PERSONAL RECEPTIVITY AND ACT: A THOMISTIC CRITIQUE

STEVEN A. LONG

Christendom College
Front Royal, Virginia

I. INTRODUCTION

ECENT NEO-THOMISTIC WRITINGS on the nature f the human person have emphasized the metaphysics f spiritual being, and in particular the liberty of spiritual being from the passive potency that characterizes merely physical subsistents. [1] The eminent Thomistic scholar Kenneth Schmitz seems to suggest that receptivity in spiritual being transcends the principles of act and potency altogether. [2] Act and potency would then pertain primarily to subpersonal being. By contrast Norris Clarke infers that creaturely receptivity is defined more by act than by potency.' Thus viewed, receptivity becomes an analogous perfection that is possessed by God-a point made by a variety of authors [4] attempting to unify under one notion creaturely and divine receptivity.

[1] See W. Norris Clarke, *Person and Being* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1993). In a different but allied vein, see Kenneth Schmitz, "The First Principle of Personal Becoming," *The Review of Metaphysics* 47, no. 4 Oune 1994).

[1] This is my reading of Schmitz's reflections in "Personal Becoming."

[1] See W. Norris Clarke, "Response to Long's Comments," *Communio* (Spring, 1994)-for instance, "But what I, with David Schindler and Hans Urs von Balthasar, am doing is precisely trying to expand the range of the concept, to call attention to the fact that at a certain level of being-the personal-the notion both can and should be detached from the limitations which ordinarily accompany it, so that it can turn into a sign of positive perfection rather than imperfection" (166).

[4] See for example "The Person: Philosophy, Theology, and Receptivity" for diverse principled accounts of receptivity, *Communio* (Spring, 1994). In particular, note the approaches of Norris Clarke, S.J., and David Schindler, who each argue that the recep-

In this article I examine the root notion that personal activity transcends the ontological principles of act and potency. I also consider the effort to retain these ontological principles by christening receptivity a pure perfection of act. Both of these views seem to presuppose the inadequacy either of St. Thomas's philosophic anthropology or at least of its traditional interpretation; I shall argue that each implies the abandonment of Thomistic metaphysics.

The teaching that act and potency pertain only to lower, subpersonal being and that these principles are utterly inadequate for philosophic analysis of the person contrasts markedly with the doctrine that all subjects of being reflect diverse *rationes* of subject and act, which as distinct but proportionately identical are bonded in a community of analogy. Likewise, the view of receptivity as pure act seems to imply that the human subject is self-actuating, thus negating the composite character of the human person. Hence the purpose of this essay is in a sense to argue for vindication of the community of analogy in response to arguments that implicitly terminate it within the domain of the subpersonal.

What is at stake is whether one falls into the very error characteristic of modern philosophy as described by Kenneth Schmitz: "the loss of a more general and more generous metaphysical interiority and the reduction of the residue of interiority to the confines of the human consciousness." [5] Is there a dichotomy between human nature and that of lesser beings, such that the principles of act and potency do not apply to it? Do human spirituality and subjectivity transcend such ontological principles as act and potency which permeate the field of subpersonal being? Should we, as Schmitz's remarks seem to do, distinguish "nonpassive receptivity" from activity and potency? [6] Or should we

tivity of the divine Word vis-a-vis the divine nature in Trinitarian theology is bonded in analogical community with creaturely receptivity. Skeptics about this project are represented in the discussion by George Blair, "On Esse and Relation," and by myself, "Divine and Creaturely Receptivity: The Search for a Middle Term."

[5] Schmitz, "Personal Becoming," 766.

[6] Ibid., 771: "Yet nonpassive receptivity is as much a mark of the human spirit as is its activity." Schmitz objects to the view that receptivity is "something less than a transcendent value."

follow Clarke in identifying receptivity as a pure perfection, contrary to the view that receptivity designates potency? [1]

I shall first broach this issue in the writing of Kenneth Schmitz, following with a consideration of the ontology of knowledge in relation to receptivity, and of Aquinas's doctrine regarding being and operation. Then I will briefly advert to Norris Clarke's effort at reconciling ontological analysis of the person with contemporary personalist philosophy.

II. RECEPTIVITY, IMMATERIALITY, AND INTERIORITY

In his recent essay "The First Principle of Personal Becoming," Kenneth Schmitz describes the negation of creaturely subjectivity and interiority characteristic of modern philosophy, which arrogates these traits more or less exclusively to rational consciousness.[8] In the course of commenting upon this phenomenon, he endeavors to recover the radically analogous conception of immateriality in Thomistic metaphysics. As he puts it:

There is a certain immateriality that is to be found in all things, even physical things. The traditional metaphysics attributed a nonmateriality to physical things by virtue of their complex constitution, since, in addition to the passive and potential factor within them that was dubbed primary matter, there were the factors of form, finality, and participation in the cosmic web of existence. These nonmaterial factors were held to be the forms of immateriality proper to physical things, but they were also held to be the physical analogues of the immateriality that was held to be inseparable from the depth and interiority constitutive of every caused being. In sum, the traditional metaphysics held that some kind of immateriality was inseparable from every being by virtue of its being.[9]

Schmitz relates this realization that being and form entail "some kind of immateriality" to the account that St. Thomas gives of the negative judgment of separation by which one discerns that being, substance, form, and act are not necessarily

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[7] Clarke, "Response," 167: "I see no convincing reason for including imperfection and limitation as part of the very meaning of the term 'receptivity' or 'receive,' and good reasons for not doing so."

[8] See Schmitz, "Personal Becoming," 762-66.

[9] Ibid., 766-67.

found with matter and motion, although they may be so.*w* In this perceptive stress upon the manner in which the *actus essendi* of any being generically overpasses the limits of material essence, the metaphysical roots of subjectivity are once again discerned. Of course, this immateriality is not the positive immateriality of intrinsically spiritual being: but it is wide enough to provide for the discovery of such being.

Were the concept of being essentially determined by materiality and mobility, then the analogous affirmations made of the unmoved mover would be impossible: a material, mobile, mutable being that is immaterial, immobile, and immutable is a contra-diction in terms! Being implicitly and actually overpasses the limits of material essence. Being as an analogically intelligible object-"subject in act"-that is intrinsically diversified in dif-ferent beings does not essentially include potency and matter, although it may be found with them. In other words, there is nothing about the intelligibly analogous object "subject in act" that requires the subject to include potency: matter and potency are accidental to existential act, which is not self-limiting but limited only by its commensuration to a potential principle. Nothing in the intrinsic character of "act" *requires* that it be com-mensurated to a finite subject (if it did, proofs for God's existence would be impossible).

[10] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Opera Omnia: Super Boetium de trinitate* (Commissio Leonina: 1992), q. *5,* a. 3: "Vtraque autem est de his que sunt separata a materia et motu secundum esse, set diuersimode, secundum quod dupliciter potest esse aliquid a materia et motu separatum secundum esse: uno modo sic quod de ratione ipsius rei que separata dicitur sit quod nullo modo in materia et motu esse possit, sicut Deus et angeli dicuntur a materia et motu separati; alio modo sic quod non sit de ratione eius quod sit in materia et mot•., set possit esse sine materia et motu quamuis quandoque inueniatur in materia et motu, et sic ens et substantia et potentia et actus sunt separata a materia et motu, quia secundum esse a materia et motu non dependent sicut mathematica dependebant, que numquam nisi in materia esse possunt quamuis sine materia sensibili possint intelligi" (speaking ofrevealed theology and philosophic theology). Note also the following lines of ibid., q. *5,* a. 4, ad 5: "Ad quintum dicendum, quod ens et substantia dicuntur separata a materia et motu non per hoc quod de ratione ipsorum sit esse sine materia et motu, sicut de ratione asini est sine ratione esse, set per hoc quod de ratione eorum non est esse in materia et motu quamuis quandoque sint in materia et motu, sicut animal abstrait a ratione quamuis aliquod animal sit rationale."

The *ratio entis* is intrinsically analogous, and its proportionate unity lies in the diverse but similar proportions of act and subject. Nothing requires this relation to be real and not logical, so it is affirmed (albeit only logically) even of God, *ipsum esse subsistens per se.* This discernment of the intrinsic analogicity of being highlights the formal intelligibility whereby we distinguish diverse grades of actuality among beings-some forms are more immersed in potency than are others. As the maxim *operatio sequitur esse* implies, the more immersed in potency is the substantial form the more immersed in potency will be the second act or operation that manifests the nature of a thing.

It is at this juncture that Schmitz's analysis seems to backpedal from the rich emphasis upon analogicity that heretofore characterizes his account. The problem is not that he distinguishes-as one ought-the immateriality that characterizes "every being by virtue of its being" from the immateriality that is specific to spiritually subsistent forms. Rather, the difficulty is that he describes the higher acts proper to personal beings in a manner that derogates the imputation of potency to them in relation to their acts. This derogation takes the form of distinguishing the receptivity of personal beings-which is "active"-from the receptivity of subpersonal or merely physical being, whose receptivity is characterized exclusively in terms of passive potency.

The context within which the question of receptivity in personal and subpersonal being arises within Schmitz's exposition is that of "communication without loss.[11] Such communication differs from physical activity, in that the "transfer" of wisdom need not imply the diminishment of it in the one who "transfers" it. Hence:

What evidence do we have of communication without loss? A most obvious fact is that which many of us have at hand: it is the evidence of teaching, whether formally in a classroom setting or informally in a conversation among friends. For when we bring someone to understand what we have come to understand, or when they bring us to that point, neither we nor they lose the knowledge communicated. [12]

[11] Schmitz, "Personal Becoming," 770.

[12] Ibid.

This point is, as it were, one of the *bonafides* of the presence of positively immaterial or spiritual being. Note, however, the subtle emphasis upon the "merely physical mode of passivity" in the lines that follow:

In this communication we meet another indicator of the human spirit and its proper law. In order to receive the communication we must be properly disposed. We must listen to what is being said or be attentive to the printed page. Gabriel Marcel has remarked upon the need to distinguish the notion of receptivity from that of passivity. In receiving a guest or a gift, the recipient is not simply passive. It makes no sense to say that the host has been mutated. He or she is called to conform to the disposition of a certain gracious activity that transcends any merely physical mode of passivity or activity, though the entire performance contains elements of both. The climate of the Enlightenment is very much with us still, and so the notion of receptivity is not easy to understand in a nonpassive sense. The insistence upon the identification of human dignity with autonomy and choice understood as individual independence makes reception something less than a transcendental value that is compatible with and even ennobling to our humanity. Yet nonpassive receptivity is as much a mark of the human spirit as is its activity, and the laws of such receptivity and activity are the laws that govern scientific understanding, artistic creativity, social civility, moral respect, and religious life."

This lengthy quotation reveals philosophical contrapositions whose nature is not immediately clear. We are told that "nonpassive receptivity is as much a mark of the human spirit as is its activity." But precisely what is meant by "nonpassive receptivity"? Does nonpassivity mean activity? If so, then is not a comparison of "nonpassive receptivity" and "activity" simply a comparison of activity and activity? If not, then what is "nonpassive" about receptivity? For is not a potency, *pari passu* with its actualization, actualized?

On the other hand, if receptivity is in some proper and limited sense an instance of passivity, then howsoever much it is a "mark of the human spirit," how is it known save through its appropriate *actualization?* Granted that human receptivity is irreducible to and "transcends any physical mode of passivity or activity," are we to infer that spiritual receptivity is simply unanalyzable in

[13] Ibid., 770-71.

terms of act and potency merely because it is not a "physical" or "material" receptivity? Or is "physical" perhaps being used here in a way cognate with the Banezian use in the phrase "physical pre-motion" (i.e., does "physical" simply mean "real")? But clearly Schmitz judges the spiritual to be real, so to say that spiritual receptivity transcends "physical" passivity or activity cannot mean that it transcends reality.

It appears that Schmitz here construes the spiritual transcendence of the person vis-a-vis lower, subpersonal, physical beings in one of two ways. In the text cited above he suggests that act and potency-as principles garnered in the knowledge of sensible beings-are too crude to serve in the analysis of personal being and operations. He seems also to adduce a third principle-neither act nor potency-that is in some sense unique to spiritual beings (for if act and potency do not pertain to personal being, personal being is nonetheless a real principle).

In any event it appears that by "nonpassive receptivity" Schmitz does not intend to designate either merely a *motio-the* act of a thing in potency insofar as it is in potency-or an imperfect act. For motion is predicated analogically both of physical and positively immaterial subjects. In this fashion, even positively immaterial beings are said to "move"-not in space, but from potency to act. Only the type of such motion, and not the generic character of the actualization of potency, differs between subpersonal (physical) and positively immaterial beings. And "imperfect act" lies still in the genus of act, and does not constitute a fundamental shift from analysis in terms of act and potency.

Granted, then, that a human being "receives" insight in a mode different from that in which a plant "receives" water, the question is whether in the process of each "actualization" or movement from potency to act we may distinguish potency and act. For even in the most densely symbiotic unity of potency and act, if they remain distinct principles, "nonpassive receptivity" will appear an overgeneral and underdetermined notion; that is, it will appear to refer to the process of receiving as a whole, including its predispositions-a process of actualization in which naturally there is a leavening of act before, during, and after the *motio* from potency to act. Yet description of any movement

from potency to act can be designated as "nonpassive" in this
way. At the level of operation, even the carnivorous insect needs
to scramble after, fight, and subdue its prey before actually
ingesting it; and actual ingestion *precedes* the assimilation of
nutriment.

Motion from potency to act is hardly unique to spiritual crea-
tures. Rather what is unique is the character of the potencies
actualized: for the spiritual assimilation to the other as other in
knowledge is clearly not a merely physical process. Whereas
when we receive food we assimilate it to ourselves, as it were, in
knowledge we become the other *qua* other, transcending the limits
of physicality. This is the very nature of objectivity: the cleaving
to and identification with that which is the case. A fortiori the
communication of truth transcends the nature of merely physical
communications. But from this it does not follow that intellec-
tive receptivity does not entail a richly intricate symbiosis of act
and potency.

Let us then take as a given that there are two corollary meanings
of "nonpassive receptivity" implicit in Schmitz's analysis. It
appears that act and potency are considered inapt to serve in the
analysis of personal being and operations, being fit only for the
analysis of subpersonal beings; and it also appears that a third
principle is being adduced-neither act nor potency-that is
contrasted with activity and is in some sense unique to spiritual
beings. To assess these points it is helpful to see if the analysis of
human knowledge in terms of act and potency can do justice to
its object.

III ONTOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF HUMAN COGNITION

Let us consider receptivity from the vantage point of St.
Thomas's ontology of knowledge. As nonpassive receptivity is
noted by Schmitz as crucial to "scientific understanding, artistic
creativity, social civility, moral respect, and religious life,[14] it
would seem one could not do better than to seek to identify "non-
passive receptivity" within the context of the life of the mind.
Indeed, St. Thomas himself writes of the intellect: "Now there

[14] Ibid., 771.

can be no contrariety in the intellective soul. For it receives according to the mode of its being." [15]

We must, as Schmitz suggests, in an intellectual context "listen to what is being said or be attentive to the printed page." [16] Clearly, focusing the mind to listen, or being attentive, is an act. If this act is not performed, one will not receive that which another intelligent mind may have to bestow. But when the mind is focused, and one is attentive and listening, what then transpires? Does one already know everything the speaker is communicating? Sometimes this is the case-sometimes we are reminded of something that we not only have considered in the past but that we have in mind even as the speaker communicates it to us.

