THE HISTORICAL CONDITIONING OF CHURCH DOCTRINE*

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I WISH to set out and defend a certain conception of what is involved in accepting the teachings of the Catholic Church. This conception is at odds with some contemporary understandings of the way in which such teachings are historically conditioned. I will argue that these conceptions are mistaken, and state what I think to be the correct understanding of the historical conditioning of dogma.

I

Possession of the Catholic faith is usually understood to involve belief in the doctrines infallibly taught by the Catholic Church, so that outward profession of, and inward assent to, those doctrines, whether explicit or implicit, is a necessary condition for being a Catholic. I do not intend to discuss which particular doctrines are infallibly taught, or how exactly one determines that a doctrine is infallibly taught. I will simply assume that there are such doctrines, and that it is possible to determine that they are infallibly taught, and go on to ask the question, What does acceptance of these doctrines consist in? (The simpler expression "teachings of the Church" will be used to mean "infallible teachings of the Church" in the rest of this paper.) I propose this answer:

• This paper had its origin in the lectures prepared for the author's philosophy of religion course at Chishawasha Seminary, Harare. The author would like to thank Fr. Norman Tanner, S.J., Fr. J.M. R. Tillard, O.P., and his colleagues at the Seminary and the University of Manitoba, for their helpful comments and suggestions.

F). To accept the teachings of the Church is to believe that the propositions expressed by the sentences taught by the Church are true.

Some comment on F) is necessary in order to make its meaning clear.

A) "Propositions"

Propositions, according to philosophers and logicians,[1] possess the following characteristics. They are

i) the bearers of truth or falsity. Whatever can be described as true, or as false, is a proposition.
ii) the meanings of meaningful sentences. Different sentences can mean the same thing; for instance, the English sentence "Snow is white" and the French sentence "La neige est blanche" mean the same thing. What these two sentences have in common-what they mean-is a proposition.
iii) the objects of cognitive, or propositional, attitudes. Such attitudes include knowing, doubting, wishing, disbelieving, suspending judgment about, expecting. When you know something or disbelieve something, what you know or disbelieve is a proposition. When you hope for something or fear that something might happen, what you hope for or fear is that some proposition might be true. Since the teachings of the Church are things that can be believed or disbelieved, are held to be true (by Catholics) and false (by some non-Catholics), and are expressed by sentences,' it follows that they are propositions.[3]

B) "Propositions expressed by sentences"

Humans communicate propositions to each other by means of sentences. A sentence is a physical object, or a physical happening;

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[1] See, for example, the introduction to *Propositions and Attitudes,* edited by Nathan Salmon and Scott Soames (Oxford, 1988). I have tried to describe in a previous paper the sort of reasons that have led philosophers to maintain that propositions are the objects of cognitive attitudes such as knowing, believing, or hoping ("The Nature of Revelation," *New Blackfriars* [July-August 1991]: 335-45).

[2] I do not mean to assert here that *all* the Church's teachings are expressed in sentences, only that the Church does at times express her teachings in sentences (which is undeniable). It is possible for the Church to teach through actions, such as liturgical actions, as well as through sentences. However, since what is taught in such actions will be something that can be known and believed, such teachings will be propositions.

[3] The question whether the teachings of the Church are propositions is not the same as the question whether divine revelation is propositional-whether divine revelation consists wholly or partly of propositions communicated by God to humans. I have argued (in "The Nature of Revelation") that revelation is at least partly propositional. However, the

it is a series of written marks, or a sequence of sounds.[4] Propositions are not physical objects or happenings. The meaning of a sentence-the proposition it expresses--depends on two things:

i) the words that make up the sentence
ii) the context in which the sentence is uttered

The most obvious way in which context contributes to the meaning of sentences is through indexical words (such as *he, she, I, now, here, there),* whose meanings depend on the time at which they are used, or the place at which they are used, or the person who uses them. It is possible to make the meaning of a sentence independent of its context, by replacing the indexicals with words whose meaning is independent of their context. Thus, suppose that on April 3, 1991, someone says, "I had my 47th birthday yesterday." This sentence's meaning depends on the context-the day-in which it was uttered. But if we replace

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position presented in this paper on the way in which Church teachings should be understood does not depend on divine revelation's being propositional. One could hold, on the one hand, that divine revelation is propositional, and that Church teaching is authoritative because it passes on the propositions that God has revealed; or, on the other hand, that revelation is not propositional, and that Church teaching is authoritative because it truly describes or gives the import of revelation. But whichever alternative one chooses, one must accept that Church teaching itself consists in propositions, since it is expressed in language, is the object of belief and disbelief, and so on.

[4] Philosophers and logicians distinguish between sentence types and sentence tokens. Consider what is written in the brackets that follow: {The snow is white. The snow is white.} The brackets contain two sentence tokens-two series of physical marks, that have a meaning in the English language. But the two tokens belong to the same type-the marks that make them up are of the same sort, in the same order. The brackets thus "contain" only one sentence type. (One should not talk of brackets containing a sentence type, but I trust I make my meaning clear.) Tukens that belong to the same type do not always have to have the same meaning. Consider two tokens of the same sort, said by different people: both of them say "I am ill." Although they are uttering sentence tokens that belong to the same type, they mean different things by them. Sentence types that contain indexicals are the ones whose tokens can have different meanings. Propositions are not sentence tokens (since different tokens can express the same propositions) nor are they sentence types (since different types that belong to the same language, or different types belonging to different languages, can express the same proposition). Some philosophers argue that propositions are therefore abstract objects of a sort. I assert only that because propositions are not the same as sentence types or sentence tokens, they do not belong to any particular language.

"yesterday" with "April 2, 1991," we can preserve the meaning of the sentence, and make its meaning independent of context.

Although sentences belong to particular languages, propositions do not. This is evident from the fact that the same proposition can be expressed in different languages, as noted above. Since propositions do not belong to particular languages, neither do the concepts that make up the propositions. The same concept can be expressed by words of different languages: for instance, *white* and *blanc*. Although concepts do not belong to particular languages, it is possible that a given language may lack a word or words that express a given concept. It will then be impossible to use that language to express propositions that make use of that concept.

C) "Propositions expressed by the sentences taught by the Church are true"

What does it mean to say that the propositions taught by the Church are true? I offer a criterion of truth: a proposition p is true, if and only if p. Thus, the proposition expressed by the sentence "water is made of hydrogen and oxygen" is true if and only if water is made up of hydrogen and oxygen; the proposition expressed by the sentence "whales are fish" is true if and only if whales are fish.[5] It follows that whether a proposition is true or not depends on whether the world is as the proposition describes it. (By "the world" I mean everything that exists outside of human minds. Obviously if a proposition refers to human minds its truth depends on whether the minds are as it describes them; otherwise, its truth depends on how the world is.) The question of the truth of a proposition is closely connected with its meaning. If one grasps what a proposition is saying about the world, what it is asserting to be true, one grasps what the proposition means, and if one grasps what a proposition means one knows what it is asserting about the world.[6]

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[5] This is not meant as a theory or a definition of truth, only as a test or criterion of truth (and not necessarily as the only criterion of truth). Several different theories of truth, as for example the correspondence, redundancy, and semantic theories, satisfy this criterion. It is not certain which theory of truth is the correct one, or even if there can be a satisfactory theory of truth. But the proposed criterion, it seems to me, does not suffer from such uncertainty.

It is difficult to imagine that this criterion could be false. It would have to be possible that, for example, the proposition expressed by the sentence "water is made up of hydrogen and oxygen" could be true, although water were not made up of hydrogen and oxygen, or that the proposition expressed by the sentence "the sky is blue" could be false although the sky is blue. Since these things are not possible, I argue that the criterion should be accepted.

This is the place to address a couple of questions that might be raised about F). One comment that might be made is that it doesn't take into account the interconnections between the teachings of the Church. These teachings are not discrete and independent like a group of cans on a shelf. It is not possible to consider them one by one and believe them individually, as it is possible to take individual cans from a shelf without affecting the others.

It is obviously true that the propositions taught by the Church are interconnected, in many different ways. They are connected through having a common justification, as the very term "teaching of the Church" implies. Many of them are connected by logical implication, or by relations of probability. A strong conception of their interconnection would be that their meanings are interconnected, so that if one is to understand one doctrine of the Church one must understand all of them. This conception is vulnerable to the usual difficulties faced by holistic theories of meaning. If in order to understand the meaning of one doctrine of the Church one must understand all of them, how does anyone ever come to learn what these doctrines are? It would not, on this hypothesis, be possible to start by learning a few of the most basic doctrines, and then go on to learn the rest, because one could only understand those doctrines if one already knew all the rest. One would have to start by grasping everything, which is not possible.

[6] The assertion that the question of the truth of a proposition is closely connected with its meaning is not meant to imply that the meaning of a proposition consists in its truth conditions.

But even if one accepts this strong conception of interconnection, it cannot furnish an objection to F). F) states that to believe the teachings of the Church is to believe that the propositions expressed by the sentences taught by the Church are true. It does not state or imply that it is possible to believe some of these propositions in isolation from others; it is neutral on that question.

A second objection that might be raised to F) is that it does not take into account the hierarchy of truths in the Church's teachings, because it puts all these teachings on the same level. To evaluate this objection, we must consider what is meant by a "hierarchy of truths." A hierarchy is an ordering of things that ranks some of them higher than others. The truths taught by the Church are ordered by not just one, but several hierarchies. There is a logical hierarchy, that results from the fact that some truths of faith are logically dependent upon others, but not vice versa. Connected to this logical hierarchy is a hierarchy of centrality. The doctrine of the Trinity is more central than the doctrines that have to do with the Eucharist. Doctrines can also be ranked in order of importance. Rankings of importance are not entirely absolute, but are partially relative to circumstances. To a married couple, for example, the teachings of the Church on marriage will be more important than her teachings on the religious life, but for a hermit the teachings on religious life will be more important than the teachings on marriage. It should be noted that the hierarchy of centrality does not always correspond to the hierarchy of importance. The teachings on grace, for example, are more central than the teachings on marriage, since the latter presuppose the former, but it is more important for a married person to know that adultery is a sin than it is to grasp the difference between habitual and actual grace. These differences of importance are connected with the distinction between explicit and implicit faith. The doctrines that all Catholics must explicitly believe, such as the Trinity and the Incarnation, are doctrines that are of the first importance for everyone.

In what sense could F) be said to erase any one of these hierarchies? It does not mention the importance or the centrality of doctrines, nor does it provide criteria for determining their importance or centrality, but that does not mean it denies them.

Differences in importance are not differences in truth; although a teaching has to be true if it is to be important in a good sense (i.e., important for living a Christian life and becoming closer to God), the fact that one doctrine is more important than another does not mean that it is more true. Such a conclusion might come from confusing a hierarchy of *truths* with a hierarchy of *truth.* There is no such thing as a hierarchy of *truth* in Catholic teachings, in the sense of some teachings being more true than others. As the criterion of truth set forth above makes clear, either a proposition is true or it isn't. There are no degrees of truth. Truth is presupposed by importance and centrality, but it is separate from them. F) thus cannot be said to erase differences between doctrines because it describes them all as true without distinguishing between degrees of truth.

We use the term "degrees of truth" in a loose sense, to convey the fact that some propositions are less inexact in their descriptions of how things are than others; thus we can say that there is more truth in the statement that the Russian Revolution was the fault of the tsar than there is in the statement that it was the fault of the Germans, but that does not mean that the statement "the Russian Revolution was the fault of the tsar" is true. In fact, it was partly, but not entirely, the fault of the tsar, and so to say that it was simply the tsar's fault is false; however, it is less inexact than saying that it was simply the Germans' fault. But Church teachings (i.e., infallible Church teachings) cannot be inexact in this way, so one cannot say that F) obscures a distinction between them.

One might try to use an understanding of historical conditioning that conflicts with F), of the sort that is described in statement H) below, to argue that it is possible for there to be elements of falsehood in Church teachings. Whether this is possible will depend on whether this sort of historical conditioning can be accepted, and the whole purpose of this paper is to argue that it cannot. It should be kept in mind. that F) is not being presented as an assumption to be argued from, but as a conclusion to be established; the impossibility of there being such "elements of falsehood" is intended to emerge from the discussion that is to follow.

We also say that one statement is more true than another when both statements are true but one contains more true information than another. Thus "Caligula was a bad man" and "Caligula was a crazed tyrant" are both true, but the latter statement contains more information than the first, and so can be said to be more true. Undoubtedly some doctrines contain more information than others. But F) does not claim that all Church teachings contain equal amounts of information, only that the information contained in these teachings is all true.

Since there is no hierarchy of truth in Church teachings, there is no hierarchy of belief either. To hold that a proposition is true is to believe it, and vice versa; we cannot say "I disbelieve this proposition, but it is true" or "This proposition is true, but I don't believe it." To describe propositions as being arranged in a hierarchy of truths asserts that they are all true, and thus worthy of belief. The view that there is a hierarchy of belief among Church teachings, so that we can distinguish between statements, recognized as teachings of the Church, that must absolutely be believed and ones that need not necessarily be believed, is guilty of the misconception criticized above, that sees Church teachings as discrete and independent units like cans on a shelf. This view, although sometimes found among Catholics, is a complete reversal of the Church's position on the hierarchy of truths. The whole point of this position is to bring out that the teachings of the Church are inseparably connected by the hierarchies in which they are ordered.

It is however possible, perhaps even necessary, to arrange propositions in a hierarchy according to the strength of evidence available for them. Theologians have done so in the past, through the system of theological notes. But we are confining ourselves in this paper to a consideration of doctrines that are infallibly taught. These all have the same strength of evidence, the highest, and so they cannot be arranged into such a hierarchy. Even if we considered doctrines that are not infallibly taught, though, F) could not be said to obscure the differences between them. It talks about the truth of doctrines, not the strength of evidence available for them, and truth and strength of evidence are two different things. F) makes no claim about the strength of evidence for a proposition.

II

This, then, is the account I want to propose of what is involved in accepting the Church's teachings: to accept those teachings is to accept that things are as they say they are. In the past, I expect that such an account would have been taken for granted, and that theologians would have been surprised to find it questioned.' However, this is no longer the case. Certain understandings of the way in which Church teachings are historically conditioned have been proposed that imply that statement F) is false.

It is generally agreed that the teachings of the Church are historically conditioned (see, for example, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's declaration *Mysterium Ecclesiae*). It is not so generally agreed in what exactly this historical conditioning consists. One sort of conditioning is implied by the account given in statement F). The propositions expressed by the sentences taught by the Church are often part of quite complex systems of philosophical or theological thought, and may involve concepts peculiar [8] to the culture of the day. They thus cannot be understood unless one knows about those systems and those cultures. Defined doctrines of the Church are usually reactions to heresies, which means that they cannot be properly understood unless one knows about the heresies they were designed to counter. Church teachings are historically conditioned in the sense that they occur in particular historical and cultural circumstances, and are thus expressed in terms suited to those circumstances; comprehensive historical knowledge is needed to discover *what was meant* by the teachings of the Church, and thus to find out what we are supposed to believe.

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[1] Aquinas would have held this view, for example, since his view of truth accords with the criterion of truth put forward here. See his *Summa theologiae,* I, q. 16.

[8] By "peculiar" I do not mean "only occurring in" (the culture of the day), since concepts peculiar in that sense would be inaccessible to people from other cultures. Rather, I mean "only naturally occurring in," concepts that have an established place in the systems of thought of that culture, but not of any other culture, and that are known only to specialists and scholars of other cultures.

This is not however the only way in which historical conditioning is understood. Some thinkers have a different concept of historical conditioning, which is incompatible with F); call this conception H).

H). Some of the propositions meant by the sentences taught by the Church as part of the Christian faith, or some aspects of the propositions meant by those sentences, are not part of the faith, but are solely due to the historical conditions under which the teachings were produced.

It follows from H) that accepting the Church's teachings does not require us to believe that things are as the teachings say they are. Only belief in the part of those teachings that is really part of the Christian faith, and is not due to historical conditioning, can reasonably be expected of the believer.[9]

[9] It is worth noting that Pope Paul VI, in his encyclical *Mysteriumfidei,* seems to have supported the understanding of historical conditioning found in F), and rejected that found in H). At least, this is what is implied by his remarks on the Eucharistic doctrine.

> False and disturbing opinions
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> 10. For We can see that some of those who are dealing with this most holy mystery in speech and writing are disseminating opinions on Masses celebrated in private or on the dogma of transubstantiation that are disturbing the minds of the faithful and causing them no small confusion about matters of faith, just as if it were all right for someone to take doctrine that has already been defined by the Church and consign it to oblivion or else interpret it in such a way as to weaken the genuine meaning of the words or the recognized force of the concepts involved.
> 11. To give an example of what we are talking about, it is not permissible ... to discuss the mystery of transubstantiation without mentioning what the Council of Trent had to say about the marvelous conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the Body and the whole substance of the wine into the Blood of Christ, as if they involve nothing more than "transignification" or "transfinalisation" as they call it. ...
> 24.... In the same way, it cannot be tolerated that any individual should on his own authority take something away from the formulas which were used by the Council of Trent to propose the Eucharistic Mystery for our belief. These formulas-like others that the Church uses to propose the dogmas of faith-express concepts that are not tied to a certain specific form of human culture, or to a certain level of scientific progress, or to one or another theological school. Instead they set forth what the human mind grasps of reality through necessary and universal experience and what it expresses in apt and exact words, whether it be in ordinary or more refined language. For this reason, these formulas are adapted to all men of all times and all places. (From *The Pope Speaks,* vol. 10 (1964-65), 311, 312, 314).

The fact that part of a doctrine is due to historical conditioning and is not a part of the faith need not imply that it is false. It may be that historical conditions led to some true statements being incorporated into Church doctrine. But those who apply H) to any particular doctrine usually do so on the assumption that the elements of the doctrine that are thought to be historically conditioned are false or at least dubious, with the intention of establishing that the historically conditioned elements are not binding on believers, since they are not a part of the faith. It should be noted that a theologian will only be motivated to accept H) if he believes that there is such a thing as infallible teaching. That is because H) allows one to maintain that the historically conditioned elements of the teaching are not really part of the teaching at all, so that one can reject these elements without thereby implying that the teaching of the Church was in error. If we accept H), we can deny the parts of Church teaching that we consider to be historically conditioned, while still claiming, in Karl Rahner's words, that "we abide by the faith of preceding generations," "*in eodem dogmate eodem sensu eademque sententia*."[10] However, a theologian who does not believe that the Church is infallible can simply assert that from time to time the teachings of the Church have been mistaken. He can hold that such mistakes are at least partly due to the historical circumstances in which they were made, but he will have no reason to believe that the influence of these historical circumstances means that the mistakes were not really part of Church teaching.

F) and H) describe alternative ways of understanding the teachings of the Church. Christians who believe that the Scriptures, but not the Church, are the infallible source of Christian teaching could easily reframe them so that they

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Mention of "concepts that are not tied to a certain specific form of human culture, or to a certain level of scientific progress" shows that Paul VI had something like the arguments for historical conditioning discussed in this paper in mind, and did not accept them. Rejection of the possibility of interpreting doctrines "in such a way as to weaken the genuine meaning of the words or the recognized force of the concepts involved" amounts to rejection of H) and acceptance of F).

[10] From Karl Rahner, "Basic Observations on the Subject of Changeable and Unchangeable Factors in the Church," *Theological Investigations* 14 (London, 1976), 13.

describe what is involved in accepting scriptural teaching. The arguments for and against F) and H) could be adjusted accordingly, without their validity being materially affected. Since the Scriptures are for Catholics a privileged part of Church teaching, the choice between F) and H) will also be a choice between different ways of understanding Scriptural teaching.

In comparing F) and H) we should realize that they constitute two of only three logically possible positions respecting Church teachings.

i) To accept Church teachings is to accept none of the propositions expressed by the sentences taught by the Church, i.e., to accept nothing of what is meant by the teachings of the Church.
ii) To accept Church teachings is to accept some, but not all, of the propositions expressed by the sentences taught by the Church.
iii) To accept Church teachings is to accept all of the propositions expressed by the sentences taught by the Church.

These three positions are mutually exclusive, and are logically exhaustive, that is, they describe all of the possible outcomes.[11] No one will suppose that the first is true, so effectively the choice is between the second-which corresponds to H)-and the third-which corresponds to F). Either F) or H) must be true, and it cannot be that both are true.

Understandings of the historical conditioning of doctrine that conform to H) are widely held. It is important for the defender of the conception of historical conditioning found in F) carefully to consider the grounds that can be offered for accepting H), and to show that these grounds are insufficient; for if there are any good reasons for believing in H), those reasons will also be grounds for rejecting F). That is what I propose to do.

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[11] It might be objected that these three alternatives are not logically exhaustive, because they do not take into account the possibility of there being propositions taught by the Church through means other than sentences, a possibility that is accepted in footnote 2 above. The "Church teachings" referred to in these alternatives are infallible Church teachings, and it seems likely that the Church can only teach infallibly through linguistic means (i.e., through sentences), so I do not think this a serious objection. However, if this is not so the three alternatives can be reframed accordingly without damage to the argument, as i) To believe the teachings of the Church is to believe none of the propositions taught by the Church through sentences or other means; ii) To believe the teachings of the Church is to believe some, but not all, of the propositions taught by the Church through sentences and other means; iii) To believe the teachings of the Church is to believe all of the propositions taught by the Church through sentences and other means.

The arguments that theologians give for H) generally may be grouped into four standard patterns.[12] If any one of these arguments works, that thesis is established. We therefore need to examine each of these arguments in turn.

A) Argument 1

This argument is composed of the following series of sub-arguments.

i) No humanly attainable concepts can give the entire truth about God.
Therefore, the statements of the faith cannot give the entire truth about God.
ii) All the statements of the faith together cannot give the entire truth about God.
Therefore, no individual statement of the faith is entirely true.
iii) No particular statement of the faith is entirely true.
Thus, H) is true.

The first argument is obviously sound. It is true that no humanly attainable concepts can give the entire truth about God. And it follows from this that the statements of the faith cannot give the entire truth about God. All propositions, including those taught by the Church, are made up of concepts standing in certain relations. To have propositions that would entirely describe God, one would need concepts that entirely described him; without the concepts, one would not be able to form the propositions. Since humans do not have concepts that entirely describe God, they cannot formulate propositions that would entirely describe him, and since humans cannot have propositions that entirely describe God, it is impossible for the statements of the Church to express propositions that entirely describe him.

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[12] Examples of the first and second arguments can be found in J. Neuner and J. Dupuis's introduction to *The Christian Faith* (Westminster, MD, 1974), xxiv. Examples of the second, third, and fourth arguments can, in my view, be found in the works of Karl Rabner: see his "Pluralism in Theology and the Unity of the Church," in *Theological Investigations* 11 (New York, 1974), especially 14-15, and his "Basic Observations on the Subject of Changeable and Unchangeable Factors in the Church," in ibid., especially 9. I say "in my view" because it might be disputed whether the arguments I describe are an accurate reflection of Rabner's thought. I was led to formulate these arguments largely by studying Rabner.

However, although the first argument in the series is sound, the second argument is invalid, because it uses "entirely true" equivocally. When we say that a set of statements does not give the entire truth about God, we mean that it does not say everything true about God that there is to be said. But when we call an individual statement "not entirely true," we mean that it is partially false, that is, that the world is not exactly as the statement says it is. Take, for example, these two statements:

-The present queen of England is a featherless biped.
-The present queen of England is descended from Queen Victoria.

Both of these statements are entirely true, that is, things are just as they say they are. Nevertheless they do not give the entire truth about the present queen of England: they leave out such pertinent facts as her name, her age, where she lives, and so on. We cannot say that because the statements of the faith do not give the entire truth about God, none of them are entirely true.

The third argument in this series is, in fact, valid. But because the second argument is invalid, argument 1 as a whole does not prove its conclusion. It fails to give reasons to believe that no individual statement of the faith is entirely true, and hence it fails to establish the truth of the conclusion of the third argument.

B) Argument 2

The second argument runs this way:

i) Human concepts change.
ii) Therefore, the concepts used in past formulations of doctrine change.
iii) Since the concepts used in past formulations of doctrine change, these formulations must be expressed in terms of new concepts, if the intention of the original formulation is to be preserved.

This conclusion is incompatible with F). Changing the concepts used in statements of doctrine changes what those statements say about the world.

This argument depends on the assumption that human concepts change. Support for this assumption is never clearly given, but theologians who put forward argument 2 seem to have something like this in mind:

- Human language changes.
- Human concepts are expressed in human language.
- Therefore, human concepts change.

This line of reasoning rests partly upon the mistake of confusing a sign with its content. Human languages are systems of signs (physical marks and sequences of sounds) that are used to express concepts and propositions. In the course of history, the relations between signs and contents (languages and their meanings) change. Different signs are used to express the same content; what was once said in Latin, for example, is now said in Italian.

But the fact that the relations between signs and contents change is no reason to suppose that the contents themselves (the concepts) change. At one time the concept of *bird* was expressed in English by the word *brid.* There is no reason to suppose that people's concepts changed when they started talking about *birds* instead of *briddes.* If one takes the sentence "Honesty is the best policy" and rewrites it in capital letters-"HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY"-one has changed the sign that expresses the meaning of the sentence. But it is absurd to think that one has changed the concepts that make up its meaning. It is similarly absurd to suppose that any change of sign-and therefore of language-must result in a change in the concepts expressed by the signs.

The assumption that human concepts change also rests on the fact that cultures and individuals acquire new concepts, and must develop new signs to accommodate them. The concept of an irrational number, for example, was not possessed by any culture before it attained a certain level of mathematical knowledge. At one time, no South Sea islanders would have possessed the concept of snow, since they would never have seen or heard of snow. It seems possible, too, for cultures to lose or forget concepts. We can thus truly say that there is change in the concepts that men have. But the change here is in the men, not the concepts; when I learned the concept of a tautology, for example, there was no change in the concept itself-there was no change in what it is to be a tautology-but a change in me. To suppose that *concepts themselves* change when this happens is a confusion. The very fact that individuals and cultures can acquire new concepts or lose old ones presupposes that the concepts themselves do not change. When one says that culture A at one time did not possess concept P, but at a later time acquired concept P, one is talking about the *same concept* which at one time is not possessed by culture A, but at a later time is.

