (e.g., by stressing some stereotypically feminine " side "), and advocates the use of female images for God. The motivation for doing so is practical and temporary, Johnson states : " Theoretically I endorse the ideal of language for God in male and female terms used equivalently, as well as the use of cosmic and metaphysical symbols " (p. 56). However, given the urgency of the moment and the underdeveloped state of female language, Johnson seems to think that for a time these should be employed almost exclusively: " In my judgment, extended theological speaking about God in female images, or long draughts of this new wine, are a condition for the very possibility of equivalent imaging of God in religious speech." Although this " choice " is " not intended as a strategy of subtraction, still less of reversal," it nevertheless " must be received as an essential element in reordering an unjust and deficiently religious situation." Apparently parity on this level is " unrealizable in actual life," and the reader must conclude that Johnson wishes all contemporary language properly called theological, that is, language naming the blessed Trinity, to be non-inclusive-feminist.

In the second section, "Foreground: Resources for Emancipatory Speech About God," Johnson prefaces a review of scriptural images fitted for use in feminist theological language with a chapter on the experience of women. The gist of this chapter is

to claim the *imago Dei,* the quality in which humans are Christ-like, for women, to appropriate portions of the prior Christian tradition in which women have acted as agents, and to dethrone the idol who is God as patriarchal religion has presented him. This is a constructive proposal, as is the recovery of the feminine images of God which are to be found in the Scriptures. Unfortunately, when Johnson examines the resources of classical theology for reformist/feminist theology, she insists that the traditional assertion of divine incomprehensibility is a charter for supplying names for God which occupy equal rank with the central Trinitarian names.

This is because " Ultimately, the highest human knowledge about God is to know that we do not know, a negative but entirely valid knowing pervaded by religious awareness" (p. 110). Surely, though, this is not correct; scripture and tradition have consistently taught that ultimately, we *will* know God, and that the state of knowledge we have through revelation is not discontinuous with what Augustine describes as communion with God in the famous last lines of *The City of God:* "We shall rest and we shall see; we shall see and we shall love; we shall love and we shall praise. Look what will be, in the end, without end: For what is our end but to reach that kingdom which has no end? "

The role of apophatic theology here is misconstrued. In classical Christian thought, apophatic language for God is based in the cataphatic terms familiar from scripture and doctrine; it functions as a *via negativa* for bringing the human being closer to the paradoxically incomprehensible-yet-knowable God. Apophatic theology rests upon the revelation that God is known in Christ. It is not a tool for deconstruction. Nonetheless, with a critical " apophaticism " in place, Johnson then reinterprets the doctrine of analogical language to assert a kind of equality of value among the " many names " for God. This can then mean, of course, that no name, such as Father or Son, need have priority over another name, such as Mother or Rock.

Using a set of names for God, or perhaps *aspects* of God in the original text, Johnson next proceeds to construct in Part Three a Trinitarian theology based on the elusive notion of God's Wis-

dom (Greek *sophia)* to be discerned in certain Biblical books. "Speaking About God from the World's History" proceeds in three chapters to construe God's inner life as the relation of " Spirit-Sophia " to " Jesus-Sophia " and " Mother-Sophia," so that a divine triad is elaborated which removes the sting from the traditional Father, Son/Word, Spirit language and emphasizes the involvement of this triad in the world. This is a Trinitarian theology consciously written "from below," so that each person's function is construed primarily as a relation with the world. Because the incarnate Logos is largely discounted, intra-Trinitarian relations remain unknowable.

In Part IV, "Dense Symbols and their Dark Light," Johnson returns to the project of the feminist critique in disowning the supposedly remote and uninvolved patriarchal God inherited from Greek philosophy by early Christian theologians, in order to describe a triune God who is a "mystery of relation." The liberating effect of this God is to reduce the " apathic, omnipotent " power of the male God and redirect it toward the human predicament, so that the " suffering God " is embraced at the end.

## Renaming the Godhead: Pro and Con

Because *She Who Is* proposes no specific programme of reform for the Catholic church's doctrinal and liturgical language, it is easy, perhaps, to miss the revolutionary import of Johnson's thought-experiment. Once the reader sorts through the book's grandiose language and utopian goals, she can easily see that the end toward which it tends is a net *reductio.*

It is one thing to propose that all the richness of the Christian tradition should be mined and offered as the wealth belonging to all believers; justice demands that they be enriched with their own heritage. But it is quite another to apply an external criterion as a rationalization for overturning Jesus' own command to baptize in the Trinitarian name, and, moreover, to deprive believers of the centuries of profound teaching which belong to them.

Johnson's book claims for itself a universally-salvific mission with regard to theology:

SHE WHO IS discloses in an elusive female metaphor the mystery of Sophia-God as sheer, exuberant, relational aliveness in the midst of the history of suffering, inexhaustible source of new being in situations of death and destruction, ground of hope for the whole created universe, to practical and critical effect (p. 243).

But classical theism offers the same, and grounds it firmly in a knowable, divine person who has freely chosen to reveal himself in human form. Like other feminists, Johnson proposes language for God which ultimately slips toward deism or simple theism, perhaps because feminism ultimately requires a universalizable religion appropriate for all women.

Johnson claims that Christianity would gain from the She Who Is metaphor an image of a more approachable deity than the one it has at present; She would be more attentive and empathic, the ideal mother. She would match the feminine experiences of birth/labor, anger, grief, and degradation with her compassion. But Johnson's interest goes beyond the metaphor to systematic reform in the arena of human endeavor, for which She is presumably more supportive. Such a move seems to result in a net loss, however, though it is familiar enough since the liberal Continental theology of the nineteenth century yielded on American shores the Social Gospel. Perhaps Catholic theology here again recapitulates the devolution suffered by Protestant thought. Certainly androcentrism, unjust and boring as it is, should give way to a just attitude and practice-that is, sexual equality-in church and world. But would Johnson's brand of invented inclusive language for God aid in this endeavor? This is the great *a priori* assumption in the book, and it remains unproven.

What also fails to appear is sufficient explanation of the patristic and medieval discourse about the Trinitarian God, in which it could be demonstrated easily that what Johnson requires is, in fact, available in the tradition. Early Christian writers, far from accepting any notion of God as Unmoved [male] Mover, wrote of-and prayed to-a God revealed in Christ's human experiences. The knowledge through revelation that God, free of the limitation of human gender, expresses his *philanthropia* by divine compassion was the foundation of an-

cient Christian worship and thought. And from the first, mainstream Christianity understood that the mystery revealed in and by Christ of the inner life of the Trinity was not precisely like human fatherhood, but encompassed it as a primary foundation of all generation. Furthermore, when human life was reordered by *metanoia* to God's life, women and men could begin to participate in the life of the Trinity. The Greek writers called this *metousia Theou,* but they expected its effects to be manifested in justice and virtue in the present life of human beings dwelling in God's good cosmos.

The true problem of *She Who Is* rests precisely in its misrepresentation of the Catholic Christian tradition. The accurate retort could be made that androcentrism has also played false with the tradition. That accepted, the real mission of theology is neither revolutionary nor utopian, but pedagogical: instead of using a feminist hermeneutic to select remnants of acceptable Christian teaching, theologians ought to learn and communicate the entire body of Christian tradition in order that theology rightly develop and deepen. To follow Johnson's lead would be to depart from the language for God made known in and by Christ, and preserved in the tradition. Instead, believers are asked to worship a God who, because " She " is unknown, and cannot be known, may be anyone. Her identity is a crucial theological question.

# **BOOK** REVIEWS

*The Immutability of God in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar.* By GERARD F. O'HANLON, S.J. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. Pp. 246. $59.95 (cloth).

O'Hanlon unfolds Balthasar's theology in four main chapters, which treat the question of immutability in terms, respectively, of Christ· ology; creation; time and eternity; and inner trinitarian life in God. In Chapter 5, O'Hanlon compares Balthasar's approach with some English-speaking authors (B. Davies, A. Kenny, E. Stump, Kretzmann, P. Geach, J. Kvanvig, D. H. Mellor, A. E. Williams). Finally, in Chapter 6, O'Hanlon ofiers a summary and assessment of Balthasar's proposals.

(1) Regarding his treatment of Christology in Chapter 1, O'Hanlon discusses how Balthasar's attempt to find a "middle way" between simple mutability and a traditional sense of immutability in God lies in uncovering the trinitarian presuppositions of Christology. Whether God is open to being afiected by dialogue with creatures hinges decisively on how we understand Jesus Christ or, more precisely, on how we understand the humanity of Jesus to reveal what God is like (9-10). This is an approach difierent from .that of those who would criticize the traditional axiom of divine immutability on the basis of certain philosophical assumptions regarding the priority of becoming over being (10-11). Balthasar's approach is first theological: when we con· sider the soteriological and eschatological dimensions of Christ's work for us, we are forced to ask the question about the nature of God: "does he too not sufier, is he not afiected by sin, can he he simply apathetic to the prospect of any final loss of his creatures to hell? " (9).

At the heart of Ba1thasar's position, then, lies an affirmation of a kenosis within the inner life of God, which already provides a foundation for the possibility of the (second) kenosis revealed in the incarnation and the cross (11-14). That is, the "kind of emptying and self. giving we see in the incarnation is both the image and the effect of the eternal ' externalization ' of God that is involved in the intra-trinitarian life" (14). It is imperative that one see the nuances of this affirmation.

On the one hand, Balthasar is careful to avoid a simple identification of the second with the first kenosis: this would make the incarna·

tion and cross natural and necessary to God, thus entailing theopaschism (14-15). On the other hand, the suffering love of Christ does truly reveal God's sovereign power to be absolute love and self-giving, because there " is a certain analogy between the divine and human natures of Christ which is due to the identity of the person, the pre-existent Logos" (14). Thus Balthasar is led to qualify the traditional understanding of divine immutability (15): there is " some real kenosis within God which has ontological status and is not merely functional, soteriological, or a simple addition which does not affect God" {16).