But what transpires when we are told something we did not know before? Take the case of a communication in which the knowledge of the listener is genuinely enhanced. By virtue of what has this enhancement occurred? Has the listener not come actually to know that which before he knew only potentially? Why focus the mind, if not to facilitate an act of knowledge? And even when that which one contemplates is something one has previously known, still with respect to cognizing it once again the mind has moved from potency to act.

In Thomas's analysis emphasis is placed upon the actuation of intellective potency as the result of several "active" factors: predispository acts (attentiveness, et al.); the actual form of the thing cognized; and the active principle of the mind-the ontological principle of the agent intellect illumining and abstracting its object, rendering it an actual intelligible inseminating the possible intellect and moving the mind from potency to act. Finally, good intellectual habits-"active potencies"-are important in order quickly and penetratingly to "get the point." Let us consider these elements of act pertaining to the cognitional process more carefully.

The role of predispository acts is clear: attending, listening, and so on, are clearly acts. That which is being attended to is an

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[15] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 75, a. 6: "In anima autem intellectiva non potest esse aliqua contrarietas. Recipit enim secundum modum sui esse."

[16] Schmitz, "Personal Becoming," 771.

ontological subject in some aspect or other. It may be that we are attending to a person speaking, or to a physical event, or to the subtleties of an emotional situation. But that to which one attends informs the mind.

The "actual character of that which is known" is correctly construed in two ways: in terms of its nature or form, or in terms of its existential act. For instance, one may focus the mind upon what the known thing is, or equally unproblematically consider whether it exists *in rerum natura* or simply as an object of knowledge. Hence the nature of the dinosaur-outside Jurassic Park-while once to be found *in rerum natura,* is now found only as an object of knowledge. One may focus the mind upon the mode of a thing's being-does the dinosaur really exist, or does it now exist only cognitionally, solely in intellectual intention? In different ways both the existence of a thing and its nature serve as active principles of our knowledge.

For St. Thomas the critically active principle of our knowledge is the agent intellect. The phrase "agent intellect" does not refer to a phenomenologically evident datum. Rather it refers to an ontological principle explicating how the human mind abstracts the nature of a thing from material singularity, how it renders the potentially knowable object to be actually intelligible and uplifted from its immersion in matter. In the absence of such a principle, either individuated natures must somehow convert themselves into universal objects of cognition, or else the principle of human knowledge must be treated as immediately divine (or at least *extra* and *supra* human), as in the case of Augustinian illuminationism. While St. Thomas concedes that the agent intellect participates the divine mind, it does so as a secondary cause exercising its own very real causality. [17] Some might consider abstraction an activity that derealizes its subject-a principle of illusion rather than knowledge. But denial of the role of abstraction in knowledge appears unfounded in real evidence. For if all

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[17] Cf. Aquinas, *STh* I-II, q. 79, a. 4, ad 5: "cum essentiae animae sit immaterialis, a supremo intellectu creata, nihil prohibet virtutem quae a supremo intellectu participatur, per quam abstrahitur a materia, ab essentia ipsius procedere, sicut et alias eius potentias."

abstraction is held to deform its object, one's universal criticism of abstraction is itself objectively groundless.

Only when the nature of the thing to be known (a nature that in the individual thing is potentially intelligible) is made actually intelligible by abstraction does there ensue a knowable object. This actually knowable object moves the mind from potency to act in respect of the thing known. There are not "two minds"- the agent and the possible-but rather two powers of the mind, one abstractive while the other is conceptually apprehensive. [18] The object made actually intelligible through illumination and abstraction moves the possible intellect from potency to act with respect to knowing. [19]

Finally, in the act of affirming or denying that the thing con- ceived *is* thus and so, the intellect returns to the singular exis- tential subject it has objectivized. Whereas truth is found both in sense knowledge and the apprehension of quiddity, this truth is not self-consciously possessed by the mind until an intellective judgment is made wherein "the intellect can know its own con- formity with the intelligible thing, [1120] for then "the thing known is in the knower, which is implied by the word *truth.* [1121] This judg- ment reflects the actuality of the thing known *in rerum natura,* and involves adversion to the phantasm and the senses. [22]

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[18] Ibid. I, q. 79, a. 4, ad 4.

[19] The intelligible species is not that which is known, but the principle whereby it is known: the mind does not simply know impressions made upon it-a suggestion quite familiar to St. Thomas long before Hume--since this would imply the impossibility of science and the view that "seeming" is all that the mind can attain. Cf. ibid. I, q. 85, a. 2.

[20] Ibid. I, q. 16, a. 2: "lntellectus autem conformitatem sui ad rem intelligibilem cognoscere potest."

[21] Ibid. The broader passage states that "Veritas quidem igitur potest esse in sensu, vel in intellectu cognoscente quod quid est, ut in quadam re vera; non autem ut cognitum in cognoscente, quod importat nomen veri; perfectio enim intellectus est verum ut cognitum."

[22] Ibid. I, q. 84, a. 7: "Dicendum quod impossibile est intellectum secundum praesentis vitae statum, quo passibili corpori coniungitur, aliquid intelligere in actu, nisi conver- tendo se ad phantasmata." See also q. 85, a. 1, ad 5: "Dicendum quod intellectus noster et abstrahit species intelligibiles a phantasmatibus, inquantum considerat naturas rerum in universali; et tamen intelligit eas in phantasmatibus, quia non potest intelligere ea quo- rum species abstrahit, nisi convertendo se ad phantasmata, ut supra dictum est."

This account of knowledge is simply the application to cognition of the ontological principle that everything that is moved from potency to act is moved by something in act.[23] The fuse of actuality runs from the *actus essendi* through the substantial form and the essence of the thing; the actual presence of the thing to the senses *via* its operations; the mind's illumination and abstraction of some objective aspect of the subject actually present *via* the phantasm (but only potentially intelligible prior to abstraction)[24] rendering the potentially intelligible object to be actually intelligible; the corresponding movement of the possible intellect from potency to act with regard to conceiving the thing known through the actually intelligible object;[25] and then, finally, to the existential synthesis of all the preceding cognitive and subtending acts in a judgment regarding the being of the thing conceived *via* the abstracted intelligible, a judgment that must advert to the phantasm and the senses.[26]

This ontological account of human knowing safeguards two important elements. On the one hand, there is an active element in our knowing: the mind must illumine and disengage some potentially intelligible object and render it to be actually intelligible.[21] Knowing is not entirely passive-it involves not merely

[23] See ibid. I, q. 79, a. 3; or I, q. 2, a. 3.

[24] Ibid. I, q. 85, a. 1, ad 4: "Dicendum quod phantasmata et illuminantur ab intellectu agente, et iterum ab eis per virtutem intellectus agentis species intelligibiles abstrahuntur. Illuminantur quidem quia sicut pars sensitiva ex coniunctione ad intellectum efficitur virtuosior, ita phantasmata ex virtute intellectus agentis redduntur habilia ut ab eis intentiones intelligibiles abstrahantur. Abstrahit autem intellectus agens species intelligibiles a phantasmatibus, inquantum per virtutem intellectus agentis accipere possumus in nostra consideratione naturas specierum sine individualibus conditionibus, secundum quarum similitudines intellectus possibilis informatur."

[25] Ibid. See also I, q. 87, a. 1: "Sed quia connaturale est intellectui nostro secundum statum praesentis vitae, quod ad materialia et sensibilia respiciat, sicut supra dictum est; consequens est ut sic seipsum intelligat intellectus noster, secundum quod fit actu per species a sensibilibus abstractas per lumen intellectus agentis, quod est actus ipsorum intelligibilium, et eis mediantibus intelligit intellectus possibilis."

[26] Ibid. I, q. 84, a. 7: "Unde manifestum est quod ad hoc quod intellectus actu intelligat, non solum accipiendo scientiam de novo, sed etiam utendo scientia iam acquisita, requiritur actus imaginationis et ceterarum virtutum. • Also: "Et ideo necesse est ad hoc quod intellectus intelligat suum obiectum proprium, quod convertat se ad phantasmata, ut speculetur naturam universalem in particulari existentem.•

[27] Ibid. I, q. 84, a. 6: "Sed quia phantasmata non sufficiunt immutare intellectum possibilem, sed oportet quod fiant intelligibilia actu per intellectum agentem; non potest dici quod sensibilis cognitio sit totalis et perfecta causa intellectualis cognitionis, sed magis quodammodo est materia causae."

our predispository attentiveness, but abstractive acts of the mind. On the other hand, the agency of the knower is not demiurgically independent of the real. On the contrary, the knower's mind is inseminated and actualized by the real, it is rendered to be actually in conformity with the nature of the thing known. "The knower in act is the known in act.["][1128] The mind, which is translucent to the real, must become conformed to the real, must actually become that which potentially it is.

If the mind is not to be regarded as entirely self-actualizing with respect to that which it knows, then it must be admitted that the mind is a "measured measure," that it receives a crucial impetus to its own achievement from the part of the actually intelligible nature of the thing known. Yet, were it not for the abstractive (and illuminative) agency of the intellect, this nature would not thus be rendered actually intelligible so as to inseminate our cognition and move us from potentially to actually conceiving it.[29]

The Thomistic doctrine of the agent and possible intellect hence preserves and explicates at the ontological level the conjoint activity and passivity evident in our experience. Knowledge involves abstractive acts, certainly; but it also and primarily involves cognition of *things* through the abstracted intelligible species. **If** St. Thomas is correct in the proposition that "everything that is received is received according to the mode of the receiver,"[30] it is to be expected that the nature of the singular thing should be received intellectually by a rational being, that is, as abstracted and illumined: as actually intelligible. And this requires the application of an active intellectual principle. This actual intelligible actuates the possible intellect, moving it from potential to actual knowledge. Clearly here we are in the presence of a most finely and delicately delineated symbiosis of

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[28] Ibid. I, q. 87, a. 1, ad 3: "Sicut enim sensus in actu est sensibile propter similitudinem sensibilis, quae est forma sensus in actu; ita intellectus in actu est intellectum in actu propter similitudinem rei intellectae, quae est forma intellectus in actu. Et ideo intellectus humanus, qui fit in actu per speciem rei intellectae, per eandem speciem intelligitur, sicut per formam suam."

[29] Ibid. I, q. 79, a. 4.

[30] Ibid. I, q. 84, a. 1: "nam receptum est in recipiente per modum recipientis."

act and potency. But the principles of act and potency-here   as elsewhere in Thomas's theory-are   kept distinct.

If "nonpassive receptivity" means only that the agent intellect-an active intellective principle-is involved in knowing, this is for the unreconstructed Thomist a noncontroversial proposition. "Nonpassive receptivity" will then only mean that in higher beings both higher potencies and higher acts are to be found. But, understood in this way, both plausible senses of Schmitz's proposition fall apart: act and potency clearly apply to the activity of personal beings (this is precisely how this account of knowing is developed!), and not merely to subpersonal or physical things. And apart from intermediary incomplete or imperfect act [31] there is no principle intermediate to act and potency, but only the motion from potency to act by virtue of something already in act. Any purported transcendence of the mind over act and potency, then, appears illusory from an ontological perspective.

What of "active potencies" (i.e., *habitus)?* Do they not offer some solace? No, because they are not active in the same respect in which they are potencies. In other words, the residual capacity-which derives from the performance of many good acts of a certain species-to   act promptly, joyfully, easily, and well, is active with respect to rendering one *more proximate* to act, but still in potency with respect to the act itself. Otherwise to have a good habit would mean to be in perpetual act with respect to that which is governed by the habit, which is clearly not the case.

The Thomistic analysis of intellective act does not, then, afford evidence for a "nonpassive receptivity" unless this phrase simply refers to the distinctive configuration of act and potency requisite for human knowledge. Indeed, St. Thomas clearly identifies the intellect as a passive power in the wide sense that it needs to be moved from potency to act (but not, it should be

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[31] Ibid. I, q. 85, a. 3: "Secundo oportet considerare quod intellectus noster de potentia in actum procedit. Omne autem quod procedit de potentia in actum, prius pervenit ad actum incompletum, qui est medius inter potentiam et actum, quam ad actum perfectum. Actus autem perfectus ad quern pervenit intellectus, est scientia completa, per quam distincte et determinate res cognoscuntur. Actus autem incompletus est scientia imperfecta, per quam sciuntur res indistincte sub quadam confusione."

noted, in the merely physical sense of losing an attribute whether proper or improper). Hence after distinguishing first a sense of passivity that involves the deprivation of natural attributes or inclinations, and then a second sense of passivity that involves alteration or movement wherein anything-whether naturally proper to the thing or not-is lost, St. Thomas writes of a third sense of passivity:

Thirdly, in a wide sense a thing is said to be passive, from the very fact that what is in potentiality to something receives that to which it was in potentiality, without being deprived of anything. And accordingly, whatever passes from potentiality to act may be said to be passive, even when it is perfected. It is *thus* that to understand is to be passive. [32]

A few lines down, he writes further:

But the human intellect, which is the lowest in the order of intellects and most remote from the perfection of the divine intellect, is in potentiality with regard to things intelligible, and is at first like a *clean tablet on which nothing is written,* as the Philosopher says in III *De anima.* This is made clear from the fact that at first we are only in potentiality towards understanding, and afterwards we are made to understand actually. And so it is evident that with us to understand is *in a way to be passive,* according to the third sense of passion. And consequently the intellect is a passive power:[33]

St. Thomas will allow that there is not simply a division between potency and act; there is also in the power that is actualized an incomplete act: "every power thus proceeding from potentiality to actuality comes first to incomplete act, which is intermediate between potentiality and actuality, before accomplishing

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[32] Ibid. I, q. 79, a. 2: "Tertio dicitur aliqui pati cornrnuniter ex hoc solo quod id quod est in potentia ad aliquid, recipit illud ad quod erat in potentia, absque hoc quod aliquid abiiciatur. Secundurn quern mod um ornne quod exit de potentia in acturn potest dici pati, etiarn cum perficitur. Et sic intelligere nostrum est pati."

[33] Ibid.: "Intellectus autern hurnanus, qui est infirnus in ordine intellectuurn, et rnaxirne rernotus a perfectione divini intellectus, est in potentia respectu intelligibiliurn, et in principio est 'sicut tabula rasa in qua nihil est scripturn,' ut Philosophus <licit in III *De An.* Quod rnanifeste apparet ex hoc, quod in principio surnus intelligentes solurn in potentia, postrnodurn autern efficirnur intelligentes in actu. Sic igitur patet quod intelligere nostrum est quoddarn pati, secundurn tertiurn rnodurn passionis. Et per consequens intellectus est potentia passiva."

the perfect act." [34] He proceeds to state that "The perfect act of the intellect is complete knowledge, when the object is distinctly and determinately known; whereas the incomplete act is imperfect knowledge, when the object is known indistinctly, and as it were, confusedly." [35]

Yet this analysis stands in contrast with Schmitz's assertion of a "nonpassive receptivity." Indeed, context will not support the proposition that what Schmitz intends by such receptivity is merely an imperfect act, for example an act of knowing that is indistinct and confused. In what would otherwise be a crisp restatement of a basic theme within St. Thomas's philosophic anthropology, Schmitz reasons:

Even when we speak of spiritual activities, such as knowing and lov-ing, we must bear in mind that it is the whole human being who knows and who loves. It follows that in any actual exercise of knowing there will be found physical movements that are both the necessary condi-tion and the constant companions of what is the spiritual factor in such activities. The kind of becoming that is proper to the human person, then, is a becoming that is mixed with mutations to eye and ear and body, but the becoming is not to be identified simply with those muta-tions. The human spirit gives evidence, rather, of a distinctive principle operating within an ever-changing physical totality."

Nothing here would be problematic but for his earlier denial that "It makes no sense to say that the host has been mutated." [37] Yet conjoined with this earlier denial, his emphasis in the above text upon mutation "to eye and ear and body" in a becoming "not to be identified simply with those mutations" takes on the aspect of a reduction of act and potency solely to the realm of physical substance and operation.