In fact, when we get the difference between sign and content clear, we can see that the idea of a concept changing makes no sense. Take the concept of redness. What could redness change to? To blueness? If someone hardily maintains that redness can change to blueness, what are we to make of the concept we formerly called redness, the concept "the color, in normal light to normal observers, of such things as strawberries, ripe tomatoes, and fire engines"? Has this concept, and along with it the color of these objects, changed to blueness? Or is the concept of the color of these objects now different from redness, although it was the same before? It is evident that it is incoherent to talk of changing the concept of redness. All we can do is change the meaning of the sign "redness," and henceforward use "redness" to express a different concept. We can say the same for any other concept and its sign or signs. No doubt it is the fact that the signs for concepts change, that leads people to talk about concepts changing; we can expect that any alleged examples of changes of concepts will turn out to be changes of signs.

It is true that changing rules of language affect formulations of the faith. They do so because they determine the signs that must be used to express the propositions that the formulations are intended to state. But it is not true that the social and historical factors that affect the rules of language can also change the concepts that a language expresses, and thus change the concepts contained in a particular formulation of the faith; that, as we have seen, is impossible.

C) Argument 3

The third argument in favor of H) is more subtle than the first two. It can be put like this:

> i) The concepts available to men at any given time are determined by the culture in which they live.
> ii) Therefore, any solemn definition of doctrine on the part of the Church (or any other infallible teaching) can only be put in terms of the concepts available to people at the time.
> iii) Therefore, expressions of the Church's faith are limited by the cultural conditions of the times in which they are made.
> iv) Because of these limitations, the Church at times included mistaken elements in her teachings; but we, who can see what these limitations were and do not suffer from them ourselves, do not have to accept the mistaken elements of Church teaching that are due to them.

What are we to make of this argument? We need not worry about objections to premise i), because premise ii) is true independently of the fact that it follows from premise i). No one, at a given time, can express propositions that include concepts not possessed by anyone at that time. Since premise ii) is true, can we infer that premise iii) is true? There is certainly a sense of premise iii) that follows from premise ii), and is therefore true. The question is whether this true sense of premise iii) is enough to establish the conclusion, statement iv).

The true sense of iii) can be put like this:

> A). Every culture has limits on the concepts it possesses. The Church in a given culture shares these limitations; it cannot possess concepts that the culture it is in does not possess. But then, the concepts available to the Church at a given time *t*, due to the culture the Church exists in at *t*, limit the true statements it can teach; for the Church cannot teach statements the understanding of which involves concepts that the Church does not possess.

If the Church exists in several cultures, instead of just one, A) can be suitably generalized. If the Church exists in cultures A, B, C, ... N, then it cannot teach statements that contain concepts possessed by none of the cultures A-N.

Is A) true? It seems to be. Cultures do have limits on their concepts. Think of the concepts of snow and of irrational numbers, which were given earlier as examples of concepts not possessed by certain cultures. And it is true that the Church always expresses herself in the language of some culture or other. Any concept that can be expressed in the language of a culture is a concept possessed by that culture, and vice versa; so the Church cannot express concepts the culture or cultures it is in does not have, and if it cannot express such concepts it cannot teach statements that contain them.

So A) is true. But it does not follow from A) that the Church has at times included mistaken elements in her teachings, and therefore it does not follow that statement iv) above is true. Having limits on the statements one can make does not imply that the statements one *does* make must be partially or entirely false, that they cannot be entirely true. Men can and do make entirely true statements, and every entirely true statement that was ever made by a man used only a limited number *qi* concepts, and was made by someone whose conceptual range was limited by his culture.

To establish the truth of iv), then, the proponent of argument 3 needs some different understanding of iii), of how expressions of the Church's faith are limited by the cultural conditions of the time in which they are made. He needs something like this:

B). The concepts the Church possesses are limited, as stated in A). Because of the limits on the concepts it possesses,the Church can teach (and has in the past taught) statements that wrongly describe the way things are; a true description of the way things are would have required concepts that were not available given the cultural context of the time.

This interpretation of iii) does, indeed, prove the truth of iv). But it does not follow from ii). Because the Church is limited in what she *can* say, it does not follow that what she *does* say must be wrong, or inadequate to describe how things are. One cannot reason from the limits on what the Church is able to say, which follow from premise ii), to the conclusion that these limits have caused the Church to be mistaken.

Something more than the truth of ii) and of A) is needed to show that B) is true, and hence that the "historical conditioning" position of statement iv) is true. One thing that would prove B) to be true is an actual example of the Church teaching statements that wrongly describe the way things are, because of a lack of the concepts that would have been necessary for a correct description.

I cannot prove that there are no such doctrines. Such an apologetic task would require an encyclopedia at least, not a single paper. I will simply deny that any of the Church's doctrines wrongly describe the way things are, and assert that any reasons that are given to prove that some doctrine does give a false description of the world will turn out to be mistaken. I do not think that the believer in historical conditioning can plausibly claim that there is any doctrine of the Church whose falsity has been established.

There is a point that should be made about this view of historical conditioning. In the past, people who believed that Catholic doctrines gave a wrong description of how things are did not conclude that such doctrines were "historically conditioned," but simply that they were false. Given the criterion of truth stated earlier on, we must admit that if the doctrines really *had* given a wrong account of the world, such people would have been right. Appeals to "historical conditioning" look like attempts to preserve Catholic teaching from any possibility of falsification. Using this approach, whenever we encounter an aspect of Catholic teaching that we believe to be false, or suspect to be false, we can attribute it to "historical conditioning," and thus excuse ourselves from maintaining it. Any confrontation with hostile ideas or recalcitrant evidence can thus be painlessly evaded. But this is not a very honest way of proceeding, as non-Catholics are likely to point out. Catholics should either stand up for the truth of their beliefs, or else admit that they are wrong; not try and shuffle out of problems through an appeal to "historical conditioning."

D) Argument 4

The fourth argument for H) is generally put in this way:

i) All human cultures suffer from limitations on the knowledge available to them. There are truths that all the members of a given culture are ignorant of, or false statements that are accepted as true.

ii) People who formulate Church doctrines are not able to overcome the limitations of their knowledge. Teaching authority in the Church does not confer the ability to transcend the limitations imposed by belonging to a particular culture and a particular time.
iii) Therefore, it is possible for Church doctrines that are formulated in a particular culture to be affected by the limitations of that culture's knowledge. The elements of a doctrine that are the results of the limitations of a culture's knowledgeare the product of historicalconditioning, and are not a part of the faith.

This only says that such conditioning is possible, not that it actually happens. A theologian who wanted to maintain that such conditioning actually occurs would have to provide an instance of its occurring. We can provide a hypothetical example of such a theologian, in order to illustrate the nature of this sort of alleged historical conditioning.

Consider a theologian who is examining the competing theories of monogenism and polygenism. He accepts that in the past Church teaching on original sin has logically implied monogenism, and that scientific evidence has shown that monogenism is false and polygenism is true. (Disregard the question of whether he is right about either of these questions.) This means that the teaching on original sin is false. Such a theologian could present this teaching as an instance of the historical conditioning referred to in this argument. For of course the people who formulated the doctrine of original sin lived in cultures that were ignorant of paleontology and scientific anthropology. If they had had available to them the scientific knowledge we now possess (says the theologian), they would never have stated the doctrine in a form that implied monogenism, for they would have known that monogenism is false. Some aspects of the doctrine are thus historically conditioned and not part of the essence of the faith.[13]

It is worth noting that historical conditioning due to limitations of knowledge is not the same as historical conditioning due to conceptual limitations. Acceptance of monogenism instead of polygenism, for example, could not be due to conceptual limitations, because anyone who can conceive of monogenism can conceive of polygenism (if one can conceive of the human race having originated with two individuals, one can conceive of its having originated with more than two individuals, as long as one has the concept "more than").

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[13] Rahner, it seems to me, adopts this position in his discussion of monogenism and polygenism in "Basic Observations."

The trouble with this view of historical conditioning is that it makes Catholic teaching unfalsifiable, and thus empty. Notice that the hypothetical theologian is not saying that because science has shown monogenism to be wrong, Catholics should accept that some parts of Church teaching (viz., the ones that state or imply monogenism) are mistaken, and should abandon them. He is saying that because (in his view) science has shown monogenism to be wrong, monogenism *never really was* a part of the Christian faith-it was only a historically conditioned accretion. The "historical conditioning" of doctrine here is simply ignorance of some fact or evidence that conflicts with the doctrine, or with aspects of the doctrine. If we accept that such ignorance is enough to make some aspect of Church teachings historically conditioned, this will have two consequences. First, in order to know what the true Catholic faith, as opposed to the historically conditioned additions, really is, we would have either to know what facts or evidence relating to Catholic teachings we are ignorant of (which is impossible by definition) or at least to know that we are not ignorant of any facts or evidence that might falsify parts of Catholic teachings. Second, we will never have any reason to believe that any part of Catholic teaching is false, because any new evidence we find that seems to indicate that a particular teaching is false will also be evidence that that teaching is not a true part of the faith at all, but is the product of historical conditioning. But this is completely unsatisfactory. We cannot therefore accept this account of historical conditioning.

III

We have been evaluating four arguments offered in support of the historical conditioning thesis H):

H). Some of the propositions meant by the sentences taught by the Church as part of the Christian faith, or some aspects of the propositions meant by those sentences, are not part of the faith, but are solely due to the conditions under which the teachings were produced.

The reason for evaluating H) is that it contradicts F), the proposed account of what acceptance of the Church's teachings consists in. None of the four arguments set out above, which are fairly representative of the sort of reasoning that leads theologians to accept H), are successful. But of course the fact that H) is not established by these arguments does not mean that it is not true. A satisfactory defense of F) also requires positive reasons for disbelieving H).

One reason for rejecting H) is suggested by our discussion of the arguments in its favor. If we accept H), we will be left with no means of finding out what the faith actually is. According to H), some of the teachings or aspects of the teachings of the Church are not really part of the faith. How can we identify the essential core of the faith?

We cannot do it by looking at the teachings themselves. Take any statement of doctrine S. One cannot discover the essential part of S, as opposed to the historically conditioned part, by turning to some other statement of doctrine T and saying that T will tell us what the essential element in S is. For T itself is historically conditioned, and thus a mixture of essential and dispensable teaching. If, in order to use only the essential element of T to determine the essential element of S, one has recourse to a third statement of the Church, U, the same problem arises, ad infinitum.

However, there may be another way of identifying the core of the faith. Since we want to identify this core by separating it from the historically conditioned part of Church teaching, we should proceed by looking at the teachings, considering which elements are caused by historical conditioning and which are not, and abandoning the former. What is left will be the core of the faith.

The trouble with this approach is that the factors that have been put forward as causes of historical conditioning make it impossible, as was said above. The historical conditioning of a doctrine was ascribed to the conceptual limitations or the ignorance prevailing at the time the doctrine was enunciated. But it is impossible to know what concepts or what knowledge one lacks, or one's culture lacks. Since we cannot know these causes of historical conditioning, we will never be in a position to distinguish between the essence of the faith and the historically conditioned part of Church teachings. We will at times be able to identify instances of historical conditioning in the past, it is true. But because the factors that lead to historical conditioning are present in every age, our own included, we cannot discard the historically conditioned elements that we find in past teachings and say that what is left over is the essence of the faith. We would always have to ask, how much of what is left over is historically conditioned by the circumstances of the present day? That is a question we could never answer.

Nor is this the only ground for objections to H). Further grounds suggest themselves, when we ask these questions: Why do we, as Catholics, consider that the teachings of the Church are worthy of belief? And how can the Church be justified in insisting that her members assent to all of them? She can only be justified in doing so if these teachings are a completely reliable source of knowledge, if we can be sure that they will never be mistaken. Otherwise it would be excessive to insist on the members of the Church believing them all without exception.

The answer to both these questions is that Catholics hold that the teachings of the Church are divinely guided. It is not the learning or acumen of the men who hold teaching offices in the Church that disposes us to accept their authoritative teachings as certainly true, but our belief that the Holy Spirit guides these teachings.[14] This belief cannot be reconciled with the sort of historical conditioning proposed by H). H) states that historical conditioning has led the Church to teach propositions that do not describe reality as it is, that are untrue. But if the teachings of the Church are guided by God, this would mean that God has led the Church to teach falsehoods. This cannot be accepted. Since God is all-knowing, he cannot be sincerely mistaken about the propositions he leads the Church to teach, and since he is perfectly good he could never deceive his people by inducing them to believe untruths.

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[14] The Second Vatican Council, for example, says of the bishops that "By the light of the Holy Spirit, they make that faith clear, bringing forth from the treasury of revelation new things and old"; of the Pope, that "his definitions, of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church, are justly styled irreformable, for they are pronounced with the assistance of the Holy Spirit"; of the whole Church, that "Under the guiding light of the Spirit of truth, revelation is thus religiously preserved and faithfully expounded in the Church" *(Lumen gentium,* section 25: translated in *The Documents of Vatican II,* Walter M. Abbott, S.J., ed., 1966).

One might attempt to give an answer to this argument along these lines: In the past, it would have been impossible for God to guide the Church to the truth in certain of her teachings, because the concepts needed for grasping the truth were not available. Thus, although the teachings set forth by the Church under divine guidance were at times partially or entirely false, they were the nearest approach to the truth possible for the people of those times.

This answer fails, for the following reasons.

-If we accepted it, it would deprive us of our grounds for believing the teachings of the Church. We can never know whether we have conceptual limitations that prevent us from being able to grasp the truth about some subject, so that the Church's teachings on that subject are falsehoods that are the best approach to the truth that we can get. But believing statements involves thinking them to be true. We cannot at the same time believe the Church's teachings on the grounds that they are guided by God, and hold that God's guidance provides no guarantee that those teachings are in fact true.

-Deceiving people is intrinsically wrong, wrong in itself. We cannot suppose that a good God would ever practice deception. If a lack of the necessary concepts prevented God from guiding the Church into the truth about some subject, we ought to expect that he would not lead her to teach anything at all about that subject, rather than that he would lead her to teach falsehoods.

-Since God is omnipotent, we cannot maintain that he could ever be prevented from leading the Church into the truth by the fact that grasp of the truth would require possession of concepts that humans did not have. It would be possible for him to bring it about that a culture acquired the concepts needed for the Church to teach the truth. And he seems, in fact, to have done this very thing; the history of the Jews in the Old Testament shows God introducing, over time, the concepts needed to understand the revelation given by Christ and the apostles-concepts such as monotheism, law, redemption, covenant.

The attempted defense of H) against objections to it thus fails. We can conclude that H) is false.

IV

We have been considering H) because it contradicts F), the suggested account of what acceptance of the Church's teachings consists in:

F). To accept the teachings of the Church is to believe that the propositions expressed by the sentences taught by the Church are true.

Since H) is false, it cannot serve as grounds for objecting to F). And if H) is rejected, F) appears obviously correct. It is correct because it states that what is involved in accepting Church teachings is simply what is involved in accepting any statement whatsoever. When someone uses a sentence to assert some proposition, he is affirming that proposition to be true. To accept someone's statement is to accept that the proposition he is asserting is true. Denying F) would mean asserting that accepting the Church's teachings involves something quite different from accepting other statements, that the term *accepting,* when applied to Church teachings, has to be understood as having a special meaning that is quite different from its normal one. It would be perverse to adopt such an unusual understanding, in the absence of compelling reasons for doing so; and there are no such compelling reasons. We can conclude that F) ought to be accepted.

AQUINAS ON VIRTUE AND THE GOODS OF FORTUNE*

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IT IS NOW commonplace to say that Aristotle considers good fortune useful, if not indispensable, for the acquisition and exercise of the virtues, and for the success of virtuous choices.[1] Aquinas obviously draws upon Aristotle's treatment of the virtues as he develops his own, and yet he says relatively little about fortune's influence upon the life of virtue.[2] This reticence is puzzling, in part because it seems reasonable to expect that Aquinas would address a matter so central to an Aristotelian account of the virtues, but also because fortune's effect upon that account is hardly benign. If the life of virtue requires good fortune, then the voluntary character of virtuous habits and actions is threatened. And for someone with Aquinas's theological commitments the threat comes packaged with additional worries, equally troubling. For it implies that Providence, which governs fortune's ways (*STh* I, q. 116, a. 1), acts as fortune does, offering virtue and its benefits to some, while unjustly denying them to others.

These are difficulties that cannot be escaped by ignoring

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*A version of this paper was presented on 7 January 1994 in Chicago at the annual meeting of the Society of Christian Ethics. I would like to thank John Carmody, Victor Preller, Jeffrey Stout, and John Taylor for their comments and criticisms. The usual disclaimers apply.

[1] See, e.g., Nancy Sherman, *The Fabric of Character: Aristotle's Theory of Virtue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), chapter 2.

[2] Aquinas's interpreters have tended to say even less. For this reason I develop Aquinas's account of the relation between the virtues and the goods of fortune by looking to a number of recent interpretations of Aristotle's account.

them, or so it would seem. We must ask, therefore, whether Aquinas fails to see the problems that fortune creates for his treatment of the virtues, or, alternatively, whether his treatment of the virtues offers reasons that warrant his silence.[3] Of course, there are multiple questions here insofar as fortune's potential influence upon the life of virtue is as complex as that life. Virtues are acquired, retained, and exercised, and fortune can affect each process in different ways, just as it can affect the success of virtuous choices. Add to this the fact that different virtues are subject to fortune in different ways and to different degrees and suddenly the possibilities for inquiry are vast. Indeed, the thought of undertaking a comprehensive inquiry tempts hubris. Mine will be more modest, asking simply this: what kind and what measure of external goods, those distributed by fortune, are required in order to pursue a life of virtue?

I. REJECTED OPTIONS

Aquinas lists the following external goods: wealth, power, honor, fame, a good country, a good name, and perhaps a few others *(STh* I-II, q. 2, a. 1-4; II-II, q. 108, a. 3).[4] He considers them instrumental goods, which the virtuous must possess in some measure if they hope to achieve their ends consistently *(STh* I-II, q. 2, a. 1; II-II, q. 83, a. 6; q. 118, a. 1). He writes, "For imperfect happiness, such as can be had in this life, external goods are necessary, not as belonging to the essence of happiness, but by serving as instruments to happiness, which consists in an operation of virtue" *(STh* I-II, q. 4, a. 7).

Often their usefulness to the virtuous is direct, when, for example, they serve as a necessary instrument of a certain kind of virtuous action. The liberal, for instance, cannot successfully exercise their virtue without at least some wealth *(STh* II-II, q. 117, a. 3). In other contexts their usefulness is indirect, their aid to the virtuous mediated by some other condition. For instance,

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[3] Attending to Aquinas's silences is, of course, an effort inspired by Joseph Pieper's classic, *The Silence of St. Thomas* (New York: Pantheon, 1957).

[4] I follow Aquinas and use "goods of fortune" and "external goods" interchangeably *(STh* I-II, q. 2, a. 4).

Aquinas warns us that a "man can be hindered, by indisposition of the body, from every operation of virtue" (*STh* I-II, q. 4, a. 6). And, of course, a consistently well-disposed body, one that is healthy and strong and thus able to perform the successful acts of virtue that constitute the happiness available to us in this life, requires a healthy measure of at least some external goods.

They are also distributed by fortune (*STh* I-II, q. 2, a. 4; II-II, q. 183, a. 1), which means they are spread among us unevenly and haphazardly. When this fact is combined with Aquinas's insistence that external goods are instruments of virtue, two distinct problems arise within his account of virtue and happiness, problems that threaten the voluntariness of virtuous action and the justice of providence. First, if virtue is the surest path to happiness, as Aquinas insists that it is (*STh* I-II, q. 5, a. 5), and if possessing external goods makes it more likely that virtuous choices will succeed in achieving their ends, and if success in virtue procures a greater measure of happiness than virtue without success (*STh* I-II, q. 20, a. 3; q. 24, a. 3), then insofar as external goods are distributed by fortune, so is happiness, at least in some degree. Similarly, if certain opportunities to act virtuously presuppose certain measures of fortune's goods, and if virtuous dispositions cannot be acquired without opportunities to act virtuously (*STh* I-II, q. 51, a. 2; q. 63, a. 2), then it would seem that the uneven and fickle distribution of external goods brings an uneven and fickle distribution of virtue and the happiness that it yields.

In the first case, fortune controls the success of virtue, thus making us wonder whether the virtuous deserve our praise when they succeed. In the second, fortune controls access to the life of virtue by controlling access to particular virtuous activities and habits. This in turn makes us doubt the voluntary character of the actions that follow from the habits of fortune's favorites. In both cases, the dependence of virtue upon luck is transferred to happiness. And if it turns out that only the lucky can be virtuous and happy, then it is reasonable to wonder whether Aquinas must conclude that God, who is ultimately responsible for fortune's ways, unjustly tips the scales of virtue and happiness in the direction of some and not others.

How does Aquinas reply? He does not believe that fortune has scuttled his account of virtue and happiness. For in that event we would expect him to modify that account in one of two directions and he has good reason to reject both. In the first, external goods are upgraded from instrumental to intrinsic goods. In the second, they are downgraded to indifferents.

1) It might be argued that there is no escaping the fact that successful acts of virtue depend upon luck and that the happy are fortune's favorites. We should simply accept this conclusion. In fact, because the goods of fortune are necessary for both the success of virtue and for the happiness available to us in this life we should not simply consider them instrumental goods. They are, in fact, intrinsic goods. They are desirable in themselves, indispensable aspects of a flourishing human life. According to this view, which Bernard Yack attributes to Aristotle, if fickle fortune takes away your external goods, leaving you powerless, impoverished, and friendless, then we cannot consider you happy in any way, because you have lost an integral and necessary part of human happiness. This holds even if you have managed to perform many acts of great virtue prior to your misfortune.'

It is not my purpose to determine whether this is Aristotle's actual view of the matter, but I can say why it cannot be Aquinas's. Unlike Yack's Aristotle, Aquinas does not consider the goods of fortune intrinsic goods, goods that are desirable in themselves because they are necessary constituents of our happiness. They are, rather, instrumental goods for the simple reason that both the virtuous and the vicious consider them useful *(STh* I-II, q. 59, a. 3). If both despots and democrats require wealth to accomplish their political aims, then why should we consider wealth good without exception? [6]

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[5] Bernard Yack, "How Good is the Aristotelian Good Life?", *Soundings 7214* (1989): 608-13.

[6] Both T. H. Irwin ("Stoic and Aristotelian Conceptions of Happiness," in *The Norms of Nature,* ed. M. Schofield and G. Striker [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986], 220), and John Cooper ("Aristotle on the Goods of Fortune," *Philosophical Review* 94/2 [1985]: 190) point out that Socrates was the first to make this influential argument. See *Meno* 87d-89a and *Euthydemus* 278e-282d.

Insofar as Aquinas considers external goods instruments of virtue and not goods desirable in themselves, he is unable to conclude that their loss eliminates happiness altogether. In fact, for Aquinas, nothing short of the complete loss of virtue can eliminate access to happiness altogether. Nor does he consider happiness an all or nothing affair, something that can be had only when all of its constitutive parts are in place. Rather, happiness is an operation according to virtue and can be achieved in greater or lesser degrees according to one's ability to act virtuously *(STh* I-II, q. 3, a. 2, ad 4). No doubt, the exercise of this ability and the success of its efforts will be assisted by the wise use of fortune's goods. Nevertheless, even those who have been mistreated by fortune and stripped of the instruments of virtue can count some measure of happiness despite their bad luck in that "act of virtue, whereby man bears these trials in a praiseworthy manner" *(STh* I-II, q. 5, a. 4). Indeed, their happiness will be diminished, but it cannot be vanquished entirely so long as some acts of virtue are still possible.

All of this implies that Aquinas need not acquiesce to the charge that his account of virtue and happiness has been rendered incoherent by fortune. Indeed, he insists that the measure of genuine happiness available to us in this life is a direct consequence of successful agency, both virtuous and voluntary, and he cannot hold this view while at the same time making luck the decisive element for our happiness *(In Ethic.* I, q. 18, a. 217). He must, then, refuse the intrinsic goodness of fortune's goods and reject the assertion that no measure of human happiness can be had without them.

Yack, on the other hand, seems quite willing to defend the intrinsic goodness of external goods and their necessary contribution to human happiness, even if this entails abandoning the traditional Aristotelian assertion that virtue is the principal cause and constituent of human happiness. Moreover, it appears that he finds this consequence bearable by committing Aristotle to a view that Aquinas would find preposterous: that involuntary states of affairs are praiseworthy in so far as we are able to consider them good. According to Yack, Aristotle argues *(Nichomachean Ethics* 110lbl2-26) that

> We do, of course, praise actions and character. But we also praise things without reference to agents and agency. We praise paintings and sunsets as well as painters and the creator of the heavens. In short, when we offer praise, we do not necessarily think of an agent responsible for the state we are praising.[7]

This enables Yack to regard Aristotle as saying that although the inescapable dependence of happiness upon the goods of fortune makes it largely involuntary, it is nevertheless a praiseworthy state.

We might think that the trouble with this view has to do with blame. (If we praise a sublime sunset whom do we blame for a dull one?) But Yack is more than willing to allow asymmetry here. Blame, he argues, requires an agent; praise does not.[8] The trouble here, at least by Aquinas's lights, is rather that no such asymmetry exists. Whether we praise or blame, we look for an agent (*STh* I-II, q. 21, a. 1 and ad 1), and Yack's examples obscure this fact. Surely we do praise paintings and sunsets, but would this seem right if there were no agents who produced them? I doubt it. A certain kind of theist might praise a tree, and if pressed I suspect she would admit to be praising its creator. But would an honest and thoughtful atheist follow suit? If the tree is tall and healthy she might call it handsome and good. If it is a California Redwood she might call it magnificent. But would she praise it for its height and girth, attributing these characteristics to its efforts? Perhaps she would, if she were a poet and were using the language of agency in new and extraordinary ways for new and extraordinary purposes. But if pressed I suspect she would admit that the language of praise and blame in its common uses presupposes an agent, and thus she has no ordinary reason to praise even the finest tree.[9]

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[7] Yack, "Aristotelian Good Life," 613.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Of course, depending on her purposes, a poet may just as well blame a tree for its stunted growth, its half-hearted efforts to thrive against the elements. There is no asymmetry here, and this gives us further reason to doubt that Yack's Aristotle is correct to say that we look for an agent when we blame but not when we praise. We look for an agent whether we praise or blame, just as a poet's purposes may lead her to linguistic innovations that ignore the need for an agent in both instances.