O'Hanlon makes clear how Balthasar is at pains always to respect the mysterious nature of the issue, as well as the limits set by the great Christian tradition. At the heart of the matter lies a return to the person-nature distinction as set by Chalcedon. Traditionally, the affirmation has been of a divine nature in Christ which remains immutable and a human nature which changes and suffers. Balthasar goes beyond this affirmation. On the basis of Philippians 2:5-11, he arrives at the necessity of positing a real kenosis in God; and from his recognition of the ontological, personal identity of the Logos as the subject who unites the two distinct natures in Christ, he refuses to limit the change and suffering which Christ experiences to his human nature alone. In fact, the tendency to understand the human nature of Christ as an *instrumentum conjunctum* which does not affect the divine person he considers as Nestorian in character. Yet, at the same time, Balthasar affirms the incommensurable difference between God and the world, between the divine and human " unmixed " natures of Christ. The relation between the two natures is precisely analogous (after the manner of the *maior dissimilitudo* of the Fourth Lateran Council). Any facile attribution of change and suffering which would fail to recognize this difference between natures Balthasar therefore rejects as a fall into monophysitism (42-46).

In sum, then: the relation between God and the incarnate Christ is one of *expression* and of *dialogue.* As " expression of God, Christ tells us about the Father, himself, the Spirit, and the one trinitarian divine being of God. As word of the Father he is the archetype of every self. expression of God *ad extra"* (47). But, as personally other than the Father, Christ reveals at the same time that God is "a trinitarian event in which there is mutual interaction and dialogue between the personal poles " (47). " This trinitarian relationship between God and Christ is the model for the relationship between God and us. In particular the reality of Christ as personal expression and dialogue partner of the Father becomes the exemplar of our relationship with God " (47).

(2) O'Hanlon's discussion of Christology sets the context for his subsequent treatment of Balthasar's theology regarding creation and time and eternity. With respect to creation, once again Balthasar be-

gins by accepting some main principles of the Christian tradition: namely, that the act of creation does not change God, and specifically that the creation of human freedom, with all that it entails, likewise does not change God (50). At the same time, Balthasar does go he·yond the traditional Thomistic axiom that God is not really related to creatures (51; see 52ff.). How does he maintain both of these perspectives simultaneously ?

The answer is to be found in the trinitarian presuppositions of crea·tion. These presuppositions show how difference and otherness are not threats to divine unity hut on the contrary the very way of that unity. The (precisely infinite) difference and otherness which is already char·acteristic of God's inner divine life makes possible the difference and otherness entailed in creation: that is, it provides grounds for being able " to speak in terms of the effect of creation on God, without elimi·nation of the divine transcendence" (168). And since the mystery of the Trinity shows us that God is already love in himself, the way is cleared for a specifically Christian notion of a free creation, against all Gnostic-type emanationist or Hegelian·type attempts to see creation as the way in which God becomes himself. Balthasar, starting with the Trinity and in contrast to these latter theories and attempts, makes a double affirmation: on the one hand, because God is already the full·ness of love, there is no necessity or external exigency for him to create (51); on the other hand, "the freedom with which he creates is in accordance with his nature as love in the self.giving way that is revealed in the Trinity" (52).

The consequences of all of this for our understanding of how God can he really related to creatures, or again, of how creatures can really make a difference to God, become clear when we recall Balth·asar's Christology, which, once again, sees the kenosis of the incarna·tion and the cross as (in a significant hut carefully qualified sense) revelatory of the inner being of God-and therefore (in the same qualified way) as a perfection. Poverty and weakness and self-empty·ing are not defects. They indicate for us not so much " negatives " which are a function of finitude (or sin), as " positives " which dis·close the inner meaning of love. O'Hanlon puts it thus:

> There is no ontological negativity in God; no evil, no sin, no defeat. The " death" that is the trinitarian event of utter self-giving is an en·tirely positive reality of divine beatitude. This means that there is no original image of sin in God. There is, however, that which gives rise to and can contain what in us, due to our use of freedom, issues in sin (81).

Similarly, the receptivity which in God is simply a perfection can give rise to and contain that which becomes suffering in Christ's in·carnation and crucifixion. The analogy is to a loving personal rela·tionship, wherein one's receptivity to the other is innerly-disposed to

becoming a suffering with respect to the other, in the face of the other's (sinful) use of freedom. As the relationship becomes truer or more perfect, one does not thereby cease to he affected by the other or to he innerly-disposed to suffer-indeed precisely to the contrary. At the same time, one is never-again, if and to the extent that the relationship is true---controlled by (and in this sense dependent upon) the other. The way is thus prepared for recognizing affectivity and even suffering as perfections; and thus, in turn, for affirming some truly analogous sense *(maior dissimilitudo)* of supra-suffering in God (see O'Hanlon's carefully qualified remarks on 81-87).

It is precisely here, then, that we see the theological-ontological grounds for Balthasar's ascribing to God many attributes and activities which seem so unusual from a traditional perspective: surprise, wonder, faith, hope, prayer, nostalgia, expectation, joy, newness, trust, obedience, increase and becoming (79) : the " positivity " of kenosis as the way of God's being, with its *receptivity* to difference and otherness, makes it possible to attribute all of these characteristics to God. This does not mean that Balthasar thereby rejects the more traditional attributes of omnipotence, infinity, eternity, immutability, and the like. It means only that these traditional attributes must now he modulated in terms of the deeper and more comprehensive sense of perfection(s) required by " the intrinsically inter-personal nature of trinitarian love " (80; see O'Hanlon's nuanced comments on 80-81).

(3) In Chapter 3, O'Hanlon makes thematic the relationship between time and eternity which operates so centrally in all that can he said about a " supra-mutability " in God. Eternity for Balthasar is more a "supra-time" than a "non-time" (92). Eternity, in other words, contains all the liveliness and movement proper to time, albeit in an utterly intensive way (90-96). The "becoming which is proper to time is like a copy *(Abbild)* of its original image or idea *(Urbild/ /dee)* which is the lively, ever-new, eventful aspect of eternity" (95). Again, it is in Christ that we find the analogue for the relation between temporality and eternity.

(4) With the analysis of the preceding chapters in hand, O'Hanlon returns in Chapter 4 to the central issue of his inquiry, namely, the immutability of God. As we have seen, " Balthasar accepts the traditional credal and Conciliar teaching on the Trinity as normative for his own theologizing. This means that the theology of the trinitarian event is developed from within an explicitly traditional Christian view of the Trinity" (llO). Most of the elements in Balthasar's carefully qualified answer to the question of immutability, which are drawn from the tradition even as they lift into relief overlooked aspects of the tradition, have already been indicated. His qualified answer is that we must continue to speak of the immutability of God-given the serious

dangers inherent in the language of mutability; but that we must nonetheless understand immutability in such a way that it is made to include " the perfection of trinitarian love within which there is ... intrinsic supra-mutability " (136) .

In the final section of Chapter 4, O'Hanlon takes up the question of the nature of theological discourse. This question, evidently, is operative all along the way in any attempt to clarify the legitimate sense in which one can speak of God as immutable-or indeed supra-mutable. O'Hanlon points out that Balthasar's language is the language of paradox (not dialectic) (317), and again that the language of paradox is proper to mystery (137ff.). The key to both paradox and mystery in Balthasar's sense is trinitarian love. The oppositions within the trinity are not inversely but directly related to the divine unity. That is, these oppositions are not dialectical (Hegel), even as they challenge a more conventional (i.e., unparadoxical: abstract) human logic (see 138). The theologian, on Balthasar's understanding of theology, has a responsibility to show how affirmations about God which seem contradictory-such as that God is both immutable and supra-mutable-are not contradictory; at the same time, he or she has a responsibility to " extend " human logic to show how it must be inclusive of paradox. Such extension involves the enrichment of abstract, conceptual language with analogical, metaphorical, and image-laden terms (137, 141). Balthasar accepts the complementarity indicated in the words of G. Sohngen: " Metaphysics without metaphor is empty; metaphor without metaphysics is blind" (142). Only in the context of some such complementarity can theology be faithful to Scripture.

(5) In the concluding two chapters, O'Hanlon compares Balthasar's position regarding immutability with the English-speaking thinkers named at the outset, and then provides his own final assessment. Despite the fact that the dialogue between Balthasar and these other thinkers is mutually enriching, O'Hanlon points out the difficulty in mediating the discussion, due to the " very real differences in presupposition, language and tone" among them (166). The key to the difference in their approaches, for example, with respect to the matter of formal-linguistic precision, lies in Balthasar's insistence on a primacy of love. Only a context of love can begin to make sense of how the freedom of surprise can be compatible with the divine omniscience (" as people get to know one another better there is, if anything, an increase in those aspects of surprise, mystery and freedom which are characteristic of love ": 166) .

In his own assessment, O'Hanlon notes especially the question raised by some regarding whether Balthasar's " unashamedly theocentric theological approach " does not entail a " denial or neglect of the reality and importance of creation in its temporal, historical, and social dimeu-

sions," as well as a tendency to dialogue with the tradition to the exclusion of contemporary theologies (170). Allowing that some of this criticism may he justified with respect to Balthasar's theology more generally, O'Hanlon says that on the question of divine immutability it is not justificd: Balthasar " has found a way to establish that creation is real and that God is involved in it, without reducing God to creation and without making God's involvement any less real by preserving his transcendence " (171).

O'Hanlon says that Balthasar is more vulnerable to criticism with respect to his imprecision of language (171), but O'Hanlon recognizes that such imprecision is in fact largely due to an appropriate sense of mystery in theological inquiry (172). Within the framework of his overall positive assessment of Balthasar's position, O'Hanlon suggests that this position he treated as a hypothesis, one that fits well into the notion of doctrinal development (172-75). That is, Balthasar's position may he considered as a stage in the process of theological inquiry. In analogy with the development of the doctrine of the Trinity in early Christianity, " an important sense of mystery always remains, and yet definitive steps forward may he possible and are signalled by the reception of the Church" (172-73). In this context, Balthasar's proposals regarding immutability in God should he tested both in the light of the whole of the tradition and in terms of " a broad theological consensus concerning the need to modify the traditional teaching " (173). This testing, says O'Hanlon, should involve more discussion with opposing views. The precision of Balthasar's position would he enhanced, for example, with more sustained treatment of the debate surrounding process theology (173).