Indeed, it appears that Schmitz is adducing the physical aspect of human nature to explain the presence of "movement"

[34] Ibid. I, q. 85, a. 3: "Omne autem quod procedit de potentia in actum, prius pervenit ad actum incompletum, qui est medius inter potentiam et actum, quam ad actum perfectum."

[35] Ibid.: "Actus autem perfectus ad quern pervenit intellectus, est scientia completa, per quam distincte et determinate res cognoscuntur. Actus autem incompletus est scientia imperfecta, per quam sciuntur res indistincte sub quadam confusione."

[36] Schmitz, "Personal Becoming," 771-72.

[31] Ibid., 771.

and "mutation." But these are also analogous terms: there are nonphysical "motions" from potency to act. Moreover, real evidence for the proposition that act and potency are insufficient principles for understanding personal activity has so far amounted only to this-that the agency of persons is higher than the agency of things. A further principle-and perhaps one that Schmitz himself would not otherwise wish to countenance-may be required in order to draw the conclusion to which this subtle use of the notion of "nonpassive receptivity" gives play. Might it be that a certain continental derogation of the *analogia entis-the* selfsame stance that Schmitz criticizes earlier in his essay for its reduction of subjects of being to mere objects of consciousness-has insinuated itself here, suggesting an ontological dichotomy where there is only the superior immateriality and liberty distinguishing personal from subpersonal being?

Rather than contemplating the superior ontological density of the human subject, whose intellect is a measured measure and who participates being, goodness, and truth *via* divine efficient causality, the persistent tendency of continental rationalism is to divorce the person from nature. Yves Simon has observed that it is not the work of natural-law theory but rather is "the most constant tendency of Kant and the Kantian tradition to strengthen, bring forth, overdo, render overwhelming, if not theoretically exclusive, the contrast between the universe of nature and the universe of morality." [38] Here one might as easily say "the contrast between the universe of being and the universe of knowledge," owing to the separation of the noumenal and phenomenal in Kantian theory. The resultant anthropological accounts ineluctably depict the human person as demiurgically self-activating and autonomous: [39] This seems to be true of many

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[38] Yves Simon, *The Tradition of Natural Law* (New York: Fordham University, 1992), 124-25.

[39] For example, Edmund Husserl's claim in *The Cartesian Meditations* that knowledge can be philosophically explicated irrespective of whether the world exists or not. However many realist glosses may be applied, this cannot help but strike one as suggesting that an epistemic impressario temporarily substitute for God. To cite but two passages: "The being of the world, by reason of the evidence of natural experience, must no longer be for us an obvious matter of fact"; "anything worldly necessarily acquires all

continental   systems of thought, [40] even of some phenomenologi-
cal philosophies of a more realist bent. [41] The ontological charac-
ter of St. Thomas ¹s analysis and its insistence upon the partici-
pated character of human intellective light establish a revealing
point of contrast:

We may therefore see whether an intellect is in act or potentiality by
observing first of all the nature of the relation of the intellect to uni-
versal being. For we find an intellect whose relation to universal being
is that of the act of all being; and such is the divine intellect, which is
the essence of God, in which, originally and virtually, all being pre-
exists as in its first cause. And thus the divine intellect is not in poten-
tiality, but is pure act. But no created intellect can be an act in relation
to the whole universal being, because thus it would need to be an
infinite being. Therefore no created intellect, by reason of its very
being, is the act of all things intelligible; but it is compared to these
intelligible things as a potentiality to act. [42]

   Over against this ontological analysis of human knowing, the
prime move in the speculative dislocation of the person from
nature seems to occur in the bifurcation of intellect and tran-
scendental being: for example in a Kantian categorical agnosis
regarding reality (the "noumenal1'),or in an utter temporalization
and phenomenalization   of being *(Dasein).* But does not the
refusal to discern the hierarchy of being as critically articulated

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the sense determining it, along with its existential status, exclusively from my
experiencing, my objectivating, thinking, valuing, or doing at particular times" *(The
Cartesian Meditations,* trans. Dorion Cairns [Nijhoff, 1960], 18, 26).

   [40] In addition to Husserl, one notes the Sartrean description of human consciousness
(:pour soi) as the antithesis of mere physical being *(en soi);* or the Heideggerian fascina-
tion with temporality (but what of transcendental being?).

   [41] Amongst professedly realist phenomenologies, one notes the teaching of Dietrich von
Hildebrand that the good of the person is irreducible to any natural analysis. See, for
example, his *Christian Ethics* (New York: David McKay Company, 1953).

   [42] Aquinas, *STh* I, q. 79, a. 2: "Considerari ergo potest utrum intellectus sit in actu vel
potentia, ex hoc quod consideratur quomodo intellectus se habeat ad ens universale.
lnvenitur enim aliquis intellectus, qui ad ens universale se habet sicut actus totius entis;
et talis est intellectus divinus, quia est Dei essentia, in qua originaliter et virtualiter totum
ens praeexistit sicut in prima causa. Et ideo intellectus divinus non est in potentia, sed est
actus purus. Nullus autem intellectus creatus potest se habere ut actus respectu totius
entis universalis, quia sic oporteret quod esset ens infinitum. Unde omnis intellectus crea-
tus, per hoc ipsum quod est, non est actus omnium intelligibilium, sed comparatur ad
ipsa intelligibilia sicut potentia ad actum."

both in first and second act in relation to potency establish pre-
cisely such a bifurcation? Is not the insinuation of a principle
that is neither act nor potency nor imperfect act an attempt to
fashion a philosophic anthropology whose prime note is no
longer act?

The best one can hope for from such a conspectus would seem
to be the re-entry of act as univocally modeled, sequestered, and
isolated in the consciousness of the person. For personal being
and act have been not merely distinguished, but dichotomized,
vis-a-vis lower analogates of being. Can such an anthropology
remain true to the created character of personal being? Granted
that such an effect is hardly commensurate with the philosophi-
cal trajectory of Schmitz's realism, it is the nature of one's view
of being and act-and the tenability of one's realism-that is at
stake.

IV. BEING AND OPERATION

Thus far consideration of the subtle transfiguration of recep-
tivity into a nonpassive principle that is distinct from act as well
as potency has occurred in two ways. Initially we focused upon
this notion inasmuch as it is present in the writing of Kenneth
Schmitz; then we contraposed this understanding with St.
Thomas's understanding of human intellection. Nowhere in St.
Thomas's account does he retreat from an allegedly pure
"Aristotelian" habit of adverting to act and potency as ontologi-
cal principles. If anything, St. Thomas appears to deepen the
analogicity of these principles by extending them to the existen-
tial realm in his metaphysics of *esse*. Not that *esse* is the act of a
somehow pre-existing essence, but *esse* as act is limited by the
potency of the nature it actualizes.

From this vantage point it appears that it is the higher char-
acter of intellective potency-and the corresponding higher
actuality of intellective operation-that marks it as distinct from
subintellective being. But the ontological principles of act and
potency do not become otiose in relation to personal being, nor
do they cease to apply proportionately to spiritual being. If they
did, then the analogy of being in terms of proper proportionality
of subjects and acts would become invalid, and the metaphysics

of the person would indeed dissolve into the mists of a highly univocal phenomenological personalism.

Repudiation of act/potency analysis of the human person is essentially a repudiation of Thomistic metaphysics in its own right. This conclusion cannot be averted by the supposition that while the principles of act and potency are important in the text of Aristotle, they play no part in the anthropological analysis of St. Thomas. Virtually every page of his text cries out with examples to the contrary. [43]

Certainly St. Thomas's treatment of knowledge does not eschew the primacy of act vis-a-vis potency in either the formal or the existential order. The ontological necessity for the doctrine of the agent intellect proceeds from the need to explicate the transition from potential to actual intelligibility on the part of the object, and the transition from potential to actual under-standing on the part of the subject. The ontological force of St. Thomas's teaching that truth consists formally in judgment con-sists in the primacy of existential act vis-a-vis the formal order (for truth is *in* quidditative knowledge, but the intellect does not self-consciously know it as such until judging what is and what is not the case, nor does it enjoy perfected knowledge of nature until it grasps it according to the manner in which it actually exists).[44]

Some forms are more immersed in potency than others. The maxim *operatio sequitur esse* implies that the more immersed in potency any substance is, the more immersed will its second act (operation) be: for operation manifests the nature of a thing. Indeed, it is only by virtue of a thing's operations that one is able to reach the point of adequate judgment regarding its status in being. Hence "since nothing acts except so far as it is actual, the mode of operation of the thing follows from its mode of being." [45]

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[43] The analogous character of these terms-act and potency-is extensively widened rather than narrowed by the further development of the metaphysics of *esse,* which should not be viewed as a substitute for the sublunary analysis.

[44] Aquinas, *STh* I, q. 84, a. 7.

[45] Ibid. I, q. 89, a. I: "cum nihil operetur nisi inquantum est actu, modus operandi uniuscuiusque rei sequitur modum essendi ipsius."

For the nature of each thing is shown by its operation. Now the proper operation of man as man is to understand, for it is in this that he surpasses all animals. Whence Aristotle concludes that the ultimate happiness of man must consist in this operation as properly belonging to him. Man must therefore derive his species from that which is the principle of this operation. But the species of each thing is derived from its form. It follows therefore that the intellectual principle is the proper form of man.••

Thus proper knowledge regarding form requires knowledge of operation. It is only by virtue of the composite character of operation in terms of act and potency that one is properly able to judge that human being is composite. Yet if intellection entails that which is neither potency nor act nor imperfect act, then intellection cannot be judged to be composite. Intellection thence becomes a sign of the unintelligibility of man's being. If one denies St. Thomas's teaching regarding operation and being, one not only abandons this particular account of human knowledge but also the Thomistic account of the analogous nature-and the hierarchy-of being.

Nowhere does St. Thomas suggest that our knowledge either of substantial nature or of a substance's mode of being is other than through knowledge of its operations. [47] Even the human discernment of the spirituality that characterizes intellectual activity derives not from a direct intuition of the spirituality of the soul, but from a contemplation of human activity: "Not therefore through its essence but through its act does our intellect know itself."[48] The hierarchy of being is thus reflected and communicated

[46] Ibid. I, q. 76, a. 1: "Propria autem operatio hominis inquantum est homo, est intelligere; per hanc enim omnia alia transcendit. Unde et Aristoteles in libro *Eth.,* in hac operatione, sicut in propria hominis ultimam felicitatem constituit. Oportet ergo quod homo secundum illud speciem sortiatur, quod est huius operationis principium. Sortitur autem unumquodque speciem per propriam formam. Relinquitur ergo quod intellectivum principium sit propria hominis forma."

[47] For this distinction between substantial nature and mode of being at the height of its significance, see St. Thomas's account of the knowledge of the separated soul, which by nature is ordered to the flesh, but whose altered mode of being sustains a praeternatural mode of operation. Cf. ibid. I, q. 89, a. 1: "cum nihil operetur nisi inquantum est actu, modus operandi uniuscuiusque rei sequitur modum essendi ipsius."

[48] Note that what is at stake is the singular perception of the intellectuality of one's soul. See ibid. I, q. 87, a. 1: "Non ergo per essentiam suam, sed per actum suum se cogniscit intellectus noster."

to our knowledge through a corresponding hierarchy of opera-
tion. This latter hierarchy is defined relative to the degree of
actuality and potentiality that characterizes operations.

What, then, are the consequences of viewing the human person's
operations as *sui generis* such that they are not bonded in ana-
logical community according to the proportion of act and potency?
The first and critical implication of such an approach is the
sequestration   and isolation of the being of the human person
from the hierarchy of being. For the hierarchy of being is under-
stood in terms of the analogy of proper proportionality-that   is,
the likeness of two proportions, xis to its act as y is to its act. But
the analogy of proper proportionality is only formulable through
knowledge of a thing's substantial mode and degree of being;
and a thing's substantial mode and degree of being is unknow-
able without recourse to its operations,   which manifest the
character of its being.

In one crucial respect the relation of *esse* to *ens* is unlike the
relation of other acts to other potencies. Other acts presuppose
their respective potencies: I cannot actually be walking unless I
first have the potency to walk. But in the case of *esse,* unless the
subject exists, it can have no other potency whatsoever. Ergo, the
first act must be considered ontologically prior to its commensu-
rate potency.

Nonetheless, in each case-whether   of first or second *act--act
is not self-limiting,* but is limited by a potency to which it is
ordered. This is indeed the authentic teaching of St. Thomas
regarding act as a real analogical principle, one that medievalist
scholars have carefully noted. [49] Furthermore, according to St.
Thomas there is no privileged cognitive access to the being of a
substance apart from contact with it through its operations. Only
insofar as these operations manifest the character of a being is it
knowable to us. And to reiterate an earlier point, a being acts

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[49] See the instructive essay by John Wippel, "Thomas Aquinas and Participation," in
Studies in Medieval Philosophy, ed. John Wippel (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic
University of America Press, 1987), e.g., 155: "Thomas insists that act as such is not self-
limiting. If one finds limited instances of act, and especially of the *actus essendi,* this can
only be because in every such case the act principle or *esse* is received and limited by a
really distinct principle."

only insofar as it is in act.[50] Hence to assert of some segment of
the person's being that it stands outside the proportion of act and
potency, is for St. Thomas to say that it stands outside of being,
which is absurd. The proportion of act to potency runs through
both the first and second act of creatures.

To assert that the human person transcends the division of
being into act and potency is to assert the fundamental inade-
quacy of Thomistic metaphysics. It is understandable why critics of
Thomistic ontology wish to embrace such a conclusion. But is
there reason to supplant the rigor and grandeur of St. Thomas's
metaphysical analysis on behalf of a notion of "nonpassive recep-
tivity" for which no anthropological correlate can be discovered?
The sight of Thomists ardently prepared to sacrifice an essential
element of the master's synthesis in order to propitiate a conclu-
sion for which no evidence has been adduced is startling. For
however finely one delineates human intellection and discerns
the distance that separates its passivities from those of the physical
order, in the broad sense of requiring activation and fecundation
from without the human intellect is a passive potency. Between
the penchant of continental rationalism to see in human intellection
an unmeasured measure pulling itself up by its own bootstraps
and St. Thomas's analysis of intellective actuation, there appears
to be no *tertia via*.

Does not knowledge of the being of the human person require
knowledge of personal activity? And does not this activity mani-
fest a composite character, however much it transcends the
realm of subpersonal act? It is only through a being's first and
second acts that it is intelligible at all-a point that should give
pause to those who suggest dispensing with St. Thomas's
account of nature, substance, and knowledge while presumably
retaining his metaphysics. Once severed from its prime eviden-
tial roots, the resultant account of *esse* may prove to be little
other than a fideist preserve. As the evidential roots of the meta-
physics of *esse* are to be found in the *contactus* with finite sensible
being in second act, denial that personal second act is bonded in

[50] Aquinas, *STh* I, q. 89, a. 1.

analogical community with the operations of subpersonal being
is a denial of the transcendentality   and hierarchy of being.

In sum, the analogy of being is known through the operations
of substances. These operations reflect diverse degrees of mate-
riality, manifesting diverse grades of being on the part of their
substantial principles. To dissever personal operations from the
ontological principles of act and potency is thus to deny the
intrinsic analogicity of being. What is forfeited in the beginning
will be difficult to reclaim in the end.

If personal operation is beyond ontological analysis, then per-
sonal being is beyond the entire order of the divine providence
and a law to itself. This conclusion hardly seems a way to
reclaim the interiority and subjectivity of being in the light of the
reduction of all things to mere objects of consciousness. For per-
sonal being becomes metaphysically incommensurable with lesser
beings once a genuinely "nonpassive receptivity" that is other
than "act" is affirmed. Yet on St. Thomas's analysis creaturely
receiving entails prior potency and activation.