2) If Aquinas cannot follow Yack's Aristotle, if he cannot agree that successful acts of virtue always require good luck, that the happy are always fortune's favorites, and that consequently external goods are desirable in themselves, then he might try a different tack. He might argue that virtue and happiness can be freed from fortune's reach if we can find a way to consider external goods irrelevant for the virtuous life. This, in turn, would require him to redraw the relations between success, happiness, and the goods of fortune. In particular, he could no longer consider external goods instruments of success in virtue. Nor could he consider them intrinsic parts of the happiness that is the consequence of virtue.[10] With these revisions it would be possible for Aquinas to call the unlucky both virtuous and happy. Moreover, unlike the solution offered by Yack's Aristotle, this approach retains the constant conjunctions between virtuous choice, success, and happiness, and it does so without threatening the voluntariness of virtuous action or reducing happiness to good luck.

This is the Stoics' approach, which they develop by redescribing the end that the virtuous seek.[11] The end, the Stoics insist, is not a particular good or an external state of affairs, but simply acting virtuously. A successful act of virtue, one that achieves its end, is simply a virtuous choice, and an agent who chooses virtuously chooses an appropriate action because it is appropriate. An appropriate action is an action chosen for the best available reasons and in light of the best information that can be reasonably known. A virtuous action, therefore, is simply a reasonable action that is chosen because it is reasonable.[12] And reason is the standard of appropriateness, according to the Stoics, because it is the principal characteristic of our nature. But note, the standard is not *right* reason, if by this we mean the sort of rationality we expect to find in the experienced and the wise; for all that is required of the virtuous is that they "do what is reasonably expected" given the knowledge and experience they happen to have.[13]

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[10] For evidence that Aquinas is familiar with the Stoic approach see *STh* II-II, q. 125, a. 4, ad 3.

[11] I am indebted throughout this discussion to Irwin, "Stoic and Aristotelian Conceptions of Happiness," 205-244; T. H. Irwin, "Virtue, Praise, and Success," 59-79; and John Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 97-111.

[12] Irwin, "Virtue, Praise, and Success," 72.

Consider magnanimity. On this view, the magnanimous neither seek the public good as the end of their actions, nor spend large sums of money on noble projects in order to achieve that end. They do not, and cannot, pursue the public good as their end because it can be achieved only by choosing external courses of action and establishing external states of affairs; and, of course, externals of this sort, according to the Stoics, are governed by chance, which makes reasoned and systematic pursuit of the public good impossible.[14] Their actions do not require large sums of money, because magnanimity, like every other virtue, simply consists in doing what can reasonably be expected with regard to a particular matter, and even the poor can do this. As T. H. Irwin puts it, the poor man who wishes to act magnanimously will concentrate "on doing what he can to spend large sums of money for the public good; and he can achieve this end even if he has no money to spend at all."[15]

How would Aquinas respond? Perhaps by casting doubt upon the belief that generates the problem: the Stoics' contention that fortune's disruptions make it impossible for the virtuous to pursue particular ends by external means in a systematic way. To be sure, he admits that fortune's play in the external world makes deliberation and choice difficult (*STh* 1-11, q. 14, a. 1). But it is this difficulty that prudence is ordered to overcome, and Aquinas thinks that the prudent normally succeed at this task (*STh* 11-11, q. 44, a. 1, 3 and ad 2).[16]

Moreover, given the fact that his account of the moral virtues highlights the work they do to make right our relation to the external world,[17] I suspect Aquinas would argue that the Stoics frustrate the purpose and intelligibility of most virtuous pursuits when they describe them without referring to ends that require the choice of external actions as means. According to the Stoics, the virtuous choose appropriate actions because they are appropriate, and appropriate actions are rational actions. And yet what makes a choice rational if not its relation to the particular end that it is ordered to achieve, in most instances by establishing an external state of affairs in the world? In fact, how would rational choice proceed at all on this view? "Choice," says Aquinas, "is the taking of one thing in preference to another" (I-II, q. 13, a. 2). And yet if choice is not ordered to the achievement of some particular end by some particular means, why choose one course of action over another? In fact, why choose at all?

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Irwin, "Stoic and Aristotelian Conceptions of Happiness," 230-31.

[15] Ibid., 233.

[16] Aquinas writes that the first act of prudence is to take counsel (*STh* II-II, q. 47, a. 8), and that counsel is required precisely because "there is much uncertainty in things that have to be done; because actions are concerned with contingent singulars, which by reason of their vicissitude, are uncertain" (*STh* I-II, q. 14, a. 1). For a discussion of Aquinas's reasons for believing that the prudent normally succeed in overcoming the difficulties that fortune presents see John Bowlin, "Contingency, Chance, and Virtue in Aquinas" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1993), 270-89.

Similarly, insofar as virtuous actions are distinguished according to the different ends they seek, how can the Stoics say that an act of justice is different from an act of magnanimity when neither action is ordained to achieve a particular end by particular means? Indeed, insofar as the Stoics have quarantined virtue from luck by insisting that the end the virtuous seek is simply a virtuous choice, it appears that they have either made virtuous choice unintelligible, or, at the very least, reduced the many concrete virtues to a single virtue, airy and mysterious.

Irwin notes that these are the standard complaints against the Stoics' view and reports that the Latin Stoics reply with their notorious doctrine of the preferred indifferents.[18] They begin with the Socratic argument that Aquinas also accepts: external goods and external 'states of affairs can be used for good or evil and thus cannot be good in themselves. They then reason to a conclusion he does not: since external goods and external states of affairs are not intrinsic goods they cannot influence the success or the happiness of the virtuous. The virtuous should be indifferent to them, caring only about virtue. Nevertheless, the Stoics consider externals valuable and desirable in a way unrelated to their contribution to our happiness and as such they can be the objects of rational concern. But how? Not as the ends the virtuous seek, since the end of virtuous action is simply to act virtuously. Rather, the indifferents serve as the objective that gives the activity in which the virtuous seek to act virtuously its distinctive shape. Acting magnanimously is the end the magnanimous desire, and they perform this act of virtue and not another only insofar as they seek one indifferent objective-to serve the public good in a grand manner-and not another.

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[17] Aquinas writes: "Now virtue causes an ordered operation. Therefore virtue itself is an ordered disposition of the soul, in so far as, to wit, the powers of the soul are in some way ordered to one another, and to that which is outside" (*STh* I-II, q. *55,* a. 2, ad 1). I develop this external orientation of Aquinas's account of the virtues in Bowlin, "Contingency, Chance, and Virtue," 25-168.

[18] Irwin, "Stoic and Aristotelian Conceptions of Happiness," 230, 234.

Aquinas, I suspect, would find this reply unintelligible. He would most likely remark that it is impossible for something to be valuable, desirable, and yet indifferent to our happiness. Indeed, something becomes desirable precisely because of its relation to happiness, our insistent final end (*STh* I-II, q. 1, a. 6). The Stoics retort that nature gives value to the preferred indifferents. They are desirable because they allow us to live and act according to nature, and a life of this sort is valuable in itself and not in relation to some further end.[19]

Clearly, I cannot continue to follow this dispute without saying how Aquinas and the Stoics differ in their respective accounts of "acting according to nature," and this would obviously sidetrack my present inquiry.[20] Still, it should be apparent that the two sides are headed in different directions. The Stoics need an account of natural action with independent normative force, one that can show us why a particular external objective is desirable while others are not without appealing to its relation to some other good, some other desirable end. Aquinas has no equivalent need. For him, everything that is desirable is good, and everything that is good is either good in itself, in which case it is a constituent of happiness itself, or good because of its relation to happiness or one of its constituent parts.

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[19] Ibid., 236.

[20] For an excellent account of the Stoics' view see Gisela Striker, "Following Nature: A Study in Stoic Ethics," in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy,* vol. 9, ed. Julia Annas (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

Still, there are other ways for Aquinas to respond. He could point out that the internal orientation of Stoic virtue prevents us from saying that virtuous action is genuinely excellent, qualitatively better than more common kinds of agency. The best way to see this is to notice that the Stoics make it possible for the young and the inexperienced tQ act virtuously, and they are just the sort of people that Aquinas 'insists cannot *(STh* I-II, q. 95, a. 1). Of course, their external actions may occasionally track the actions of the virtuous, because of good luck or because the circumstances of choice presenf no serious difficulties, but these cases are the exception. Normally the actions of the young and the inexperienced fall far short of the good and the best. The virtuous, on the other hand, act with excellence consistently, and, at least in part, the difference is their experience with the world *(STh* II-II, q. 49, a. 1). And in fact it must be, for virtuous actions are directed toward making right our various relations to the world and to each other, and this, according to Aquinas, can be achieved only when the virtuous possess a firm understanding of what good relations are like and a stable grasp of the contingent singulars that make them difficult to achieve *(STh* II-II, q. 58, a. 1).

As such, the ydung and wealthy and well meaning, for instance, cannot act magnanimously because they do not know the particular content of the public good. If they were advised by the wise about this good they still would be ignorant of how it might be achieved in a manner that was both virtuous and effective. And if they were told how it might be achieved they would be unprepared for the unpredictable contingencies that would inevitably arise and foil their progress. The Stoic sage, on the other hand, does not seek to achieve a particular end by a particular external means and thus inexperience with the world is no impediment to the success of his virtuous actions. Virtuous action, for him, consists in choosing as well as can be expected, which simply means choosing after a thorough consideration of the knowledge and experience he happens to have. But this means that even those endowed with little understanding of the world and meager experience with its ways can act as the virtuous do.

Irwin points out the irony here. The Stoic sage is virtuous precisely because he knows all that is required to act virtuously. Normally this is taken to mean that his knowledge and experience are vast, but now we see that the knowledge needed to act virtuously may well be insignificant.[21] In fact, the most consistently virtuous sage may know very little. For if he acts virtuously only after a reasoned consideration of the knowledge available to him, then it would seem that he has a greater chance of acting virtuously when he has less knowledge to consider.

II. AMBIGUOUS FORTUNE

If Aquinas has good reason to resist modifying his treatment of virtue and happiness in either of these two ways, then how does he respond to the charge that exposure to luck threatens that treatment with incoherence? How does he respond to the charge that virtuous action becomes involuntary once the virtuous consider fortune's goods useful? And how does he free happiness from fortune's control when the virtue that is its principal cause falls so easily within fortune's domain?

Recall, there are two distinct problems here, despite their common consequences for virtue and happiness. On the one hand, fortune appears to influence the success of virtuous choice by controlling access to the instruments of success. On the other, fortune appears to control access to the life of virtue by controlling access to certain kinds of virtuous activities, which it accomplishes by controlling access to the instruments that those activities necessarily presuppose.

My intent in what follows is to consider Aquinas's response to the second worry, leaving his response to the first for another day. I will argue that Aquinas considers this second worry misguided, precisely because he believes that God supplies all human beings with the external goods they require to participate in a life of virtue.

The best evidence that this is in fact Aquinas's view comes when he asks whether it is unlawful to be solicitous about temporal goods of any sort. He answers that it is, when our fear of being without a sufficient quantity of temporal goods is excessive, and he then provides three reasons for putting aside this fear.

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[21] Irwin, "Virtue, Praise, and Success," 72.

First, since God has supplied us with the goods of the body and of the soul without our solicitude, we have every reason to believe that He will provide us with temporal goods as well. Second, since we know that God provides animals and plants with the external goods they need to flourish according to their kind, we have good reason to trust that God watches over our needs with similar attention and care. And third, because God is providential, and thus able to care for our temporal needs, we have reason to believe that He will *(STh* II-II, q. 55, a. 6). An identical conclusion is reached when Aquinas asks whether we can merit external goods as gifts of grace. He replies that when external goods are considered instruments of virtuous actions they fall directly under merit, and that God provides all human beings, "both just and wicked, enough temporal goods to attain everlasting life" *(STh* I-II, q. 114, a. 10; cf. I-II, q. 5, a. 5, ad 1).

Now, caution is required here. Aquinas is not arguing that our worry about fortune's control over access to virtue is wrong-headed simply because God, and not fortune, governs the distribution of external goods. In fact, elsewhere he argues that fortune and providence are equivalent causes that we happen to distinguish only because God's providential purposes transcend our knowledge. An accidental happening in this world that appears to occur by fortune or chance (a *fortuna vet casu provenire),* that is, an event whose cause we cannot locate, is actually caused by God.[22] It is like the case of the master who sends two servants to the same place. "The meeting of the two servants in regard to themselves is by chance; but as compared to the master, who had ordered it, it is directly intended" *(STh* I, q. 116, a. 1). Ignorant of their master's intentions, they will say their meeting had no proximate cause other than fortune, which is correct. But it is also the case that his direction is the distant and primary cause, unknown to them (*STh* I, q. 116, a. 1, ad 2). In short, our ignorance makes fortune's effects compatible with providential planning. Thus, the fact that divine providence controls the distribution of external goods does nothing to undermine their status *for us* as goods governed by fortune's whim.

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[22] For an excellent discussion of Aristotle's argument that accidents have no cause see Richard Sorabji, *Necessity, Cause, and Blame: Perspective in Aristotle's Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 3-44. The argument turns on the fact that for Aristotle, and for Aquinas, cause is related to explanation and not necessity.

Rather, the argument is that all human beings have been provided with a sufficient supply of external goods to lead a life of virtue. It is a simple factual claim and nothing more. The trouble, of course, is that it is difficult to see how this can be an intelligent reply to our worry about fortune's control over access to virtue. Indeed, it would be the best reply if it were true. But how can it answer our worry, or at the very least, bypass its complaints, when all agree that external goods are distributed unevenly, and that it is often the case that we do not possess the external goods that we need in order to act, all things being equal, in the ways and contexts we would prefer? And the reply is particularly puzzling given the dire material conditions of Aquinas's own age.[23] How can he smugly reply that providence provides us with the external goods we need in order to participate in a life of virtue?

The easiest, but also the most unsatisfactory, way to understand this curious remark is to point out that Aquinas considers fortune's goods unnecessary for participation in the beatific vision, which is our perfect happiness. Since contemplation is the activity in this life that most resembles the beatific vision (*STh* I-II, q. 3, a. 5), it stands to reason that those who spend more time in contemplation will be in less need of fortune's goods (*STh* I-II, q. 4, a. 7). And since Aquinas believes that contemplation is the surest path to happiness in this life, we should not be surprised when he says that external goods are always in sufficient supply.

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[23] Jacques Le Goff, *Medieval Civilization: 400-1500,* trans. Julia Barrow (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 229-54. Of course, not every inequity in the distribution of external goods is directly caused by fortune. I may farm a dry and rocky quarter because there has been no rain for many years, or it may be because all the rich and fertile lands have been confiscated by the local despot. Aquinas is well aware that sin creates losers in a zero sum game. Excessive love of external goods is a principal cause of sinful action, and inequitable distribution of externals is one of its effects (*STh* II-II, q. 118, a. 1, ad 2). Nonetheless, if tyranny deprives me of the wealth and power I need to act virtuously, fortune still has a hand in my privation. For it is certainly my misfortune that a despot should rule the land at a time when he could have this effect upon my life.

This approach ignores what Aquinas explicitly maintains: that our animal bodies require care and attention for contemplation to proceed without distraction in this life. The contemplative intellect cannot find its proper focus when a diseased body, a demanding stomach, and an empty purse interrupt with their complaints (*STh* I-II, q. 4, a. 6). These complaints cannot be answered without participating in a variety of practical activities, activities that cannot be pursued successfully without external goods in some measure (*STh* I-II, q. 4, a. 7). So although the contemplative life may well require a relatively smaller portion of fortune's goods than the active life, Aquinas gives us no reason to believe that destitution and want are conducive to it.

Perhaps, then, it is better to admit that Aquinas does not defend his argument directly. He is truly silent. Nevertheless, I think a defense can be developed for him that is faithful to his account of the moral virtues and to his understanding of their place in a flourishing human life.

Let us begin with three assumptions. First, Aquinas construes the moral virtues functionally. They are habits that enable us to cope with the various difficulties that hinder our achievement of the good and the best. This does not imply that he doubts the intrinsic goodness of virtuous habits. Nor does it conflict with his insistence that virtuous actions are pursued because they are good in themselves and not simply because they are useful for the achievement of this or that end.[24] However, it does mean that he cannot make sense of the intrinsic goodness of virtuous habits and actions without referring to their functional character.[25]

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[24] It is important to note that Aquinas does not insist upon the intrinsic goodness of virtuous action from the thoroughly modern desire to restrict the range of actions we can consider moral. He does not believe that virtuous action is distinguished by its disregard of interest and its single-minded attention to duty. Rather, he insists that virtuous action must be done for its own sake because it must be voluntary (*STh* II-II, q. 58, a. 1). Voluntary actions are done knowingly. Acting *with* knowledge, therefore, is the mark of freedom (*STh* I-II, q. 6, a. 1), and it consists *in* judging judgments (*De verit.* q. 23, a. 1). The free agent is one who not only knows the end and judges that the means will achieve *it,* he also judges what he has judged, both ends and means. His freedom consists *in* his asking about the merits of what he has concluded, for only at the end of that inquiry can he truly claim his actions as his own (*De verit.* q. 23, a. 2). But note that this making judgments about judgments, this asking why he pursued this end and not another, will come to a conclusion only as he discovers some good that is good in itself and for which

Second, an act of virtue can be great in two ways: either by achieving a great and noble good, or by coping with some great difficulty *(STh* I-II, q. 60, a. 5, ad 4).

Third, when Aquinas says that external goods are useful to the virtuous he does not simply consider them as instruments of success in virtue. Their usefulness also consists in their ability to create opportunities for the virtuous to exercise their virtue. For instance, wealth is not simply an instrument of the just, whose actions bear on external matters and thus often require financial resources in order to be successful. It also generates opportunities for the liberal to make good use of their virtue *(STh* I-II, q. 117, a. 3).[26]

These three assumptions enable us to argue that Aquinas considers the relation between external goods and virtuous actions as thoroughly ambiguous. Once this ambiguity is established we can begin to see both the reasonableness of Aquinas's insistence that providence always provides a sufficient supply of external goods for a life of virtue and the soundness of his silence.

Consider physical appearance. We might assume that one must have the good luck of being relatively attractive in order to encounter opportunities that call for acts of temperance. This is John Cooper's reading of Aristotle's view. He argues that

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he ultimately acts. Virtuous action becomes voluntary only when it concludes in a judgment of this sort. Since Aquinas insists that all virtuous actions are, by definition, voluntary, we must conclude that he rests their intrinsic goodness on the demands of freedom.

[25] Thus Aquinas often remarks that "It is essential to virtue to be about the difficult and the good" *(STh* 11-11, q. 129, a. 2; q. 123, a. 12, ad 2; q. 137, a. 1). The point is that our need for the virtues becomes intelligible and the character of virtuous action is defined only after we fix our attention as the virtuous do, upon both the difficult and the good. The life of virtue is not simply about doing the good because it is good, but also about overcoming various difficulties so that the good might be achieved. This overcoming is what the virtues do. It is their work. Thus, for example, Aquinas refers to the principal act of practical wisdom, taking counsel, as the *opus prudentis (STh* II-II, q. 49, a. 5).

[26] Boethius puts it this way: "So a wise man ought no more take it ill when he clashes with fortune than a brave man ought to be upset by the sound of battle. For both of them, their very distress is an opportunity, for the one to gain glory and the other to strengthen his wisdom" *(De consol.* 4.7).

> if one is physically quite unattractive not only will one's sex life, and so one's opportunities for exercising the virtue of temperance, be limited in undesirable ways (you may still have sex, given the circumstances, with whom you ought, and when, and to the right extent, and so retain and exercise the virtue of temperance, but the effects of this kind of control will not be as grand as they would be if you really had a normally full range of options).... People will tend to avoid you, so that you will not be able to enter into the normally wide range of relationships that pose for the virtuous person the particular challenges that his virtue responds to with its correct assessments and right decisions. Such a person, let us assume, may in fact develop all the virtues in their fully perfected form and actually exercise them in ways that respond appropriately and correctly to his circumstances; but the circumstances themselves are restricted by his ugliness and the effects this has on others, so that his virtue is not called upon to regulate his responses and choices in all the sorts of circumstances that the more normally attractive person would face, and so its exercise is not as full and fine a thing as that more normally attractive person's would be.[27]

My immediate interest does not lie in judging the merits of Cooper's interpretation of Aristotle's views. My concern is Aquinas's response to Cooper's Aristotle, and I believe he would consider this argument useful, but also muddled by the simplicity of its vision. Why should we assume, he would most probably ask, that the attractive have a greater need for temperance than the physically unattractive or the ordinary? Temperance is needed to cope with our desire for bodily pleasures, desires that make it difficult for us to make choices that consistently track the good (*STh* II-II, q. 123, a. l; q. 129, a. 2; q. 141, a. 2, 4).[28] Why should we assume that only the attractive find themselves in circumstances that elicit concupiscible desires of sufficient strength to threaten their pursuit of the good? Those who are exceedingly unattractive and as a result find their amorous intentions frustrated at every turn may well be in constant need of great acts of temperance. In fact, it is very likely that without this virtue their perpetually unfulfilled desires for physical affection will constantly threaten to derail their judgments about the good and the best.

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[27] Cooper, "Aristotle on the Goods of Fortune," 182-83.

[28] In fact Aquinas insists that temperance principally regards our desire for pleasures that result from the sense of touch, for these he considers the greatest pleasures and the strongest desires, and therefore the most able to make our pursuit of the good difficult and our need for virtue constant (*STh* 11-11, q. 141, a. 4-5).

Note that all we can say is "probably" and "perhaps." It is only likely, and never certain, that both the ugly and the beautiful will frequently find themselves with opportunities that demand great acts of temperance. In fact, the number of additional contingencies involved in the production of frustrated desires and amorous temptations are so numerous that even the most general judgments about any. agent's opportunities to act temperately are presumptuous. Health, wealth, and local custom will all exert some influence, as will character, class, and achievement. Would Alcibiades, that legendary beauty of ancient Greece, have frequently found himself in circumstances that required great acts of temperance if he had not been an aristocrat, a war hero, and a witty dinner companion? Probably not. A poor, cowardly, and dull Alcibiades would probably attract few suitors and therefore find himself in no more need of temperance than the rest of us.

Of course even this is difficult to conclude, for it may turn out that the rest of us, those who are neither beauties nor beasts, may in fact find ourselves in need of great acts of temperance. Socrates, for instance, was of common appearance, neither praised for his physical beauty nor decried for his hideousness, and yet his intelligence and wit, along with the constancy of his character and the beauty of his soul, made him beloved by many and created numerous opportunities for great and noble acts of temperance.

These kinds of reflections help us make sense of Aquinas's curious assertion that all people possess a sufficient measure of external goods to pursue a life of virtue. They allow us to interpret his remarks to mean that the relation between a particular external good and a particular kind of virtuous action is ambiguous at best. The beautiful will find no more opportunity for temperate action than the ugly or the common. Nor will they alone find need for great and noble acts of temperance. And although the work that temperance does for each will differ-moderating concupiscence in some, challenging insensitivity in others-all will find themselves in need of its labors, both ordinary and great.

This complexity and ambiguity can be found in every relation between a good with instrumental value and the opportunities it creates for great acts of virtue. Consider children.[29] Cooper argues that according to Aristotle,

> A childless person or one whose children are bad people will find his virtuous activities impeded, even though he retains a firm grasp on those qualities of character that constitute the virtues, because, again, he is forced to put them into effect in circumstances that do not give his virtues their normal scope. One central context for the exercise of the virtues is in the raising of children and the subsequent common life one spends with them, once adult, in the morally productive common pursuit of morally significant ends. If this context is not realized in one's life then, Aristotle would be saying, one's virtuous activities are diminished and restricted.[30]

Again, Aquinas would agree with this as far as it goes, but it doesn't go very far. If virtue has to do with coping with those difficulties that hinder our achievement of the good and the best, then one might argue that the parents of bad children will require greater and more frequent acts of every moral virtue than the parents of good children. But even this would be presumptuous. Who is in greater need of virtue, the parents whose children elicit excessive pride or those whose children bring sorrow? It is almost impossible to say.

To be sure, Aquinas does contend that certain passions are naturally stronger than others and therefore more able to hinder our deliberations. Anger, for instance, he considers, of all the passions, "the most manifest obstacle to the judgment of reason" *(STh* I-II, q. 48, a. 3). Thus we might be tempted to say that children who frequently slight their parents and goad their anger create a greater need for virtue than children who elicit only sorrow or pride (*STh* I-II, q. 47, a. 2). But this is a temptation to avoid. All things being equal anger may well be a more difficult passion than others, but things are rarely equal. Consider the fact that the difficulty of a particular passion varies with its intensity. Once this is taken into account ranking passions according to difficulty becomes a hopeless project. Which passion calls for greater acts of virtue, intense sorrow or mild anger? How could we say? Similarly, how passions influence each other within a particular subject will obviously affect their relative strengths and difficulties. Thus in addition to asking whether the passion in question is anger or sorrow, and whether it is of this intensity or that, we will also want to know something about the agent who suffers it. We will want to know whether she is frequently subject to other sorts of passions. For we will not be able to say whether it is anger or sorrow that puts her in greater need of virtue without first understanding something about the rest of her passionate relation to the world.

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[29] Unlike Cooper's Aristotle, Aquinas does not consider children external goods, and therefore neither does he consider them instrumental goods simply. By his lights, only external goods have instrumental value alone, while only God and happiness have unconditional value. All other goods, including children, are a mixed lot, good in themselves, but also useful, perhaps indispensable, for the pursuit and achievement of other goods *(in Ethic.* book 1, chap. 18, lines 217-22).

[30] Cooper, "Aristotle on the Goods of Fortune," 183.

Returning to the childless, it is certainly true that child rearing and the common life of the family create contexts that demand the exercise of the virtues, while bearing their misfortune well may be the only way for a particular childless couple to act virtuously. Nevertheless, Aquinas's understanding of the relative indeterminacy of the human intellect and will brings him to conclude that there are "various pursuits in life ... found among men by reason of the various things in which men seek to find as their last end" (*STh* I-II, q. 1, a. 7, ad 2). Each human life is afforded a vast number of complex and difficult activities, each demanding acts of virtue, both common and great, for the good to be achieved within them. The childless are denied one significant opportunity to act virtuously, but there are others. They could just as well participate in the common life of a religious order, a university faculty, a neighborhood group, a church, an extended family, a softball team, or a social reform movement. The list is almost endless and all have the potential to be as important and difficult as raising children, and thus in general requiring no more and no less virtue. It is groundless, therefore, as well as a failure of imagination, to say that the virtuous activities of the childless are "diminished and restricted."