O'Hanlon concludes that Balthasar's theology on the question of immutability is probably, hut not certainly, correct.

> In a very difficult area, with the need to keep a delicate balance in the inter-relationships between the witness of Scripture, tradition, Christian experience, the inherent logic and dynamic of philosophical systems and his own presuppositions and biases, Balthasar has provided us with a way of speaking about God which resonates with the intuition of the Christian faithful concerning God's consoling intimacy and yet his reassuring otherness (174).

O'Hanlon's hook brings out well what is perhaps most important and distinctive about the work of Balthasar: how his *traditwnal* theology opens up *creative* perspectives concerning a central truth of Christian faith. Balthasar is at pains to protect what is indispensable in the traditional affirmation of God's immutability: namely, God's infinite-transcendent perfection. He therefore retains the term "immutability." Nonetheless, he wishes equally to insist on a "liveliness in God, an ' event,' which the more usual understanding of immutability does not

convey and so he attempts to invest the term with new meaning and to call for a new image of God " (6). It is important to understand that Balthasar does not mean simply to replace more traditional " ontological " categories in our understanding of God with more " personalist " categories. On the contrary, he means to take " personalism," as disclosed above all in the divine trinitarian relations, as revelatory of the *being* of God. The result is a genuine alternative to either (static) state or (dynamic) event as characterizing divine life: an alternative, that is, which goes beyond state and event even as it includes crucial features of both (135; 111-112).

O'Hanlon repeatedly makes clear: all of the deepening and development that Balthasar proposes with respect to the tradition hinge on taking trinitarian love as one's starting point. It is trinitarian love, with its inherent receptivity to the other (to otherness and difference) that makes possible, indeed warrants, all of the attributes in God which express God's supra-mutability and supra-suffering.

In sum, then: realization of the purpose of his book required O'Hanlon to show how Balthasar's theology, at various critical junctures, operates with presuppositions different from those which we have become accustomed to take as traditional. These presuppositions do not so much depart from the tradition as they lift up from the tradition elements which have heretofore not received sufficient emphasis. The presuppositions can be framed in terms of five main questions: (1) To what extent has a traditional, philosophically-dominated, approach to the tract *De Deo Uno* determined our idea of what attributes are appropriately ascribed to God (see 80)? Is our deepest sense of unity given in " substance" or in the " intrinsically inter-personal nature of trinitarian love," and in what ways (80; see the question O'Hanlon poses to Balthasar in this respect: 115-116)?

(2) How does one conceive the distinction of divine and human natures ("unmixed") in Jesus Christ in a way that is consistent with the unity of Jesus' divine person? Is Jesus' self-emptying and suffering-receptivity-unto-death (kenosis) revelatory of the inner being of God in some truly analogous sense?

(3) What does a trinitarian (and christocentric) starting point entail regarding the Thomistic understanding of God as *Actus Purus* or *Esse?* Specifically, in what sense is receptivity to be affirmed of *Esse,* and thus as a perfection? What does this imply for the relation of God and the world?

(4) If receptivity is a perfection of *esse,* what consequences does this hold for the Aristotelian conception of the feminine in terms of " matter " (wherein receptivity is tied first to the potency and hence passivity of " matter ") ?

(5) What follows for the " critical " and " systematic " dimensions of theology, if, accepting Balthasar's centering of thought in (the paradoxes of) love and beauty, one sees mystery, metaphor, concrete imagery, and indeed "myth" as essential and not "accidental" to all theological meaning?

In opening up these questions, O'Hanlon's important book identifies the areas where dialogue with Balthasar's work might best begin, even as it makes its own constructive contribution to theology.

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*Goodness and Rightness in Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae.* By JAMES F. KEENAN, S.J. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1992. Pp. xii + 212. $25.00 (paper).

James Keenan says that he began his work on this book " believing the simple presupposition that goodness describes persons and rightness describes actions" (p. ix). The main focus of the study is the question of whether and to what extent this distinction can be found in the work of Aquinas. The author holds that the understanding of the relation of reason and will in the early work of Aquinas precludes the distinction of goodness and rightness held by the author and other contemporary moralists. Keenan claims, however, to find in the *Prima Secundae* of the *Summa Theologiae* a significant shift in Aquinas's notion of the will and its relation to reason, a shift toward an " autonomous will." Keenan states in the Introduction: "The will's autonomy is a necessary condition for understanding moral goodness "; indeed he proceeds to note that " without it there can be no distinction " between goodness and rightness (pp. ix-x).

Before commenting on Keenan's work I will first briefly summarize the basic points of the book. The book is divided into four parts. In the first part we see the distinction between goodness and rightness. Keenan explains the distinction:

> Goodness and badness describe whether or not we strive to the extent we are able to attain rightness in our lives and actions. Rightness and wrongness describe whether or not we attain the end that reason dictates is proper and necessary for our lives and actions (p. ix).

Keenan finds the foundation for this distinction in the reasoning of G. E. Moore. A person's actions can he judged right or wrong independently of a consideration of the person's motives. For instance, a

right action might be performed by a good person or by a bad person, the goodness or badness being determined by the motive. There are, then, two distinct moral descriptions; one, goodness or badness, pertains to persons and the other, rightness and wrongness, pertains to actions.

Keenan joins several contemporary moral theologians in claiming something which Moore did not, namely, that " a person who performs a wrong action can be called good for performing the action" (p. 6). This assertion is based upon an understanding of goodness as determined " antecedent to action " (p. 15) , and likewise as " antecedent to and distinct from rightness" (p. 7). Moral goodness is determined by the motivation, and motivation alone, of the person acting (p. 14). For example, does the person act out of love for God and neighbor, or rather out of a desire for self-aggrandizement? Jn question here is what Keenan calls the " fundamental, formal self-movement of the agent" (p. 14). Rightness on the other hand is a moral description determined by the measure of reason. It describes actions, and can also describe the agent, in terms of right order in relation to the end of human life.

In Part II (the second and third chapters) Keenan turns to the supposed shift in the thought of Aquinas regarding reason and will. Keenan finds the early position of Aquinas incompatible with the distinction of goodness and rightness, but the later position compatible with the distinction. Keenan also presents Aquinas's distinction between specification and exercise in the act of the will as crucial to the distinction between goodness and rightness. I will return to this point shortly.

Part III (the fourth and fifth chapters) considers Aquinas's treatises on the human act and moral virtue found in *Summa Theologiae* I-II. Keenan holds that Aquinas's considerations are restricted exclusively to questions of rightness: "Thomas's only concern in these treatises is whether acts and persons are rightly ordered" (p. x). He supports this claim by noting that the "object" has primacy in Aquinas's moral writings. The role of the object in moral action is in the realm of specification, which for Keenan is the realm of rightness.

In the first chapter of Part IV Keenan claims to find in Aquinas's notion of charity a parallel for his notion of moral goodness. It becomes clear here that for Keenan moral goodness and badness are found only in what he calls the "will's primary *exercitium,"* which he explains is "its self-movement toward specification" (p. 119). He asserts that in the notion of charity as commanding virtues and actions Aquinas has finally articulated what can be called a description of moral goodness. Charity as commanding is a description of the will's primary *exercitium,* and as such is prior to any description of the will as measured

by reason in specification (cf. pp. 129-30). Keenan notes that according to Aquinas the interior act of charity is measured by one measure alone: the measure of charity; while external acts are measured by two measures: the measure of charity and the measure of reason (II-II, 27, 6 ad 3, cited on p. 131). Keenan asserts that these two measures correspond indirectly to the distinction of goodness and rightness. Goodness is measured by one measure, charity, and rightness by a different measure, reason.

The final chapter of the book considers the question of moral badness, and finds that Aquinas did not distinguish moral badness (the opposite of goodness) and wrongness (the opposite of rightness) in his treatment of sin. As in his treatises on the human act and moral virtue, Aquinas gives primacy to the object in his treatment of sin. However, in the treatises on charity, says Keenan, Aquinas's starting point is the agent himself as striving for God (p. x).

As noted earlier, Keenan himself says that without autonomy of will there can be no distinction between goodness and rightness. I wish then to focus our attention on the question of autonomy. What does Keenan mean by autonomy? At issue is the relation between willing and knowing. Keenan says, "If we can will to know, then the will is autonomous " (p. 23). He develops this notion further in his exposition of the purported shift in Aquinas's view of will and reason, a shift to an autonomous will. Keenan, finding the shift in I-II, 9, explains the new understanding: " As first mover, the will's movement is independent of and prior to reason's presentation of the object . . . " (p. 47). Here is the heart of this notion of autonomy: the will can move in total independence from reason. There is a first movement or *exercitium* of the will which is antecedent to specification (p. 50) and requires no object presented by reason (p. 66). Since the last end "exists a priori in the will" (p. 4,3), the will in its antecedent *exercitium* wills the end and thus moves itself " into the willingness to be determined" (p. 46). This willingness is alternatively described as a "willingness to be presented with any object" (p. 46), and as a willingness to strive to do the right (Cf. pp. 54-55). The specification by reason is said to have an *"a posteriori* influence on the will" (p. 48).

The autonomy of the will for Keenan, then, is in the power of the will to move itself with no influence from reason, and to determine its own "attitude" (my term) toward reason. Moral goodness or badness is found in this movement of the will, and there alone.

I now turn to commentary. I intend to center my critique on autonomy of the will, the linchpin of Keenan's study. I must omit a consideration of the various subordinate claims and discussions. I will argue first that Aquinas does not shift to an autonomous will in the

*Summa Theologiae.* In light of this argument, I will examine Keenan's assertion that moral goodness is constituted prior to the specification of reason. In my examination I find Keenan's position incompatible with Aquinas's moral teaching, including that on charity, and discontinuous with the broader moral tradition which Aquinas's teaching represents.