One can of course envisage certain misconstructions of the
doctrine of analogy that might explain the speculative rationale
behind the view that personal being and operation transcend the
analogical extension of act and potency. If, for instance, the anal-
ogy in play were merely an analogy of extrinsic attribution, it
might mistakenly be supposed that for St. Thomas the personal
subject only is and acts in virtue of the similitude of the person
to wholly physical beings.

On the contrary, it is clear that persons do not enjoy being
solely because of their similitude to nonpersonal being. Nor is the
doctrine of St. Thomas that emphasizes corporeal quiddity as the
proper object of the human intellect [51]–and that stresses that
"incorporeal things, of which there are no phantasms, are known
to us by comparison with sensible bodies of which there are
phantasms" [52]–a reduction of the being of positively immaterial
or spiritual creatures to a mere similitude of physical things.

[51] Ibid. I, q. 84, a. 7.
[52] Ibid., ad 3: "Dicendum quod incorporea, quorum non sunt phantasmata, cognos-
cuntur a nobis per comparationem ad corpora sensibilia, quorum sunt phantasmata."

For the order of our knowledge and discovery is distinguishable from the order of being. That which is most intelligible in itself may be·initially, in relation to our knowledge, least intelligible. That we depend upon beings of lesser luminosity for our knowledge of essentially higher immaterial realities flows from the nature of the human person as an embodied knower. As the subject is not a mere Cartesian consciousness but a unified subject who both senses and intellectively knows, so the proper object of the human intellect is proportioned to the composite nature of the embodied knower.

This teaching focuses on the starting point and term of our knowledge in corporeal beings-which, though lower beings, are still beings. It is precisely the function of the negative metaphysical judgment of separation to lay bare the transcendence of being vis-a-vis any particular limited mode thereof by virtue of the transcendence of act vis-a-vis any finite subject.

This judgment of separation leads one to recognize the intrinsic diversification of being in terms of the similar but diverse proportions of subject and act. It thus manifests the proportionate unity of being as that of a similitude of diverse proportions of subject and act. As there is nothing in the intrinsically diversified *ratio* of subject-in-act that mandates any particular degree and kind of potency, being does not require-but may be found with-potency. Hence the evidence of being permits of the discovery of the truth of the proposition that God exists, and that in God the relation between subject and act is one of utter identity: the relation is wholly logical. If material things were affirmed to be by virtue of their degree of potency, rather than by virtue of their *actus essendi,* then discovering that a purely actual unmoved mover existed would be impossible (for being would be equivalent to being material).

Clearly, then, St. Thomas is not saying that God *is* simply because He is similar to Tootsie Rolls, porcupines, and other physical creatures. Indeed, for St. Thomas there is more dissimilitude than similitude here, and the truth of the matter is that the being of every finite subject is but an ontologically deficient imitation of God. Hence, in one place St. Thomas identifies the principal form of analogical knowledge of God as that of the

relation of cause to effect.[53] Knowledge of this relation, in turn,
presupposes the analogy of being uniting all creaturely things,
inasmuch as St. Thomas argues, "For it is not possible to name
God unless from creatures. [1154] **If** being is predicated of creatures
according to their diverse but similar proportions of subject and
act, and God is named from creatures, then the naming of God
presupposes analogy of proper proportionality.

Being, which is intrinsically diversified, is first discovered in
subjects proportioned to our powers as bodily (as well as spiritual)
beings. As the starting point and naturally proportioned termi-
nus for our rational acts, physical being supplies our prime *con-
tactus* with being. This first contact with being is *ipso facto* contact
with the efficient causality of God.

In summary, then, personal being is not rendered univocal
with lesser being in St. Thomas's account. **It** is untrue to say,
because spiritual being follows corporeal things in the order of
discovery, that in the order of being spiritual being is secondary.
That which is more intelligible in itself is frequently less intelli-
gible to us. St. Thomas does not suppose that a spiritual being *is*
only because of its likeness to sensible being; rather we *know* it
is, only because of our knowledge of evidence proportioned to
the unity of our nature as embodied knowers. This account of
knowledge is not ontological reductionism, but it does preserve
and respect the character of *human* being: man is not an angel,
nor a demiurge. Unlike the Edmund Husserl of the *Cartesian
Meditations,* St. Thomas does not suppose that knowledge can
be explicated in precision from the actual existence of the world.
For the intellect is a measured measure.

V. Is receptivity an act separable from potency:
a pure perfection?

Having criticized the notion of a nonpassive receptivity that is
neither act, imperfect act, nor potency, we can consider Norris
Clarke's argument that nonpassive receptivity is a pure perfec-

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[53] Ibid. I, q. 13, a. S.

[54] Ibid.: "Non enim possumus nominare Deum nisi ex creaturis."

tion of act. He reasons that receptivity may be subjected to a judgment of separation that will reveal that receptivity does not require potency, although it may be found with potency. This judgment would thus be cognate with the negative judgment of separation revealing the subject matter of metaphysics, the judgment that being does not require potency although it may be found with it.[55] If such a judgment about receptivity is well-founded it would indeed be a way to embrace personalist conclusions without abandoning the metaphysical lights of St. Thomas Aquinas. But is this judgment well-founded?

Clarke insists that ascribing potency to receiving "would be defining the term by its own partial negation, which is not a valid way of conceptual analysis." [56] However, one must note that any activity essentially requiring matter or potency is indeed defined "by its own partial negation." Whether such definition is "a valid way of conceptual analysis" or not is determined not by our dialectical experiments with concepts but by the natures our concepts reveal to the intelligence. Moreover, the removal of temporality from our understanding of receptivity will not settle the issue. One must first settle what the term "receptivity" designates. If it indicates the possession of a perfection by virtue of another and not by virtue of oneself, then the subject receiving does not originate the perfection. Hence, its mode of possession of the perfection is not through itself, but through another, indicating that it does not, simply speaking and through itself, possess the perfection.

If the receiving subject does not originate the perfection, it would seem that even on the hypothesis of a "complete reception" of a perfection the subject would stand in an atemporal relation of potency vis-a-vis the originating principle of the perfection: "atemporal" because not every receiving is temporal, and here we are concerned with the pure definition of "receiving"; "potency" because in some respect-that of the perfection received-the subject is actualized by another (whether temporally or nontemporally) and hence is not simply self-actualizing. From this very

[55] Clarke, *Response,* 161.
[56] Ibid., 166.

datum it becomes manifest that a received pure perfection *cannot be received in its totality.*

The totality of a pure perfection *excludes* potency, while the potency for some perfection-to be actualized through another rather than simply through itself-is necessary for receptivity. Potency is discernible in the subject's nonpossession of the perfection apart from the causality of another. Naturally speaking, receiving indicates potency.

Clearly acts are associated with human receiving-for instance, the act of focusing one's mind in receiving the content of a lecture. Acts such as this occur prior to and throughout one's intellectual reception. But a "receiving" that requires predispository and sustaining acts in order to occur does not yet reveal any case in which the precise element of receiving is a pure perfection of act. It establishes only the existence of a process that involves such acts. If *this* is receptivity as act, it appears to be merely a semantic shift to an order of generality sufficiently diffuse to encompass acts and potencies indistinctly.

Certainly in the case of intellective receptivity there are predispository acts. We have seen that human knowledge involves a delicate harmonization of potency and act, the motion from potency through imperfect act to complete act. For receptivity (in the case of the intellect) to *be* act it must be identified with the agent intellect's illumination of and abstraction from the phantasm. But the agent intellect does not itself receive the intelligible. The abstractive (and illuminative) agency of the intellect raises the potentially intelligible nature to actual intelligibility, actively inseminating our cognition via the abstracted species through which we are moved from potential to actual conception of the thing known. [57]

This account highlights the abstractive agency of the intellect, and the passive receptivity of the ideational conception of the thing known. But the principles of act and potency remain distinct. Indeed St. Thomas renders it clear that in his judgment the power of the intellect is in the most general sense a passive

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[57] Aquinas, *STh* I, q. 79, a. 4.

potency. [58] What is achieved by construing the agent intellect's act of abstraction as a "reception"? The reception is on the part of the possible intellect. Why should one maintain that the possible intellect is in act prior to its actualization? [59]

This treatment has not, of course, targeted the nature of love but rather that of knowledge. Love might be thought to be different, and more favorable, inasmuch as it bears upon an act of the will. Yet on closer inspection the volitional act is itself *actuated.* For while the will is a spiritual faculty, (1) it is specified by and begins with knowledge, which is itself actuated; and (2) even more than knowledge does love find its actual alpha and omega in the being of the beloved, which being is an ontologically imperfect participation of the goodness of God. Love is stirred, actuated, and sparked by the existence of the beloved subject, by *the being of the beloved.* Even deformed love manifests this nostalgia for the being of the beloved. Finally, (3) the positive substance of any act of the will is not outside the creative providence of God who is the author of freedom-as Thomas puts it, "man's free choice is moved by an extrinsic principle, which is above the human mind, namely by God." [60] The will is not a demiurgic unmoved mover, but a power of rational desire for the good whose liberty rests upon the intellect's translucence to universal truth.

VI. CONCLUSION

St. Thomas's metaphysical doctrine is not a renunciation, but a deepening affirmation, of the primacy of act. As has been seen, his analysis of human knowledge involves act and potency

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[58] Ibid. I, q. 79, a. 2.

[59] I do not wish to affect lack of sympathy for the objects that frequently motivate the desire to explicate "nonpassive receptivity" as discontinuous with Aristotelian analysis. Specifically, in analysis of gender in terms of diverse modes of possession of human nature, one might argue that the perfection of the feminine in terms of "nonpassive receptivity" has been derogated in favor of activity. But why not carry out the analysis in terms of act, locating feminine and masculine according to a similarity-in-difference of act, implying complementary perfections? Are not the distinctions, whatsoever they be, actual?

[60] Aquinas, *STh* I-II, q. 109, a. 2: "liberum arbitrium hominis moveatur ab aliquo exteriori principio quod est supra mentem humanam, scilicet a Deo."

regarding both the formal element (abstraction and conception) and the supraformal existential element (affirmation or negation regarding the being of the thing conceived). This follows *pari passu* with the roles of act and potency both in a substance's operation (manifesting the nature of the agent) and in being (composition of essence-Le., the limiting, potential principle-with existential act-i.e., *esse)*.

Efforts to deny the applicability of act and potency to the higher life of the person must end in the isolation and sequestration of the human person from transcendental being, rendering the person a metaphysically unintelligible reality. Such a separation of the person from the hierarchy of being implies that the human subject-who may quickly metamorphose to a pure "rational consciousness"-is an *unmeasured measure-a* gnostically self-sufficient and demiurgic subject. Even Clarke's effort to identify receptivity as "act"-thus preserving the fundament for metaphysical contemplation-precisely destroys the basis for judging the cognitive acts of the person to be composite, by transubstantiating potency into act.

By contrast the Thomistic emphasis upon the intellective power as a *measured measure* preserves the metaphysical dependency of the human mind upon being and God. The human intellect is a spiritual faculty whose exercise involves an intricate symbiosis of potency and act. This account preserves and explicates the passivity and activity, indeed the objectivity and the creatureliness, of human cognition. St. Thomas's philosophic analysis never ceases to place the human person's knowledge in relation to the entire hierarchy of being and hence a fortiori to the divine wisdom and providence.

Human receptivity is not a reality undefined by act and potency, nor is greater justice to the person achieved by an anthropological denial of the epiphany of act. The metaphysics of *esse* crowningly articulates the *inscape* of finite being through the similitude of diverse relations of act and potency; and our knowledge of personal being is mediated by our knowledge of personal operation. Separate these operations from the analogy of being and they are rendered metaphysically unintelligible.

Nor can one escape these conclusions by fleeing to a view of receptivity as an act, so as to situate it in the hierarchy of being. Howsoever desirable such a conclusion might be for certain purposes, creaturely evidence will not yield any receptive principle whose receptive status does not flow from its passive potency. In the absence of any such evidence there is no natural foundation for personalist separatism isolating human acts from principles explicative of all creaturely being. Finally, then, the human person is not distinguished from other beings as a subject who is uniquely ontologically opaque or naturally unintelligible. Rather the human person is a being whose nature is at root spiritual, positively immaterial, transcendent and free, and hence intellectively translucent to the whole universe of *ens commune* and to its absolutely transcendent Author.

EXCEPTIONLESS NORMS IN ARISTOTLE?: THOMAS AQUINAS AND TWENTIETH-CENTURY INTERPRETERS OF THE *NICOMACHEAN ETHICS*

CHRISTOPHER KACZOR

University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana

S CHOLARS HAVE DEBATED a great deal about whether or not Thomas Aquinas taught that there are exceptionless moral norms for human action and, if he did hold that there are such norms, how he understood them. [1] Remarkably, however, no study exists treating solely or for the most part Thomas 's commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics,* the *Sententia libri ethicorum,* [2] in relation to the question of exceptionless norms. [3] In what follows I intend to fill that lacuna.

[1] The following articles serve as a mere introduction to the vast amount of secondary literature on the subject: Franz Scholz, "Problems on Norms Raised by Ethical Borderline Situations: Beginnings of a Solution in Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure," in *Readings in Moral Theology,* vol. I: *Moral Norms and Catholic Tradition,* ed. Charles E. Curran and Richard A. McCormick, S.J. (New York: Paulist Press, 1979): 158-83; Jean Porter, "Moral Rules and Moral Actions: A Comparison of Aquinas and Modern Moral Theology," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 17 (1989): 123-49; Louis Janssens, "A Moral Understanding of Some Arguments of Saint Thomas," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 63 (1987): 354-60; Louis Janssens, "Saint Thomas Aquinas and the Question of Proportionality," *Louvain Studies* 9 (1982-83): 26-46; Mark Johnson, "Proportionalism and a Text of the Young Aquinas: Quodlibetum IX, Q. 7, A. 2," *Theological Studies* 53 (1992): 683-99.

[2] I am aware of the contemporary controversy regarding whether Thomas's Aristotelian commentaries represent his own views. A chapter of my dissertation will treat the view that nothing in the commentaries can be taken to represent Thomas's own thought unless substantiated by another text in the Thomistic corpus, a view aptly represented by Mark Jordan's "Thomas Aquinas's Disclaimers in the Aristotelian Commentaries" in *Philosophy and the God of Abraham: Essays in Memory of James A. Weisheipl,* O.P., ed. R. James Long, Papers in Mediaeval Studies 12 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1991), 99-112. However, even if Jordan is right, Thomas may still be useful as a rival interpreter of Aristotle vis-a-vis modern scholars .

[3] Cf. John A. Trentman, "Bad Names: A Linguistic Argument in Late Medieval Natural Law Theories" *Nous* 12 (1978): 29-39. Trentman mentions Aquinas's commentary, but Thomas is hardly the central figure of his treatment.

In Catholic circles, recent debates have been couched in terms
of the "deontologists" versus the "proportionalists." Many virtue
theorists have prior and more fundamental concerns than pro-
portionalists about how a truly Aristotelian theory can ever be
compatible with exceptionless norms. This paper explores those
concerns. First, I will bring forward the arguments of several
prominent Aristotelian scholars whose theses undermine the
possibility of exceptionless moral norms in the *Nicomachean
Ethics.* [4] In many places, Thomas's own exegetical remarks seem
to support their contentions. Next, I will present the chief textual
citations that represent, as it were, a *sed contra* to these authorities
and indicate how these citations were understood by Thomas. I
will then argue that exceptionless norms must be a part of
Aristotelian or Thomistic virtue ethics. Finally, I will suggest
some answers to the arguments of the authorities cited earlier.