These examples show the subtlety and complexity of Aquinas's bold reply to our worry about fortune's control over access to the life of virtue. He is able to declare that providence provides only because he assumes that there is no good answer to the question, "what quantity and variety of external goods are needed to lead a virtuous and happy life?" beyond the empty platitude that "we need the aggregate of those goods that suffice for the most perfect operation of this life" (*STh* I-II, q. 3, a. 3, ad 2). Human virtues cope with the difficulties that human agents confront as they seek the good (*STh* II-II, q. 137, a. 1), and both the presence and the absence of external goods call for the work of the virtues precisely because both create opportunities for action and difficulties that must be addressed. As such, the absence of any one external good from a particular human life does not necessarily diminish opportunities for virtue. In fact, they may be increased. Similarly, the presence of any one external good may in fact create some opportunities for virtue only as it extinguishes others.

Still, it might be argued that misfortune can diminish or eliminate the opportunity to participate in a particular sort of virtuous activity when the act of virtue in question presupposes the possession of a particular external good. Consider liberality and wealth. The impoverished have neither the opportunity nor the instruments to act virtuously in precisely this way. Aquinas can hardly disagree, and yet when he considers the plight of those "who have nothing to give" and no opportunity for virtuous action beyond enduring their poverty he implies that their numbers are few (*STh* II-II, q. 117, a. 1, ad 3). Even the poor have wealth that needs to be put to good use and that calls for the work of the virtues, and in particular the work of liberality (ibid.; q. 117, a. 3, ad 3). In fact, their poverty may increase both their opportunities to act liberally and the greatness of their acts. "It belongs to liberality before all that a man should not be prevented from making any due use of money through an inordinate affection for it" (*STh* II-II, q. 117, a. 3, ad 3). Poverty, like great wealth, tends to cause affection for money that is both inordinate and strong. The difficulty that this affection presents means that the poor will be in great need of liberality. And if they manage to make good use of their wealth, their actions will be great and praiseworthy despite the relative poverty of their means (*STh* II-II, q. 117, a. 1, ad 3).

The great advantage of this view is its ability to make the uneven distribution of external goods inconsequential for access to virtue, thus limiting, in some degree, fortune's effect upon both virtue and happiness. It also honors a simple truth about human life. Over the course of our lives most of us face a mixed distribution of external goods, as to both quantity and variety, and as a result most of us are provided with the opportunity to act virtuously in a diversity of contexts and with a diversity of instruments. We do not all share the same contexts and opportunities, but most of us are provided with a range of options that requires the full exercise of the virtues. In fact, it is precisely because fortune inevitably creates a diversity of contexts for each of us that we must, according to Aquinas, give full exercise to our virtues if we are to achieve the happiness available to us in this life (*STh* I-II, q. 4, a. 7).

Other outcomes are also worth noting. If this treatment of Aquinas's account of the goods of fortune is correct, then we must hear a well-reasoned view, and not a monkish or a romantic asceticism, when he declares that we should care little for external goods (*STh* I-II, q. 87, a. 7, ad 2) and that the life of virtue requires but a few things (*STh* II-II, q. 117, a. 1). In both remarks we can understand him to be saying that providence provides. If both the presence and the absence of external goods equip us with the opportunities we require to act virtuously, then excessive care for them seems unwarranted as even a small measure should provide sufficient opportunity for virtue. This does not imply that a virtuous life must assume a small measure, since the virtues can be had and exercised both in plenty and in want.

If this is true, we might be tempted to conclude that there is no way to choose between a life blessed with a great supply of every kind of external good and a more common life of mixed blessings. Both lives offer the opportunities we need to be virtuous and happy, and thus it appears that we have no grounds to prefer the fate of fortune's favorites over the fate of the rest. But this is a mistake. It would be better to say that what is preferable is good fortune, fortune that not only provides opportunity for virtuous action but also encourages it. Bad fortune, on the other hand, creates opportunities to act virtuously but is not conducive to success because the difficulties that it creates and the acts of virtue it demands are too great. The fallout of this is that we cannot determine whether fortune's gifts are blessings or burdens, at least not without prior knowledge of the character and circumstances of the agent in question. Is it good fortune that Kermit wins a flush lottery jackpot? It depends. He will certainly have new opportunities to act virtuously, but it may be that his character is such that he cannot cope with the new difficulties they present.

Still, we want to say that, all things being equal, Kermit is better off having won, and I think Aquinas would agree that there is something right about this desire. External goods are useful to the virtuous not just as opportunities for action, but also as instruments of success; and instruments of success in the hands of the virtuous will yield good, at least for the most part. Thus, when we count newfound wealth a blessing we express our hope that it will be used for good. We express our hope that the person blessed possesses virtue of such strength that he will act virtuously in plenty as well as in want. Similarly, when we decry the tyrant who leaves his people destitute, we do not lament lost opportunities for virtue, for the poor and powerless are rich in those. RaLner, we oppose their diminished access to the instruments the virtuous need to achieve those goods that constitute a flourishing human life. Our complaint is not with their access to virtue but with their access to happiness that is complete and secure. Of course, we know nothing of their virtue and therefore we do not know whether they would use fortune's gifts to pursue the goods that the virtuous desire. But this is our hope.

Of course, the implication here is that although the uneven distribution of fortune's goods cannot, at least in most instances, yield an uneven distribution of opportunity to act virtuously, it can influence the distribution of happiness. Indeed, diminished happiness in this life, even tragically diminished, can result from fortune's twists and turns. This threat holds true for those of great virtue as well as for those of little.

Here the two worries that we distinguished at the start of the inquiry converge. As we conclude that Aquinas has little reason to worry that fortune distributes opportunities to act virtuously, we imply that it does control happiness insofar as it distributes the instruments of success in virtue. Nevertheless, I believe that Aquinas finds this implication merely apparent, and in fact regards fortune's grip upon the happiness of the virtuous much looser than it now seems. Unfortunately, this argument will have to lie fallow awhile, for there are other matters related to fortune's control over access to opportunity and virtue that demand attention.[31]

III. THE LARGE-SCALE VIRTUES

By Aquinas's lights, the uneven distribution of the goods of fortune does not result in the uneven distribution of opportunities to act virtuously. Nor, as his reflections on liberality indicate, does he think that uneven distribution influences our ability to participate in particular kinds of virtuous activity, at least in most instances, since the demands of virtue are always proportionate to the means available.

Aquinas is not out of this thicket of complaints yet. He construes liberality in terms general enough-making good use of wealth-to accommodate the effects of fickle fortune. Even the poor can make good use of their modest means. But what about the large-scale virtues? Aquinas concedes that both magnanimity and magnificence demand considerable resources and therefore it appears that only the wealthy and the powerful have the opportunity and the means to acquire and exercise them (*STh* II-II, q. 129, a. 8; q. 134, a. 3).

As before, fortune seems to threaten the voluntariness of virtuous action and distribute virtue and happiness according to its fancy. This time, however, its threats are mediated by Aquinas's insistence that the virtues are mutually connected (*ad*

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[31] I defend this view elsewhere. See Bowlin, "Contingency, Chance, and Virtue," 270-89.

invicem connexae). They offer indispensable assistance to each other in their respective labors. As such, an agent must possess all the virtues perfectly in order to possess any of them perfectly (*STh* I-II, q. 65, a. 1). The trouble, of course, follows from the participation of the large-scale virtues in this society of mutual aid. If they are needed in order to possess any of the virtues, then it appears that only those whom fortune has blessed with the wealth and power of a tyrant will be able to act virtuously at all. In short, fortune undermines the voluntariness of virtuous action and distributes access to virtuous habits circuitously, by means of Aquinas's insistence upon the unity of the virtues.

Aquinas finds this problem so puzzling that he proposes three different solutions, and so difficult that he fails to develop any of them with sufficient care. We shall have to fill in the detail. Doing so we will find that only one of the three satisfies. The other two free the virtues from luck's domain more successfully, yet they are unacceptable insofar as freedom is won at the expense of the distinctiveness of the large-scale virtues.

Aquinas's first solution is the least satisfactory of the three. He begins with the common assertion that both magnanimity and magnificence bear on something great. The magnanimous act virtuously in great undertakings of every sort and pursue virtuous courses of action only insofar as they are great (*STh* II-II, q. 129, a. 1, 4; q. 134, a. 2, ad 2), while the magnificent pursue great undertakings, usually great public works, that can be achieved in the external world by great expenditures (*STh* II-II, q. 134, a. 2, ad 2). Magnanimity regards great and difficult actions simply, while magnificence regards such actions in a determinate matter, namely in external production (*STh* II-II, q. 134, a. 4, ad 1). Aquinas then argues that

> an act may be called great proportionately, even if it consists in the use of some small or ordinary thing, if, for instance, one make a very good use of it: but an act is simply and absolutely great when it consists in the best use of the greatest thing. (*STh* II-II, q. 129, a. 1)

The direction Aquinas is headed should be obvious. Those who lack the riches, power, and friends that are conducive to great undertakings considered simply may still act magnanimously by making the best use of the resources they do possess (*STh* II-II, q. 129, a. 8, ad 1, 3). Similarly, those who are incapable of the great expenditures needed for accomplishing acts of magnificence considered simply "may be able to do so in things that are great by comparison to some particular work; which, though little in itself, can nevertheless be done magnificently in proportion to its genus; for little and great are relative terms" (*STh* II-II, q. 134, a. 3, ad 4). The conclusion is clear: since little and great are relative judgments all may possess and exercise the large-scale virtues. As such, the unity of the virtues cannot be a conduit through which fortune determines access to every virtue and sabotages the voluntariness of every virtuous action.

The trouble with this argument is that it takes the relativity of little and great too far and thereby threatens the distinctiveness of the large-scale virtues. Of course, in a community of paupers those with relatively more wealth than the rest can act magnificently in relation to their fellows. But so long as there are other available frames of reference, other standards of excellence to judge the greatness of their actions, the locally magnificent will sooner or later discover how far their actions fall short of genuine greatness. (It's the sort of realization that minor league all-stars experience when they hit the big leagues.) We might say, "they were as magnificent as they could be," but the caveat implies that their actions forsake true greatness. Moreover, there is something suspiciously paternalistic about saying that the impoverished can act magnificently, for it seems to imply that their poverty is of no consequence; that it cannot divide their capacity for great expenditures that serve the common good from the capacities of those whom fortune has truly blessed with substantial means.

So actual greatness must be the standard for the large-scale virtues if we are to make sense of their actions as embodying distinctive kinds of human excellence, and therefore unlike the liberal, the magnanimous and the magnificent cannot make do with what they have. The poor and the powerless may well act virtuously given their resources but they cannot participate in great undertakings or make great expenditures. As T. H. Irwin puts it (borrowing an analogy from Aristotle), a shoe might be the best that can be made from shoddy leather without being a really good shoe.[32]

Aquinas's second solution is better, but not much. It turns on the difference between possessing a virtue and exercising it, and is offered as a direct response to the worry about the large-scale virtues, the goods of fortune, and the unity of the virtues. Regarding magnanimity Aquinas writes,

> The mutual connection of the virtues does not apply to their acts, as though everyone were competent to practice the acts of all the virtues. Wherefore the act of magnanimity is not becoming to every virtuous man, but only to great men. On the other hand, as regards the principles of virtue, namely prudence and grace, all virtues are connected together, since their habits reside together in the soul. ... Thus it is possible for one to whom the act of magnanimity is not competent to have the habit of magnanimity, whereby he is disposed to practice that act if it were competent to him according to his state. (*STh* II-II, q. 129, a. 3, ad 2)

Aquinas's remarks concerning magnificence are virtually identical (*STh* II-II, q. 134, a. 1, ad 1).

What does it mean to possess a habit and yet be unable to exercise it? Aquinas doesn't say, but I think we can construct an answer for him from the one hint he does give. "The chief act of virtue," he writes, "is the inward choice, and a virtue may have this without outward fortune" (*STh* II-II, q. 134, a. 3, ad 4). Elsewhere Aquinas tells us that choice is an act of the will and can be of two sorts: complete and incomplete. A "complete act of the will is only in respect of what is possible" (*STh* I-II, q. 13, a. 5). And, since it is impossible for those who possess the large-scale virtues without a healthy measure of external goods to choose courses of action in accord with those virtues, we can safely assume their *interior electio* is an incomplete act of the will.

An "incomplete act of the will is in respect of the impossible; and by some is called *velleity* because to wit, one would will *(vellet)* such things, were it possible" (ibid.). It follows that those without great resources possess the large-scale virtues insofar as they are positively disposed toward the acts of those virtues. Although they are unable to will complete acts of magnanimity and magnificence, incomplete acts of the will are within their range. That is, they are capable of interior choices that they would complete and actually translate into magnanimous and magnificent courses of action if fortune provided them with the relevant resources.

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[32] Irwin, "Virtue, Praise, and Success," 65-66.

The problem with this solution is making it work within Aquinas's externally oriented account of the virtues. What sense can be made of an inward choice of the impossible when Aquinas insists that choice is ultimately oriented toward the external and the possible? Consider the fact that choice is preceded by rational apprehension of the end that ought to be pursued and practical deliberation over the means that will achieve it (*STh* I-II, q. 15, a. 3). These two acts of practical rationality are the linchpin of at least a portion of this second solution, since Aquinas maintains that prudence is at least partly responsible for bringing the large-scale virtues to those who cannot exercise them. Therefore, if we wish to know whether it is possible for those without great external resources to possess the large-scale virtues by incomplete and inward choice, we need to look at the place of prudence in acts of magnanimity and magnificence.

Aquinas maintains that the *opus prudentis* is needed to cope with the infinite number of contingent singulars in a circumstance of choice (*STh* II-II, q. 47, a. 3). These contingent singulars make it difficult for us to apprehend the good that ought to be pursued as an end and to choose the good course of action that will be a proper means to that end (*STh* I-II, q. 14, a. 1-3; II-II, q. 47, a. 1, and ad 2). The prudent do this work well, in part, because of their experience with similar circumstances (*STh* I-II, q. 14, a. 6; II-II, q. 49, a. 1). When they confront contingent singulars whose arrangements and relations are familiar the difficulty they face is reduced and they are able to deliberate with confidence. It follows, then, that those who are habitually disposed to pursue great projects and to make large expenditures that serve the common good will need experience with the contingent singulars associated with these enterprises in order to acquire the familiarity that makes choice good.

Aquinas appears to share this conclusion. Commenting on Aristotle's remark that the magnanimous act slowly and with caution *(Nichomachean Ethics* 1125a13-16), Aquinas argues that they must proceed with all due care, for "the magnanimous man is intent only on great things; these are few and require great attention, wherefore they call for slow movement" *(STh* II-II, q. 129, a. 3, ad 3). We can assume that great attention is needed in those circumstances of choice where experience is also required, since both make it possible for the magnanimous to choose well despite the many contingent singulars-all the fussy details-that make good choice difficult in great undertakings.

From these reflections I think we can concede the possibility that some can possess the large-scale virtues without actually exercising them: in particular, those who once possessed great resources and as a result acquired the experience and the habits of affection of the magnanimous and the magnificent. We can imagine them saying, "I would choose this way, as the magnificent do, if I only had the means." I suspect, however, that we will find it difficult to imagine those who have never possessed great resources making internal choices that track the choices of those who actually possess and exercise the large-scale virtues. They will lack the necessary experience. The person who hits the lottery jackpot, for instance, cannot act magnificently, at least not right away, because she has never pursued great ventures and she knows nothing of the great expenditures required to conclude them successfully.

Aquinas seems to maintain this view with respect to liberality. He writes, "Those who, having received money that others have earned, spend it more liberally, through not having experienced want of it, if their inexperience is the sole cause of their liberal expenditure they have not the virtue of liberality" *(STh* II-II, q. 117, a. 4, ad 1). Why should he think something different with respect to magnificence? Since the lottery winner has had no previous opportunity to pursue great public works that require great expenditures and no previous gemand to reflect in a concrete way upon the large-scale needs of her fellows, she will undoubtedly have little idea how to proceed.[33] Even if she understands that the common good would best be served at this time and in this place by restoring the ice rink in Central Park, for instance, her inexperience with financing, city officials, safety regulations, local political feuds, etc., would most likely derail her choice of appropriate means.

Moreover, the effects of inexperience are not merely cognitive. The role practical wisdom plays in unifying the virtues and shaping the passions guarantees this. That is, the inexperience of the lottery winner not only makes it impossible for her to offer prudential judgments about the kinds of great undertakings that will actually serve the common good, but it also prevents her from being rightly affected toward money, the material object of magnificence (*STh* II-II, q. 134, a. 3). Perhaps she was destitute before her win and as a consequence has a great love of money. Now she 'knows no want, and yet her inexperience with excess may cause her affection for wealth to continue as before. A strong and habitual desire for money that perhaps in the past hit virtue's mean now surpasses it and causes her to love immoderately. In short, her inexperienced passions make it too arduous for her to spend large sums on great endeavors that serve the common good, and thus her magnificence is hindered (*STh* II-II, q. 134, a. 3, 4). If this scenario is a reasonable possibility, why should we assume that she could have made internal choices before her win that track the actual choices of the magnificent?

We can sum up the trouble with Aquinas's second solution this way: by construing the latent or tacit possession of large-scale virtues in terms of incomplete and internal choice Aquinas has failed to honor his own treatment of choice. Choice bears on contingent singulars, and therefore magnanimous and magnificent choices, even of the incomplete and internal sort, demand experience with those particular contingencies that hound great projects and expenditures. But perhaps the best way to characterize Aquinas's confusion is to recall his own remarks about the relation between virtue and difficulty.

[13] Irwin, "Disunity in the Aristotelian Virtues," 63.

The work of a distinct virtue is called for and made intelligible only when a distinct difficulty that needs addressing is located (*STh* II-II, q. 137, a. 1). Virtue, Aquinas insists, is not only about the good desired; it is also about the difficulties that must be overcome in order to desire that good constantly and achieve it regularly. The large-scale virtues are needed because of our difficulties with great measures of honor and money. Both are desirable and necessary for human life, and thus our passions for each often create a powerful resistance to the judgments of right reason (*STh* II-II, q. 129, a. 2; q. 134, a. 2 and ad 2; q. 134, a. 3). Aquinas maintains that the virtues associated with ordinary measures of these goods are insufficient for the difficulties associated with large measures, in part because our passions intensify when directed toward large sums and great honors, but also because the proper use of these goods-for great public works-presents practical difficulties that surpass those associated with the proper use of ordinary measures and thus call for different kinds of experience (*STh* II-II, q. 129, a. 1; q. 131, a. 2, ad 1). Accordingly, when Aquinas argues that those who have never possessed large measures of external goods can nevertheless possess the large-scale virtues without exercising them, he seems to deny the distinct cognitive and affective difficulties that large measures and great projects create for us and that make the large-scale virtues both distinct and necessary. In short, he can make the large-scale virtues available to all only by ignoring the difficulties that make them necessary and intelligible as distinct virtues in the first place.

Aquinas's third solution is the most compelling. It makes the uneven distribution of the goods of fortune matter less for the possession of the large-scale virtues, and therefore it prevents fortune from using the mutual connections among the virtues as a means of controlling access to them. Nevertheless, it comes with costs, for it fails to resolve the problem in a manner that leaves all the original pieces of the problem untouched.

Responding directly to the dilemma the large-scale virtues create for the unity of the virtues Aquinas writes,

> But there are some moral virtues that perfect man with regard to some eminent state, such as magnificence and magnanimity; and since it does not happen to all in common to be exercised in the matter of such virtues, it is possible for a man to have the other moral virtues, without actually having the habits of these virtues-provided we speak of acquired virtue. Nevertheless, when once a man has acquired those other virtues he possesses these in proximate potentiality *(in potentia propinqua).* Because when, by practice, a man has acquired liberality in small gifts and expenditures, if he were to come in for a large sum of money, he would acquire the habit of magnificence with but a little practice: even as a geometrician, by dint of little study, acquires scientific knowledge about some conclusion which had never been presented to his mind before. Now we speak of having a thing when we are on the point of having it, according to the saying of the Philosopher: That which is scarcely lacking is not lacking at all. (*STh* I-II, q. 65, a. 1, ad 1; cf. II-II, q. 129, a. 3, ad 2; q. 134, a. 1, ad 1)

When the liberal possess magnificence *in potentia propinqua* it is not actually possessed. Rather, it is nearly possessed and easily acquired because of its similarity to liberality. Liberality and magnificence are kindred virtues, first cousins perhaps, related in concern and divided only by fortune and a share of experience so small that it is easily had with a bit of practice. Consequently, nothing significant prevents those who do not possess large sums of money from possessing all the virtues, since the magnificence they lack is so similar to the liberality they enjoy that its absence has little influence upon the condition of the other virtues.

Aquinas does not in this way dissolve the difference between large and small expenditures. Nor does he say that when fortune brings great resources the large-scale virtues necessarily follow. Rather the claim is that the habits of mind and affection required to make large expenditures well are not much different from those possessed by the liberal. The skills of the liberal transfer easily to the contexts occupied by the magnificent because the difficulties that need addressing in those contexts are so similar, differing in magnitude but not in kind. (If I play softball well isn't it likely that my skills will transfer to the baseball diamond?) And if the contexts of action are similar, then inexperience should not be a problem, since the experience required to act liberally make acts of magnificence a quick study. The liberal person who hits the lottery jackpot cannot immediately pursue magnificent projects, but she will be able to soon enough. In short, the difference between liberality and magnificence makes no difference. It is as if the liberal already possessed the ability to act magnificently, or at least nearly so.

Clearly, Aquinas walks a fine line here. Wishing to preserve the connections among the virtues from the scattering effects of the uneven distribution of fortune's goods, he diminishes the distinctiveness and the significance of the large-scale virtues. But he knows he cannot take this solution too far and risk collapsing the large-scale virtues into their counterparts among the ordinary virtues. So he insists that only those truly experienced with the proper use of great resources can actually possess magnanimity and magnificence. What makes this solution compelling is its ability to retain all the original pieces of the puzzle. Unity among the virtues is retained and fortune is leashed without dissolving the distinct need the large-scale virtues fulfill and that make their work intelligible. What makes this solution succeed is the fact that Aquinas has weakened the relative strength of the claims made on behalf of both the unity of the virtues and the distinctiveness of the large-scale virtues. In the other two solutions Aquinas retains the unity of the virtues by sacrificing the distinctiveness of the large-scale virtues. Here, both are diminished but neither eliminated. One does not need to possess all the virtues in order to possess any of them precisely because the large-scale virtues are not all that much different from their ordinary counterparts.[34]

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[34] Of course, some might ask whether an account of the virtuous life that preserves a place for the large-scale virtues manages to preserve its Christian character. Christians normally wish to make the distinction between little and great projects and expenditures independent of available resources. For Aristotelians, this muddies the distinction between little and great precisely where it ought to be clarified. The easiest way to resolve this conflict in points of view would be to exclude the large-scale virtues from a Christian account of the moral life. Aquinas's first two attempts to solve the problem of access to virtue that fortune and the unity of the virtues create in conjunction with magnanimity and magnificence indicates that he is tempted by this approach. Nevertheless, an account of the moral life that wishes to be both Christian and Aristotelian must find a place for the large-scale virtues, and this is the source of the obvious need Aquinas has for his third solution.

IV. CONCLUSION

Puzzles remain. Throughout we have assumed that all people will possess goods of fortune in sufficient measure to participate in a variety of virtuous activities. When the measure is low, we have assumed that opportunities remain. Even the ordinary will find need of temperance. Even the poor will have some wealth to spend well, some need to exercise their liberality and to lay the foundation of future magnificence. No doubt this assumption makes sense most of the time. But what about those instances when misfortune bears down with such force that endurance is the only possible activity, the only sphere of action for virtue to shine? What of the genuinely powerless-the victims of torture, abuse, or profound disability? What of the thoroughly destitute? Surely fortune prevents them from participating in nearly every variety of virtuous activity.

Here the difficulty is not with the voluntariness of the endurance they muster, but with the justice of providence. Suddenly we have left moral theology behind and entered the domain of theodicy. Aquinas's answer, if he has one, will be found there. Nevertheless, it should be apparent how far we have to travel within his moral theology before we reach a place where theodicy lays claim to our inquiry, before his treatment of the virtues can no longer answer our worries about fortune's effect upon the life of virtue.

THE ACCURACY OF ARISTOTLE'S DEFINITION OF THE SOUL

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AT THE OUTSET of the *De anima* Aristotle claims that while knowledge of any kind is a thing to be prized, one kind of knowledge is prized more than another "either by mason of its greater exactness *[kat'akribeian],* or of a higher dignity and greater wonderfulness of its objects,"[1] and knowledge of the soul, he judges, satisfies both these criteria (402a4). While the attributes of nobility and wonderfulness quite obviously belong to the science of the soul, the claim Aristotle makes for its exactness, or accuracy, is far less conspicuous. R. D. Hicks in his commentary on the *De anima* suggests that for Aristotle the meaning of accuracy varies according as it is applied either to demonstration *(apodeixis)* or scientific knowledge *(episteme).*[2] The accuracy belonging to demonstration is a function of the necessary nature of premises yielding, through correct reasoning, necessary conclusions. The paradigmatic instance of such accuracy is to be found of course in mathematics, while less accurate forms of argument are found, for example, in the various branches of political science, the premises of which are contingent:' The accuracy belonging to scientific knowledge, on the other hand, is not so much a function of the type of demonstration employed, as of the objects with which such a science deals. In this context, Hicks explains, *akribes* means "abstract" in the sense of being simpler and logically prior. Thus in the *Metaphysics* Aristotle states that those sciences are more accurate that have to do with first causes, for the sciences that start from fewer premises are more accurate than those that are complicated with additional determinations. Arithmetic, accordingly, is more accurate than geometry.[4]

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[1] Aristotle, *De anima* 402al-3, trans. J. A. Smith in *The Complete Works of Aristotle,* ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984). Unless otherwise noted all translations from Aristotle's works will be taken from this Oxford edition.

[2] R. D. Hicks, *Aristotle: De anima* (New York: Arno Press, 1976), 174-75.

[3] See Aristotle's comments on the varying degrees of accuracy in demonstration at, for example, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.3 (1094bll-27) and 2.12 (1104al-6).