There is, I contend, questionable basis in Aquinas for the assertion that the will moves independently of and prior to the specification of reason. To illustrate this point, let us look at the distinction between exercise and specification to which Keenan appeals. In I-II, 9, 1, in considering whether the intellect moves the will, Aquinas distinguishes two ways that a power of the soul can be in potency. It can either act or not act (order of exercise), and it can do this or that (order of specification). Given this duality, the power must be moved in two ways; the first comes from the subject (or power) itself, the second from the object. As is clear in the example of sight, which either sees or does not, and sees white or sees black, there are two distinct sources of *one* movement. The power of sight cannot be exercised without an object. Aquinas's distinction between the two orders does not imply some first *exercitium* which is independent of specification.

Indeed, the flow of the argument in I-II, 9, taken as a whole, militates against Keenan's notion of the *primum exercitium.* Aquinas explains that the will must be moved *quantum ad exercitium* into its first act by some exterior principle, which is God, the author of nature. There is no indication that this or any other act of the will is "independent of " the apprehension of reason. Reason cannot move the will to exercise its act, *but this does not mean that there is any act of will independent of reason.* Indeed in I-II, 19, 3 ad 1 (note that this text comes *after* the purported shift) Aquinas states: "The will cannot desire a good, unless that good be first apprehended by reason."

This position does not compromise the freedom of the will. Aquinas explains in several texts (e.g., *ST* I-II, 10, 2 and 13, 6) that the will is free inasmuch as it can either will or not will (order of exercise) , and can will this or that (order of specification) . Given God's initial movement of the will toward universal good, no object can necessitate the will in the order of exercise, and no particular good can necessitate it in the order of specification. The will is always free not to act. Yet when it does act, it must be specified by reason. The will remains free, however, because it has control over its own specification: it controls whether an object will be considered by reason, and also how it will be considered. This " dominating indetermination " of the will, to use a phrase of Jacques Maritain, constitutes our human freedom.

I now turn to Keenan's notion that moral goodness is found in a willingness antecedent to specification. When Keenan speaks of the

willingness to be determined, and the willingness to strive for the right, he touches on issues of foundational importance in morality. Moral goodness indeed requires such willingness on the part of the agent. Keenan's reading, however, fails to take account of two important points found in Aquinas. First, as discussed above, there is no willing antecedent to all specification of reason. Second, human moral goodness is not *completely* accounted for in any willingness alone; it is more complex.

To expand the first point, I simply ask, how can one will to strive for the right prior to any conception of the right? Further, what is a " willingness to be determined " in the absence of any notion of what might or might not determine me, or be determined by me? An agent must have some " thing " to will, with some specific (or specified) con· tent, if he is to exercise his will at all. Keenan claims that the end exists in the will *a priori,* and that it can be willed *a priori.* Since " a priori " here clearly means prior to the action of reason, he must then hold that the will itself has cognitive power. Other philosophers have held such a view of the will; but again, I see no evidence that Aquinas does.

Let us turn to the second point. In the questions on goodness in human action Aquinas refers several times to a dictum from Dionysius: " any single defect causes evil, but good results from the complete cause, *ex integra causa" (ST* I-II, 18, 4, ad 3). He further explains: " But in order for the will to be good, it must will the good under the aspect of good; that is, it must will the good, for the sake of the good " *(ST* I-II, 19, 7 ad 3.) Simply having a good motivation, for instance, is not sufficient to constitute moral goodness. Now Keenan claims that when Aquinas says " good " in passages such as these from the treatise on action, it should be read " right." This claim cannot be reconciled with Aquinas's moral thought as a whole. I believe that I have shown that Aquinas does not shift to a position of autonomy of the will as described by Keenan. Since by the latter's admission such an autonomy is a condition for the distinction between goodness and rightness, we can reject the claim that Aquinas is speaking of something distinct from goodness in his treatise on human action.

For Aquinas" good and evil in human actions are said through reference to reason," precisely because the good of man is " to be accord· ing to reason" *secundum rationem esse (ST* I-II, 18, 5). The good pertains to the intellect, under the aspect of the true, prior to pertaining to the will under the aspect of the desirable (Cf. *ST* I-II, 19, 3 ad 1). In order to be good, human beings must will and act upon the true good, as known by reason. That reason is the rule or measure of human action is ordained by the eternal law (cf. *ST* I-II, 19, 4 and 91, 1).

But what about the measure of charity, and Keenan's claim that this is the true and only measure of goodness?

In one text (*ST* II-II, 27, 6 ad 3), which Keenan quotes at length (p. 131), Aquinas is distinguishing the interior act of charity and external acts. The interior act of charity is not measured by reason, since the object of charity, God, surpasses the judgment of reason. Keenan claims, as noted earlier, that the interior act of charity (as commanding) can be called good prior to any consideration of specification. He also claims that the two measures (charity and reason) of external acts correspond to goodness and rightness. As regards the first claim, we should note that while the interior act of charity is not measured by reason, it is still *specified* by its object-God, known by faith. Only as specified can it be good. Perhaps more importantly, as regards the claim about external acts, I see no basis for denying that the two measures *both* pertain to goodness. The supernatural measure of charity does not wipe away a natural requirement of goodness, namely, that the act be in accord with reason. Were it otherwise, grace would not build upon but rather subvert the natural order.

As a final consideration I turn to what is probably the most crucial implication of the distinction of goodness and rightness. I noted earlier that Keenan asserts that " a person who performs a wrong action can be called good for performing the action" (p. 6). He returns to this point in the concluding pages of the book. Here he states that the " defect in rightness does not affect the description of goodness" (p. 173), whether of person or action. Moral goodness, then, of persons and actions is determined by one thing, and one thing alone-motivation.

I have two comments. First, I want to reiterate that Keenan's claim on this point is incompatible with Aquinas's moral teaching, including that on charity. As just noted, actions commanded by charity are measured by two measures, not only that of charity but also that of reason, precisely because the latter is always required for moral goodness. It follows then that any action which falls short in its object from the measure of reason is thereby to some degree rendered morally evil, regardless of motivation.

Second, it seems to me the assertions that a person performing a wrong action can be called good for performing the action, and that the wrong action itself can be called good, are not consonant with the moral tradition which Aquinas exemplifies. In his recent encyclical *Veritatis Splendor,* Pope John Paul II considers the basic principles of the Christian moral understanding. To find an answer to the question of moral goodness he turns, as does Aquinas, to God's ordering of man to the final end through natural law. Through an examination of Christ's response to the rich young man's question: "Teacher, what good must I do to have eternal life ?," the Pope argues that obedience

to God's commandments is "the way and condition of salvation" (*VS* # 12). Now obedience to the commandments entails, in addition to a good motivation or a willingness to strive, the conformity of an action's object to the specifying content of the commandment. What is the significance of a commandment to honor one's father and mother, if it does not *specify* actions? The commandments of God specify what kinds of action are, or are not, in conformity with the true good of man.

In his analysis of the moral act, the Pope holds that the *object* of the act is "the primary and decisive element for moral judgment" (*VS* # 79). Actions which by the nature of their object are unable to be ordered to man's true end can never be "good" actions. Further, he notes that acts, even individual acts, are determinative of the goodness or badness of the *person.* These points are summarized nicely in the following passage:

> Activity is morally good when it attests to and expresses the voluntary ordering of the person to his ultimate end and the conformity of a concrete action with the human good as it is acknowledged in its truth by reason. If the object of the concrete action is not in harmony with the true good of the person, the choice of that action makes our will and ourselves morally evil, thus putting us in conflict with our ultimate end, the supreme good, God himself (*VS* # 72).

I believe that Keenan's study commendably highlights the freedom of the will in the order of exercise, and its power to exercise dominion over the intellect in the order of specification. Keenan also insightfully emphasizes the central role of the love of God as the root of our striving to live well. Yet any willing can only be consequent to some knowing. Further, the willingness to strive and be determined, if it is good, is a willingness to be determined, or specified, by the *true* good known by reason and faith. This willingness, which is a crucial element in moral goodness, must be completed by actions in conformity with the true good. Human goodness is in freely, and lovingly, living out the truth of human nature and its end.

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*Moral Absolutes: Tradition, Revision, and Truth.* By JOHN FINNIS. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991. Pp. 113. $24.95 (cloth), $9.95 (paper).

Not long after his conversion to Roman Catholicism, Alasdair MacIntyre told a group of Catholic bishops: "As a matter of autobio-

graphical fact, I came to the conclusion that there were exceptionless and binding [moral] norms prior to and quite independently of any faith in Divine Revelation." Within the Church Macintyre entered, however, there existed, and exists, widespread doubt and confusion about "moral absolutes" or " exceptionless moral norms." Certain eminent Catholic moral theologians today dissent from Pope John Paul's teaching that " there exist acts which *per se* and in themselves, independently of circumstances, are always seriously wrong by reason of their object." In the face of this dissent, John Finnis has produced a powerful philosophical and theological defense of the papal teaching.

*Moral Absolutes* presents the 1988 Michael J. McGivney Lectures which Finnis delivered at the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family. The hook consists of four chapters: "Foundations," "Clarifications," "Christian Witness," and "Challenge and Response." Like Macintyre, Finnis maintains that the authority of scripture and tradition supplement reason's grasp of certain specific types of act as intrinsically wicked and, therefore, never to he performed. Although his goal is to vindicate the proposition that there are moral absolutes, rather than to say which, or even how many, moral norms qualify as " exceptionless " (and therefore as, in the relevant sense of the term, " absolute ") , his examples include norms against abortion (and, more generally, the direct killing of innocent human beings), adultery, fornication, contraception, homosexual sex, blasphemy, and disclaimer of the faith.