I. ARGUMENTS AGAINST EXCEPTIONLESS   NORMS IN THE
NICOMACHEAN   ETHICS

Martha Nussbaum, in *The Fragility of Goodness,* draws a
dichotomy between two visions about how norms or "rules"
might function in ethical deliberation, justification, and
practice.

One possibility is that the rules and universal principles are guidelines
or rules of thumb: summaries of particular decisions, useful for pur-
poses of economy and aids in identifying the salient features of the par-
ticular case .... They [i.e., moral principles] are normative only insofar
as they transmit in economical form the normative force of the good
concrete decisions of the wise person and because we wish for various
reasons to be guided by that person's choices. We note that their very
simplicity or economy will be, on this conception, a double-edged

  [4] Since to my knowledge there exists no secondary literature on the *Sententia libri
ethicorum* and exceptionless norms, my chief interlocutors in this discussion will be nei-
ther Thomists nor proportionalists but rather Aristotelian scholars. Interestingly, we find
arguments used by proportionalists to argue against exceptionless norms in Thomas's
thought that are similar to those used by Aristotelian scholars who find no exceptionless
norms in the *Nicomachean Ethics.*

attribute: for while it may help the principle to perform certain peda-
gogical and steering functions, it will also be likely to make it less
correct as a summary of numerous and complex choices.'

Nussbaum proposes one understanding in which moral norms
serve as guidelines to be respected and considered in all cases,
but only observed insofar as those norms substantially embody
the choices made by the wise. The simplicity of these rules facili-
tates the inculcation of good decision making among the young
and guides the mature person in action inasmuch as these rules
remain for the most part normative.   Though they are not
normative in certain unusual cases, they serve as a caution
against hasty violation of a *prima facie* moral norm/'

   On the other hand, one might understand   these rules as
always and without exception binding.

Another possibility is that the universal rules are themselves the ulti-
mate authorities against which the correctness of particular decisions is
to be assessed. As the aspiring Platonic philosopher scrutinizes the par-
ticular to see the universal features it exemplifies, and considers it
ethically relevant only in so far as it falls under the general form, so the
aspiring person of practical wisdom will seek to bring the new case
under a rule, regarding its concrete features as ethically salient only
insofar as they are instances of the universal. ... The universal principle,
furthermore, is normative because of itself (or because of its relation to
higher principles), not because of its relation to particular judgments.'

Aristotelian norms, interpreted in this way, are binding or "deonto-
logical," in the terminology of scholars in the proportionalist
debate. [8]

   ' Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 1986), 299. J. A. Smith's introduction to *The Ethics of Aristotle* (London: J. M.
Dent & Sons LTD, 1911), gives an earlier version of this interpretation: "It is all-
important to remember that practical or moral rules are only general and *always admit
of exceptions,* and that they arise not from the mere complexity of facts, but from the lia-
bility of the facts to a certain unpredictable variation" (xi, emphasis added).

   [6] This understanding of moral norms or rules is what I take some proportionalists to
mean by "virtually" and "practically" exceptionless moral norms. See, for example, Louis
Janssens, "Norms and Priorities in a Love Ethic," *Louvain Studies* 6 (1977): 207 and 217-
18; and Richard McCormick, *Notes on Moral Theology 1965 through 1980* (Washington,
D.C.: University Press of America, 1981): 710.

   ; Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness,* 299-300.

   [8] Cf. Bruno Shiiller, S.J., "Various Types of Grounding for Ethical Norms," and Charles
Curran, "Utilitarianism and Contemporary Moral Theology: Situating the Debates," in
Curran and McCormick, *Readings in Moral Theology,* 1:184-98 and 341-62.

Nussbaum   regards the first reading as more plausible on
account of the following passage from the *Ethics:*

Let this be agreed on from the start, that every statement *(logos)*
concerning matters of practice ought to be said in outline and not with
precision, as we said in the beginning that statements   should be
demanded in a way appropriate   to the matter at hand. And matters of
practice and questions of what is advantageous   never stand fixed, any
more than do matters of health. **If** the universal definition is like this,
the definition concerning particulars   is even more lacking in precision.
For such cases do not fall under any science *(techne)* nor under any
precept, but the agents themselves must in each case look to what suits
the occasion, as is also the case in medicine and navigation.'

According to Nussbaum, Aristotle indicates the necessity of the
mutability,   indeterminacy,   and particularity   of ethical dis-
course.10Ethical discourse, and hence for her moral norms, must
change since "the world of change confronts agents with ever
new configurations,   surprising them by going beyond what they
have seen." [11] A moral agent cannot rely on general conceptions of
justice, just as a doctor "whose only recourse, confronted with a
new assortment   of symptoms,   was to turn to the text of
Hippocrates   would surely provide woefully inadequate treatment;
a pilot who steered his ship by rule in a storm of unanticipated
direction and intensity would be, quite simply, incompetent at
his task. [1112] Nussbaum   also emphasizes that Aristotle speaks of

[9] *NE* 1103b34-l 104al0. William Charlton in *Weakness of the Will* glosses this state-
ment by saying, "Aristotle would hold, then, that a general principle of conduct can estab-
lish at best a *primafacie*   rightness and wrongness" (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1988),
116. We have, then, in Nussbaum and Charlton, the same basic argument, though on dif-
ferent levels of the text. Nussbaum   works for the most part macroscopically and
Charlton microscopically, but both conclude that in Aristotle we find no "absolute duties"
or, in the language of proportionalists,   no exceptionless moral norms.

[10] Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness,* 302.

[11] Ibid. Joseph Fuchs concurs: "The *a priori,* hence universal, non-historical social
ethics that stands opposed to this [taking into account the entire reality of the action], that
provides norms in advance for every social reality, sacrifices the indispensable objectivity
and therefore validity of duly concrete solutions to an *a priori* universalism" (Joseph
Fuchs, "The Absoluteness of Moral Terms," in Curran and McCormick, *Readings in
Moral Theology,* 1:115).

[12] Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness,* 303.

the *"indefiniteness* or *indeterminacy* of the practical. [13] A rule, like a manual of humor, is naturally bound between two irreconcilable tasks: "what really counts [in humor] is in the response to the concrete, and this would be omitted [in a manual]. … [Yet] the rule would imply that it was itself normative for response (as a joke manual would ask you to tailor your wit to the formulae it contains)--and thus would impinge too much on the flexibility of good practice. [14] Since individual actions have irreducibly particular features, we as agents in ethical reasoning, reasoning about the practical, use norms in childhood as a more absolute guide, but as mature persons use these norms "tentatively in our approach to the particular, helping us to pick out its salient features.[15] These rules help greatly in situations in which we as mature moral agents must decide without much reflection and also "give us constancy and stability in situations in which bias and passion might distort judgment. [16] However, superior ethical agents "would not have the same need for them. [17] Nussbaum concludes, "Practical wisdom, then, uses rules only as summaries and guides; it must itself be flexible, ready for surprise, prepared to see, resourceful at improvisation. [18]

In opposition to the "deontological" interpretatfon of norms in Aristotle, she suggests that it reduces the full description of the act, "regarding its concrete features as ethically salient only insofar as they are instances of the universal." [19] Further, she seems to imply that universal principles lack sensitivity to the prudential and practical judgments that are a cornerstone of Aristotelian thought: "The universal principle, furthermore, is normative

   u Ibid.

   [14] Ibid.

   [15] Ibid., 304.

   [16] Ibid.

   [17] Ibid.

   [18] Ibid., 305. Cf. *Sententia libri ethicorum* 9.2 (1779);hereafter *Sent.* All Latin citations are from the Leonine edition. English translations of tbe commentary are my own or by C. I. Litzinger, O.P., *Commentary on Aristotle's "Nicomachean Ethics"* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Dumb Ox Books, 1993); the numbers in parentheses refer to paragraphs in the English edition.

   [19] Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness,* 299-300.

because of itself (or because of its relation to higher principles), not because of its relation to particular judgments. [20]

Nussbaum's interpretation finds support in the *Sententia libri ethicorum.* Aristotle, according to Thomas, "says that it is not easy to assign the sort of thing we must choose in such circumstances [i.e., of seemingly compulsory action]. He assigns as the reason that many differences are found in singulars. Hence the judgment of them cannot be comprised under an exact rule but they are to be left to the evaluation of a prudent man. [21] In other passages that likewise stress the particularity of moral action, Thomas lends support to Nussbaum's interpretation.

Nancy Sherman provides a second objection to the existence of exceptionless norms in the *Nicomachean Ethics.* In the second chapter of *The Fabric of Character,* she highlights the importance of *epieikeia,* or equity, in Aristotle's thought. [22] In her summary of the relevant texts, she argues that Aristotle gives several overlapping reasons why, at times, written law must give way to *epieikeia:* (1) the written law cannot enumerate all the possible actions that might take place,[23] (2) in judging the applicability of the law, the lawgiver's intention must be determined, [24] (3) the interpreter of the law must at times go beyond the lawgiver's intention to correct for defects present in the lawgiver (e.g., the lack of relevant empirical evidence), [25] and (4) in all cases where no existing law applies, equity must be used to determine a conclusion. [26] "The effect of equity in counteracting legal rigorism is perhaps clearest in the establishing of punishments. It is associated with considerateness *(suggnome)* and a disposition to show

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[20] Ibid., 300.

[21] "dicit quod non est facile tradere qualia oporteat pro qualibus eligere, et rationem assignat ex hoc quod multae differentiae sunt in singularibus et ideo iudicium de eis non potest sub certa regula comprehendi, sed relinquitur existimationi prudentis" *(Sent.* 3.2 (399)].

[22] Nancy Sherman, *The Fabric of Character: Aristotle's Theory of Virtue* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

[23] A point acknowledged by Thomas at *Sent. 5,* 16 (1083).

[24] Acknowledged by Thomas at *Sent. 5,* 16 (1078, 1086).

[25] Thomas notes this also at *Sent. 5,* 16 (1084).

[26] Sherman, *The Fabric of Character,* 17-18; Thomas also accepts this point, cf. *Sent. 5,* 16 (1086).

forgiveness, leniency, or pardon. [1121] Sherman contrasts this approach with the Kantian principle of "universalizability. [1128] Thus, one might conclude from Sherman's account (though she does not explicitly draw this conclusion), that the norms of the moral life must be subject to equity, so that we can avoid falling into the error of administering justice without regard to consequence. Textual evidence from both Aristotle and Thomas lends credibility to this view. Thomas writes:

Since particulars are infinite, our mind cannot embrace them to make a law that applies to every individual case. Therefore a law must be framed in a universal way, for example, whoever commits murder will be put to death.... The reason why not everything can be determined according to law is that the law cannot possibly be framed to meet some rare particular incidents, since all cases of this kind cannot be foreseen by man.2[9]

According to a reading of the text inspired by Sherman, we would err, then, if we were to claim that moral norms are universal. On this view, both Aristotle and Thomas hold that moral norms cannot be framed to meet "some rare particular incidents." Thus, in atypical situations, exceptionless norms must give way to *epieikeia.* [30] We should not therefore speak of exceptionless norms but only virtually exceptionless norms, since for all norms, in light of equity, exceptions must be made.

An argument put forward in W. F. R. Hardie's *Aristotle's Ethical Theory* provides our final objection to the thesis that exceptionless norms exist in Aristotle's ethical system. At *Ethics* 1107a9-14, Aristotle writes:

[27] Sherman, *The Fabric of Character,* 18.

[28] Ibid., 22-24. Whether or not this contrast is justified is another question. If one understands "universalizability" as R. M. Hare does, in the sense of not making personal exceptions for oneself, then Sherman's contrast would be harder to maintain. See R. M. Hare, *Moral Thinking: Its Levels, Method, and Point* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 106-17.

[29] "quia enim particularia sunt infinita non pussunt comprehendi ab intellectu humano ut de singulis particularibus lex feratur et ideo oportet quod lex in universali feratur, puta quod quicumque fecerit homicidium occidatur" *(Sent.* 5, 16 (1083, 1087]).

[30] Charles Curran is perhaps the best-known proponent of a similar idea, which he calls a "theology of compromise." See his *Directions in Fundamental Moral Theology* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985).

But not every action nor every passion admits of a mean; for some have names *(onomastai)* that already imply that badness is included in them *(suneilemmena meta tes phauloutetos),* e.g., spite, shamelessness, envy, and in the case of actions such as adultery, theft, murder; for all of these and such things imply by their names that they are themselves bad, and not the excesses or deficiencies of them. [31]

This teaching, Hardie notes, neither adds to nor modifies the antecedent doctrine, but rather indicates an implication of the doctrine to eliminate possible misunderstandings. [32] He comments further that:

[Aristotle] is making a purely logical point which arises from the fact that certain words are used to name not ranges of action or passion but determinations within a range with the implication, as part of the meaning of the word, that they are excessive or defective, and therefore wrong. Thus envy is never right and proper because "envy" conveys that it is wrong and improper. Again it does not make sense to ask when murder is right because to call a killing "murder" is to say that it is wrong .... This, and no more than this, is what Aristotle means when he says that "not every action nor every passion admits a mean" (1107a8-9). [33]

In other words, Hardie admits that Aristotle holds that "To murder is always wrong," but suggests that to use the word "murder" already implies a moral evaluation. "To murder" means "to kill wrongly" or "to kill unjustly." The word used to name the act implies a moral evaluation of the act. [34] Thus, we do find exceptionless moral norms in Aristotle, but these norms are tautological. [35]

[31] Oxford translation, which Hardie uses generally throughout his book.

[32] W. F. R. Hardie, *Aristotle's Ethical Theory,* 2d ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) 136.

[33] lbid., 137-38.

[34] Saint Thomas sometimes makes remarks that support Hardie's claim: "Likewise in practical matters there are some principles naturally known as it were, indemonstrable principles and truths related to them, as evil must be avoided, *no one is to be unjustly injured,* theft must not be committed and so on" *(Sent.* 5, 12 [1018], emphasis added).

[33] In this same vein, Richard McCormick writes: "When something is described as 'adultery' or 'genocide,' nothing can justify it; for the very terms are morally qualifying terms meaning unjustified killing, intercourse with the wrong person, etc. That is, they are tautological. The question contemporary theologians are facing is rather this: What (in descriptive terms) is to count for murder, adultery, genocide?" *(Notes,* 700). Lisa Cahill concurs: "[Norms] such as 'Do not commit murder,' 'Do not tell a lie,' and 'Do not

It may not be apparent why this interpretation serves an argu-
ment against moral norms in Aristotle. Does not Hardie's inter-
pretation of Aristotle's text at 1107a8-9 presuppose that Aristotle
accepts that there are exceptionless moral norms? As a matter of
fact, Hardie acknowledges exceptionless norms, but he under-
stands them in such a way as to make them inoperable and non-
guiding. In a sense then, according to Hardie's interpretation,
there are no exceptionless norms in Aristotle, not because of the
adjective   "exceptionless" but because of the noun "norms."
"Norm" connotes that which can or ought to guide a person.
Tautological rules cannot do this. How could they? Let us take a
non-moral example of a norm (not an exceptionless norm, just a
"good *in pluribus"* norm): "If you want your car to run well,
change the oil every three thousand miles." This rule can guide
action *only* if it is non-tautological. If we were to understand
"every three thousand miles" really to mean "every time your car
needs its oil changed," and the precise question we are asking is:
"How often ought I to change my oil?" we will not have gotten a
bit closer to an answer. Similarly in moral matters, if we ask,
"What is good (or evil) for a human agent to choose?" and the
answer really boils down to: "What is good (or evil) for a human
agent to choose," then our inquiry has not advanced:' [6] Hence, to

be cruel' [are analytical or tautological norms]. These specify a certain sort of act, and
indicate furthermore that it is carried out in circumstances that make it immoral.
However, the precise nature of those circumstances is not specified. The norms prohibit-
ing murder, lying, and cruelty deal with homicide, telling an untruth, and inflicting suf-
fering, all of which might be justified in some but not all circumstances .... we are not
told what kind of homicide counts as murder, of untruth as lying, or of infliction of pain
as cruelty" (Lisa Cahill, "Contemporary Challenges to Exceptionless Norms," *Moral
Theology Today* [St. Louis, Mo.: The Pope John XXIII Center, 1984], 123).