With this distinction in hand we can readily see how the *De anima* provides accurate knowledge of the soul, insofar as Aristotle's definition of soul as the first actuality of a natural organic body potentially having life is of something "abstract," that is, of something more simple and logically prior to the knowledge of specific kinds of soul. But as this definition of soul is pursued by Aristotle within the context of natural philosophy, we should also expect its accuracy to be affirmed by the necessities belonging to theoretical demonstration. In other words, Aristotle's investigation of the soul, as a theoretical undertaking, stakes its claim to accuracy not only on the fact it seeks to define something simpler and logically prior to certain other things, but also on the demonstrability of this definition.[5]

Though in recent years the *De anima* has enjoyed a generous amount of attention from commentators,[6] these readings have not made perspicuous the way in which Aristotle's claim for the accuracy of his study is supported by theoretical demonstration. A perusal, moreover, of an older and much respected commentary on the *De anima,* that of St. Thomas Aquinas, does not at first appear to help. While St. Thomas joins Aristotle in claiming accuracy for this inquiry, he attributes its accuracy to what at first might be taken as a startling pronouncement: that knowledge of the soul is a commonplace for everyone.[7] This comment raises at least two questions. By St. Thomas 's own statement this commonplace knowledge is restricted to the *possession* of soul, but says nothing about the soul's essential nature. But if it says nothing about the soul's nature, why is it called "knowledge" at all? And what is its relation to either of the two senses of accuracy we have distinguished?

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[4] *Metaphysics* 1.2 (982a25ff.)

[5] Hicks's comment on 402a3, where Aristotle claims that the study of the soul is to be prized both for its accuracy and for the nobility of its subject matter, neglects this point. "In this treatise," Hicks writes, "our subject is *to empsuchon z11on e empsuchon*, and we deal preeminently with the form (which is *akineton)* not with the matter; and in proportion as we do this we regard the *empsuchon z1Jon* not concretely as made up of *sarks, ostoun, neuron,* and the like, but abstractly as living, moving, perceiving, thinking, these attributes being due to soul as cause" (Hicks, *Aristotle: De anima,* 175). This is correct as far as it goes, but, as we will show, the claim of accuracy for this study is also warranted given the demonstrability of the definition of soul as form. Siwek 's comment is even less to the point: "Non desunt, qui vocabulum *akribeian* vertant 'accuratio'. ... Cui versioni favere videntur *(Meta.* K.7 1064a4; *Top.* I.I 10la21). Nihilominus censemus versionem hanc hie non esse ad rem, ut patet ex 402al0-ll; proindeque vocabulum *akribeia* sumendum esse in sensu suo primitivo, 'acuitas,' 'subtilitas' *(akros,* acutus)," *Aristotelis De anima: Libri tres graece et latine* (Roma: Gregorian, 1946).

It is the target of this essay to defend the claim that the commonplace knowledge of soul St. Thomas speaks of is the key to understanding Aristotle's claim for the accuracy of his definition of soul. It is the key, as St. Thomas explains, because it serves as the middle term in Aristotle's demonstration of his definition of the soul. I thus intend to show how definition and demonstration, as well as another important part of scientific inquiry for Aristotle, division, are employed in the decisive first two chapters of *De anima* book 2. The argument requires more or less of an analysis of these chapters, though to present the argument most clearly I will take up these chapters in inverse order. After a preliminary section entailing some general remarks about

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[6] I am thinking especially of William Charlton's essay "Aristotle's Definition of the Soul" in *Aristotle's De anima in Focus,* ed. Michael Durrant (New York: Routledge, 1993) and *Essays on Aristotle's De anima,* ed. Martha C. Nussbaum and Amelie Oksenberg Rorty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); but also of Joseph Owens 's "Aristotle's Definition of Soul," in *The Collected Papers of Joseph Owens,* ed. John R. Catan (Albany: SUNY Press, 1981); J. L. Ackrill's "Aristotle's Definitions of *psuchi!,"* in *Articles on Aristotle,* vol. 4, ed. Barnes, Schofield, and Sorabji (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978); and D. W. Hamlyn, *Aristotle's De anima Books 2 and 3* (with certain passages from book 1), with introduction and notes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).

[7] "Hee autem sciencia, scilicet de anima, utrumque habet, quia et certa est (hoc enim quilibet experitur in se ipso, quod uiuificet) et quia est nobiliorum (anima enim est nobilior inter inferiores creaturas)" *(In sentencia libri De anima* book 1, cap. 1, lines 92-95).

Aristotle's method of definition, part 2 of the essay will provide a discussion of the demonstration at *De anima* 2.2, while part 3 will comprise some final remarks on the relationship of *De anima* 2.2 to 2.1.

I. THE *PROCESSUS IN DETERMINANDO*

In the opening chapter of the *Physics,* in determining the method of approach to the principles of nature, Aristotle makes the well-known distinction that the natural way to proceed in any science is from what is more knowable and clearer to us to what is more knowable and clearer by nature. The things that are at first plain and clear to us are "poured together" *(ta sungkechumena),* and it is later that their elements and principles become known to those who distinguish them.[8] Consequently, in the case of each thing we should proceed from the universal to the particular. The Greek for "universal" here is the familiar *to katholou,* and that for "particulars" is *ta hekasta.* From these terms we might at first think that Aristotle is reversing his usual approach to science,[9] that is, the movement from the particular to the universal, by saying that in physics we will move from the universal to the particular. But as St. Thomas explains, "particulars" in this instance does not mean the individuals themselves, but the species, and "universal" refers to the genera which are known first in a confused and potential way.[10] So in this context *to katholou* signifies an indeterminate whole given to sensation, a mixture not yet differentiated into its principles, as when the child calls every man he sees "daddy" or when biologists some years ago were unsure whether to classify the virus among the living or the non-living. From the indeterminate wholes in nature, indeterminate though more knowable to us, science proceeds to the constituent principles, more knowable in themselves, which explain the whole.

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[8] *Physics* 1.1 (184a23-27). The translation of *ta sungkechumena* is taken from Hippocrates Apostle's translation of the *Physics* (Grinnell: The Peripatetic Press, 1980).

[9] Cf. *Posterior Analytics* 1.2 (71b34).

[10] "Hie au tern singularia <licit non ipsa individua, sed species; quae sunt notiores secundum naturam, utpote perfectiores existentes et distinctam cognitionem habentes: genera vero sunt prius nota quoad nos, utpote habentia cognitionem in potentia et confusam" *(In octo libros Physicorum Aristotelis* book 1, cap. 1, lect. 1, no. 8). Cf. Joseph Owens, "The Universality of the Sensible in the Aristotelian Noetic," in *The Collected Papers of Joseph Owens,* ed. John R. Catan (Albany: SUNY Press, 1981).

In his commentary on the *Physics* St. Thomas uses the language of act and potency to explain this progression toward knowledge. Universals contain in themselves their species in potency. Whoever knows something in the universal, as "poured together" when first apprehended, knows it indistinctly. Knowledge becomes distinct when each of the things that are contained in potency in the universal is known in act. Someone who comes to know "animal," for instance, potentially also knows "rational animal," but not until the distinctions between the various kinds of animal are clarified. Learning proceeds from potency to act.[11]

A little farther along in this first *lectio* of the commentary on the *Physics* St. Thomas calls this progression from indistinct knowledge of the universal to distinct knowledge of principles a *processus in determinando,* and furthermore, identifies it as Aristotle's method for obtaining definitions.[12] For this reason, the *processus* is also linked with demonstration and the overall order of the sciences. Since every science is established through demonstration, and since definition is the middle term in demonstration, it follows that the sciences are distinguished according to the diverse modes of definition.[13] The diverse modes of definition, accordingly, are established as our knowing proceeds from potency to greater and greater degrees of actuality. In other words, inasmuch as definitions are differently related to potency (i.e., matter) they pertain to different sciences.[14]

""Ad intellectum autem secundae propositionis, sciendum est quod *confusa* hic dicuntur quae continent in se aliqua in potentia et indistincte. Et quia cognoscere aliquid indistincte, medium est inter puram potentiam et actum perfectum, ideo, dum intellectus noster procedit de potentia in actum, primo occurrit sibi confusum quam distinctum; sed tunc est scientia completa in actu, quando pervenitur per resolutionem ad distinctam cognitionem principiorum et elementorum" *(In octos libros Physicorum Aristotelis,* book 1, cap. 1, lect. 1, no. 7).

[12] Ibid., no. 8. Cf. *STh* I, q. 85, a. 3.

[13] Ibid., no.1.

[14] "Sciendum est igitur quod, cum omnis scientia in intellectu, per hoc autem aliquid fit intelligibile in actu, quod aliqualiter abstrahitur a materia; secundum quod aliqua diversimode se habent ad materiam, ad diversas scientias pertinent. Rursus, cum omnis scientia per demonstrationem habeatur, demonstrationis autem medium sit definitio; necesse est secundum diversum definitionis' modum scientias diversificari" (ibid.).

Scientific inquiry thus begins with natural philosophy, the objects of which are more knowable and clearer to us. Natural philosophy as a whole begins with that which all natural beings share, mobility, and progresses toward distinctions regarding the different kinds of motions and the different kinds of mobile bodies. After the *Physics,* which treats mobile being in general, Aristotle proceeds in other treatises to examine each of the three kinds of motion he distinguishes in *Physics* book 5. The *De caelo* treats motion according to place while the *De generatione et corruptione* treats motion according to quality or alteration. The third kind of motion, motion with respect to quantity, is restricted to animate beings and thus we might suspect the third study to treat of living bodies.

We may be surprised, however, when we learn that the treatise devoted to the third kind of motion is the *De anima.* This title tells us the subject matter of this study is the soul rather than "the living" or "mobile animate being." But if the *De caelo* treats of the motion of bodies according to place and the *De generatione et corruptione* of bodies that come to be and pass away, why then doesn't Aristotle present us with a treatise on living bodies? It would seem that only after an examination of the general properties of living bodies would he turn to the properties of soul in particular.

Yet Aristotle proceeds in the inverse order. At the beginning of the *De sensu et sensato* he explains that "Having now considered the soul, by itself, and its several faculties, we must next make a survey of animals and all living things .... What has been already determined respecting the soul must be assumed throughout" (1.1 [436al-5]). In his commentary on the *De sensu* St. Thomas indicates that after the study of the soul in itself, followed by studies of sensation and sense objects, sleep and waking, and local motion, only then, "ultimo, autem ordinatur libri qui pertinent ad communem considerationem uiui." [15]

Why do Aristotle and St. Thomas believe it is necessary to study the soul in itself before taking up the study of animate bodies?

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[15] *In sententia libri De sensu et sensato,* prohemium, lines 124-25.

At the beginning of his commentary on the *De anima* St. Thomas gives us the reason. In studying any class of things it is first of all necessary to consider separately what is common to the class as a whole, and afterwards what is proper to particular members of the class.[16] This is simply a restatement of what St. Thomas in the *Physics* commentary calls the *processus in determinando,* not to mention of Aristotle's own words in, for example, *Parts of Animals* 1.5 (645bl-10). Now living beings taken all together, St. Thomas continues, form a certain class of being; hence in studying them the first thing to do is to consider what living things have in common, and afterwards what each has peculiar to itself. What they have in common is a life-principle or soul. Couldn't we also say that what these bodies have in common is precisely that they are living? Indeed; but that by which these living bodies are living is the soul. The soul is the principle that distinguishes the living from the non-living.[11]

The soul, therefore, is the principle held in common by living bodies. In the *De anima* Aristotle begins his study of the living with a general treatment of this principle, much as the *Physics* serves as a general treatment of mobile being. But if one requirement of scientific inquiry according to Aristotle is to begin with what is common to a class as a whole, another requirement, as we learn from *Physics* 1.1, is to begin with what is more knowable to us and proceed to what is more knowable by nature. It seems that the soul satisfies one but not both of these requirements. Theoretically, the soul is that principle held in common by all living bodies, yet it doesn't seem to be a phenomenon clearly known to us from which we can proceed to that which is more knowable by nature. How do I know' that I have a soul, or that a flower or a beagle has one? It does not seem that knowledge of the soul is so evident that we can make a start from it.

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[16] "Sicut Philosophus docet in XI De animalibus, in quolibet genere rerum necesse est prius considerare communia, [et seorsum] et postea propria unicuique illius generis ... " *(Jn sentencia libri De anima,* book 1, cap. 1, lines 1-5).

[17] "Rerum autem animatarum omnium genus est et ideo in consideratione rerum animatarum oportet primo considerare ea quae sunt communia omnibus animatis postmodum uero ilia que propria sunt cuilibet rei animate. Commune autem omnibus rebus animatis est anima" (ibid., book 1, cap. 1, lines 10-15).

Charles De Koninck, in an insightful preface to Stanislas Cantin 's *Precis de psychologie thomiste,* from which I have borrowed much of the above approach to our problem, presents a convincing argument that the soul is in fact that which is most knowable to us as we begin our study of the living, as well as that which is most common to the class of living bodies. His argument is founded upon the fundamental consciousness we have of our own activities. For instance, I am sitting right now at my desk pecking at the keyboard of my word processor. I am well aware that I am the one moving my fingers; I am so well aware of this I can mention it to you. I am also aware that I would like a cup of coffee, and sublime thoughts on the soul are crowded by memories of the smell of fresh coffee and the pangs of appetite. I am fundamentally aware of all this activity happening "inside" me. As a rational animal I can reflect upon my own activities and distinguish between them. I can know that I am living.

> La notion premiere de la vie, celle a laquelle on devra toujours revenir, nous vient d'abord et principalement de !'experience interne de vivre. Vivre, c'est toucher, gouter, sentir, entendre, voir; discerner ces sensations les unes des autres, imaginer, se souvenir; aimer, ha'ir, se mouvoir soi-meme de lieu en lieu, se rejouir, s'attrister; comprendre, raisonner, vouloir. La vie nous est d'abord connue dans la conscience de !'exercise meme de ces operations.'"

This immediate knowledge of our own bodily activities, as De Koninck states, is "irrefragable." It is impossible not to be certain that we are the possessors of certain vital operations; this much is admitted by philosophers as different in approach from Aristotle and Aquinas as Descartes, Hume, and Wittgenstein.

'I\vo misconceptions, however, may arise at this point. First, as De Koninck is quick to point out, it must not be thought that this internal experience of our own bodily operations is "un privilege d'adeptes." It requires no bold mental gymnastic to realize that "I am the one who is controlling the operations of my fingers on this keyboard." Nevertheless, this internal experience is not

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[18] Stanislas Cantin, *Precis de psychologie thomiste* (Quebec: Editions de l'Universite 'Laval, 1948), xiii.

itself directly given to experience: "!'operation que nous eprouvons en nous-memes est sans doute objet de cette experience, mais elle n'est pas objet au meme titre que l'object peri;u par cette operation." [19]

A second possible misconception might take this consciousness of one's psychic operations as directly manifesting the subject of these operations. This is not the case, as St. Thomas discusses in various places, most notably in *Quaestiones de veritate,* q. 10 a. 8.[20] In answer to the question whether the mind knows itself through its essence or through some species, St. Thomas observes, following St. Augustine, that each person can have a twofold knowledge of the soul. One kind is the knowledge by which the soul of each man knows itself only with reference to that which is proper to it; that is, the knowledge each has of his soul insofar as it is proper to himself, as it exists in this individual. The second kind is knowledge with reference to that which is common to all souls, that is, knowledge of the nature of the soul and its proper accidents.[21]

The first kind of knowledge is what De Koninck speaks of, the knowledge by which we know we are alive and about which we cannot make a mistake. It can be regarded in two ways. First, in actuality, as when we perceive that we are alive through our operations. Second, through habit, for the soul has the power to enter upon actual cognition of itself from the very fact that its essence is habitually present to it. This habit of course does not have to be acquired. The essence of the soul is always present to consciousness and we know of it from the operations that proceed from it.

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[19] Ibid., xvi. Cf. *De veritate* q. 10, art. 8: "in hoc enim aliquis se percipit animam habere et vivere et esse quod percipit se sentire et intelligere et alia huiusmodi vitae opera exercere; unde <licit Philosophus in IX *Ethicorum* 'Sentimus autem quoniam sentimus, et intelligimus quoniam intelligimus, et quia hoc sentimus intelligimus quoniam sumus.' Nullus autem percipit se intelligere nisi ex hoc quod aliquid intelligit, quia prius est intelligere aliquid quam intelligere se intelligere."

[20] Cf. *ScG* III, c. 46 and *De anima* 3.4 (429b5-10).

[21] "Una quidem qua cuiusque anima se tantum cognoscit quantum ad id quod est ei proprium, alia qua cognoscitur anima quantum ad id quod est omnibus animabus commune" *(De veritate,* q. 10, art. 8, lines 203-5).

The second kind of knowledge of soul is the knowledge of its essential nature and its proper accidents. This kind of knowledge St. Thomas explicitly states is not directly given to our experience. We do not know the *nature* of the soul from the internal experience of our operations. Why not? Primarily because the soul, as St. Thomas says, holds the last place among intellectual things as prime matter does among sensible things. For just as prime matter is in potency to all sensible forms, so the possible intellect is in potency to all intelligible forms. Therefore the human intellect cannot so understand itself that it immediately apprehends itself in its nature. As with every other intelligible form, the form or whatness of soul is an idea born out of the abstraction from phantasms.[22]

To sum up, we have been following what St. Thomas calls the *processus in determinando,* the movement in understanding from that which is universal and more knowable to us to that which is specific and more knowable in itself, tracing Aristotle's scientific progression from mobile being in general to examination of the soul. We have come to see that the soul, within the context of animate bodies, is that which is both universal to animate bodies and more knowable to us as we begin our examination of the living. To say that the soul is more knowable to us as we begin examination does not beg the question of *what* the soul is in its nature. As De Koninck argues: "Le mot 'ame,' en effet, ne signifie a present rien d'autre que le principe et la cause des operations qui consistent a se mouvoir et a sentir, lesquelles sont tres manifestes quant au fait."[23] Nevertheless, the *processus in determinando* has yielded a certain sort of knowledge of the soul, knowledge that can be expressed in the form of a definition. At this point we can say we have what Aristotle and St. Thomas call knowledge "that" *(to hoti; quia)* we have a soul, and define it as the principle and cause of those life operations of which we are irrefragably aware. This level of knowledge, however, is still only a point of departure; it is not itself science of the soul. The science of the soul consists in discovering its essence or whatness, and to do that we must turn, as Aristotle does in *De anima* 2.2, from the singular experiences of the individual consciousness to the universal knowledge that is science.

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[22] This raises the very interesting question put to me by Kevin White: from what kind of phantasm or phantasms is the idea of soul abstracted? Presumably the idea of soul is abstracted from living beings performing activities, but one wonders how much the analogy between living beings and artifacts influenced Aristotle on this matter. In *De anima* 2.1, for example, the soul as first actuality of an organic body potentially having life is compared with the form of an axe.

[23] Cantin, *Preeis,* xxiii.

II. *DE ANIMA* 2.2: THE DEFINITION OF SOUL AND ITS PROOF

The crux of *De anima* 2.2 consists in the employment of the provisional definition of soul we have been talking about as the middle term in an *a posteriori* demonstration concluding to a definition of soul in terms of its essence, namely, as the first actuality and form of an organic body potentially having life (2.1 [412b3-5]). Before we can discuss the details of this demonstration, however, we must first say a few words about why Aristotle thinks demonstration of this definition is necessary at all.

At the beginning of *De anima* 2.2, Aristotle states that a good definition ought not merely show the fact, as most definitions do, but also the cause. The definition of soul established in chapter 1 of book 2, that the soul is the first actuality of a natural body possessed of organs, is deficient in Aristotle's mind for just this reason. It explains the fact but does not give the cause. What exactly does Aristotle mean by this? And how does chapter 2 of book 2 state the cause of the definition of soul provided in chapter 1?

Joseph Owens's comment on these questions directs the reader to the distinction between fact and reasoned fact from *Posterior Analytics* 1.13.[24] There a fact is explained as the conclusion of a demonstration made through either an effect or an intermediate cause. A reasoned fact, on the other hand, is explained as the conclusion of a demonstration made through the primary or "strict" cause of a thing. The strict cause, as the Oxford translation renders *to dioti,* may be called the first cause, as Owens remarks, in the sense of the immediately proximate cause: that cause, in other words, whose absence would prevent the issuing of the effect.[25] Reasoned facts, in this sense, are the conclusions of the kind of demonstration the medievals called *demonstratio propter quid,* while facts are the conclusions of that kind of demonstration termed *demonstratio quia.*

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[24] Owens, "Aristotle's Definition of Soul," 112.

Owens employs this distinction from the *Posterior Analytics* incorrectly, however, insofar as he takes the fact definition of soul established at *De anima* 2.1 to be an expression of a remote cause plus an effect:

> The wording "first entelechy of a natural organic body" gives a remote cause, "entelechy," that can exercise the role of formal cause in regard to both living and non-living bodies. To restrict it to the notion of "soul," the effect "organic body" is inserted into the definition. The definition, accordingly, makes plain the fact without giving the immediate cause.'[6]

Owens therefore takes Aristotle's statement at the beginning of 2.2, that definitions ought to make plain the reasoned fact and not merely the fact, to mean that the project of 2.2 is to find the "strict" cause of the soul's being the form of a natural organic body. This takes shape as a search for a very special type of form:

> In order to formulate the definition in terms of immediate cause, the formal aspect that differentiates the form of an organic body from the form of an inorganic body will have to be brought to light. In a word, the differentia of organic body has to be isolated solely in terms of formal aspect, and not in terms of the composite living body that is its characteristic effect.[27]

Owens's search for this immediate cause, the formal differentia separating the living from the non-living, ends in disappointment. For what he finds Aristotle talking about in 2.2 is "life" considered in its various senses:

> We resume our inquiry from a fresh starting-point by calling attention to the fact that what has soul in it differs from what has not in that the former displays life. Now this word has more than one sense, and pro-

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid., 114.

[27] Ibid.

> vided any one alone of these is found in a thing we say that thing is living-viz. thinking or perception or local movement and rest, or movement in the sense of nutrition, decay, and growth. (2.2 [413a2-25])

One reason Owens finds it obvious that "life" cannot serve as the desired formal *differentia* is that "life" extends to separate forms, to substances that are not the forms of bodies.[28] "Life" for Aristotle is a notion that ranges wider than soul, just as "animal," to take an example from the *Posterior Analytics* (1.13 [78b15-31]), is too wide a notion to entail the conclusion that something breathes. Thus "life," being a remote cause of soul, cannot serve as the strict cause Owens is looking for in 2.2.

But apart from this difficulty, Owens finds "life" to be too remote a cause for another reason. It is worth quoting him on this at length, for it is in this explanation that the differences between his interpretation of these chapters and that of St. Thomas become most manifest:

> The difficulty is located in the failure of human intellection to penetrate this awareness of life, sensation, and intellection in a way that would allow reasoning from a "strict cause" to effects. The notions of life, sensation, and intellection, no matter how certainly they are experienced through internal awareness, do not give the clarity and penetration that would allow a science of the soul to be developed in the way a science of geometry is built up from the geometrical differentiae. One may be conscious of the graded hierarchy in life, sensation, and intellection, conscious of it with unshakeable certainty. But one does not penetrate this knowledge in a way that yields specific premises for scientific conclusions. The privileged knowledge establishes the *fact* of specific difference between the living and the non-living, and between the sentient and the intellective. But it does not make manifest the differentia in the way required for functioning as "the strict cause" in the definition."

This explanation is illuminating, for if we compare it with St. Thomas 's understanding of the role internal awareness plays in defining the soul, especially as his position is elaborated upon by De Koninck, then we see how differently each interpreter expects internal awareness to pay off. Owens looks in *De anima* 2.2 for a "strict" cause that will sufficiently explain the fact definition of 2.1; St. Thomas sees *De anima* 2.2 as establishing only a definition based upon observed effects, which then serves as the middle term in a demonstration proving the definition of 2.1. Owens is disappointed that internal awareness only establishes *thefact* of specific difference between the living and the non-living, but on St. Thomas 's reading of Aristotle this is all internal awareness is ever expected to provide. Let us turn now to support this argument by a closer look at the text of Aristotle.

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[28] Ibid., 119. Cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.7. Owens also cites *De anima* 1.2 (413a6-7; 413b24-27).

[29] Ibid., 120.

Aristotle opens *De anima* 2.2 with a reformulation of his methodology in natural philosophy, what we have been calling with St. Thomas the *processus in determinando:* "Since what is clear and more familiar in account emerges from what in itself is confused but more obser.vable by us, we must reconsider our results from this point of view" (413all-12). He then goes on, as we have already seen, to declare that a good definition ought not merely to show the fact, but the cause as well. Thus the promise of 2.2 is the manifestation of the *reason why* the soul is defined in 2.1 as the first actuality of a natural organic body. The kind of cause the fact definition of 2.1 requires, however, cannot be the "strict" causality of which Owens speaks. Indeed, Aristotle's own methodology precludes even the search for such causality, at least at the outset of defining the soul. What his methodology does require is for definition to begin from what is universal and more knowable to us. Therefore the kind of causality Aristotle himself declares he is looking for in 2.2 is not "strict" causality at all, but rather causality in terms of an effect or a remote cause; for these are precisely the kinds of things that are universal and more knowable to us.

This fits well with what Aristotle says next. As most definitions merely show a fact and not the cause, they are in this way like *conclusions* of demonstrations (413al5-16). This does not exclude them as definitions, certainly, but it does make them inferior to those that manifest a cause. At *Posterior Analytics* 1.8 Aristotle distinguishes three kinds of definition. A definition can either be the conclusion of a demonstration, the demonstration's starting-point, or the entire demonstration itself, though not in syllogistic order (75b30-36). Aristotle's remarks here at *De anima* 2.2 suggest that the definition of soul at 2.1 is a definition in the first sense just outlined; it is merely a conclusion to an absent demonstration.[30]

This characteristic is typical of definitions reached by means of division. That Aristotle is using a divisional procedure at *De anima* 2.1 will be argued for in the next and last section of this essay. For now we will take it for granted and point out Aristotle's assertion at *Posterior Analytics 2.5* that "just as in the case of conclusions without middle terms if someone says that if these are the case it is necessary that *this* is the case, it is possible to ask why; so too this is possible in the case of divisional definitions" (91b36-92a). The example given is a (dialectical) definition of man as a two-footed mortal animal. Such definition by means of division will always prompt the question why, as it has not been demonstrated in this case that man is a mortal rather than immortal animal. Similarly, the definition of soul at *De anima* 2.1, as a product of division, prompts the question why insofar as it does not itself serve as a *demonstration* of the soul's being the form of a natural body potentially having life. The definition is, once again, like the conclusion of an absent demonstration.[31]

That absent demonstration is provided by Aristotle in 2.2 (414a4ff.), though the syllogism is made more evident by St. Thomas in his commentary. The demonstration is outlined as follows:

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[30] St.Thomas understands the structure of the first two chapters of *De anima* 2 in just this way: "in prima ponit diffinitionem anime que est quasi demonstrationis conclusio; in secunda ponit diffinitionem anime que est quasi demonstrationis principium" *(In sentencia libri De anima,* book 2, cap. 1, lines 35-38).