As Finnis observes, the Church's tradition of proclaiming these norms and their absoluteness is "massively solid." Against certain neo-scholastic defenders of the tradition, however, he rejects "legalistic" understandings of these and other norms of morality. A common mistake of pre-conciliar Catholic moral theology was to conceive of moral norms as rules which God lays down much as human laws are rules which legislators lay down; all too often, the rewards and punishments for obeying or disobeying human laws then became the model for thinking about the relevance of heaven and hell to Christian moral life. Finnis argues that the point of moral norms (including moral absolutes), rather, is to secure and advance the real good of flesh and blood human beings *in this world* as well as the next: " they guide one toward human fulfillment, by disclosing the plan, the mind, the *consilium* of God for that fulfillment."

Hence, a sound understanding of moral norms as intrinsic to " the integral human fulfillment which cannot be found outside that King· dom whose material is being formed here on earth but whose completion lies beyond history " will not be subject to the familiar complaint that the idea of moral absolutes "honors rules above values."

Although Finnis is critical of various aspects of neo-scholastic moral

thought, his principal targets in *Moral Absolutes* are the contemporary " proportionalist " theologians who have, over the past twenty years or so, become the " establishment " in Catholic moral theology in the United States as well as in Europe. Finnis sums up the characteristic moral principle and method of these theologians as " Pursue the course which promises, in itself and its consequences, a net greater proportion of good states of affairs, or . . . a net lesser proportion of had, overall, in the long run." This principle and method effectively exclude moral absolutes in the sense that the tradition affirms them, i.e., as exceptionless moral norms that exclude types of action that are specifiable, as possible objects of choice, without reliance on any evaluative term that presupposes a judgment of the morality of the action. (Proportionalists can, of course, affirm purely formal absolutes which, by incorporating evaluative terms, implicitly provide in advance for exceptions, e.g., "do not murder," where murder is defined as "wrongful killing," or "do not commit adultery," where adultery is defined as " sexual intercourse between a spouse and someone not that person's spouse that is not justified by a proportionate reason.") At most, proportionalists claim that there are some " practical " or " virtual " absolutes that exclude some types of act as falling afoul of the proportionalist principle " practically " or " virtually " all of the time.

Drawing on (and developing) the philosophical and theological critique of proportionalism that he and his collaborators, Germain Grisez and Joseph Boyle, have presented in various books and articles, Finnis subjects the proportionalist principle and method to intense and rigorous philosophical scrutiny. He concludes not merely that the proportionalist method is incapable of rationally guiding human action in situations of morally significant choice, but that its principle is quite literally incoherent. Thus, according to Finnis, proportionalism is not a method of rational moral judgment at all; rather it is, and cannot help but be, a technique for rationalizing behavior chosen on grounds independent of the application of proportionalist method.

The core of Finnis's case against proportionalism derives from his claim that the goods and bads involved in options for morally significant choice are incommensurable in such a way as to render nonsensical the comparisons of value by which proportionalists propose to guide human action. In the twenty years over which Finnis, Grisez, and others have pressed this " incommensurability thesis " against proportionalism, no proportionalist has come up with anything resembling a plausible answer to it. To my knowledge, only Richard McCormick, SJ., among notable proportionalists, has made any kind of serious attempt to come to terms with the problem of incommensurability, and he concludes not by refuting or even rebutting the incommensurability

thesis, hut merely by asserting that "somehow or other, in fear and trembling, we commensurate."

McCormick's claim is easily answered, however. He and other proportionalists propose their method precisely as a rational way of guiding morally significant choice; but it cannot be a *rational* method of moral judgment unless it can present *reasons* for assigning certain weights to certain values in certain circumstances or for adopting a premoral "hierarchy of values" according to which choices can be rationally guided. To suggest that by, or in, choosing we bring human goods into a kind of commensurability or, in a sense, establish for ourselves a hierarchy of values is not to provide reasons to guide the choosing. In contrast to proportionalists, Finnis, Boyle, and Grisez, in their constructive work, have presented and defended moral norms as providing conclusive reasons for action that guide morally significant choice (i.e., paradigmatically, choice as between incompatible practical possibilities each or all of which have some intelligible appeal-and thus provides a reason for action-by virtue of the possible good that can be instantiated by a choice in its favor.

In *Nuclear Deterrence, Morality and Realism* (1987), Finnis, Boyle, and Grisez presented an argument that exposes the inability of proportionalist method to provide rational guidance in situations of morally significant choice. In *Moral Absolutes,* Finnis restates the argument and responds to its critics. I will present the argument in my own terms: Proportionalist method requires the identification of one option rather than its alternative (s) as promising unqualifiedly greater good (or lesser evil). Such an option would necessarily include everything of value available in the alternative (s) *plus some more.* Someone who recognizes this situation, however, has no *reason* (though he might have powerful subrational motives, such as hatred, selfishness, or mere laziness) to choose an alternative. The *rational* appeal of any alternative would simply fade away. In such circumstances, however, the choosing subject would simply have no need for the proportionalist method which, after all, is proposed not as a method of overcoming subrational (e.g., emotional) impediments to rational (i.e., fully morally upright) choosing, but rather as a rational method of deciding between or among incompatible options both or each of which has some rational appeal.

It will not do to respond to this argument, as Robert McKim and Peter Simpson have responded to it, by pointing out that one might egoistically "choose" an alternative which one has identified as promising the lesser good or a greater evil. This response merely equivocates on the idea of "choice." The decisive point is that one could not "choose" the lesser good or greater evil in the strong and relevant sense of choosing *for a reason* (as opposed to acting egoistically or on some other suhrational motive). If the options available for choice were

in fact commensurable, and one really could, prior to choosing, identify one option as promising the greater good (or lesser evil), then one would have no *reason* for choosing an alternative. One's motives for choosing an option promising lesser good or greater evil could only be subrational (e.g., egoistic). And, to repeat, proportionalists do not propose their method as a way of overcoming subrational impediments to morally upright choosing, but rather as a rational method of identifying the morally correct option.

In addition to his philosophical arguments, in *Moral Absolutes* Finnis develops a powerful theological argument against proportionalism which Grisez articulated briefly in his *The Way of the Lord Jesus: Christian Moral Principles.* This argument is in the form of a *reductio ad absurdum* which highlights the inconsistency of proportionalist goals and assumptions with a Christian understanding of divine providence. He begins by observing that God's providence, as Christians understand it, involves the permission of evils only so that from them God may somehow bring about a greater good. If proportionalists are right, however, that it is the obligation of humans to choose the state of affairs promising the greater good, then " the moral norm in every problem-situation would be, quite simply, Try anything. That is, Do whatever you feel like! " If, as Finnis points out, you succeed in what you attempt, then you can rest assured that your choice conduced to the long run net good (since God's providence permitted your goal to be accomplished); if, on the other hand, you fail to accomplish your goal, then you can content yourself with the knowledge that your failure tended to the overall good (since God's providence frustrated your effort). "So," as Finnis says, "try anything."

It will be interesting to see whether advocates of proportionalism make a more serious effort to come to terms with this argument than they have thus far in the case of the argument from the incommensurability of options available for morally significant choice. If they do, I am certainly curious about whether their strategy will be to question the traditional understanding of divine providence or to attempt to show that Finnis's *reductio ad absurdum* miscarries. If I may anticipate a wholly unsatisfactory response, it will not do to argue that belief in divine providence generates Finnis's *reductio ad absurdum* not merely for proportionalism, but for every method of moral judgment. What renders proportionalism particularly vulnerable to this argument is its implicit replacement of divine with human providence. By shifting to human beings a responsibility that only God can hear-a responsibility for states of affairs in the world that are ultimately far beyond the control of particular men and women-it effectively renders the whole idea of human moral responsibility meaningless. It is this feature of

proportionalism that Finnis's theological argument exploits. In this regard, there is no moral theory, good or bad, which overreaches so far as proportionalism does.

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*Faithful Persuasion: In Aid of a Rhetoric of Christian Theology.* By DAVID S. CUNNINGHAM. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991. Pp. xvii + 312. $29.95 (cloth) ; $16.95 (paper).

The relation between words and the Word has always been of interest in Christian theology. Earlier in this century a school of writers approached " the Bible as literature " with a view to bringing Scripture into a more persuasive relation with literature at large, but their insistence on the rigorous exclusion of dogmatic elements from literary scrutiny impoverished their work. A later set of procedures and perspectives on rhetoric and language in their relation to reality was better able to allow the utterances of a text's speakers their own integrity, whether sacred or secular. In any case, a *thematic* interpretation of the founding texts of Christianity, influenced by Aristotle's *Rhetoric*- where form is a means for persuasively communicating an idea-content-had long predominated in *ecclesial* usage, germane as it was to the didactic concerns of the Church. An alternative tradition, more indebted to Aristotle's *Poetics,* where form, content, and functions are treated as factors making for the indissoluble whole which is the literary work, has been less conspicuous-though its offer of initiation into the " world " of the sacred writers gives it great exegetical potential. The text's "word " should be encountered at the level of its own patterned imagery and wrought design. In the appreciation of the Gospels this has become in recent decades a commonplace. However, as the T. S. Eliot scholar Helen Gardner warned, one should not so react against the older approach as to treat the biblical text as the product of a disembodied imagination, rather than a human being writing a work that might make his readers "wise unto salvation."

David S. Cunningham's *Faithful Persuasion* extends this discussion of the propriety or impropriety of a rhetorical approach to Scripture to the discourse of Christian theology as a whole. The intent is a laudable one but its execution vitiated, to my mind, by the excessive concessions to scepticism from which the author sets out. Because his theological epistemology, aware of the limitations of the propositions in which we assert the truths of faith, will grant those assertions no more than a

(continuously) revisable character, he falls back on an account of theology as rhetoric so as to make the best of a bad job. For persuasion is what we use when we know demonstration is hopeless. As a result, Professor Cunningham's study, which could most usefully have "placed" a variety of theologies of past, present, and, prospectively, future on the spectrum of (onto-) logic, poetic, and rhetoric, concludes instead that theology must regard itself as rhetorical or perish! This inevitably narrows the several services theologies of different kinds can perform for the Church. Imagine how biblical studies would be reduced were the exegete only to treat his text as paraenesis, and never as history or as a symbolic world.