""Thomas agrees. When commenting on Aristotle's remarks at 1138b25-32, Thomas
says: "Next at 'It is true,' he shows that it *is* not enough to know this about right reason.
He states that what was said is certainly true but does not make sufficiently clear what
is required for the use of right reason; it is something common verified in all human occu-
pations in which men operate according to a practical science, for instance, in strategy,
medicine, and the various professions. In all these it is true to say that neither too much
nor too little ought to be done or passed over but that which holds the middle and is in
accord with what right reason determines .... If a person were to ask what ought to be
given to restore bodily health, and someone advised him to give what is prescribed by
medical art and by one who has this art, *i.e.,* a doctor, the interrogator would not know
from such information what medicine the sick man needs" *(Sent.* 6, 1 [1111]).

interpret the words "murder," "adultery," and "theft" as already
implying moral evil and nothing more is to claim that no
exceptionless norms exist in Aristotle:' [7]

II. AN OVERLOOKED AND MISCONSTRUED PASSAGE:
N!COMACHEAN ETHICS 2.6

This impressive set of arguments and authorities must, if it is
to be thorough, treat texts that seemingly contradict this inter-
pretation. To Hardie's credit, he does treat such texts, but
Nussbaum and Sherman do not. The latter two do not acknowledge
Ethics 1107al-22:

Not every action nor every feeling, however, admits of the mean, for
some of them have names which directly include badness, e.g., such
feelings as malicious gladness, shamelessness, and envy, and, in the
case of actions, adultery, theft, and murder; for all of these and others
like them are blamed for being bad, not [just] in their excesses and defi-
ciencies. Accordingly, one is never right in performing these but is
always mistaken; and there is no problem of whether it is good or not
to do them, e.g., whether to commit adultery with the right woman, at
the right time, in the right manner, etc., for to perform any of these is
without qualification to be mistaken. [38]

This lacuna mars their treatment of the *Ethics.* Thomas does not
make such an omission in his commentary.

All of these things [adultery, envy, murder] and the like are evil of
themselves and not only in their excess or defect. Hence in such things a
person cannot be virtuous no matter how he acts, but he always sins in
doing them. In explaining this, he [Aristotle] adds that right or wrong
in actions like adultery does not arise from the fact that a person does
the act as he ought or when he ought, so that then the act becomes

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     Ji Porter concurs: "Most proportionalists hold that the negative moral rules can be
recast as essentially tautological affirmations that it is wrong to do wrong with respect to
some of life's most important values: 'Murder is wrong' means 'Wrongful killing is
wrong.' ... In order to apply these rules to concrete cases, it is necessary to evaluate
whether a contemplated instance of killing, say, *is* wrong, that is, is not justified by some
commensurate premoral value. Hence, the moral rules themselves give us *no specific
information on what one ought or ought not to do,* as they do for traditionalists. *At most,*
they identify areas of human life that are of special moral significance" (Porter, "Moral
Rules and Moral Actions," 129, first emphasis hers).
     Js Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* trans. Hippocrates G. Apostle (Grinnell, Iowa: The
Peripatetic Press, 1984), 29.

good, but on the other hand evil when not done as it ought. Without qualification sin is present whenever any of these is present, for each of them implies an act opposed to what is right.'"

Thomas goes on to point out that since these actions (adultery, murder, etc.) are either an excess or a defect, in order for them to be morally good they must be at the same time a mean, which is a contradiction. Furthermore,   we would have to find the excess of the excess and the defect of the defect, which could go on forever. [40] The latter consideration   amounts to a *reductio ad absurdum,* for in practical matters, like ethical deliberation, agents cannot speculate endlessly.

For Aristotle as well as Thomas, exceptionless norms make up part, and only part, of their conception of virtue. Perhaps Nussbaum, Charlton, and Hardie were motivated, in part, by a wish to mark the distance between Aristotelian ethics and Kantian   deontological   ethics,   a valuable   enterprise. [41] Nevertheless, we ought not lose sight of the importance and even necessity of exceptionless norms in Aristotelian or Thomistic virtue ethics. [42] In the words of Alasdair Macintyre:

In possessing the moral virtues [a virtuous person] will recognize that, just as it is always wrong to act contrary to the virtues, so certain types of action (for example, murder, theft and adultery) are always bad, independently of circumstance. Aristotle said nothing about how precisely the knowledge of the universal wrongness of these types of action is related to the possession of *phronesis.* This silence concerns what was to become a central problem area for later virtue ethics.' [1]

[39] "omnia enim ista et similia, secundum se sunt mala; et non solum superabundantia ipsorum vel defectus; unde circa haec non contingit aliquem recte se habere qualitercumque haec operetur, sed semper haec faciens peccat. Et ad hoc exponendum subdit, quod bene vel non bene non contingit in talibus ex eo quod aliquid faciat aliquod horum, puta adulterium, sicut oportet vel quando secundum quod non oportet. Sed simpliciter, qualitercumque aliquod horum fiat, est peccatum. In se enim quodlibet horum importat aliquid repugnans ad id quod oportet" *(Sent.* 2, 7 [329]).

[40] See ibid. (330).

[41] Cf Sherman, 119-23. See also Julie Annas, "The Virtues," in *The Morality of Happiness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 47-131.

[42] Elsewhere Aristotle writes that "it is probable that there are some kinds of action that a man cannot be forced to do and he ought to undergo death of the cruelest kind rather than do them. (The reasons that constrained Euripides' Alcmaeon to kill his mother seem to be ridiculous.)" *(Nicomachean Ethics* ll 10a26-29).

[41] Alasdair Macintyre, "Virtue Ethics," in *Encyclopedia of Ethics* (New York: Garland, 1992) 1277.

I hope to move in the direction of a solution by talking about practices and the hierarchical ordering of practices in Aristotle and Thomas.

Aristotle, Thomas, and Nussbaum draw analogies between the practice of virtue and the arts of medicine and seamanship. [44] It is true that these analogies indicate the way in which the moral life cannot be simply deduced from universal norms, yet these analogies tell us more than that alone. Is it not the case that, in these activities, to do certain individual acts is not to do these activities well? In the art of medicine, it is without doubt true that the proper medicine to give to an ailing patient cannot be deduced from an a priori universal norm, but it is also the case that certain treatments ought never to be given. [45] Before considering all the relevant and particular characteristics of an asthmatic, a doctor cannot determine whether Theodur, Serevent, or Provental will best alleviate his bronchitis, but the doctor knows that forcing the patient to inhale car exhaust will not help his condition. Given that an exclusive atmosphere of CO along with the corresponding exclusion of 0_2 over an extended period causes death in all human patients (thus naturally excluding the end of the medical art, restoration of health), we would be justified teleologically in holding the exceptionless moral norm: "Do not administer CO to patients." [46] To violate this negative exceptionless norm is to thwart the end of the medical profession.

Nussbaum, again following Aristotle and Thomas, takes up a second analogy from the art of seamanship. [47] Once again, the example perhaps indicates more about the moral life than Nussbaum may want to admit. Although we cannot sail a boat to shore by a priori positive dictates, this is not to say that we cannot thwart the effort to move a ship to shore by violating negative precepts. Given that winds and waters vary in channels

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[44] See Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness,* 303.

[45] I leave aside here questions about euthanasia, assuming for the moment that the art of medicine only properly achieves its end in the restoration of health to the sickly.

[46] Since some may point out that there is a circumstance involved here implicitly, that is, "over an extended period of time," we could substitute a less colorful example, like completely lobotomizing or decapitating the patient.

[47] Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness,* 303.

and seas, a ship's captain must make prudential judgments in light of relevant and highly specific factors to chart a course. Without experience and knowledge of relevant particulars, one cannot say whether a port tack upwind is or is not more advantageous than running a spinnaker downwind. However, certain negative norms apply if we want to sail a ship at all. Thus, it is an exceptionless norm of this activity that we must not destroy the ability of the boat to float. To cause the boat to sink is to exclude naturally and necessarily the end of moving that boat into shore.

The observation that certain practices often can be thwarted by certain actions should not provoke much controversy. In fact, this is recognized by Macintyre in *After Virtue* when he notes that if a child playing chess is seeking the good internal to the game of chess and not external, "if the child cheats, he or she will be defeating not me, but himself or herself." [48] However, even if these analogies and examples indicate something important about the moral life, as their use in Aristotle, Thomas, and Nussbaum suggests, we need not accept that flourishing in virtue necessitates the observance of exceptionless norms. [49] Certainly, to sink a ship or to cheat is to exclude the internal goods of sailing and chess playing, but in light of other goods, would not the virtuous person punch a hole in the hull or move a piece without the other player's knowledge? Intuition suggests that the goods internal to practices may have to be sacrificed in light of other goods internal to other practices.

But in Aristotle and in Thomas, practices are ordered to one another. As Aristotle notes in the *Nicomachean Ethics,* bridle

[48] Alasdair Macintyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 188.

[49] I do not mean to conflate rational activity leading to the habit of virtue *(arete)* with craft *(techne).* According to Aristotle, virtue differs from craft in at least three ways. One cannot misuse a virtue, but one can misuse a craft (as a doctor using knowledge of the human body and medicines could kill a patient). Secondly, crafts function independently of the intention of the artisan, but the exercise of virtue requires the just intention of the agent. Thirdly, craft ends in product; virtue in activity. What Aristotle does not say, and on my account cannot say, is that craft and virtue differ in that the former is of such a nature that some actions thwart its aim, while the latter is of such a nature that no action, in itself, thwarts its activity. Cf. Jan Edward Garrett, "Aristotle's Nontechnical Conception of *Techne," The Modern Schoolman* 64 (May 1987): 283-94.

making is ordered to horsemanship which in turn is ordered to the military art. It would therefore seem apparent that the virtuous person would never violate the goods internal to the military art for the sake of the goods of bridle making. Hence, it would seem that the practices at the top of the hierarchy cannot be violated at all, since there would be no goods internal to still higher practices for which they might be violated. The highest practices for both Aristotle and Aquinas involve communal life. Norms prohibiting the destruction of this life are exceptionless, since without this communal life agents cannot flourish in the lower-order practices. Speaking about Aristotle, Macintyre notes, "Examples of such offences would characteristically be the taking of innocent life, theft, and perjury and betrayal." In reference to Aquinas, Jean Porter writes that exceptionless norms govern "the harms that involve some violation of the fundamental institutional structures of the community. Adultery violates the norms of marriage (II-II 154.8); lying violates the very point of language (II-II 110.1); usury violates the institutions of property and commerce (II-II 78.1); the various kinds of judicial offences (perjury, for example) violate the norms of legal justice." [50] Without community there cannot be human flourishing, hence to harm the communal well-being in such a way as to undermine the community is to thwart not only the well-being of the community, but also one's own. The agent who violates these norms undermines a necessary condition for his own flourishing in virtue and those who undermine such conditions cannot themselves be virtuous; hence the virtuous person would never violate exceptionless norms prohibiting the aforementioned acts.

   This is precisely why Aristotle, and Thomas following him, speaks of actions that ought not be done regardless of circumstances or remote intention. [51] Certain actions naturally and by necessity thwart the ends of human activity of the highest

   [50] Porter, "Moral Rules and Moral Actions," 138.
   [51] By circumstances I mean "accidental circumstances" in Janet Smith's terms and I wish to distinguish remote intention from what she calls "specifying intention." Remote intention is the intention that does not specify the act, though it may be the reason for the act; for example, if one steals to give to the poor, giving to the poor is the remote

order. [52] One could, it seems to me, argue against this under-
standing of morality as an entire system in favor of versions of
Kantian deontology or Millian utilitarianism. However, to operate
with Aristotle's or Thomas's presuppositions and then to deny
exceptionless norms does not seem tenable. [53]

III. A RESPONSE TO ARGUMENTS AGAINST EXCEPTIONLESS NORMS IN ARISTOTLE'S *NICOMACHEAN ETHICS*

Martha Nussbaum's insightful interpretation cannot be
appreciated until one first differentiates groupings of norms: (1)
positive norms admitting exception, (2) positive norms admitting
no exception, (3) negative norms admitting exception, and (4)
negative norms admitting no exception. Let us clarify what is
meant by each category of norms in turn. [54]

Most positive moral norms fall into category (1), positive
norms admitting exception, for example, "Return borrowed
objects," "Take care of your spouse and children," and "Pay
employees as promised." These norms do not need to be consid-

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intention, the proximate intention is stealing. I take these distinctions from her article "A
Tangled Web or: *Veritatis splendor* and the Object of the Act" (unpublished). Illustrating
this point, Thomas writes: "He [Aristotle] states that other actions are so evil that no
amount of force can compel them to be done but a man ought to undergo death of the
cruelest kind rather than do such things, as St. Lawrence endured the roasting on the
gridiron to avoid sacrificing to idols" *(Sent.* 3, 2 [395]).

[52] In addition, to have certain virtues one must engage in the corresponding types of
activity: "However, it can happen that a man, having other moral virtues, may be said to
be without one virtue because of lack of matter, for example, someone good but poor
lacks munificence because he does not have the means of great expenditures" *(Sent.* 6, 11
(1288]).

[53] This is recognized by some proportionalists. Louis Janssens writes that moral evil
exists when "There is an inner contradiction between the elements forming part of the
description of what is done .... Violence is a premoral disvalue and its use can be justi-
fied by a proportionate reason (e.g. in self-defence). But truly human sexual intercourse
is an expression of love and thus a free, mutual self-giving which is radically opposed to
the use of violence" (Janssens, "Norms and Priorities," 217-18). I take it, though Janssens
does not explicitly say so, that this means all acts of rape, rape here meaning "acts of
intercourse without mutual consent" ought not to be done, since *ipso facto* to rape is to
exclude the proper end of human sexual activity which is, in part, mutual self-donation.

[54] I do not mean by this division to show that such norms exist, but only logically to
divide the possible norms according to two categories, positive/negative and exception-
less/non-exceptionless.

ered at all times, nor do they bind all agents at all times. **If** one
has not borrowed objects, one need not observe the norm:
"Return borrowed objects." Even if one has borrowed an object,
let us say a sword, and the owner intends to kill himself with it,
again one is not bound to return the sword, because one judges
that not returning the sword in this case is a rightful exception of
the positive norm that applies *in pluribus.* [55]

Other positive norms (2) apply always and without exception.
For example, Thomas would agree that we are always and with-
out exception bound by the norm that we are to love God with
all our heart and our neighbor as ourselves.;r, And Aristotle
would assent that we should promote virtue in ourselves and
others. As a norm this is true, but the norm is so general that it
lacks practical application, not in the sense that one cannot
apply it, but in that applying the rule constitutes the very
difficulty of the moral life.[57] Nussbaum and others are correct in
noting this. [58]

The type of norm (3) that is negative but not exceptionless
likewise helps us to make prudential judgments but does not and
cannot be our sole guide to action. W. D. Ross in *The Right and
the Good* called these guidelines *"primafacie* duties." Examples

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[55] Thomas recognizes this: "Such is the nature of human actions that they are not done
always in the same way but are done otherwise in certain infrequent instances. For exam-
ple, the return of a deposit is in it5elf just and good, as it happens in most cases, but in a
particular situation it can be bad, for instance, if a sword is returned to a madman" *(Sent.*
5, 16 (1085]). Advocates and opponents of proportionalism offer different accounts of
why this is, but they agree that it is the case.