[31] St. Thomas's comment on the passage cited from the *Posterior Analytics* summarizes the nature of Aristotelian division: "Unde talis modus argumentandi non est syllogisticus. Ita etiam in terminis divisivis non fit syllogismus, quia semper restat interrogatio *propter quid.* Puta si aliquis volens notificare *quid est homo,* accipiat per viam divisionis quod homo est *animal mortale bipes,* vel *habens pedes, sine pennis;* ad quamlibet appositionem praedictorum poterit convenienter quaeri *propter quid* sit necesse. Ille enim qui ad manifestandum quod quid est conatur, non solum dicet, sed etiam probabit per divisionem, secundum quod ipse opinatur, quod omne quod est sit mortale aut immortale" *(In Posteriorum analyticorum expositio* book 2, cap. *5,* lect. 4, no. 8).

The first principle of life in things is the actuality and form of living bodies.
The soul is the first principle of life in things.
The soul is the actuality and form of living bodies."

To make this demonstration evident Aristotle must show two things: first, that the soul is the first principle of life; and second, that the first principle of life is the form and actuality of living bodies. Now we have in a sense already seen how he shows that the soul is the first principle of life, for he appeals to the very self-evident awareness of our own activities of which St. Thomas speaks and on which De Koninck elaborates. By becoming aware of our own operations, and by seeing like operations in beings all around us, we can conclude that we possess a principle that distinguishes us from non-living bodies. The principle of these operations we call soul: "We resume our inquiry from a fresh starting-point by calling attention to the fact that what has soul in it differs from what has not in that the former displays life" (413a20). Being alive, Aristotle continues, is predicated in several ways, and even if only one of these is present we say there is life; as, for example, intellection, sensation, or locomotion, as well as the movement and rest involved in nourishment, and growth and decay (413a23-25). Aristotle's procedure here is clearly *a posteriori.* He is drawing from his own internal awareness as well as from his experience of other animals and plants in claiming, simply enough, that things that manifest such activities as thinking, nourishment, and locomotion are different from those things that cannot. Aristotle goes on to make a few preliminary remarks concerning how certain of these activities are manifest in plants and animals, but at 413b10-13 he concludes, "At present we must confine ourselves to saying that soul is the source of these phenomena and is characterized by them, viz. by the powers of self-nutrition, sensation, thinking, and movement."

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[32] "Illud quod est primum principium uiuendi est uiuentium corporum actus et forma; sed anima est primum principium uiuendi hiis que uiuunt; ergo est corporis uiuentis actus et forma; manifestum est autem quod hec demonstratio est ex posteriori: ex eo enim quod anima est forma corporis uiuentis, est principium operum uite, et non e converso" *(In sentencia libri De anima,* book 2, cap. 3, lines 109-16).

That the soul is not matter but form and actuality Aristotle shows beginning at 414a5. "That whereby we live and perceive" (i.e., the principle of our vital activities) can be considered either actually or potentially, just as "that whereby we know" can be considered either in terms of actual knowledge or the soul that potentially knows; or health can be considered in terms of health or the body which is healthy. Such relations describe an actuality existing *in* a subject. Now by *soul* we understand that by which a living thing is alive. It is understood, therefore, as existing *in* a subject. The body that is alive is more like a subject and a matter than a modification existing in a subject. So, that by which we live, the soul, is actuality, and first actuality, rather than matter.

Aristotle thus demonstrates that the soul is the first actuality of a body potentially alive, proceeding from knowledge more "universal" and knowable to us ("the soul is the first principle of life") to knowledge more "particular" and knowable by nature ("the soul is the actuality and form of living bodies"). In this way he proves the definition offered at *De anima* 2.1 and secures, according to the dictates of his own method, the accuracy of the knowledge of the soul.

Given this interpretation of *De anima* 2.2 the way past Owens's objections is clear. First, because Aristotle is not looking in *De anima* 2.2 for the strict cause of the definition offered at 2.1, it is no problem that the phenomenon he focuses on, "life," ranges wider than soul-even, as we find in the *Metaphysics,* to the heavenly spheres and god. For "life" is only being considered, at least at the beginning of 2.2, *as an effect* of natural bodies-the cause of which it takes the reasoning of that chapter to determine. Second, Owens's search in 2.2 for the strict cause of the soul's being the form and actuality of living bodies is misguided in that it misapplies the important distinction from *Posterior Analytics* 1.13. In that text Aristotle distinguishes a fact as the conclusion of a demonstration made either through an effect or a remote. cause. This distinction bears upon the definition of soul at *De anima* 2.1 because that definition is the conclusion of a demonstration made through a remote cause, a demonstration absent in 2.1 but which Aristotle provides, as we have just seen, in 2.2. For this reason Aristotle begins 2.2 by reminding us that most definitions only state a fact but a good definition should also state the reason why. Thus he proceeds in 2.2 to search out the reason why the soul is the form and actuality of natural organic bodies, and because he is involved in a biological investigation he proceeds *a posteriori.* The "reason why" he searches for is either a remote cause or an effect that can serve as the middle term in *a posteriori* demonstration. Owens is therefore mistaken to take the definition of 2.1 as an expression of a remote cause plus an effect, and then to go on to try and locate the strict cause of this definition in 2.2. Like the mysterious purloined letter in Poe's famous story, the strict causality he was looking for was under his nose the entire time, for the definition in 2.1 is the strict cause of the soul's being the first principle of life in living bodies.

III. DEFINITION BY DIVISION: *DE ANIMA* 2.1

We have considered how the commonplace knowledge we have of soul, rooted in the fundamental consciousness of our own bodily activities, serves as the key to understanding Aristotle's claim for the accuracy of his definition of the soul. By St. Thomas's argument, this knowledge that we have a soul serves as the middle term in an *a posteriori* demonstration proving the definition of soul as first actuality of a natural organic body. The question that St. Thomas 's interpretation of *De anima* 2.2 leaves open, however, is what exactly is going on, methodologically, in 2.1. If the definition of soul in that chapter is the conclusion of an *a posteriori* demonstration to be found in 2.2, how then does Aristotle arrive at the 2.1 definition? It cannot be by way of demonstration, for the pertinent demonstration, as we have just seen, comes in 2.2.

At *Posterior Analytics* 2.13 [96b15] Aristotle remarks that when one makes a systematic study of some subject it is "necessary" *(chre)* to "divide" *(dielein)* the genus into its primary, "atomic" *(atomon)* species. A little later, at b25, he adds that "divisions according to differentiae" *(hai de diaireseis hai kata tas diaphoras)* are "useful" *(chresimoi)* in such investigations. Though, as Michael Ferejohn has recently argued, Aristotelian division differs from its Platonic ancestor in more than one respect, Aristotle nevertheless allows a place for something "very much like this Platonic device, provided that certain safeguards are observed, for a very specific and limited purpose within his own account of the demonstrative generation of the highest form of knowledge."[33] It is my proposal, following St. Thomas's reading of *De anima* 2.1, that this chapter serves as a good example of what Aristotle understands his adoption of Platonic division to be.

Ferejohn explains that while both Platonic and Aristotelian division proceed "by dividing a genus down into its indivisible species" *(Posterior Analytics* 2.13 [96b15]), this should not obscure the fact that the procedure has a vastly different epistemological function within each philosopher's system. For Plato, division not only is a self-sufficient philosophical method for obtaining a desired definition, but also is heralded as the proper business of the very highest form of intellectual activity-dialectic. For Aristotle, by contrast, division can never by itself yield knowledge in the strictest sense of the term. Such status is reserved in his method for scientific demonstration. Moreover, Ferejohn argues that Aristotle's version of division, unlike Plato's, presupposes that one has already grasped an appropriate set of immediate principles (some but not all of which may be definitions themselves) which are then deployed over some field of scientific interest in order to generate the premises necessary for the construction of demonstrative syllogisms.[34]

Aristotle's method of division, as Ferejohn describes it, thus comprises the "framing stage" of demonstration. As Aristotle states at *Posterior Analytics* 1.2, the premises of demonstrative syllogisms are characterized by being true, primary, immediate, better known than, prior to, and causative of the conclusion (7Ib16-20). Ferejohn's argument is that for Aristotle division is supposed to secure the second and third of these requirements, that is, premises that are primary *(proton)* in the sense of being immediate *(ameson).* By "immediate" Aristotle means premises that are "unmiddled," having no middle term by which the predicate can be demonstrated to be joined to the subject.[35]

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[33] Michael Ferejohn, *The Origins of Aristotelian Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 20.

[34] Ibid., 23. Ferejohn's claim, however, that Aristotle's version of division is not a method for *generating* definitions (p. 23) is questionable. If by this Ferejohn only means that Aristotelian division does not serve as a test for the correct division of essential from accidental attributes he is certainly right. That distinction seems to be the work of induction, as the parallel between division and induction at *Posterior Analytics* 2.5 suggests. Nevertheless, such distinctions do lead, via division, to the generation of definitions. In what follows we will show how this happens in the context of *De anima* 2.1.

The actual procedure of division, outlined at *Posterior Analytics* 2.13 (97a28-35),[36] could not be simpler. One begins with a set of essential terms within a single genus. (Once again, division for Aristotle presupposes that one has already grasped a set of immediate principles.) One then proceeds to place them in the proper order of inclusion, as Ferejohn explains, "by first finding the one that is nonreciprocally entailed by all the others (which will presumably be the genus itself), next finding the one that is nonreciprocally entailed by all the others among the remainder, and continuing in this way until the original set of terms has been exhausted."[37]

Aristotle hints at the possible use of division in his inquiry into the soul as early as the first chapter of the *De anima.* At 402a20 division is suggested, along with demonstration, as a possible method for obtaining knowledge of the soul, and a few lines later the suggestion is put in play:

> Perhaps our first business is to determine to which of the genera the soul belongs, and what it is; I mean whether it is a particular thing, i.e., a substance, or whether it is a quality, or quantity, or belongs to any other of our pre-established categories, and furthermore, whether it has potential or actual existence (402a24-26).[38]

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[35] Or, in other words, any proposition whose predicate is included within the notion of its subject. Some immediate propositions are immediate not only in virtue of themselves but also *quoad nos;* others require some demonstration of their immediacy. The definition of soul at *De anima* 2.1 is ready to serve as an immediate premise, though its immediacy is not evident *quoad nos.* Thus the demonstration of the definition at *De anima* 2.2. Cf. *Posterior Analytics* 1.2.

[36] Cf. *Prior Analytics* 1.27-31 and *Posterior Analytics* 2.5.

[37] Ibid., 25. At *Posterior Analytics* 2.13 (97a23-26) Aristotle specifies three rules for good division: "To establish a definition through divisions, one must aim for three things-grasping what is predicated in what the thing is, ordering these as first or second, and ensuring that these are all there are."

[38] *De anima,* trans. W. S. Hett (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1986).

Studies of the *De anima* have remarked on the parallels between the opening of the treatise and the opening of Aristotle's fresh start of the inquiry in book 2.1, and these lines just quoted provide an example of this. Book 2.1 parallels the suggestion given here in book 1: "let us now make as it were a completely fresh start, endeavoring to answer the question, What is soul? i.e. to formulate the most general possible account of it" (412a5). Further, while 1.1 conjectures whether soul might be a particular thing *(tode ti),* that is, a substance, 2.1 actually takes on the discussion of substance, beginning with a distinction between three senses of the same (412a6-7). Finally, while the passage from 1.1 plans to ask whether soul has potential or actual existence, 2.1, after the soul is established as substance in the sense of being the form and actuality of a natural body, proceeds to discuss the two senses in which something may be called actual (412a23-412b). What these parallels have to do with division in 2.1 is the following: The passage quoted above from 1.1 suggests that perhaps the first business of the inquiry into the soul is to determine to which of the genera the soul belongs. The verb for "to determine" here at 402a24 is *dielein,* which quite literally means to make divisions. We should not be surprised, then, given the parallels already cited, that division will also guide the fresh start of the inquiry at 2.1. The method of division we find there, moreover, is division in the specifically Aristotelian sense, in that, once again, it *presupposes* a set of immediate principles to be divided. In the passage quoted from 1.1, for example, we see Aristotle, even before he launches into the discussion of his predecessor's views on the soul, sifting through various of his own principles-in this case, a few of the more important categories-just as in 2.1 we find him introducing whole sets of principles that hint of having their full articulation pursued elsewhere.

St. Thomas also clearly interprets Aristotle's procedure at *De anima* 2.1 as that of division. He breaks down the chapter into two main parts: "in prima permittit quasdam *diuisiones* ex quibus habetur uia ad inuestigandum diffinitionem anime; in secunda inuestigat anime diffinitionem .... "[39] There are two main divisions, according to Thomas. First, Aristotle makes certain distinctions regarding the soul's *essence* (412a5-11), and then proceeds to make certain distinctions regarding the *subject* endowed with soul (412a11-13). [40] This initial division is entirely appropriate for an inquiry concerning natural substances, for natural substances are defined, like all substances, according to their intrinsic principles, and the intrinsic principles of naturat substances are form and matter. This initial division also follows the rule laid down by Aristotle at *Posterior Analytics* 2.13 (97a23): the items in division are to be arranged according to priority and posteriority. This means that division first takes that which is implied by the other things that are taken later (97a28ff.). Soul as substance and first actuality is presupposed by the natural body that has life in it.

Let us take a closer look now at the divisions Aristotle makes at *De anima* 2.1. The' distinctions regarding the soul's essence begin with the widest set of principles Aristotle possesses, the categories themselves, before isolating substance in its three manifestations (form, matter, composite), then substance as form, and finally form in the sense of first actuality. From here Aristotle proceeds to divide natural bodies (or composite substances). Some have life in them, others not. With these divisions before him Aristotle is now poised, at 412a16, to begin the defining proper. Given that there are natural bodies possessed of life, the soul cannot be either a natural body or matter itself for soul is that which is attributed to these things. Hence, by elimination, soul must be the form of a natural body potentially having life (412a20-21). We should notice that this definition is not the product of demonstration, but simply of an analysis of the principles put forth in the above divisions.

We should also notice, by way of conclusion, that on St. Thomas 's understanding of *De anima* 2.1 Aristotle is already fairly sure of where he is heading in terms of defining the soul even before he begins the process of division. For we have seen how the dividing in 2.1 takes place according to certain principles pertaining to the soul's essence, and others pertaining to the subject endowed with soul. This suggests that Aristotle is already thinking at the outset of 2.1 of soul as something existing *in* a subject, and his readiness to accept soul as form, as that *by which* a particular thing exists, corroborates this point. This underscores Ferejohn's argument that division in the peculiarly Aristotelian sense presupposes that one has already grasped a set of immediate principles; and more, that such principles will indicate to the inquirer in advance the most likely way to pursue an investigation. Thus one might say that the definition of soul at *De anima* 2.1, as the result of division, serves only as a likely indicator of what the soul might be. To be assured of this definition demonstration must come to the fore and argue the case more accurately. And this, we have shown, is the project of 2.2.

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[39] *In sentencia libri De anima,* book 2, cap. 1, lines 54-57 (emphasis mine).

[40] Ibid., book 2, cap. 1, lines 84-89. The whole of this chapter of Thomas's commentary should be consulted in support of this part of my interpretation of *De anima* 2.1.

GASPARE DI BALDASSARE DA PERUGIA O.P. (1465-1531):
A LITTLE-KNOWN ADVERSARY OF CAJETAN

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THE LEADING EXPONENTS of early sixteenth-century Thomism would certainly have been surprised by the kind of reputation that Tommaso De Vio da Gaeta has enjoyed among so many nineteenth- and twentieth-century Neo-Thomists. The latter have generally acclaimed Cardinal Cajetan as the most authoritative commentator on the *Summa theologiae* and even as the paradigm of fidelity to the doctrines of Aquinas. Yet, even though Cajetan's cleverness undoubtedly earned the admiration of his contemporaries, and his remarkable career possibly their envy, his many singular opinions just as surely did not gain their unquestioning adhesion. The exact opposite, in fact, seems to have been the case: no other Thomist of the period was the target of such unrelenting, and at times bitter, polemics as Cajetan. His critics, moreover, included all the most important representatives of the Thomism of his generation: his own teacher in Padua, Valentino da Camerino; Silvestro Mazzolini da Prierio; Francesco Silvestri da Ferrara; Crisostomo Iavelli da Casale; Bartolomeo Spina da Pisa; and Ambrogio Caterino (Lancelotto de' Politi).

Furthermore, even though some of these men are now usually remembered solely for their involvement in the "Pomponazzi affair," their opposition to Cajetan was not confined to his "notorious" stand on the interpretation of Aristotle on the immortality of the soul and its suspected influence on Pomponazzi. In fact, their objections to Cajetan ranged over the entire field of speculative issues in both philosophy and theology and it was Cajetan's supposed failure to adhere to the authentic teaching of Aquinas that was most often taken to task. To see that this was indeed the case it suffices to cast a glance at, for example, the commentaries on the *Prima Pars* composed by Prierias' and Iavelli.[2]

The subject of this essay, Gaspare da Perugia, is to be counted among Cajetan's now almost forgotten antagonists. It is disappointing that it is not possible to discover the substance of Gaspare's doctrinal disagreement with Cajetan, for his polemical works are on the whole no longer extant. But, even though he was not a major figure and recent scholarship seems to remember him solely as a teacher in Padua of Pietro Martire Vermigli,[3] Gaspare is certainly also of interest in his own right. In his own time he was renowned as both preacher and academic and his life, moreover, epitomizes the kind of internal turmoil and factionalism that consumed the religious orders, especially the mendicants, in the period immediately preceding the Reformation. In view of this, Gaspare surely warrants some attention.

We are fortunate to possess two contemporary biographical accounts of Gaspare. These appear as obituary notices in the chronicles of the two Dominican convents around which his life mostly revolved: San Marco in Florence[4] and San Domenico in Perugia.[5] Both of these accounts were written by friars who had actually known Gaspare; taken together they provide us with a fairly reliable framework that can be filled in from other sources,

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[1] *Conflatum ex S. Thoma* (Perugia: per Hieronymum quondam Francisci Chartularii, 1519). I discuss this work below.

[2] *Expositio in primum tractatum primae partis D. Thomae (qq. I-XIII)* and *Expositio super tractatum de Trinitate primae partis D. Thomae (qq. XVI I-XL! II),* both written ca. 1520 but first published posthumously as appendices in Thomas Aq., *Summa Theologiae,* Ia, ed. by Seraphinus Capponi a Porrecta (Venice: apud Iuntas, 1596). Iavelli constantly polemicizes against Cajetan whom he does not name but refers to as the "Expositor."

[3] See P. McNair, *Peter Martyr in Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 103-4.

[4] Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana: MS. San Marco 370 *Chronica conventus S. Marci Florentiae* (hereafter CSM), f. 17lr.

[5] Perugia, Biblioteca Comunale Augusta: MS. 1141 *Chronica conventus S. Dominici de Perusio* (hereafter CSD), f. 70r-v.

especially the still mostly unedited Registers of the Dominican masters general.[6]

Gaspare was born in Perugia in 1465. Since it was then customary to refer to religious, especially the friars, in terms of their place of birth, he was usually called "da Perugia" from the time of his reception among the Friars Preachers. Some historians have ascribed to him the surname Mansueti,[7] thereby suggesting some kind of family connection with a contemporary Dominican master general, Leonardo Mansueti da Perugia,[8] and the Perugian noble house of De Mansueti, but for this there seems to be no documentary evidence. His contemporaries commonly designated him "Cartolario," but this, rather than being a surname, indicates his family's occupation: his father, his older brother, and his nephew were stationers and printers.

Gaspare's relatives were in fact prominent members of Perugia's *Ars Chartularium:* the small, but influential, corporation of parchment manufacturers that had been first founded in August 1338 and which, by the end of the fifteenth century, controlled, as well, the milling of paper and the printing and sale of books.[9] This guild was presided by a *camerarius,* or *camerlenghus,* and divided into five districts, headed by rectors, centered on each of the gates of Perugia's walls. The still-extant documentation of the guild, which includes both its statutes and a roster of its members, contains frequent references to Gaspare's relatives who belonged to the district of the Porta Santa Susanna. His father, Baldassare di Francesco, first became an *artifex* or full member in 1471 and served as *camerarius* in 1489. His brother,

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[6] Rome, Convento di Santa Sabina, Archivio Generale Domenicano (hereafter AGOP): MS. series IV.

[7] The first to have done so seems to be J. Facciolati, *Fasti Gymnasii Patavini* (Padua: 1757), II, 97, and III, 251. He has been uncritically followed by G. Contarini, *Notizie Storiche circa li pubblici professori nello Studio di Padova scelti dall'ordine di San Domenico* (Venice, 1769), 27-30, and by G. Brotto and G. Zonta, *La Facoltii Teologica dell'Universitii di Padova* (Padua: Tipografia del Seminario, 1922), 189-90.

[8] Leonardo Mansueti was master general during 1474-88. See A. Mortier, *Histoire des Maitres Generaux de l'Ordre des Freres Precheurs* (Paris: A. Picard et Fils, 1909), 4:488-541.

[9] O. Marcacci Marinelli et al., *Statuti dell' Arte dei Cartolari di Perugia* (1338-1554) (Perugia: Ed. Univ., 1987), 7.

Francesco di Baldassare, was not only a leading member of the association but also served as Prior of the Commune of Perugia in 1493. The last reference that we have is to his nephew, Girolamo di Francesco, who is recorded as attending an assembly of the corporation as one of its rectors in January 1554.[10] From other sources we know that Girolamo was the most celebrated printer in Perugia during the first half of the sixteenth century and enjoyed the patronage of its *signore*, Malatesta IV Baglioni.[11]

Gaspare seems to have led a fairly boisterous, if not dissolute, youth which came to an end when he received a severe wound in the head during a street brawl in Perugia.[12] This incident was not occasioned by a bout of exuberant merry-making but by the interminable struggles for control of the *signoria* of Perugia between the supporters of the Baglioni and those of the Oddi. The mending of Gaspare's ways which followed it resulted in his decision to enter the Dominican Order. In late 1485, at the age of twenty, he was received at the convent of San Marco in Florence where, after the completion of his novitiate, he made his first profession on 7 September 1486.[13]

At this time the convent of San Marco still formed part of the reformed Observant Congregation of Lombardy. This congregation had been erected by Pius II in 1459 as a distinct juridical entity uniting the various convents of "regular life" situated within the territories of the unreformed, "conventual" or "common life," provinces of St. Peter Martyr (or *Lombardiae Superioris)* and St. Dominic (or *Lombardiae lnferioris).* These convents had previously formed part of the reformed vicariate first established by Blessed Giovanni Dominici (1356-1419) in 1393 as part of a larger reform movement fostered by Master

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[10] Ibid., 17' 55-65.

[11] See G. B. Vermiglioli, "Di alcuni libri di Rime italiane rarissimi stampati in Perugia nella prima meta del secolo XVI," in *Opuscoli* (Perugia, 1837), 3:31-60.

[12] "Hie post iuvenilem aetatem inter litas et rixas Perusii actam, gravi in capite vulnere percussus in melius mores reformandos ducens, in praefato Sancti Marci Conventu habitum nostrum suscepit." CSD, f. 70r.

[13] CSM, f. 94r. See also A. F. Verde, "La Congregazione di San Marco dell'ordine dei frati predicatori. II 'reale' della predicazione savonaroliana," *Memorie Domenicane* n.s., 14 (1990): 170.

General Blessed Raimondo da Capua (1330-1399). In 1531, the year of Gaspare's death, Clement VII would reconstitute the Congregation of Lombardy as the *Provincia Utriusquae Lombardiae Regularis Vitae* and demote the two unreformed provinces to the status of vicariates.[14]

A few of the convents of the Congregation of Lombardy were situated as well within the territory of the unreformed Roman Province and this was in fact the case with San Marco. Founded as a reformed house within the Roman Province in 1436, San Marco had been first aggregated to the Lombard Congregation in 1451 and again, after a stormy separation of five years, in 1474. This affiliation was subsequently confirmed by Sixtus IV in 1480 at the insistence of Lorenzo de' Medici.[15]

It is probable that as a novice Gaspare had some contact with Girolamo Savonarola. He might even have had him as a teacher during the academic year 1486-87, for at that time Savonarola was still serving as San Marco's *lector principalis.* But Savonarola left San Marco at the end of that academic year to take up an appointment as master of students in the Lombard Congregation's *studium generate* in Bologna.[16] In fact, Gaspare's contacts with Savonarola even during these few years are likely to have been minimal. Gaspare seems to have been very ill during his early period as a student and to have spent a considerable period away from San Marco in the hospice for sick friars attached to the convent of Santa Maria del Sasso near Bibbiena.[11]

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[14] The history of the Congregation of Lombardy has been traced by R. Creytens and A. D'Amato, "Les Actes Capitulaires de la Congregation de Lombardie (1482-1531)," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* (hereafter AFP) 31 (1961): 213-306 and R. Creytens, "Les Vicaires Generaux de la Congregation de Lombardie," AFP 32 (1962): 211-84.

[15] The most accurate account of San Marco's changes of affiliation during this period is in R. Creytens, "Santi Schiattesi, O.P., disciple de S. Antonin de Florence," AFP 27 (1957): *234-52.*

[16] R. Ridolfi, *Vita di Girolamo Savonarola* (Rome: Belardetti, 1952), 1:37.

[17] "Fr. Gaspar Baldassaris de Perusio, professus in hoc conventu, cum adhuc esset iuvenis laboravit dolore capitis adeo quod nullatenus studere potuit. Unde propterea missus fuit ad hospitium S. Mariae de Saxo ut valitudinem recuperaret." CSM, f. 17lr.