Nonetheless, on the way from its (as I find) unsatisfactory starting-point and to its depressing conclusion, *Faithful Persuasion* has worthwhile points to make about a number of authors (of various periods) and topics, though it might have made them more *persuasively* (its author's key term) had the intended audience (middle-brow or academic?) been more clearly viewed in advance.

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*Church and Culture: German Catholic Theology, 1860-1914.* By THOMAS FRANKLIN O'MEARA, O.P. Notre Dame/London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991. Pp. x + 260. $35.95 (cloth).

" In 1925, Baden's *Kultusminister,* a Protestant, began an address to the Gorresgesellschaft in Heidelberg by describing this era: ' Brave men like Hertling, Schell, Julius Bachem, and Carl Muth, shook the German Catholic world in order to lead it out of its fortress, to lead it again into the midst of the life and activity of the entire people, even when this seemed at first strange and uncomfortable ' " (pp. 159f.) .

Even to many theologians, the era in question-the last four decades of the nineteenth century through the outbreak of the "Great War"- is comparatively unknown. There has been, of course, renewed interest in prominent theological figures like John Henry Newman, but his German-speaking contemporaries are for the most part strangers to the English-speaking world. And this is the first reason why this book is important: it describes a forgotten world of a century or so ago, yet one whose theological problematic was strikingly similar to our own.

The " contours " of this period, deftly described in the first part of this book, were both varied and complex. Politically speaking, during the nineteenth century, " Germany " changed from an assortment of

geographically contiguous minor and medium-sized states to an Empire dominated by Prussia. Such a political re.arrangement had ecclesiastical implications: Roman Catholics, who previously had been the majority in places like Bavaria found themselves a persecuted minority during the *Kulturkampf* under Bismarck. And like many other victims of persecution, Roman Catholics adopted a "fortress mentality"- fearful of Berlin, which was influenced by both the Lutheran Reformation and the Enlightenment, and mesmerized by Rome, which was coming under the increasing influence of neoscholasticism in doctrine and ultramontanism in discipline.

German Catholic theologians found themselves in a quandary: what direction should they take? Many, like Joseph Kleutgen, took refuge in Rome; a few, like Joseph Schnitzer, found the appeal of Berlin more attractive; still others, however, tried to steer an independent course in dialogue with the culture of their day. The second and major part of this book focuses on five such theologians: Matthias Joseph Scheeben, Alois Schmid, Paul Schanz, Herman Schell, and Carl Braig.

Scheeben (1835-88), "the best known and the most read in the first half of the twentieth century " (p. 53) , pursued an independent route in seeking a " transcendent synthesis " incorporating both patristic and idealist thought; indeed, his lengthy *Mysteries of Christ"ianity* continued to enjoy a certain popularity up till the time of Vatican II, though more as a resource for spiritual reading than as a work of systematic theology. Like Newman, Scheeben's thought was *sui generis,* "and inspired the most divergent evaluations " (p. 65) ; unlike Newman, Scheeben has few disciples today.

In contrast to Scheeben, the other four theologians attempted to emerge from the " fortress " of Roman Catholic defensiveness and to engage the historical and philosophical currents of their age. The most creative of these, Herman Schell (1850-1906), expounded an immanence apologetics intended to overcome the estrangement between the Church and contemporary culture. And, in order to address that world, Schell insisted that theologians need appropriate freedom; otherwise, they are caged like a bird: "The bars of the bird's cage are the dogmas; the owner watching that the bird does not fly away is the church's teaching office; the possibility to hop from the bar to the base of the cage and back is the freedom of the theologians" (p. 121). Such opinions (or at least such rhetoric) about the compatibility of Catholicism and the modern world brought Schell into bitter conflict with ultramontane theologians and eventually led to his major works being placed on the Index. Though Schell declared his submission, both his reputation and his theological enterprise were severely damaged.

The third part of this book treats the emergence of *Reformkatholizismus* and Modernism in the years before World War I. Like Americ-

anism in this country, *Reformkatholizismus* had the disadvantage of appearing at a time of ultramontane ascendancy, when "conversation with modernity equalled advocating heresy" (p. 184). However, reform endeavors in Germany found an unusual champion in a prominent layman, Georg von Hertling (1843-1919), whose career began as a professor of philosophy and ended as chancellor of the German Reich (1917-18). Unlike professional theologians, "the philosopher-statesman [Hertling) had an eye for concrete problems which he did not solve with a new theory but clarified practically" (p. 158). Nonetheless, his positions have a modern ring: " If Christianity ... had hypothetically moved more toward Asia rather than toward Europe, theological form and expression (but not its content) would have been quite different from today's approach, marked by Greek thought-forms" (p. 158).

It is both ironic and tragic that this era, which began with the *Syllabus errorum* (1864), ended with *Lamentabili* (1907). To many non-Catholics, both documents appeared as the Church's declaration of hostilities with the modern world. One could, of course, claim that the modern world was really not prepared to listen to the Church and so used the documents as pretexts for its own brand of intolerance. Yet, however debatable their effects on the contemporary world, both documents certainly had a deleterious intramural effect in stifling theological efforts to address contemporary culture. As Karl Adam remarked about the " Oath Against Modernism ": " What makes the oath for professors a burning issue in the life of higher education is *the issue of the right of the historical-critical method in the area of Catholic theology"* (p. 173).

One concludes this volume with a sense of *deja vu-not* that one has previously met the participants or witnessed the incidents, but with the sense that much of the scenario has been replayed in recent years, though with different actors and different settings. It is then upsetting to read of injustices committed, of reputations impugned, and of careers destroyed. It is disheartening to read of theologians oblivious to both the facts of history and current intellectual developments, yet self-assured in the righteousness of their own positions. It is dismaying to read of ecclesiastical authorities refusing to listen to their subordinates and insisting on blind obedience. But most of all, it is discouraging to read of the Church's refusal to engage the contemporary world in genuine dialogue about Christian revelation. Thus, the relationship of the " Church and Culture " is as much an issue for today as it was for German Catholics of the nineteenth century.

Accordingly, this volume is not only an important contribution to understanding that era, but to understanding our own. Moreover, O'Meara is a skilled theological artist, who has the admirable ability to

paint the trends of an age in impressionistic strokes backed by a formidable, indeed overwhelming, amount of research (as indicated in the impressive footnotes, pp. 209-252). Yet, as in any masterpiece, one can find a few flaws: sometimes (particularly in Part II), the *leitmotiv* of " Church and Culture " gets obscured in the details; also, while some portraits, like those of Schell and Hertling, are captivating, others, like those of Schmid and Schanz, seem perfunctory. There are a few typographical errors and other errata; in particular, the Oxford Movement began in 1833, not 1883 (as in the "Synchronology," p. 2) ; also the data on the number and the percentage of German Catholics do not correspond (p. 249, n. 37).

Yet, such minor criticisms aside, this work is a notable addition to the literature on nineteenth century theology.

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*The Stripping of the Altars.* By EAMON DUFFY. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992. Pp. 608. $45.00 (cloth).

Eamon Duffy's most recent contribution to the debate about the English Reformation is a two-edged sword. His goal is to correct two very different errors about the English Reformation, the classic one, the " Whig version," lately and brilliantly set forth by A. G. Dickens in his *English Reformation* (1964), and the other, the more recent "discontinuity" thesis of John Bossy *(The English Catholic Community, 1580-1850)* and Hugh Aveling *(The Handle and the Axe).* Something must be known about the two theses before Duffy's work can be fully appreciated.

The Whig Version is the idea that the English Reformation was the necessary, popular, and wholesome reaction to centuries of superstition, corruption, and clerical manipulation by the Roman Church. The people conquered because the people were right. There was Good Queen Bess who was Protestant, and Bloody Mary who was Catholic. It is a theory which has held sway in the popular (and even the intellectual) mind of England for the last four hundred years.

Bossy and Aveling make the combined (and seemingly different) point that the Roman Catholic Church which re-surfaced in England in the 1800s cannot lay claim to representing the Church catholic because it broke radically with its own traditions in the late 1500's. Trent had no effect on a dwindling English Catholic Church, which became no more than a separating community. Aveling curiously uses an in-

organic example to underline his contention that there was an organic discontinuity. His grandfather's axe had hung over the mantel and eventually had its blade and handle replaced. The Roman Catholic Church in England, said Aveling, was continuous with its medieval counterpart only in the same sense that the axe over the mantel is the same as his grandfather's. It is a theory which depends on Dickens because it makes popularity, or the majority, the determining factor of the Church catholic.

Refuting all of this is a big order and is accomplished most effectively in Duffy's encyclopedic account of the pre-Reformation Church. This information has long been the missing piece of the Reformation puzzle, and Duffy has finally catalogued it-with results that are devastating to the causes of the above-mentioned historians. Duffy has found, through the same exacting local research that is being applied to the English Reformation itself, that the pre-Reformation Catholic Church was *not* corrupt and was popularly practiced by both peasants and gentry. Related to this, Duffy discovers that the distinction between the educated spirituality of the elite and the " superstitious " practices of the illiterate populace was not so decisive as has been proposed by Jean Delumeau. Invocations against the devil, for example, were not the exclusive domain of illiterate husbandmen, hut were part of the mainstream, both clerical and lay, educated and uneducated, and found expression in the liturgy itself. " They did not have a different religion . . . . Late medieval Catholicism was a broad Church" (p. 298). Furthermore, Duffy finds that this pre-Reformation Church was well-informed as to the meaning of sacraments, ceremonies, and creed, and was in good shape morally when the Reformation struck.

Duffy accomplishes all of this by marshalling an impressive array of the latest local research: church wardens' accounts, wills and will preambles, sheriffs' reports, diaries, catechisms, and primers. Furthermore, he demands of this body of information an interpretation which is sensible and balanced. In addition to this massive body of information, Duffy has provided photographs of surviving existing artwork from the pre-Reformation period and has woven them convincingly into the text. One is astonished that so much of this art still exists in the parts of the country where Duffy found them-areas which were supposedly very favorable to the Reformation.