"'Louis Janssens agrees that there are such norms: "The formal norms constitute the
absolute element of morals. For instance, it will remain true, that always and in all cir-
cumstances, we must be just" ("Norms and Principles," 208).

" Ibid., 208-9: "Formal norms do not determine the concrete content of our actions.
There is, for example, the norm requiring us to be chaste: we have to order our sexuality
in such a way that we respect ourselves as human subjects, our relationship to others,
and the demands of social life. The formal norm, though describing our inner attitude,
does not tell us which concrete actions are able to embody a chaste disposition."

[58] Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness,* 302: "And matters of practice and questions
of what is advantageous never stand fixed, any more than do matters of health. **If** the uni-
versal definition is like this, the definition concerning particulars is even more lacking in
precision. For such cases do not fall under any science *(techne)* nor under any precept,
but the agents themselves must in each case look to what suits the occasion, as is also the
case in medicine and navigation."

of these types of norms include "Do not break promises," "Do not inflict pain," and "Do not put your life in danger." A morally good agent keeps these in mind as important rules of thumb that help guide people to what many situations demand, but not all.

Finally, as we noted above in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and in the *Sententia libri ethicorum,* there are those norms (4) that the one seeking to be morally good must not violate under any circumstances. As we have seen, Thomas gives as examples murder, envy, and adultery. [59] Elsewhere, Thomas adds another example, a distinctly non-Aristotelian one, idolatry: "The philosopher speaks here according to the habit of the Gentiles, which now has been abrogated by manifest truth; hence, if anyone now would spend something on the cult of demons, he would not be munificent, but sacrilegious." [60] A quick retort to this example might be that even here Thomas does not condemn offerings to demons in all cases and times but only under the New Law, which he implicitly assumes. However, Thomas does not say that the moral evil of offerings to demons comes from being prohibited by both the Old and New Law, but rather that such offerings are prohibited because they are morally evil according to the natural law. The "nunc" refers to the situation now in which moral agents would *know* that they are offering sacrifice to demons, beings unworthy of such offerings. Unlike the Gentiles who had unformed consciences about this matter, Christians know better. The moral depravity of such offerings exists regardless of the moral culpability of the agents.<"Norms of type (4) include the Ten Commandments: Thou shall not have strange gods in my sight, nor adore nor serve graven images. Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Thou shall not commit adultery. Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's wife,

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[59] *Sent.* 2, 7 (329).

[60] "Loquitur hie Philosophus secundum consuetudinem Gentilium, quae nunc manifestata veritate est abrogata, unde, si aliquis nunc circa cultum daemonum aliquid expenderet, non esset magnificus, sed sacrilegus" *(Sent.* 4.7).

[61] In scholastic terms, offering sacrifice to demons is always *peccatum,* but does not always involve the same or even any degree of *culpa.* Consideration of personal guilt or lack of guilt of persons who violate moral norms is beyond the focus of this study.

nor his house, nor his field.[62] For Thomas, these norms are exceptionless and his conception of the final end, in differing from Aristotle's, indicates why his list of exceptionless precepts includes commands not only of the second tablet of the Ten Commandments, but also of the first.r"

Let us return to Nussbaum's objection. To support the collapse of norms (1)-(4) into one category of rules, Nussbaum and Charlton cite this text from the *Ethics,* yet the citation at best supports only half their deduction. Aristotle writes:

There is nothing stable in the field of conduct or in what is advantageous any more than in the field of medicine. And such being the position with universal principles, still less do principles concerning particular cases admit of exactness. Particular cases fall under no set of rules. The person acting at any time must look to what fits the occasion, as in medicine and seamanship. [64]

Charlton glosses this statement by saying, "Aristotle would hold, then, that a general principle of conduct can establish at best a prima fade rightness *and wrongness."*[65] The italicized portion does not have support in the Aristotelian text cited. We cannot determine "what is advantageous," but Aristotle does *not* say that we cannot determine what is disadvantageous or what is wrong in the sense of exclusive of the end. In 1107al-2 2 he indicates some actions that he considers inherently disadvantageous, inherently morally wrong. And as we saw earlier in the *Sententia libri ethicorum,* Thomas concurs with this judgment. [66]

Given the types of moral norms that appear in both Aristotle and Thomas, Nussbaum errs in collapsing all four under the one category of "moral rules." For three of the four categories of norms, this reductive move makes sense. Norms (1), (2), and (3) are either so general as not to admit concrete application without difficult prudential judgment or as to serve as important but nevertheless *primafacie* guides, binding only for decision making in

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[62] See Deuteronomy 5:1-21.

[63] Whether or not these norms are tautological is another matter to be treated later in this paper.

[64] *Nicomachean Ethics* 1104a3-10.

[65] Charlton, *Weakness of the Will,* 117, emphasis added.

[66] Cf. *Sent.* 2, 7 (329).

times of passion, urgent necessity, or youthful lack of prudence.
However the category of moral norms (4) does not appear in
Nussbaum's analysis of the text, though it appears in Aristotle
and in Aquinas. Norms of this kind make untenable her proposed
dichotomy of Aristotelian   "rules." [67]

In response to Sherman's objection about the primacy of equity,
it must be pointed out that it is distinct, though related, to the
question of exceptionless norms. She does not suggest that equity
implies a denial of norms (4), but this position may be implicit in
and certainly is compatible   with her analysis. First one must
point out that though exceptionless norms may be codified in
law, they need not be and not all can be. [68] Both Aristotle and
Thomas make clear that equity treats positive law, not moral
law. [69] Aristotle says that the equitable man is "the one who chooses
and does the things spoken of; he is not a zealous enforcer of justice
in the worse sense, but a mitigator, although he recognizes the
law as a deterrent." [70] Thomas comments on this passage, noting
that the just man "is not *acribodikaios,* i.e., a zealous enforcer of
justice in the worse sense, for vengeance, like those who are
severe in punishing, but rather like those who mitigate the penalties
although they may have the law on their side in punishing. The
legislator does not intend punishments in themselves but as a
kind of medicine for offenses. Therefore the equitable person

[67] Nussbaum's other concerns, that norms (4) reduce the ethically salient features of an
act and that such norms make prudential judgment meaningless do not seem *very* sub-
stantial. In respect to the first difficulty, as we understand from other works of Thomas,
morally good actions require a good act or object, a good intention, and fitting circum-
stances. If any of these are missing, on Thomas's account, the agent has acted badly. A
defense of this doctrine, however, lies outside the scope of the present inquiry. In response
to the second, exceptionless norms, in fact any type of norm, do not render superfluous
the exercise of prudence. According to Thomas, the reverse is true: the exercise of pru-
dence, which applies a judgment to the appetites (see his *De veritate,* q. 17, a. 1, ad 4),
requires moral norms.

[68] Norms treating exclusively internal actions, "Thou shall not *covet* thy neighbor's
goods," seemingly cannot be codified in law, since it would be all but impossible to prove
a violation of the law, if the person never acted exteriorly under envy's sway.

[69] Thomas writes: "What is *legally just* is determined by the majority of cases. But what
is equitable is directive of the legally just things because *the law* necessarily is deficient
in the minority of cases" *(Sent.* 6, 9 [1243], emphasis added).

[70] *Nicomachean Ethics* 1137b34-1138a2.

does not add more punishment than is sufficient to prevent
violations. [1111] These texts indicate that Aristotle and Thomas
understand equity as treating positive rather than moral law, for
there is no way that one can avoid the punishment of the moral
law. In Aristotle's terms, for an agent to violate the moral law is
to thwart his own happiness. In Thomas's terms, to violate the
moral law is to separate oneself from God, the source of happi-
ness. In neither case does anyone outside the agent punish him;
rather he punishes himself in the very doing of the immoral deed.
Both Aristotle and Thomas could in principle assent to what
Augustine said: "The punishment of sin is sin. [1112]

One might respond that ideally moral law would not require
equity, but that in so far as moral norms become codified in written
form by human hands, equity would apply to these as well as to
the positive laws of a community. This response has merit, but
we must distinguish ways in which equity would and would not
apply to written moral teaching.

As we noted, Sherman summarizes Aristotle's case for equity
in several overlapping reasons why, at times, written law must
give way to *epieikeia:* (1) the written law cannot enumerate all
the possible actions that might take place, (2) in judging the
applicability of the law, the lawgiver's intention must be deter-
mined, (3) the interpreter of the law must at times go beyond the
lawgiver's intention to correct for defects present in the lawgiver
(e.g., the lack of relevant empirical evidence), and (4) in all cases
where no existing law applies, equity must be used to determine
a conclusion. [7] Let me suggest briefly here the use and abuse of
epieikeia for norms as prominent in proportionalist literature.

The first argument could apply to moral norms (4) in so far as
these norms cannot and do not pretend to delineate the entire
scope of concrete actions that in the concrete situation are morally
evil. At times, even the most seemingly benign act, for example,
a kiss, can be a wicked act. [74] Norms (4) indicate one way in

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[71] *Sent. 5,* 16 (1089).

[72] "Sed utique agnoscimus hoc peccatum poenam esse peccati" *(Contra lulianum opus
impeifectum* 2.38.17-18).

[73] Sherman, *The Fabric of Character,* 17-18.

[74] Cf. Luke 22:46-47.

which a person might go wrong, but a person could go wrong in
another way by an evil intention or by doing something that in
itself is good (marital intercourse) but in a circumstance that renders
the action morally bad (in a public place, when intercourse
would endanger the health of one spouse, etc.). According to
Thomas's moral theory, moral norms (4) do not, cannot, and
were never intended to encompass the whole of moral life, but
only delineate certain parameters of human action.

With respect to the second argument, McCormick and others
are correct in observing that one difficulty of moral theology and
philosophy is determining what is or is not "adultery," "murder,"
or "genocide." [75] No moral norm can apply itself.[76] As we have
seen, however, we have no moral *norm* at all if the moral norm
is tautologous. Therefore, the three words McCormick uses as
examples do have evaluative elements in them, *but not morally
evaluative elements.* Let us then distinguish two common ways
in which the word "adultery" has been used. One could mean by
"adultery $_1$" wrongful, undue, or disproportionate intercourse.
This, I take it, is what McCormick and Cahill mean by the term.
On the other hand, one could mean by the term "adultery $_2$" sexual
intercourse between a married person (X) and someone else (Y)
not married to that person (X).[77] The debate today, of course, is
not whether or not the sixth Commandment prohibits adultery $_1$.
How could anyone be confused about the wrongfulness of hav-
ing wrongful intercourse? Even Hugh Hefner could assent to
that. The debate centers around whether or not adultery $_2$ can be
permitted. [78]

[75] Cf. McCormick, *Notes,* 700. One might object that these are "value-laden" terms
because they describe the object in a fuller sense than *materia circa quam.* Adultery, for
instance, is not an action in its material aspect alone but has other specifying circum-
stances. Still, the admission of "specifying circumstances" cannot be equated with "value-
laden terms" until shown. **If** we define adultery as "sexual intercourse between married
person (x) and ... " then we have specifying circumstances, but no terms with morally
evaluative elements.

[76] Cf. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* §§85 and 86.

[77] This way of refering to adultery is more precise and symmetrical than Thomas's ref-
erence to the same unjust act as "having sexual intercourse with another's wife" *(Sent.* 5,
15 [1076]).

[78] Cf. W. V. O. Quine, "TWo Dogmas of Empiricism," in *From a Logical Point of View*
(Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), 20-46.

McCormick and Cahill mistake intension for extension when they say that these norms are tautologous in magisterial documents. For example, "two squared" and "four" are intensionally different, but extensionally the same. That the Church's magisterium teaches that adultery $_2$ is extensionally the same as adultery $_1$ does not mean that they are intensionally the same, that is, the same in meaning.

To apply a norm prohibiting adultery, we must determine what it is to be married and what it is to have intercourse, both usually obvious matters to determine,[79] but, particularly with respect to the former, perhaps not easy to determine in every instance. [80] To apply the norm prohibiting murder, if we understand by murder the direct killing of an innocent person, [81] we

[79] I bracket for the moment considerations of annulments of marriages. My point is simply that the vast majority of people do not puzzle much when they have to check either the single, married, or divorced box on their tax return.

[80] We have to be pretty imaginative here but if a man and a woman were stranded on a desert island after a shipwreck in which both their spouses presumably drowned, one could reasonably conclude that if they thought their spouses were dead and if they committed themselves to one another as husband and wife until death, then they would not be commiting adultery by having intercourse. Still, others might question if they had a valid marriage, etc.

[81] One might object that this is not the definition of murder, but an attempt to specify circumstances that make homicide murder. Furthermore, the objector might continue, I have taken simple actions (homicide, sexual intercourse) and added circumstances in which they might be considered immoral (of an innocent, with the spouse of another or without mutual consent). As to the former, the definition of a word is no fixed entity. Periodically, when using the words "adultery," "murder," or "rape" I have defined them as I believe they are understood in common usage and by magisterial documents of the Church. McCormick, Cahill, and others use these words in a different way than I do. Of course, they are free to do so and it may be helpful to do so at times. The important point is not what *word* we use to describe Al as "sexual intercourse between a married person (X) and someone else (Y) not married to that person (X)" but whether Al can or cannot be the choice of an agent seeking to act morally well. McCormick and others, as I read them, say that A can be done, in some circumstances, morally. One point of this paper is to show that Thomas disagrees.

As for the second objection, again it is somewhat beside the point to argue about whether "with the spouse of another" (SA) should be or not be considered as the object of the act or as a specifying circumstance. On my account, it does not matter for the moral consideration   of the act. **If** SA is part of the object, the action is evil. **If** SA is considered a circumstance, the action is still evil. I have not shown why Thomas holds that A is evil but the status of SA as within or around the object of the act is irrelevant to moral (but not conceptual) debates, if we hold as Thomas that the moral evil of the whole human act comes through the moral evil of any one of its elements.

still must evaluate what is or is not direct and who is or is not an
innocent person. The same holds true for the norm prohibiting
rape. If we mean by "rape" intercourse without the consent of
one party involved, then, as recent debates about sexual harass-
ment have made clear, questions arise about what does or does
not constitute consent. What seems apparent, however, is that
we can and should seek to evaluate the meaning of these words
(consent, innocence, direct/indirect) and their application with-
out weighing the benefits and drawbacks of such determina-
tions. In other words, the balance of premoral/ontic/physical
goods and evils connected with a course of action does not
determine whether or not we are married, innocent, or willing.
After the definition has been established we are left with the real
task of application that cannot be avoided or minimized. Rules
do not interpret themselves.

   The third argument holds that equity must determine new
cases in light of old standards. This requires, as all judgments in
Aristotelian virtue ethics do, the exercise of prudence. When the
birth-control pill first began to be widely used, Louis Janssens
argued that such use was not contraceptive but an extension of
the natural cycle of the woman.82 Paul Vi's *Humanae vitae*
denied Janssens's opinion. The question at the time was whether
the pill was or was not a contraceptive medicine. However, once
again, for both (early) Janssens and Paul VI the question of
whether the pill is or is not a contraceptive device was not deter-
mined by the weighing of premoral goods and evils of use or non-
use of the pill, but on intrinsic grounds. This insight, to some
extent, has been lost in recent debates on the matter.