Although he was still only an unordained student, Gaspare was chosen to be a member of the group of friars from San Marco who were sent to Pisa on 29 August 1488 to introduce the reform in the convent of Santa Caterina Martire.[18] This convent had been separated from the unreformed Roman Province and annexed to the Congregation of Lombardy on 24 July of that year.[19] In late 1493 the Pisan convent would be occupied by a new party of friars from San Marco. Earlier that year, San Marco, guided by Savonarola, who had returned to Florence in 1490 and been elected its prior a year later, had separated itself from the Congregation of Lombardy in order to introduce an even stricter observance.[20]

But Gaspare did not remain in Pisa long enough to witness the Savonarolian occupation of Santa Caterina. On 20 September 1489 he had been permitted by Master General Gioacchino Torriani to spend six months either in Perugia or in Siena on medical grounds.[21] We cannot be certain about precisely where Gaspare went, but it is very likely that it was Siena and that he remained there for a considerably longer period than was at first envisaged by the master general's concession.

The reason for this conjecture is that Gaspare would always make much of having been a student of Paolo Barbo da Soncino and it is believed that Soncinas taught in Siena during these years. It is likely, therefore, that Gaspare completed his initial studies, under Soncinas's direction, in the *studium* of the convent of Santo Spirito in Siena, which belonged to the Congregation of Lombardy. The chroniclers of both San Marco and San Domenico in Perugia record that at first Gaspare was a very poor student but that, at approximately halfway through his early studies, he improved so remarkably as to surpass all his fellow students. If this metamorphosis was in any way due to Soncinas 's mentorship we can then readily explain why Gaspare held him in such high esteem.

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[18] Domenico da Peccioli, *Chronica antiqua conventus sanctae Catharinae de Pisis,* ed. F. Bonaini, in *Archivio Storico Italiano* 6/2 (Florence, 1845): 606-7.

[19] The brief of Innocent VIII is in *Bullarium Ordinis Praedicatorum,* ed. T. Bremond (Rome, 1732), 4:38.

[20] R. Ridolfi, op. cit., 1:95; R. De Maio, *Savonarola e la Curia Romana* (Rome: Ed. di Storia e Letteratura, 1969), 35.

[21] "Fr. Gaspar de Perusio potest morari Perusii vel Senis per sex menses ibique petere medicus. Florentiae 20 Sept. (1489)." AGOP, IV, 9, f. 83v.

Soncinas had previously been a student in the *studium generale* in Bologna from 1474 to 1479. After a spell of apostolic work he had returned to Bologna as a *studens formalis* in 1481 and served as master of students during 1486-87. After his period as a lector in Siena he would return to Bologna to serve as bachelor of the *Sentences* during the biennium 1493-95. He graduated as a Master of Theology of the University of Bologna in 1495 and died soon after while serving as prior of the Dominican convent in Cremona. Although Soncinas 's literary remains consist exclusively of works on scholastic philosophy and theology, the breadth of the man is perhaps best indicated by the fact that he was a close friend of Giovanfrancesco Pico della Mirandola. [22]

At a later point in time, which it is not possible to determine with precision, Gaspare composed a work in defence of his teacher. The *Apologia Pauli Soncinatis olim magistri sui* is, unfortunately, no longer extant. But we do know that it was -directed against Cajetan. [23] Cajetan had written a critique of Soncinas's commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* [24] which is itself now lost and which scholars until very recently mistakenly believed to be a commentary by Cajetan on Aristotle's work. [25] Gaspare's *Apologia* must, then, have been a critique of Cajetan's critique of Soncinas and it is probable that both works were written sometime after Soncinas's death in 1495.

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[22] On Soncinas see: J. Quetif and J. Echard, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum* (Paris, 1719-21), 1:879-80; T. Kaepelli, *Scriptures Ordinis Praedicatorum Medii Aevi* (Rome Inst. Stor. O.P., 1970-80), 3:203; C. Prantl, *Geschichte der Logik im Abendlande* (Leipzig: Gustav Fock G.M.B.H., 1927), 4:229; C. Piana, *Ricerche su le Universita di Bologna e di Parma nel secolo XV* (Quaracchi-Florence: Tip. Coll. S. Bonaventura, 1963), 9, 61, 200-202, 212, 234, 284; C. Piana and C. Cenci, *Promozioni agli ordini sacri a Bologna e alle dignita ecclesiastiche nel Veneto neil secoli XIV-XV* (Quaracchi-Florence: Tip. Coll. S. Bonaventura, 1968), 172, 174, 176.

[23] "Etenim ex ipsius ore accepi se defendisse magistrum suum Paulum Soncinatem contra Thomam Cayetanum qui scripserat super erroribus Soncinatis." CSD, f. 70v.

[24] First published posthumously as *Quaestiones in XII Metaphysicorum Aristotelis* (Venice: per Simonem Papiensem, 1496).

[25] See F. Von Gunten, "Sur la trace des inedits de Cajetan," *Angelicum* 46 (1969): 336-46.

Gaspare 's continuing absence from the convent of San Marco, of which he continued to be a *filius,* meant that he remained within the Congregation of Lombardy even after San Marco's separation from it in 1493 and the eventual establishment of Savonarola's Congregation of San Marco in 1495.[26] After the completion of his early studies and ordination to the priesthood sometime around 1492, Gaspare devoted himself to apostolic work and seems to have become very rapidly proficient as an itinerant preacher. This is indicated by the fact that Master General Gioacchino Torriani conferred upon him the title and prerogatives of a Preacher General as early as 28 April 1494.[21] Popular preaching would continue, it seems, to be Gaspare 's preferred occupation even long after he had become fully committed to an academic career: as late as 1517 the Venetian Senate recalled him to his chair of theology in the University of Padua only on the condition that he did not allow himself to be distracted by preaching engagements. [28]

Gaspare's academic career began in earnest in 1496 when, on 26 April, Master General Gioacchino Torriani assigned him as a *studens formatis* of theology in the *studium generate* of the convent of San Domenico in Perugia. [29] On 15 January of the following year, 1497, the same master general appointed him bachelor of the *Sentences extraordinarius* in the *studium generate* of the convent of Santa Maria Novella in Florence. On the same date Torriani also permitted him to be incorporated in the Faculty of Theology of the University of Perugia and to proceed to the degree of Master of Theology.[30] His graduation had not yet taken place on 20 March when, in a letter from the master general assigning him as a preacher in Terracina during the following Lent, he was still referred to as "frater." [31]

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[26] R. Ridolfi, op. cit., 115.

[21] "Fr. Gaspar de Perusio fit predicator generalis cum gratiis <Die 28 Aprilis 1494, Perusii>." AGOP, IV, 10, f. 82v

[28] "Idem anno MDXVII statim post helium evocatus est florenis LXXX augendis triennio ad C sed conditione addita, ne de concionando cogitaret." J. Facciolati, op. cit., II, 97.

[29] "Fr. Gaspar de Perusio assignatur Perusius in studentem theologiae. Die 26 Aprilis <1496>." AGOP, IV, 11, f. 68r.

[30] "Fr. Gaspar de Perusio assignatur Florentiae bachallareus extra ordinarius et Perusii debet incorporari et completa lectura etiam recipere potest insignia magistralia. Die 15 Ianuarii <1497>." AGOP, IV, 12, f. 40r.

Gaspare's graduation as a Master of Theology must have occurred, however, by the end of the academic year 1496-97 since on 12 June 1497 the master general appointed him regent master of the *studium artium* in the convent of San Niccolo in Treviso which belonged to the unreformed Province of St. Dominic. [32] A few months later he also entrusted him with the task of preaching in Treviso during Lent of 1498.[33] Gaspare's willingness to add such duties to his academic commitments might have provoked some resentment on the part of the friars of San Niccolo for, on 28 January 1498, Gioacchino Torriani had to reiterate Gaspare's assignation as regent master and to insist that the appointment envisaged the entire triennium 1498-1501.34

At long last, on 21May1499, Gaspare was finally transfiliated from the convent of San Marco in Florence to that of San Domenico in Perugia. [35] But he did not thereby permanently sever all ties with San Marco even though the status of San Marco had undergone yet another change a few years earlier. In 1496 it had been absorbed by the new Tuscan-Roman Congregation of San Marco founded on 7 November by Alexander VI, at the behest of Cardinal Oliviero Carafa and largely as a ploy to dilute the influence of Savonarola's Congregation of San Marco. The new congregation united the four convents of Savonarola's former congregation with five convents of the Congregation of Lombardy and seven unreformed convents of the Roman Province. [36]

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[31] "Fr. Gaspar de Perusio assignatur Teracine in predicatorem ... Die 20 <Martii 1497>." AGOP, IV, 12, f. 4lr.

[32] "Magister Gaspar de Perusio assignatur regens in conventu Tarvisino provincie S. Dominici. Die 2 lunii <1497>." AGOP, IV, 12, f. 42r.

[33] "Assignatur reverendus magister Gaspar de Perusio in predicatorem Tarvisii pro futura queresima et eidem datur etiam licentiam eligere unum socium qui electus sit assignatus in illo conventu in quo ipse stabit. Die 8 Novembris <1497> Venetiis." AGOP, IV, 12, f. 44v.

[34] "Declaratur per patentes magistrum Gasparem de Perusio esse assignatum per tres annos proximi futuris regentem in conventu S. Nicolai de Tarvisio a die presentis declarationis et quod non possit ab aliquo inferiori removeri neque in salario diminui ... Die 28 Ianuarii <1498>, Venetiis." AGOP, IV, 12, f. 44v.

[35] "Magister Gaspar Perusinus fit filius conventus Perusii nativus consentientibus magistris et patribus nemine discrepante: et a conventu Sancti Marci de Florentia ad conventum Perusinum transfertur cum omnibus bonis suis. Die 21 Mai <1499>." AGOP, IV, 12, f. Slv.

On 16 April 1502 Gaspare was received as a member of the Tuscan-Roman Congregation by its chapter held in the convent of Santa Maria del Sasso. This move envisaged Gaspare as a teacher of theology in the congregation and, in particular, as a replacement for Master Martino da Genova: [11] He was, furthermore, subsequently granted permission to lecture in any of its convents by Master General Vincenzo Bandello on 12 July 1502.[38] Nevertheless, Gaspare's involvement with it does not seem to have affected his membership in the Congregation of Lombardy and, moreover, Bandello's concession was accompanied by the proviso that he would continue to be assigned to the convent of Perugia and retain his rights within it no matter where he actually went to work.

During the first half of 1503 Gaspare was engaged in preaching in the convent of Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venice.[39] He must have made a very favourable impression for on 8 July he was appointed by the Venetian Senate to the chair of theology *in via Thomae* in the University of Padua. In this position he succeeded Girolamo di Ippolito da Monopoli who had resigned the chair in order to take over the chair of metaphysics *in via Thomae* which had become vacant with the death of Vincenzo Merlini da

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["6] See R. Creytens, "Les actes capitulaires de la congregation Toscano-romaine O.P. (1496-1530)," AFP 40 (1970): 125-230.

[37] Ibid., 153. For the background to this see A. F. Verde, "L'insegnamento della teologia nella Congregazione savonaroliana di San Marco alla fine del '400 e all'inizio del '500," *Vivens Homo 5* (1994): 495-508.

[.8] "Magister Gaspar de Perusio conventus Perusini potest legere in quolibet conventu congregationis S. Marci, et tamen remanet sua assignatio in conventu Perusino, et mandatur priori eiusdem conventus ut quandocumque redierit restituat sibi cameram, et potest habere socium gratum et voluntarium de licentia prelati. 12 iunii 1502, Venetiis." AGOP, IV, 15, f. 67r.

[39] "Cum autem predicasset Venetiis in conventu SS. Iohannis et Pauli, ea occasione, ut creditur, fuit conductus mercede a Dominio Venetorum ad legendum publice theologiam in studio Patavino, ubi laudabiliter legit per annos XXVIII." CSM, f. 17lr.

Venezia in 1502. Gaspare would subsequently fill this chair of Thomistic theology in Padua for twenty-eight years until his death in 1531.[40] During this time he normally resided in the unreformed convent of Sant' Agostino in Padua and probably taught in its *studium generate* as well as at the university.

When he was first appointed to this chair in 1503, Gaspare became the *concurrens* of the Irish Franciscan Maurice O'Fihely, whose chair of theology *in via Scoti* was the chair of theology *primi loci* because of his seniority. At this point Gaspare was assigned a yearly stipend of sixty Florins. In 1506 O'Fihely was appointed by Julius II Archbishop of Tham, in Ireland, and Gaspare, believing that O 'Fihely would leave Padua, petitioned the Venetian Senate that his own chair *in via Thomae* be declared *primi loci.* O'Fihely, however, remained in Padua and the Venetian authorities consoled Gaspare by his stipend to one hundred Florins in February 1506.[41]

There is very little evidence of Gaspare's activities as a professor in Padua for there is practically no extant documentation regarding the university's theological faculty for the period from 1500 to 1550.[42] Two surviving documents concerning graduations in the Faculty of Arts do, nonetheless, give us at least glimpses of the academic circles in which he moved.

The first, dated 4 November 1504, records the graduation as a Doctor of Arts of the Venetian patrician Alvisio Bono. The doctoral insignia were conferred upon Bono in Padua's cathedral church by the professor of theoretical medicine and philosopher Pietro Trapolin. Gaspare is listed as one of the official witnesses along with the Franciscans Maurice O 'Fihely and Antonio Trombetta, the incumbents of the chairs of theology and metaphysics *in via Scoti,* and Pietro Pomponazzi the *ordinarius* for natural philosophy.[43] The second document records the formal disputation which preceded the doctoral promotion of another

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[40] G. Contarini, op. cit., 27-30; G. Brotto and G. Zonta, op. cit., 189-90. (Both reproduce the decree of appointment.)

[41] G. Brotto and G. Zonta, Joe. cit.

[42] E. Martellozzo Forin, *Acta Graduum Academicorum ab Anno 1501 ad Annum 1525,* Fonti per la storia dell'Universita di Padova, 2 (Padua: Antenore, 1979), 11111, XIII.

[43] Ibid., 122, n. 354.

Venetian nobleman, Antonio Surian, held on 23 March 1505 in the university's *aula magna.* Gaspare appears as one of the disputants along with O'Fihely, Ttapolin, Pomponazzi, and the philosopher Antonio Fracanziano. [44]

Sometime around the beginning of the academic year 1508-9 Gaspare, true to form, petitioned the Venetian Senate to be given a leave of absence from his teaching duties in Padua in order to be able to preach during Lent of 1509. Gaspare was refused permission but given a gratuity of twenty-five Florins on 12 October 1508.[45]

In addition to his activities in the university Gaspare was also often entrusted with academic tasks within the order. Thus, for example, in June 1508 he was commissioned by Master General Cajetan to examine, along with Girolamo da Monopoli, a friar to determine his suitability to be a candidate for the master's degree. [46]

Gaspare's stay in Padua was interrupted for several years from 1509 when he was forced to leave that city when its university was closed because of the wars of the League of Cambrai and, later, of the Holy League. At this point he most likely returned to San Domenico in Perugia. It was there that he published in 1510 an exposition of two *Opuscula* of Aquinas. [47] This work, dealing with spiritual themes, was dedicated to his niece

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[44] B. Nardi, *Saggi sull'Aristotelismo Padovano dal secolo XIV al XVI* (Florence: Sansoni, 1958), 289-90.

[45] G. Contarini, op. cit., 28.

[46] "Fratri Marco Antonio Luciano, Veneto, conceditur <facultas> quod si per magistri Hieronymi de Monopoli et magistri Gasparis de Perusio examen inventus fuerit sufficiens et cursum suum expleverit, magisterium in theologia suscipiendi." *Registrum Litterarum Fr. Thomae de Vio Caietani O.P. Magistri Ordinis 1508-1513,* ed. A. De Meyer, Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum Historica, XVII (Rome: Inst. Stor. O.P., 1935), 72 n. 43 (hereafter MOPH XVII).

[47] *Doi aurei opuscoli a vero tractati de lo angelica doctore sancto Thomasa de Aquino. El primo del modo de la confessione et purita de conscientia. El secundo de li divini costumi.* "Dechiarati et vulgarizati dal Reverendo Professore de sacra Theologia Maiestro Guasparre de Perosia de! sacro ordine de Ii predicatori. Secondo che conviene ad persone spirituale maximamente ad persone religiose. Mandati et intitulati ad suora Theodora de! terzo ordine dicto de la penitentia de sancto Dominico in nel monastero de la felice memoria de suora Colomba: figliole de Francesco chartolaio et nepote de! predicto Maiestro Guasparre" (f. Air). (A specimen of this work is in Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, EE.XI. 54.)

Teodora, the daughter of his brother Francesco, who was a nun in the Dominican monastery dedicated to the Blessed Colomba da Rieti in Perugia.[48] It was printed by Teodora's brother, Gaspare's nephew Girolamo, who by then was in charge of the family's printing business.[49] The exposition is of particular interest insofar as it is, possibly, the earliest commentary on Aquinas written in the vernacular.

Upon his return to San Domenico it seems that Gaspare attempted to assert his rights insofar as he was still officially a *filius* of that convent and which had been assured him by Master General Bandello in 1502. This was apparently resented and resisted by the provincial of the Roman Province, Sebastiano Bontempi, who did not treat him kindly. The result was a major squabble which provoked the intervention of Master General Cajetan, who began by abrogating, on 24 January 1512, the disciplinary measures which had been taken against Gaspare.[50] Cajetan subsequently appointed Tommaso Caiano, of the convent of San Marco, as commissary to adjudicate the matter on 18 June[51] and, again, on 27 July.[52] The issue was finally resolved, in Gaspare's favor, by Cajetan on 23 October.[53]

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[48] It has not been possible to discover anything about Teodora as the monastery's archive does not contain any documentation from this period. See G. Casagrande, "Inventario dell'archivio del monastero della Beata Colomba," *Bollettino della Deputazione di Storia Patria per l'Umbria* 73 (1976): 251-66.

[49] "Stampati in la inclita citta de Perusia: per Girolamo: figliolo del sopradicto francesco cartholaio: fratello de la sopradicta suor Theodora: et nepote del sopradicto Maiestro Guasparre. Adi xiij de Febraio M.CCCCC.X." (f. 8v).

[50] "Suspenduntur omnes sententiae, declarationes et poenae latae et factae contra magistrum Gasparem de Perusio, donec comperiatur veritas de huiusmodi. 24 Jan. <1512> Romae." MOPH XVII, 144 n. 263.

[51] "Frater Thomas Caianus fit commissarius super omnes fratres conventus Perusini et eius districtus cum auctoritate praecipiendi, citandi, inquirendi etc. super quibusdam querelis, praesertim ex parte magistri Gasparis de Perusio; et quae invenerit, cum authentica copia mittat Reverendissimo. 18 Jun. <1512> Romae." MOPH XVII, 145 n. 277.

[52] "Frater Thomas Caianus, congregationis S. Marci, fit commissarius et visitator super conventu S. Dominici de Perusio et super omnibus et singulis fratribus dicti conventus ibidem commorantibus et ad ipsum spectantibus et super Magistro Gaspare alibi assignato, cum potestate, quam habet prior provincialis, et potestate cognoscendi omnes lites, causas et quaestiones, et eas debito iustitiae fine terminandi; et puniendi, praecipiendi, incarcerandi, priorem absolvendi et querelam filiationis magistri Gasparis terminandi; si minus, referendi Magistro Reverendissimo, inquirendi, investigandi etc. et omnia ad haec necessaria faciendi etc. 27 Jul. <1512> Romae." MOPH XVII, 146 n. 281.

During the course of this litigation, on 12 May 1512, Cajetan had appointed Gaspare regent master in the *studium* of the convent of Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome, probably as an interim, peace-keeping, measure.[54] But the Dominican general chapter held in Genoa in May 1513 soon reassigned Gaspare to San Domenico in Perugia by appointing him regent master in its *studium generate.*[55] It is instructive that this appointment was made in the context of an announcement of a projected reform of the convent of San Domenico which was to be consolidated by its absorption within the Congregation of Lombardy. Gaspare probably continued in this post until his return to Padua in 1517.

Gaspare's most significant work during this Perugian interlude was probably the assistance that he lent to Silvestro Mazzolini da Prierio with the publication of the *Conflatum ex S. Thoma.* It is perhaps on account of this literary collaboration with Prierias that he is mentioned in Leandro Alberti 's *De viris illustribus Ordinis Praedicatorum* (1517) within a list of then famous Dominican theological authors.[56]

Prierias is chiefly remembered by scholars because of his involvement in the Roman juridical processes against Reuchlin and Luther and an epistolary exchange with Erasmus. He also played a central role in the famous "Pomponazzi affair" which has been generally overlooked.[57] When Gaspare began working with him Prierias held the post of Master of the Sacred Palace and was a professor of theology in the University of Rome, the *Sapienza.* He had been appointed to both these positions by Leo X towards the end of 1515 after many years of service as an academic, as well as a superior, in the Congregation of Lombardy. Almost a quarter of a century earlier, at the very beginning of his career, Prierias had been at first a classmate and then a colleague of both Soncinas and Savonarola in the Dominican *studium generate* in Bologna.[58] This connection with Soncinas provides, perhaps, at least a partial explanation of Gaspare's readiness to be of service to Prierias.

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[53] "Significatur priori, magistris, patribus et omnibus fratribus conventus Perusini, quatenus Reverendissimus Magister ordinis sententialiter pro tribunali sedens annullavit et cassavit sententiam latam a reverendo provinciali Romani magistro Sebastiano contra venerandum magistrum Gasparem de Perusio super privatione filiationis conventus et poena gravioris culpae; et declaratur, quod est in possessione filiationis conventus, mandans haberi pro filio dicti conventus etc. 23 Oct. <1512> Romae." MOPH XVII, 147-8 n. 292.

[54] "Magister Gaspar de Perusio fit regens conventus Minervae. 12 Maii <1512> Romae." MOPH XVII, 145 n. 271.

[55] "Conventui Perusino, quern nisi ipsius patres et fratres ita reformaverint, ut et priorem habeant, qui non solo nomine sit prior, et in moribus ac studio, ita ut reverendissimo magistro ordinis acceptetur reformatio, unimus congregationis Lombardiae, salva in omnibus et per omnia auctoritate reverendissimi magistri atque obedientia ei debita; mandabitur autem executioni, ut et quando reverendissimus magister iudicabit et non aliter. Huie itaque conventui assignamus in regentem fr. Gasparem de Perusio magistrum." *Acta Capitulorum Generalium O.P,* IV, ed. B. M. Reichert, Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum Historica, IX (Rome: Inst. Stor. O.P., 1901), 119.

[56] Leander Alberti, *De viris illustribus Ordinis Praedicatorum* (Bologna, 1517), f. 142r.

Insofar as Prierias's *Conflatum* relates to our discussion a few comments are in order. It was conceived as a great work which, if it had been completed, would have rivaled in scope the famous commentaries by Cajetan on the *Summa Theologiae* and Francesco Silvestri on the *Summa contra Gentiles.* Indeed, it was a far more ambitious project than either of these two works for it was intended to be a vast anthology and digest, accompanied by a commentary, of all of Aquinas's writings. In fact, the *Conflatum* was never completed because of various interruptions such as those caused by the case of Martin Luther and Prierias's subsequent preoccupation with the threat posed by the supposed "sect of the witches." A further obstacle to its completion was the poor health that debilitated Prierias during the last years of his life before his death during the Sack of Rome in 1527.[59] Prierias himself tells us that he completed about half the work, corresponding approximately to the material covered by Aquinas in the *Prima pars* and *Prima secundae* of the *Summa Theologiae.*[60] Furthermore, of these completed parts of the *Conjlatum* only a small portion was actually printed. The section published in the first volume, printed in Perugia in 1519, covers the material

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[17] See my "Silvestro da Prierio and the Pomponazzi Affair" which is to appear in *Renaissance and Reformation*..

[58] See C. Piana, op. cit., 270.

[19] I shall argue elsewhere that the standard account of Prierias's death as taking place in 1523 is mistaken.

[60] See Prierias's Jetter to the reader in *Conflatum,* f. 299v.

treated by Aquinas in the first forty-five questions of the *Prima pars.*

The help brought to bear by Gaspare to the publication of this first volume of the *Conflatum* is well documented. The brief of Leo X, dated 28 June 1516, which prefaces the *Conflatum* is in fact addressed to Gaspare and in it the role that would be played by him is clearly indicated.[61] Gaspare was allowed by the pontiff to enlist the assistance of several other Dominicans and was to be responsible for the checking of Prierias's selections from Aquinas, correcting the proofs, and generally seeing the work through the press.

Leo X's brief is also addressed to Gaspare's nephew Girolamo and it directs that the actual printing was to be done by the family's business. The pontiff conceded Girolamo various privileges which, in effect, correspond to contemporary copyright laws. Severe financial penalties and even excommunication were threatened against both printers and purveyors of pirated editions. Gaspare and Girolamo together certainly did a fine job; the *Conflatum* is indeed a handsome tome. It consists of six hundred tightly packed pages in folio which, unlike the case of so many sixteenth-century scholastic books, are entirely free of typographical errors. The frontispiece reproduces a woodcut of Aquinas with, at the bottom, representations of Prierias in pious and studious which poses are the only likenesses of him that we still have.

Prierias's commentary in the *Conflatum* is primarily concerned to defend what he believes to be the authentic teaching of Aquinas from divergent interpretations proposed within the Thomistic School itself. It abounds, accordingly, with criticisms of the speculative positions of contemporary Thomists who usually are not mentioned by name but are referred to by means of conventional expressions such as "quidam Thomistae" and "nonnulli Thomistae moderni." The by far most frequent referent of these expressions is Cajetan. Except for one occasion, Cajetan is never mentioned by name. But that he is indeed the principal target of Prierias 's polemics cannot be doubted as they usually focus on direct citations from his works, especially the commentary on the *Prima pars* which had been published in 1507. One cannot but suspect, then, that the principal polemical motive behind Prierias's composition of the *Conflatum* was the rebuttal of Cajetan's interpretation of Aquinas.

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[61] "Dilectis filiis Gaspari Baldassaris de Perusia ordinis predicatorum ac sacrae theologiae professoris ... Tibi fili Gaspar de quo idem Silvester plurimum confidit: ut operi impressure huiusmodi incumbere: etiam extra religionem in quovis loco ubi illud imprimi contingerit: retento tamen habitu: legendo scilicet scribendo sive scriptoribus dictando corrigendo et revidendo: unum quoque vel duos ex fratribus dicti ordinis per te eligendos tecum retinere: illosque quando tibi visum fuerit expedire mutare et alios loco ipsorum ponere libere et licite possis et valeas: licentiam et facultatem auctoritate apostolica tenore presentium concedimus et elargimur." *Conflatum,* f. +lv.