Much has been lost, of course, and Duffy (less calmly) catalogues the destruction in three gruesome chapters, concluding that " Iconoclasm was the central sacrament of the reform" (p. 480). The style of the final chapters is reminiscent of Aidan Gasquet's " tear-stained pages " of a hundred years ago, and of David Knowles's understated anger at the wholesale destruction of the monasteries:

> Men might well wonder (Knowles wrote) if any reverence towards the things of God remained in those who ordered this pillage, and if any human faith could be looked for in those who desecrated great abbeys dedicated to the divine service, and trafficked in their treasures. . . . Visible beauty of form and line and hue is as nothing in comparison with the eternal beauty of things unseen, but those who wantonly destroy the one will not readily be supposed to value the other *(Religious Orders of England Ill,* p. 387).

Duffy *is* angry (the last few pages are elegantly evocative) and it is because, like Gasquet and Knowles before him, he is theologically involved. His religion has been misrepresented for four hundred years and he has, I think, proved and detailed the misrepresentation. Duffy believes the theological content of the Reformation is essential to the debate. He sees continuity in the small band of recusants who held to the same beliefs as had been held for a thousand years and who hold them still. This is not sentimentality or nostalgia. Duffy is simply stating the fact that the pre-Reformation Church was "another country, another world " from the Anglican Church which followed, and that any attempt on the part of Anglicans to claim continuity with the Medieval Church is wishful thinking at best. The English Reformation represented a profound theological change in the English nation, and, even though some of the ceremonies and ecclesiastical forms of the traditional religion were kept, the heart of it, the content, was gone.

One important consequence of Duffy's attention to theology is that the continuity of the English Catholic Church from the late medieval period even to the present day (let alone 1850) becomes obvious. Prayers for the dead, the liturgy, the Pope, the Eucharist, vestments, devotions involving ashes and palms, pilgrimages (Have you been to Walsingham lately?) , the veneration of the saints-they are all with us today just as they were with Catholics of pre.Reformation England, sometimes in startling similarity.

Duffy has produced a masterpiece of historical investigation and evaluation and this book must be read by any serious student of the English Reformation.

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*An Introduction to Moral Theology.* By WILLIAM E. MAY. Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, 1991. Pp. 239. $7.95 (paper).

In this present work William E. May, Michael McGivney Professor of Moral Theology at the Pope John Paul II Institute for Studies on

Marriage and Family in Washington, D.C., sets for himself a two-fold task. The first and more ambitious is to respond to the call of the Second Vatican Council for a renewal of moral theology which displays " livelier contact with the mystery of Christ " and is " more thoroughly nourished by biblical teaching" *(Optatum Totius,* n. 16). While this work makes no claim to be the definitive response to this summons, May sees it as a contribution especially as it presents in compact and accessible form some of the more positive developments in moral theology since the Council, including both the work of others (especially Germain Grisez, upon whom he relies heavily) and some of his own previously published work. The second and more immediate task of the book is to provide " an alternative moral vision " to some of the currently popular revisionist introductions to moral theology such as those of O'Connell and Gula (p. 16). For May, the two tasks are not unrelated insofar as revisionist moral theology is not representative of authentic renewal because of its departures from Church tradition and teaching.

In light of the first task of the work, May loosely structures the work to reflect the " central biblical themes of crucial significance to moral theology and the moral life, ... creation, sin, incarnation and redemption, and eschatology" (p. 14). The theme of creation is taken up in the first three chapters of the work. While there is little biblical or theological analysis of the notion of creation, May lays the foundations of his natural law approach to morality through a treatment of related ideas: human dignity, human action, conscience, and the primacy of reason in Aquinas's natural law theory. After sketching the content of this natural law theory as discussed in the *Prima Secundae,* May argues that this basic structure is greatly improved by the work of Grisez, Finnis, and Boyle who fill in certain gaps in Thomas's account (e.g., by identifying all of the basic goods which are integral to human flourishing and not merely a partial listing) and make it more precise (e.g., their restatement of the first principle of morality which Aquinas formulated in the biblical language of love of God and neighbor in more precise language of choosing in accord with a " will toward integral human fulfillment "-see p. 66). May also believes that this account better demonstrates the movement from first principles to specific moral norms, some of which may be regarded as absolute, specifying acts as intrinsically evil. May reviews revisionist arguments against moral absolutes and finds them wanting on a variety of grounds: their false notion of the totality of human action (with Aquinas an act must be good in its circumstances, end, and object in order to be morally good); their impossible attempt to commensurate human goods; their failure to acknowledge the reflexive character of human

action, and their inadequate notion of " concrete " human nature as subject to change in history. The most creative part of this critique is found in the theological rationale which May offers concerning the need for moral absolutes. He suggests that such norms serve to show the Christian " what love *cannot* mean " and to " liberate man from servitude to every partial, fragmentary, and illusory horizon, from servitude to every aspiration to assume the role of divine Providence itself " (pp. 123-24).

The final three chapters of the book take up the remaining biblical themes of sin, incarnation, redemption, and eschatology, adding to them a consideration of the role of the Church. Here May considers biblical teaching more directly, offering a largely synchronic overview of scriptural understandings of sin and the role of Jesus as Redeemer, especially as these have been developed in subsequent Church tradition. With Thomas, he emphasizes that this new law of the gospel is primarily the grace of the Holy Spirit working within the lives of the faithful (cf. *ST* 1-2, q. 106, a. 1). Hence the foundation of the moral life is Jesus himself to whom Christians are joined in baptism and in whose divine life they now share. The primary vocation of Christians, therefore, is to join themselves to the redemptive work of Christ and to love " even as we have been loved by God in Christ " (p. 185) • This command to love is specified by Jesus' own teaching in the beatitudes (Mt. 5:3-12) which leads to distinctively Christian moral norms generated by the light of faith. Having recapitulated Catholic teaching concerning the Church's ability to teach infallibly, May closes by arguing that not only *can* the Church teach infallibly through its ordinary magisterium, but that it *has* done so, citing the understanding of the Decalogue within the *Roman Catechism* as an example. In regard to non-infallible teaching, May insists on its authoritative character and the proper response to it of a " ready and respectful allegiance of mind (*obsequium religiosum)"* (p. 207; cf. *Lumen Gentium,* n. 25). While an informed person may " withhold assent " to such teachings or even raise questions concerning them, this can in no way be equated with the public dissent advocated by some theologians (pp. 216-20).

May's work constitutes an important and substantial introduction to moral theology. His exposition of the teaching of Aquinas and the Second Vatican Council concerning natural law is cogent and thorough, demonstrating a high level of scholarship. His presentation of opposing positions is generally fair and the criticisms which he makes regarding them, while often not new, are substantive. May generally avoids heavy polemic even while dealing with controverted issues. Hence, in regard to May's stated purpose of providing "an alternative moral vision" to revisionist introductions to moral theology, this work is largely successful.

Nevertheless there are aspeots of the work which could be developed further or clarified. May rightly insists on the reflexive character of human action and points out the inadequacy of some revisionist ac· counts of moral agency and fundamental option theory which:

> needlessly shift the locus of self determination from the free choices we make every day ... to an alleged act of total self-disposition deep within the person that remains prereflexive, unthematic and incapable of being articulated explicitly in one's consciousness (p. 156).

It would seem that such an observation could be enhanced if this reflexive component of human action were linked to a more extensive consideration of character and virtue. There is a dynamic interplay between character and choice in the moral life which is obscured by the division of the person into layers in the inherently idealist anthropologies of some fundamental option theories. But one's character is not simply shaped reflexively through one's actions. Actions are also the products of one's character. An expanded account of virtue would also serve to balance the rather intellectualist account of natural law in this book, just as Aquinas's natural law theory is complemented by the treatise on virtue in the structure of the *Summa.*

May's overall fairness to those with whom he disagrees has always been evident in his writings and the present work is no exception. In regard to the discussion of disputed matters in the present work two points might be mentioned. First, on the matter of " distinctively Christian ethics," the norm generated by Christian faith which he cites from Grisez, that one " should find, accept, and faithfully carry out (his or her) personal vocation" (p. 192), seems to beg an important question. That is, the positive form of this statement appears to leave in doubt its status as an absolute moral norm which would specify particular actions as morally evil. The real issue in this debate is not therefore directly addressed. Second, regarding the issue of Church teaching authority and the formation of conscience-an area where the debate is often most strident-one wonders if there would be less polemics if the role of Church teaching authority were better contextualized by a corresponding emphasis on the development of a Christian worldview and the cultivation of spiritual discernment rooted in a life of prayer (as in, for example, the recent introduction by David Bohr).

May's Thomistic foundation is evident and solid. However, one cannot help wishing for more development of the history of moral theology outside of Aquinas. Besides Augustine and a brief mention of Lombard, there is little discussion of other patristic or medieval theologians and their contributions to moral theology. Likewise, in spite of some perceptive observations on historical development within the thought of Aquinas and contemporary revisionist theology, there is no overview

of the history of .the discipline provided. Such a history would greatly aid readers in appreciating the import of some of the primary arguments in the hook. For example, it is hard to grasp the difficulty involved in reappropriating Aquinas's natural law theory in the present context without knowing something of its deformation in neo-scholastic theology or the impact of the Enlightenment on conceptions of human nature. It is likewise difficult to appreciate the nature of the renewal of moral theology called for hy the Second Vatican Council without noting the legalistic tendencies of the manualist tradition or its inclination toward prooftexting.

There also appears to he room for some development in the way in which the hook utilizes scripture. Leaving to biblical scholars to judge the use of some individual texts in ways which do not seem to reflect their original meaning or context (e.g., Mt. 15:18-19 as an illustration of the reflexive character of human action-see pp. 25, 147-48), even the admittedly rather loose and thematic approach to scripture employed here is not free of problems. May's five biblical themes " of crucial significance to moral theology and the moral life " betray the influence of the standard history of salvation approach. However, flowing from the renewal of biblical studies, recent works in New Testament ethics would suggest the centrality of other themes for the New Testament writers themselves. Some of these, such as conversion, covenant, righteousness, and faith, are mentioned in the hook hut could he developed further. Others, such as the Kingdom of God, or discipleship, are omitted altogether. While such additions might not greatly change the overall structure or focus of the hook, they could enhance its effort to be " more thoroughly nourished hy scriptural teaching."