In the dedication of the *Conflatum* written by Gaspare himself and addressed to the Venetian nobleman Domenico Loredan, Gaspare does not only recapitulate the role played by him and his nephew in the work's publication, he also stresses the importance of Prierias's work as a corrective of deviant interpretations of Aquinas.[62] The most important factor that brought Prierias and Gaspare together might well have been their common theological hostility to Cajetan.

Gaspare would continue to cooperate with Prierias even after his return to Padua in 1517. This is evident from the fact that the printing of the first volume of the *Conflatum* was only completed in 1519.[63] It is also evident from the further aid extended by Gaspare in the correction and seeing through the press of one of Prierias's several works directed against Luther. The *Epithoma*

[62] "Plerique autem hucusque ad doctrinam sancti Thome aspirantes: ob voluminum multitudinem in quibus eedem difficultates pertractantur, multiplicibusque sententiis resolvuntur: quarum alie sine aliis limpide intelligi minime possunt: ab huius sacrate scole thomistice voto quasi impossibili sese retraxere. Plerique vero eamdem audacius quam hucusque licuerit aggredientes: nee terminos ipsius ob longa requisita in variis voluminibus studia attingentes, solis quibusdam sententiis magis in promptu se offerentibus inspectis, oblique multa in eadem doctrina interpretari fuere: profitentes se thomistas: cum potius a sancti Thome doctrina deviaverint: quasi recti naturam et complementum distorta diminutaque regula examinantes." *Conflatum,* f. +3v.

[63] "Per reverendum quoque professorem sacre theologie celeberrimum professorem magistrum Gasparem Perusinum summo cum studio revisus: et per eiusdem nepotem dominum Hieronymum quondam Francisci chartularii summa cum diligentia et arte Perusie impressus. Anno ab incarnatione salvatoris MDXIX pridie idus augustias feliciter explicit." *Conflatum,* f. 299r.

responsionis ad Lutherum was published in Perugia in 1519; it too was printed by Gaspare's nephew Girolamo.[64]

Gaspare returned to Padua at the beginning of the academic year 1517-18. His salary at the university was initially fixed at eighty Florins for the first three years and was to be raised to one hundred thereafter.[65] Once again, the paucity of documentation leaves us quite uninformed about his academic activities. Gaspare's presumed influence on Pietro Martire Vermigli is, therefore, no more than a conjecture based on the knowledge that Vermigli studied theology in Padua during the early 1520s.

We are a little better informed, however, about his participation in the life of the community of Sant' Agostino where he resided. His major superiors seem to have especially employed him to impose disciplinary measures. He was commissioned with such a task in January 1521 by Vicar General Girolamo Penafiel[66] who also confirmed his membership in the house council of Sant' Agostino in October of the same year.61 Pefiafiel's successor, Antonio da Ferrara, entrusted him with similar chores in May[68] and in July 1523.[69]

Although from the latter half of 1517 he was fully committed in Padua, Gaspare maintained close contacts with and played an active role within the convent of San Domenico in Perugia to which he continued to be assigned. In October 1521 Peffafiel allowed him to occupy what seems to have been the best cell in that house.[70] Soon after, the vicar general revoked the disciplinary measures that that convent's prior had taken against Gaspare and, along with others, the friar who would eventually write Gaspare's obituary for the house's chronicle.[11] Gaspare seems to have been left in peace thereafter and in 1527 Master General Francesco Silvestri allowed him to enlist another friar to look after his room in Perugia during his absences.[12]

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[64] The title page of the first edition of the *Epithoma,* Perugia 1519, bears the indication: "Perusiae typis invigilante et accurante F. Gasparo de Perusia Ord. Praed. cum duobus ex ordine sodalibus sibi adscitis per Hieronymum Franciscum Cartulareum dicti F. Gasparis fratuelem."

[65] "Idem anno MDXVII statim post helium evocatus est florenis LXXX augendis triennio ad C ... " *].* Facciolati, op. cit., 2:97.

[66] "Rev. Priori et mag. Gaspari de Perusio committitur et sub praecepto mandatur quod si invenerit mag. Albertum de Utino non paruisse litteris contra barbam nutrientes promulgatis, si se legitime non excusaverit, declarent ilium incurisse praefatas poenas et datur eis facultas procedendi contra eum ad ulteriora. 7 Jan. <1521>." *Magistrorum ac Procuratorum Generalium O.P. Registra Litterarum Minora (1469-1523),* ed. G. Meersseman and D. Planzer, Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum Historica, XXI (Rome: Inst. Stor. O.P., 1947), 109 n. 276 (hereafter MOPH XXI).

[67] "Mag. Gasparis praedicti acceptatio in patrem conventus Paduani approbatur et confirmatur. Eodem die. <28.X.1521>." MOPH XXI, 102, n. 227.

[68] "Data est commissio Rev. S. Theo!. professoribus fr. Gaspari de Perusio et fr. Benedicto de Foiano ut examinent causam inter mag. Marcum Antonium Venetum et fr. . . . et etiam inter ipsum fr. Marcum Antonium Venetum et fr. Albertum de Castello. 12 Maii 1523." MOPH XXI, 151 n. 80.

[69] "Commissa est examinatio de quaerimoniis datis de Rev. fr. Gabriele de Padua, magistro, Rev. Patribus fr. Zachariae de Ravenna, magistro, et fr. Gaspari de Perusio, magistro ... 12 Iul. <1523>." MOPH XXI, 152-3 n. 93.

Early during the academic year 1530-31 Gaspare fell ill and could not continue lecturing. Nonetheless, duly weighing his many years of service to the University of Padua, the Doge Andrea Gritti decided that he should continue to receive his stipend.[73] Gaspare then at once left Padua and returned to San Domenico in Perugia where he seems to have played an important part in a reform of that convent by a party of friars from San Marco despite his deteriorating health.[74] A short while before his return, San Domenico had in fact been subtracted from the unreformed Roman Province and united to the Tuscan-Roman Congregation. Before long, in late October 1531, Clement VII would transform this congregation into the Reformed Roman Province and demote the old Roman Province to the status of a vicariate.[75] But shortly before this happened Gaspare died on 31 September at the age of sixty-six and in San Marco in Florence. Feeling that his end was near he had previously left Perugia, divested himself of his possessions and returned to the convent where, forty-six years earlier, he had first embraced religious life.[76]

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[70] "Rev. Gaspari conventus Perusini conceditur cella quae fuit olim mag. Sebastani integra ut ille possidebat, cum onere quod in ea recipiantur Generalis Rmus., Procurator, visitatores et alii quicumque e conventu supra Priorem potestatem habentes, mandaturque Priori seu praesidenti et omnibus fratribus dicti conventus sub praecepto et poena excommunicationis quod earn illi assignent et nullatenus impediant quin illam assequatur et sub eodem praecepto et poena excommunicationis latae sententiae quam contrafaciendo etc.; mandatur quibuscumque earn quomodolibet inhabitantibus quod earn infra trium horarum spacium a notitia litterarum illi earn relinquant, claves consignent et in pacifica possessione reliquant. 27 eiusdem <Octobris 1521>." MOPH XXI, 102 n. 225.

" "Prioris Perusini fr. Hieronimi de Monte Politiano sententia poenae gravioris culpa contra mag. Gasparem, fr. Dominicum Antonii et fr. Dominicum de Ballionibus Perusinos data, declaratur fuisse nulla et iniusta, irrita et inanis et ilia revocatur annullaturque. 28 eiusdem <Octobris 1521>." MOPH XXI, 102 n. 226.

[72] "Magistro Gaspari de Perusio Congregationis Lombardiae conceditur quod possit deputare fratrem ad curam camerae suae in conventu Perusino ... 27 Feb. <1527> Paduae." AGOP, IV, 20, f. 55v.

[73] G. Contarini, op. cit., 28-9.

Domenico di Francesco dei Baglioni, the author of Gaspare's obituary in the chronicle of San Domenico in Perugia, was a younger confrere who had lived with Gaspare in that convent and seems to have known him well. He remarks that, owing to his volatile character, Gaspare was generally deemed unsuitable for administrative posts in the order. But he is not sparing in his praises of him as a theologian. He stresses that Gaspare was a particularly effective disputant and that his sharp wit and vast erudition were complemented by an especially tenacious memory which, he conjectures, was due to Gaspare's having been an adept of the art of mnemonics. Domenico's great disappointment is that Gaspare had not published more than he did.[77]

Besides the works that have already been mentioned, Gaspare has been attributed a collection of sermons: *Sermones quadragesimales et domenicales per annum.*[78] But it is unlikely that this work was ever printed and, by now, there seems to be no trace of it. A further work that has been ascribed to him is a *Compendium primae philosophiae*[79] dated 1527 and of which

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[15] R. Creytens, art. cit., 136.

[76] The date, place and circumstances of Gaspare's death are recorded in CSM (f. 171r), CSD (f. 70r) and in the obituary of Sant' Agostino in Padua (see G. Mazzantini, "L'Obituario del convento di S. Agostino in Padova," *Miscellanea di Storia Veneta,* 2d ser., 2 (1894): 19). There is a discrepancy, however, between these documents on the year of Gaspare's death. The obituary of Sant' Agostino indicates 1532; CSM mentions 1530 but not explicitly as the year of Gaspare's death and its account of Gaspare's continuing activities seems to indicate 1531; CSD is explicit on 1531. In the light of our reconstruction, 1531 is to be preferred.

[17] CSD, f. 70v.

[18] See: L. Jacobillus, *Bibliotheca Umbriae* (Foligno, 1658), 124; J. Quetif and J. Echard, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum* (Paris, 1721-24), 2:24.

[79] See C. Lohr, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries. II Renaissance Authors* (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1988), 325.

there seems to be only one extant manuscript.[80] This manuscript is so mutilated as to render difficult the identification of its author, but it is evident, however, that its attribution to Gaspare is mistaken. A reference to Gaspare does indeed feature in the opening sentence of the dedicatory letter which prefaces the *Compendium.* But this mention of Gaspare does not present him as the author of the work but merely as the intermediary through whom the author had received a letter from a third party requesting a copy.[81]

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[80] Berlin, Straatsbibliothek: MS. lat. fol. 392 (= Rose 261[XVI], 2) ff. lr-83r.

[81] "Reverende Pater, Cum s<uper>ioribus mensibus Gaspar Perusinus monachus ac theologus praeclarus, tuas mihi literas adtulit ... quibus a me petebas, ut compendium illud primae philosophiae quod composueram dum in Hyspania ... tibi transcribendum et mittendum curarem ..."MS cit., f. lr.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, ONTO-THEOLOGY, AND MARION*

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IT IS NOT surprising that the *Revue thomiste* would produce a collection of papers defending Thomas Aquinas from the Heideggerian indictment of Western metaphysics as onto-theology. What is surprising, however, is that the most significant vindication in the collection is authored by none other than Jean-Luc Marion. The reason for the surprise is, of course, that Marion's earlier and influential *Dieu sans l'etre* (1982) had contained a damning indictment of Aquinas as the principal progenitor of onto-theology. There Marion had argued that by reversing the Pseudo-Dionysian priority of the good over being in his doctrine of the divine names, Aquinas had moved fatally away from the God of revelation and faith, who is fundamentally Love, towards the construction of the metaphysical idol of "God" who would come to dominate modern thought. Marion's original verdict on Aquinas was that he was not significantly different from Avicenna and John Duns Scotus insofar as he accorded primacy to a human concept of being (allegedly tainted with the representational limitations of the imagination) as the horizon that dominates and determines the way in which God can appear; moreover, this conceptual priority could only be univocal and so the alleged Thomistic analogy of being collapses. God is thus objectified and subordinated to human conceptualization, the

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'*Saint Thomas et l'onto-theologie. Actes du collogue tenu a l'lnstitut catholique de Toulouse les 3 et 4 juin 1994.* A special edition of the *Revue thomiste,* 95, no. 1 (January-March 1995): 192.

beginning of the development that would flower into modern onto-theology.

Subsequent dialogue with French Thomists, however, led Marion to modify his assessment of Aquinas. In the 1991 "Preface to the English Edition" of *God without Being,* Marion held out the possibility that Thomistic *esse* may not be the being from which God needs to liberated, identifying the latter instead with both the conceptually univocal being of modern metaphysics and Heidegger's *Ereignis.* Marion suggested that Thomas does not chain God to metaphysics because the *esse divinum* maintains a transcendent distance from the composed *(esse-essentia)* order of beings that is the subject matter of metaphysics *(ens commune).* Indeed, that distance is so great that there is "hardly" any analogy. Hence Thomas can be considered to be a proponent of God without being when the latter is understood in the sense of *ens commune.* Marion noted at the time that his arguments were only sketchy, however, and many critical questions remained regarding his interpretation of Thomas on such subjects as the nature of metaphysics, the transcendence of the divine *esse,* the analogy of being, and divine causality. The 1991 arguments are filled out and advanced in this volume's central piece: "Saint Thomas d'Aquin et l'onto-theo-logie." The great significance of this article, which provides the focus for the following review discussion, is that it is a clearly acknowledged *retractatio* by Marion of his earlier criticism of Aquinas. Whether or not it should be accepted as a genuine vindication of Aquinas, however, is not so clear.

Discussion of onto-theology is often muddled by obscurity surrounding the meaning of the term. It therefore comes as something of a relief to find Marion beginning with a clear articulation of the Heideggerian sense of metaphysics as onto-theology in terms of three essential notes. First, God must be conceived as a part of the subject matter of metaphysics, arrived at through an analysis of the particular historical determinations of the Being of beings and grasped through a univocal concept. Second, God must be the efficient causal foundation *(Begrundung)* of beings as their sufficient reason. Third, God as ground must be *causa sui,* supremely grounding precisely because self-grounded. Marion's subsequent vindication of St. Thomas amounts to showing that his treatment of God does not embody any of the three constitutive characteristics of onto-theology.

First, Marion shows that Aquinas does not include God within the science of metaphysics. For St. Thomas, the proper subject of metaphysics is *ens commune.* God enters metaphysics' consideration only indirectly, as the *principle* of *ens commune.* Marion argues that Aquinas's clear separation of God from metaphysics' proper consideration of being is a kind of decisive preemptive strike against the subsequent scholastic tradition's tendency to bring God back within the bounds of metaphysics and its concept of being; Marion describes that tradition as having received its foundations in Scotus and its most influential modern formulation in Suarez. Marion emphasizes that Aquinas needs to be encountered on his own terms and so liberated from the prejudiced view that sees him merely as the head of the grand onto-theological metaphysical tradition. It is plain that this emphasis is born of Marion's realization that his earlier account of Aquinas was skewed by his failure in just that regard. The distance between *Dieu sans l'etre* and this work can be measured by Marion's greater familiarity with the texts of Aquinas, his careful reading of some of the standard secondary works on Aquinas's metaphysics, and his increased historical knowledge of the subsequent scholastic tradition. Marion has done his homework.

The development in Marion's interpretation can be measured best by his treatment of analogy. Having once impugned the so-called analogy of being, Marion now argues that it is a central reason why Aquinas's position escapes the charge of onto-theology. Marion retracts his earlier charge that *ens* as *primum conceptum* commits Aquinas to an Avicennian-Scotistic univocity of being. Rather, by strictly separating *esse divinum* from *esse commune,* and marking the distance by the contrast between divine simplicity as the identity of *esse* and *essentia* and created composition as the limitation of *esse* by a distinct *essentia,* Aquinas secures a transcendence of God from the being of metaphysics that rules out any univocal sense of being. This means that there can be no conceptual reciprocity between God and created beings. What relationship there is between God and other beings is an analogical one wherein the *proportio* that allows for a kind of unity is grounded not in a set of relationships to a common concept (as in the Cajetanian view), but rather by a focal reference to a really existing primary term that both transcends and grounds the other analogates. Analogy is a clear case where secondary reading, in the form of Montagnes 's classic *La doctrine de l'analogie de l'etre d'apres saint Thomas d'Aquin,* has improved Marion's understanding. Marion is now able to appreciate Aquinas's own view of analogy as distinct from the subsequent Scotistic-influenced Thomistic tradition.

If analogy is crucial to Aquinas's escape from the first requirement of onto-theology, it seems to come at the price of confirming the second: reducing God to ground *qua* efficient cause/sufficient reason. Yet Marion argues that the causal framework of participation that grounds the analogy of being does not reduce Aquinas's God to a modern onto-theological *Begriindung* because Aquinas's understanding of divine causality is normed by creation. The causality of God as Creator is not reducible to mere efficiency and productivity along the lines of the Cartesian *totalis et efficiens causa.* Although Aquinas privileges efficiency, he has a more pluriform and analogous notion of divine creative causality such that it includes formal and final causality and bears no resemblance to mundane making. As *causa essendi,* divine causality exceeds what we can know from its created effects and analogues insofar as the latter remain within the horizon of *ens/esse commune.* One of Marion's most penetrating insights is that creation is the key to keeping the distance between God and being. Creation implies a unique and transcendent kind of origination that is not locatable within some larger conceptual framework provided by all-encompassing univocal notions of being or causality as in subsequent onto-theological schemas. Given this notion of creative causality, it is clear that Aquinas's God also escapes the third onto-theological requirement of being *causa sui.* It is well known that Aquinas thinks that self-causation of *esse* is incoherent. As the arguments for the existence of God show, causality stops *before* God, not *with* God. Marion notes that it is significant that Aquinas explicitly refuses to submit God to the ultimate metaphysical a priori of causality or sufficient reason; this refusal is another way in which Aquinas preemptively distinguishes his position from subsequent onto-theology.

Marion rightly worries, however, that such a defense of Aquinas does not go far enough. Even if Aquinas separates God from the metaphysics of *ens commune,* does he not still submit God to the *horizon* of being even while trying to distance him from being? Is not the entire project vitiated by its subordination of God to the question of being? In opposition to his earlier affirmative answer, Marion now argues that Aquinas separates God from being in a way that sharply distinguishes him both from a modern *metaphysica* with its *conceptus univocus entis* and from Heidegger's understanding of *Sein* or *Ereignis* (thus rendering otiose the many misguided attempts, some of which are chronicled in A. Dartigues 's contribution, to vindicate Aquinas by claiming some kind of common ground with Heidegger). Aquinas accomplishes this by refusing to submit God even to *esse* as we know it. While according *esse* a primacy in terms of the divine names, Aquinas does not forget his own distinction between *res significata, ratio nominis,* and *modus significandi.* Our grasp of the divine *qua esse* is not a grasp of the divine nature, which remains a *mysterium tremendum et fascinandum,* since our grasp of *esse* is inescapably rooted in the horizon of *ens commune.* We do not know God because we know created *esse,* since God is not found within the horizon of created *esse.* We can gain no conceptual purchase on the nature of the utterly simple and infinite *esse* of God. Ultimately what *esse* means is determined by divinity in a way that completely surpasses our conceptual ken. Marion argues that Thomas 's exegesis of Exodus 3:14 confirms this reading. While *Qui est* is *maxime proprium nomen Dei,* it remains only a name. And even *Qui est* must give way to the Tetragrammaton as *magis proprium* precisely because it safeguards the singular incommunicability of God.

Marion's basic position is that Thomas's metaphysics escapes onto-theology because it culminates in apophatism. His most controversial claim in this regard is that Aquinas's *esse divinum* should be understood in an exclusively negative sense. Thomistic *esse* should not even be considered within the horizon of traditional metaphysics, but rather taken in a meta-ontological sense. Marion acknowledges that there are numerous texts where Aquinas does identify God with being as *primum ens,* but that these passages need to be read in the light of Aquinas's larger aim which is to distance God from the being of metaphysics. Marion therefore concludes by arguing that Thomas 's apophatic teaching regarding the divine *esse* makes "God without Being" a thoroughly Thomistic doctrine. Gery Prouvoust echoes this strategy in another contribution and argues that "God without Being" should be accepted by Thomists so long as the negation is understood by way of eminence rather than privation and no other name is substituted.

Marion anticipates that some Thomists will object to his latest reading of Aquinas as no more than a covert recapitulation of his strategy in *Dieu sans l'etre* of subordinating *esse* to some other cause along the lines of Pseudo-Dionysius. Marion himself acknowledges that such worries are not without some foundation, since his work goes against more traditional readings of Aquinas and is marked by his own limitations of knowledge. Yet even if one cannot go all the way down the path that Marion has marked out, as I cannot, there is no doubt that this is a genuine *retractatio* and that it points out some novel and persuasive lines of vindication for Aquinas. There is no covert Dionysianism here; Marion is not interested in subordinating *esse* to *bonum.* Nor is there covert Heideggerianism here; Marion wants a God without *Sein* or *Ereignis* as well as without onto-theological being. Marion does want to make a Heideggerian end-run around a corrupt metaphysical tradition, but now the latter is more properly interpreted to be the one beginning with Scotus and running through Suarez to Wolff and beyond. If there is something post-modern about Marion's reading of Aquinas, there is also something traditional. Marion's emphasis on the apophatic side of Aquinas involves a conscious attempt to link himself with the kind of Thomism represented most significantly in the twentieth century by A.-D. Sertillanges (see n. 81 on p. 62) and there is some textual warrant for such an interpretation.

Marion seems to go beyond even Sertillanges's position, however, in his exclusive emphasis on the *via negativa* at the expense of the *via causalitatis* and the *via eminentiae.* While Marion is right to argue that the apophatic side of Aquinas needs to be retrieved in the light of the Heideggerian critique, he ultimately pushes that interpretation too far. Marion's reading simply cannot be reconciled with Aquinas's position that certain terms can be predicated of God positively and substantially (though non-quidditatively) through analogy. At the risk of oversimplification, it seems that once again analogy is at the root of Marion's misunderstanding of Aquinas. For all of his progress on analogy, Marion still seems somewhat under the spell of Scotus insofar as he continues to construe analogy as an account of how formal concepts can apply to God rather than as an account of the lived use of language in religious affirmations. It is to be hoped that further reading -of secondary sources will help Marion to see that Aquinas's confidence in the possibility of positive analogical predication is rooted not in the belief that God can somehow be captured by the concepts involved, but rather in the belief that such judgments really do point us dynamically in the right direction toward the abiding mystery of God.

Thomists who find Marion's position extreme might prefer the more conventional responses to onto-theology outlined by T.-D. Humbrecht and Michel Bastit. Humbrecht considers the question whether or not God has an essence and argues that to interpret Aquinas's identification of *esse* and *essentia* in God as tantamount to a denial that God has an essence fails to escape from onto-theology because it remains within the grip of the very essentialism that needs to be surmounted. Rather, it is central to Aquinas that both *essentia* and *esse* be attributed to God. Humbrecht argues that it is the identity of *esse* and *essentia* ingredient in Aquinas's doctrine of divine simplicity that secures divine transcendence; the distance that Marion wants between God and being is safeguarded by situating God not beyond being, but rather beyond composed being. In a similar vein, Bastit argues against a Platonic detachment of God from being on the grounds that it implies indeterminacy and potentiality in God. It is rather the case that Aquinas secures God's transcendence by identifying the divine being, understood in terms of both *esse* and *essentia,* with the plenitude of self-determining actuality conceived ultimately (following the lead of John of St. Thomas) in terms of God's act of auto-intellection. While there is much that is insightful in Humbrecht's and Bastit's replies to the onto-theological challenge, they are likely to be persuasive only to those already committed to Aquinas. This group should welcome Marion's work as a more effective instrument for convincing those who have already dismissed Aquinas.

A common assumption of all the contributors to this volume is that onto-theology has its origins in metaphysical developments after Aquinas. Articulating this new historical narrative is a vital part of any vindication of Aquinas. Olivier Boulnois, a specialist in Scotus, devotes his contribution to determining the premodern origins of onto-theology. He lays the blame squarely at Scotus 's door. By articulating a univocal conception of being prior in intelligibility to God, Scotus anticipates the modern objectification of being and the distinction between *metaphysica generalis* and *metaphysica specialis.* The subsequent historical development of onto-theology includes many Thomists who betrayed their master's position by compromising the analogy of being in the face of Scotism. As many note, the most significant figure in this regard is Suarez; unfortunately, however, there is no extended treatment of Suarez in this collection (instead we are constantly referred to J.-F. Courtine's *Suarez et le systeme de la mitaphysique* [Paris, 1990]). Serge Bonino provides an extended consideration of the way in which Capreolus succumbed to Scotus by holding for a univocal concept of being that applies to both God and creatures while simultaneously trying to maintain his fidelity to St. Thomas by holding that being itself is analogical. This pull of opposing noetic and metaphysical forces plagues Thomism after Scotus. As Bonino shows, a univocal conception of being leads away from the apophatic path advocated by Marion and towards a more Scotistic claim that we can have a proper, though non-defining, knowledge of God wherein being provides the central note. Bonino shows that Capreolus 's claims about the possibility of proper, positive, albeit imperfect, knowledge of God are squarely within the Thomistic mainstream and a defensible reading of Aquinas. Bonino is certainly right about the historical claims; however, Marion's analysis indicates that a more apophatic approach to Aquinas ought to be preferred.

This collection would be valuable even without Marion's piece. It must ultimately be acknowledged, however, that it is Marion's *retractatio* that gives this volume its real import. Doubtless some Thomists will greet Marion's *retractatio* with a shake of the head and be tempted to believe that he is saying something that they had known all along. Yet it should be evident by now that Marion's work is not a simple corroboration of traditional positions, but a powerful re-reading and retrieval of Aquinas within the context of an important contemporary problematic. If his reading proves provocative and disturbing to some Thomists, they should find consolation in the fact that it will prove equally or even more disturbing to those who have hitherto been able to rely on *Dieu sans l'etre* as an authoritative demonstration of the irrelevance of Aquinas to the postmodern problematic. Marion's repudiation of his earlier distorted reading means that facile criticism of Aquinas as an onto-theologian no longer has any fashionable intellectual cover. The claim that the recovery of God without onto-theological being necessarily requires a repudiation of Aquinas must now be argued for rather than presumed. And the most influential intellectual foe to be overcome in that attempt is henceforth Marion himself.

While it would be premature to push this line very far, it nevertheless seems possible that Marion may turn out to be something like Alasdair Macintyre: an established philosopher trained outside the Thomistic tradition, initially critical of Thomas, who eventually finds his way to embracing Thomas in provocative and innovative ways. If this is the case, then Marion will likewise find himself criticized on both sides as neither fish nor foul; postmodern types will lament that he has gone soft, while Thomists will lament that he is not yet traditional enough. He may never satisfy either side, but they both will have to read him. And they both can learn from him.

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