A final area in which the argumentation of the work could be developed or clarified pertains to its description of the relationship between natural law and Christian faith-nature and grace. Some of the difficulties in the account provided by Grisez of the good of religion and its relationship to his vision of Christian faith and revelation have been ably pointed out elsewhere by others. Here it can be noted that some features of the present work could also he clarified in this regard. The fact that three chapters are devoted to the natural law basis of ethics and only one chapter each to the realities of sin and redemption appears to place much of the weight of the moral life on natural human reason in its fallen condition. Such a concern is underscored by the ambiguity concerning the content which Christian faith provides to the moral life, as I noted above, and the lack of development of the grounding of morality in the spiritual life and in prayer, which May treats only in passing. Perhaps a more complete exposition of the role of grace, and particularly the theological virtues, in the moral life could clarify some of these ambiguities and demonstrate more clearly the

opening of natural law into the Christian economy of salvation for which May argues. It should be noted that May displays an admirable openness to further development along these lines with his appreciation of some of the questions raised by Aurelio Ansaldo (see pp. 97-98, n. 135).

In spite of some limitations, this is a significant work well-deserving of consideration by any student of moral theology. It highlights the ongoing contribution of an authentic and well-grounded Thomism to current efforts toward the renewal of moral theology-a contribution also recommended by the Second Vatican Council (cf. *Optatum Totius*, n.16).

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*From Existence to God; A Contemporary Philosophical Argument.* By BARRY MILLER. London and New York: Routledge, 1992. Pp. x + 206. $42.50 (cloth).

Can the existence of God be proved from the existence of any concrete individual thing? Many religious thinkers-theists as well as atheists-might regard this as a vain project. The criticisms of Hume and Kant, as well as a certain suspicion of the validity of the principles of sufficient reason and intelligibility, appear to have demolished all grounds for such an argument. Many find no contradiction in affirming the existence of the whole universe while denying the existence of God.

Barry Miller, on the contrary, does find a contradiction in affirming the existence of even one concrete individual unless the existence of God is also affirmed. His book is a sustained and intriguing attempt to show that contradiction. His argument is based not on the principles of sufficient reason or intelligibility, but strictly on the principle of noncontradiction (172-4). The concrete individual which serves as his starting point and remains his faithful companion throughout the book is a particular existing dog named " Fido," and the way to the existence of God begins with the simple question: " How ever can it be that Fido does exist ? "

Miller's first task is to establish that his question is not gratuitous by showing that Fido's existence is not a " brute fact" requiring no explanation. The argument given in chapters two and three shows that Fido's existence is very puzzling indeed, requiring conditions that are "apparently impossible to satisfy" (10). The argument begins with

the Fregean position that ontological categories are to he assigned in accordance with linguistic categories. (While Miller admits that this Fregean view is not the only legitimate one, he does not think that this limits the effectiveness of his argument [10, 87-88.]) Since the name "Fido" in the linguistic expression " Fido exists " is a complete expression, while the predicate " exists " is not (15, 23), Fido's existence is understood as " exemplifying two ontological categories, viz., a complete entity (Fido) and an incomplete entity (Fido's existence)" (Prop. 1.1, p. 10). It is then argued that "Fido's existing must he constructible conceptually from Fido and his existence" (Prop. 1.2, p. 10). This conceptual construction would he impossible, however, "if Fido were inconceivable except in terms of Fido's existing." The fact is, however, that Fido is inconceivable except in terms of Fido's existing: "Fido could neither he referred to nor conceived of before he existed" (Prop. 1.3, p. 11). Indeed, prior to its existing, "no concrete individual could be conceived of by anyone or in any way " (42). One is thus left with a dilemma that requires one conceptually to construct Fido's existing from Fido and Fido's existence, but prevents one from doing so since Fido is only conceivable in terms of Fido's existing.

In chapter four and its appendix, Miller presents detailed arguments in response to C. J. F. Williams, B. Russell, W. V. Quine, and others to show that existence is a real property. He then goes on in chapter five to review the dilemma and to offer his solution. Fido's existing must he conceptually constructible from two ontological categories, "Fido" and "Fido's existence." But "Fido's existing" cannot he constructed from them since one of them, "Fido's existence," is not a complete entity and the other one, " Fido," is itself not conceivable until Fido actually exists (83). In order to solve the dilemma, Miller must find some way for Fido to he the first step in the conceptual construction of Fido's existing even though Fido is not conceivable until Fido exists. Fido could he the first step in constructing " Fido's existing " only if Fido were somehow able to complete his existence. But how could Fido be able to do that before he exists? Miller's answer is that Fido has this capacity neither in virtue of being a concrete individual (since the concrete individual Fido is not conceivable until Fido exists), nor in virtue of being an existing concrete individual (since this would make Fido's existence ontologically prior to Fido, and Fido must be a constituent of Fido's existing), hut in virtue of "something other than either his being a concrete individual or his being an existing concrete individual." For the moment, this "something other" is called" a" (84).

The next step is to investigate the nature of " a." If "a " were a concrete individual of the same kind as Fido, " a " would require an,

explanation for its existence just as Fido does, and the explanation of " a " would require a similar explanation, etc. How long could such a series of explanations continue? In chapter six, Miller analyzes various kinds of causal series to show that some must be terminated if they are to be effective. It is to such a terminating (rather than infinite) series of causes that Fido's existence must belong. The first member of that series, unlike all the other members, will be something that causes others to exist without itself being caused to exist.

Miller goes on in chapter seven to explain just how that " uncaused cause " is different from Fido and all of the members of the series. Fido requires an explanation beyond himself since Fido's existing is constituted by Fido and Fido's existence in a way that Fido alone is unable to account for. This kind of dilemma arises for each member of the series which is itself distinct from its existence. The dilemma does not arise, however, for the first member of the series since there is no distinction between it and its existence (117).

Once the existence of this first member of the series (the uncaused cause) has been established, Miller can then consider its properties. The uncaused cause is, first of all, unique. For if there were more than one such cause, each would be an individual instance of subsistent existence, but this would imply that each was distinct from its existence. But if they were distinct from their existence, they could not be the uncaused cause (126). Since every concrete individual is distinct from its existence, the uncaused cause cannot be an individual, except perhaps in some analogical sense (126-127). Nor is the uncaused cause to he identified with the whole universe since the universe, being made up of individuals, is itself an individual (132, 135). Since the uncaused cause is not distinct from its existence, it can neither begin to exist nor cease to exist hut must exist necessarily (151) .

Finally, in chapters nine and ten, Miller reviews a number of traditional objections to the contingency argument for the existence of God and shows how his form of the argument has overcome them.

A particularly creative and insightful element in Miller's argument is his use of Frege's linguistic philosophy in conjunction with the metaphysics of Avicenna and Aquinas. Both belong to the realist tradition and both become aware of an element of incompleteness in the real world-Frege, through his notion that the objective correlates of predicates have an incompleteness that corresponds to the incompleteness of the predicates themselves, and Aquinas and Avicenna through their understanding of the relation between essence and existence. By using Frege's philosophy, Miller can inquire into that incompleteness in a way that avoids the usual criticisms of arguments which rely on the principle of sufficient reason. The scholastic insight into the rela-

tion of essence and existence is then used to answer the question that arises from the Fregean analysis of any concrete existing individual.

Whether Miller's argument succeeds, however, depends at least in part on the validity of the shifts that it makes between the ontological and conceptual orders. It is clear that Miller does not wish to offer a purely conceptual argument such as Anselm's (150). He wants to begin with the ontological fact of Fido's existence and move to the ontological fact of God's existence. The Fregeau path he travels in doing this, however, seems to lead the argument from the ontological into the conceptual order, and it is difficult to see whether the argument ever really emerges once more from the realm of concepts into the realm of being. From the ontological question, " How ever can it be that Fido *does exist* ? " Miller moves immediately to a conceptual consideration about a " legitimate way of *conceiving* of Fido's existing" (Prop. 1.1, p. 10). The ontological principle that "Fido and his existence are ontologically ... prior to Fido's existing" is also immediately explained in conceptual terms: "... which is to say that Fido's existing must be constructible *conceptually* from Fido and his existence " (Prop. 1.2, p. 10) . The dilemma which validates the inquiry into Fido's existence is also framed in conceptual terms: "It would be impossible to take even the first step in that *conceptual* construction if Fido were *inconceivable* except in terms of Fido's existing." The dilemma thus seems to be located in the conceptual rather than the ontological order: " Fido could neither be referred to nor *conceived* of before he existed" (Prop. 1.3, p. 11).

At this point we seem to have lost our grounding in the ontological order. Whatever we are forced to affirm or deny in order to avoid violating the principle of non-contradiction in this conceptual order therefore seems to have no necessary relation to the ontological order. In this sense Miller's argument, like Anselm's, may (if we accept its premise) force us to admit some conclusion in the order of logic, but it does not seem capable of establishing any relationship between that conclusion and the order of ontology: "The conflict between (1.1) and (1.2) on the one hand and (1.3) on the other will leave us *logically* no option but to ask, ' How ever can it be that Fido does exist ? ' " (p. 11).

Miller does recognize and discuss the objection that "the argument proves not that 'a' does exist, but merely, that we have to think that it does" (p. 89). His response, however, does not consider the problem that, since the argument is conducted on the conceptual level (what we can or cannot *conceive)* , it may not be able to yield a conclusion on the ontological level (what can or cannot *be)* . Miller does try to establish a link between ·the linguistic (logical) and ontological orders through his use of Frege: "I begin by adopting the Fregean position

that the ontological categories exemplified in Fido's being black are to be assigned in accordance with the linguistic categories of the expressions in the proposition made true by it: 'Fido is black'" (15). Whether this Fregean link between the order of language and the order of reality is sufficient to validate Miller's metaphysical conclusion, however, remains a question.

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