   As for the fourth argument, by definition, where no written
law exists, a solution cannot be determined by established writ-
ten moral norms, but perhaps can be determined only by the
exercise of prudence and long discernment. This however does
not constitute an argument against moral norms (4) but only
indicates that such norms do not make up and guide the whole
of moral life, a claim not in dispute by anyone arguing for the

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82 Louis Janssens, "Morale conjungale et progestogenes," *Ephemerides Theologicae
Lovanienses* 39 (1963): 787-826.

existence of exceptionless norms in Aristotle or Thomas. Both
know that "rules" cannot be the beginning or end of moral think-
ing. The character Mary in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*
exemplifies the bookish intellect who knows general maxims but
not how to apply them in particular cases not covered by explicit
rules. Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park* provides a foil to Mary. She
acts rightly even when no rules are available (e.g., "buy silver
spoons in times of family crisis").[83] According to Aristotle's and
Thomas's moral theory, Fanny provides the model for excellence
in human action, not Mary, since the guidance of norms (4) indi-
cates only what *not* to do, not what to do. And what to do is the
real task of the moral life.

Our final objection came from Hardie who, if he is right,
could lend great support to both Nussbaum's and Sherman's
interpretations. In reference to *Ethics* 1107a8-9, Hardie comments
that

[Aristotle] is making a purely logical point which arises from the fact
that certain words are used to name not ranges of action or passion but
determinations within a range with the implication, as part of the
meaning of the word, that they are excessive or defective, and therefore
wrong. Thus envy is never right and proper because "envy" conveys
that it is wrong and improper. Again it does not make sense to ask
when murder is right because to call a killing "murder" is to say that it
is wrong .... This, and no more than this, is what Aristotle means when
he says that "not every action nor every passion admits a mean" (1107
a8-9).[84]

Exceptionless moral norms exist, but their tautological nature
makes them meaningless as guides to moral action.[85] Though
Hardie claims that his interpretation is held by most com-

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[83] Thanks to Alasdair Macintyre who provided me with the example.

[84] Hardie, *Aristotle's Ethical Theory,* 137-38.

[85] Among proportionalists joining Hardie in this same judgment vis-a-vis Thomas
and/or the Catholic tradition, see Bruno Schiiller, S.J., "Christianity and the New Man:
The Moral Dimension-Specificity of Christian Ethics," in William J. Kelly, *Theology
and Discovery: Essays in Honor of Karl Rahner S.J.* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette
University Press, 1980), 307-12; Frank Scholz, "Durch ethische Grenzsituation aufge-
wortene Normenproblem," *Theologische-praktische Quartalschrift* 123 (1975): 341-55;
and McCormick, *Notes,* 700.

mentators, [86] he cites no support. John Finnis, for one, is not convinced:

Hardie, you noticed, gives no argument for his interpretation. Nor does he tell us how to read the sentence: "Goodness or badness with regard to such things does not depend on committing adultery with the right person, at the right time, and in the right way." The parallel passage in Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics,* which Hardie leaves unmentioned here, is even harder to read as making a merely logical point about the meaning of words: "A man is not an adulterer through having intercourse with a married woman more than he ought (there is no such thing): that is already a vice.""

Finnis goes on to remark on the history of commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics.* An ancient commentator known only as the anonymous Scholiast suggested that a man could have intercourse with another's wife (a tyrant's wife to be precise), without the act being considered wrong, if the man were doing so for the sake of overthrowing a tyrant. Finnis notes that Christian commentators on Aristotle, among them Robert Grosseteste and Albert the Great, all rejected this interpretation, holding both that norms prohibiting adultery are not understood as analytically involving moral evil, but rather as synthetically involving moral evil, and that one cannot do this (or any other) moral evil regardless of the foreseen consequences of committing or abstaining from that moral evil. [88]

Even if Finnis has correctly interpreted the commentary tradition, his opponent has an easy retort: the commentary tradition was wrong. This, however, would have to be demonstrated with more than an assertion. Finnis, for his part, is mistaken when he claims that Hardie's case rests on just this, an assertion. After the passage cited by Finnis, Hardie goes on to argue on etymological grounds that Aristotle's word for adultery denotes

[86] "Most commentators get this point right" (Hardie, *Aristotle's Ethical Theory,* 137).

[87] John Finnis, *Moral Absolutes: Tradition, Revision, and Truth* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991), 32.

[88] Ibid., 33-36. I use the Kantian terms "synthetic" and "analytic" only provisionally since they are so much a part of the proportionalist/antiproportionalist debate. Not only do these terms import foreign (hostile?) categories into premodern texts, but distinguished philosophers have called into question the hard distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions. Cf. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," 20-46.

"something morally evil" but nothing descriptively. [89] This sup-
port seems fragile to me, for the etymology of a word does not
indicate the meaning of the word in every case-not every eulogy
is good, but every euphony is in some sense good. Etymology
does not settle the question in one way or the other. Let us con-
sider the passage in question   again. In order to show the
ambiguity of the passage, I will underline the point of emphasis
of Hardie's reading and italicize my own.

Not every action nor every feeling, however, admits of the mean, for
some of them have names which directly include badness. e.g., such
feelings as malicious gladness. shamelessness, and envy, *and,* in the
case of actions, adultery. theft, and murder; for all of these and others
like them are blamed for being bad, not [just] in their excesses and defi-
ciencies. Accordingly, one is never right in performing these but is
always mistaken; and there is no problem of whether it is good or not
to do them, e.g., whether to commit adultery with the right woman, at
the right time, in the right manner, etc., for to perform any of these is
without qualification to be mistaken. [90]

Hardie reads the line "some of them have names which directly
include badness" as governing "malicious gladness, shameless-
ness, ... envy ... adultery, theft, and murder." I understand
Aristotle to mean that some feelings have names that indicate
that they are morally bad (malicious gladness, shamelessness,
envy) *and* that some actions do not admit a mean (adultery, theft,
murder). The genus is actions and feelings not admitting a mean,
with species of feelings, indicated as wrong by name, and morally
wrong actions. Either reading makes sense (though Hardie's
seems more plausible given editorial punctuation and translation),
so let us turn to external reasons to decide which is justified.

  One must note that in the ancient world the word "adultery"
was not always understood as analytically a moral evil, but
sometimes simply as "intercourse with another's spouse," which
may or may not be morally evil.[9] In other words, acts such as

[89] See Hardie, *Aristotle's Ethical Theory,* 137.

[90] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* trans. Hippocrates G. Apostle (Grinnell, Iowa: The
Peripatetic Press, 1984), 29.

[91] Cf. W. K. Lacey, *The Family in Classical Greece* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University
Press, 1968) 113-16, 227. Lacey's exposition indicates that some Greeks understood adul-
tery in Hardie's sense and others in a non-tautologous sense.

intercourse with another's spouse or with a person of the same
sex were not considered morally wrong by definition by all
Greeks; for them, the moral judgment "Adultery is a moral evil"
was a synthetic (and debatable) proposition. Objecting to the
characterization   of adultery as evil made sense in a way that
objecting to the characterization of maliciousness as evil does not
for us. We cannot argue from the common Greek use of the word
to the judgment that the word "adultery" analytically indicates
moral evil.

  Second, Aristotle, in claiming that *the act* of adultery was evil,
was not uttering a mere Greek truism. To say that any sexual act,
as an act, is morally evil would have been unusual among
common ancient Greek opinion.',[2] In the estimation of Michel
Foucault, certainly   no advocate of exceptionless norms,

What seems in fact to have formed the object of moral reflection for the
Greeks in matters of sexual conduct was not exactly the act itself (con-
sidered in its different modalities), or desire (viewed from the stand-
point of its origin or its aim), or even pleasure (evaluated according to
the different objects or practices that can cause it); it was more the
dynamics that joined all three in a circular fashion (the desire that leads
to the act, the act that is linked with pleasure, and the pleasure that
occasions desire). The ethical question that was raised was not: which
desires? which acts? which pleasures? but rather: with what force is
one transported   "by the pleasures and desires"? Immoderation and lack
of self restraint with regard to pleasure is what in fact was problematic to
the Greeks. Immorality in sex is always connected with exaggeration,
surplus, and excess. Offenses are quantitative in nature. Excess along
with passivity were the two main forms of immorality."

If Foucault is to be believed, then Aristotle's specification of
adultery as an *act* that does not admit a mean cannot be under-
stood merely by the use of the word "adultery" to imply a moral
evil. Rather, to his Greek audience, the question of whether or
not any sexual act is morally evil or good would be a very open
question, with most people holding the opinion that any sexual
act *could* be a moral good provided that the acting man kept his

  [92] See, for instance, K. *J.* Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and
Aristotle* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974), 205-16.
  [9J] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality,* vol. 2, *The Use of Pleasure,* trans. Robert
Hurley (New York: Vantage Books, 1990).

pleasure somewhat in check and the boy, woman, or husband of
the woman was of lesser social status, and that the acting man
did not play a passive role.[94] Aristotle's text indicates a departure
from this ordinary view. In saying that adultery could never be a
mean, Aristotle cut against the common opinion that any single
act as an act could not be classified as good or evil in kind.

Finally, if Aristotle uses the words "adultery," "murder," and
"envy" in this tautological fashion, then he utterly fails in the goal
Hardie attributes to him in the first place. Aristotle, says Hardie,
makes his remarks about norms (4) not because "they add new
points to doctrine, or because they modify points which have
been made, but rather because they indicate implications of the
doctrine which have been stated in order to anticipate or elimi-
nate misunderstanding. [95] Hardie faces this difficulty: how does
using a word such as "adultery" (in the sense he thinks Aristotle
means it) help explain anything or help eliminate any possible
misunderstanding?   It is as if someone asked Aristotle: "What is
the arithmetical mean between one and five?" To which Aristotle
replies: "Three." Finnis understands   "three" to mean the addition
of one and one and one. Hardie thinks it clarifies and eliminates
possible misunderstandings   about the meaning of "three" to say
that "it is the arithmetical mean between one and five." But the
precise question is "what is the arithmetical mean?"! Obviously,
one makes no progress in answering this question or eliminating
possible misunderstandings   by saying "the arithmetical mean is
the arithmetical mean. [96] Aristotle must mean more by "adultery"
than "a wrong act" if he is to illuminate the reader and, as both

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[94] Ibid., 43. A Christian or post-Christian audience might assume that norms prohibit-
ing adultery implies an analytic or tautologous moral judgment because for centuries the
Church has taught that adultery (meaning "having sexual intercourse with one other than
one's spouse") is morally wrong. This statement is not analytic but synthetic, which is
why arguments are given for it (e.g., such actions violate marital trust, often bring about
terrible consequences, etc.). One does not argue for statements that are analytically true.

[95] Hardie, *Aristotle's Ethical Theory,* 136.

[96] The difficult questions about the mean prompt a long discussion by Aquinas found
in *Sent. 5,* 1-10. A treatment of disjunctive and continuous proportionality is, however,
beyond the scope of this paper.

Hardie and Aquinas claim, eliminate misunderstandings that may arise about the mean. [97]

Whatever the case with Aristotle, Thomas certainly did not understand "adultery" to mean analytically "wrongful intercourse." He comments that Aristotle "affirms that, on account of what has been said, people also are of the opinion that the just man can do injustice as readily as anyone else, because from the fact that he is just he knows not less but more and can do any one of the things called unjust, *like having sexual intercourse with another's wife.""*[8] None of the terms in the italicized proposition indicate moral evil, but it is connected synthetically with the "unjust." Therefore, we cannot say that Thomas understood the proposition, "Adultery is a morally evil act," as only analytically true. [99]

Let me conclude with a summary of my argument. I have tried to present the best arguments available against the proposition that in the thought of Aristotle (and by extension the thought of Thomas in his commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics)* exceptionless norms do not exist. Next, I tried to show that the very analogies used by Aristotle, Thomas, and major commentators invite the idea of exceptionless norms. Finally, I have tried to answer the objections raised by commentators to my thesis that such norms, or a basis for such norms, exist in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and Thomas's commentary on it. [100] Of course, many questions remain unasked and unanswered

[97] Thomas writes: "Because virtue can occupy the middle course and vice the extremes in actions and in passions, someone might think that this would happen in all actions and passions. But he rejects this by saying that not every action or passion of the soul admits a mean in the context of virtue" *(Sent.* 2, 7 [328]).

[98] "et <licit, quod propter praedicta etiam homines aestimant quod nihil minus sit facile iusto facere iniustum quam cuicumque alii, quia per hoc quod aliquis est iustus non minus, sed magis scit et potest operari unumquodque horum quae dicuntur iniusta; sicut commisceri mulieri alterius" *(Sent. 5,* 15 [1076], emphasis added). Thomas does not always speak in this way however. Cf. *Sent. 5,* 10 (1018).

[99] Karl Rahner has suggested that an underlying problem in this debate is the Kantian difficulty in accepting true, universal synthetic judgments. I believe that he is right, but a defense of these judgments takes me too far beyond the tasks at hand, and in any case is rarely if ever taken up by the authors discussed here.

[100] In reference to Thomas I have not supplied any argument for the first premise of my argument: Thomas's commentaries on Aristotle represent his own thought. Thomas writes in his commentary that there are exceptionless moral norms. He holds that there

in terms of the modern debate about proportionalism and its relation to the thought of Thomas. This inquiry did not consider the use or abuse of the "direct/indirect" distinction in Thomas and if such a distinction is found in Aristotle. [101] Further, we might have inquired about moral goods and evils and premoral, physical, or ontic goods and evils as found or not found in both authors. [102] Likewise, we have passed over the role of intention in moral action and the debate about how one should understand the "object of the act." [103] There are many interesting and possibly fruitful avenues of research down which we have not started. However, we must make a start somewhere, even if our steps are small.

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are exceptionless moral norms. I have concentrated on establishing only the second premise. I have argued elsewhere the plausibility of the first premise, but to establish this would require extending the paper to an undue length.

[101] *Sent.* 5, 14 (1035-37); 5, 13 (1044); 5, 14 (1056); 5, 14 (1061).

[102] *Sent.* 7, 5 (1312-14); 7, 12 (1494); 7, 14 (1519); 8, 11(1691);9, 2 (1773-76); 9, 9 (1878); 10, 1(1957);10, 2 (1973).

[103] *Sent.* 8, 13 (1743); 5, 11 (1001); 5, 16 (1087); 8, 3 (1563); 10, 5 (2013); 10, 7 (2039-40).

EX POSSIBILI ET NECESSARIO:
A RE-EXAMINATION   OF AQUINAS'S THIRD WAY

THOMAS A. F. KELLY

St. Patrick's College
Maynooth, Ireland

! SHALL NOT ATTEMPT in this essay any systematic exegesis of Thomistic   texts, still less an interpretation   of Aquinas on arguments for the existence of God. What I shall try to do, rather, is to suggest that a valid argument for the existence of God, resting upon premises known to be true-which is what I would call a proof [1]-results from a restructuring of the Third Way. This may seem a large, not to say ill-advised, claim, in a time when even proponents of theism tend not to stress the argumentatious   underpinning of their position, and when there seems to be a kind of floating opinion, shared by many, that such argument is useless or even harmful. However, my answer to such misgivings is the only possible one, namely, that if the argument works, that is sufficient reason for considering it.

The restructured argument, though clearly not identical to the Third Way, nevertheless makes use of the metaphysical principles stated in it. Since in pursuing this investigation   I am following what I take to be the spirit of Aquinas, namely, the desire to know not merely what philosophers-himself   in particular-have said, but, more profoundly, where the truth of the matter under discussion lies, I shall make use of the logical and linguistic developments that have taken place since his time.

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[1] Proof, in the present writer's view, has little or nothing to do with conviction on the part of those who read or hear it; if we are both honest and rational, conviction will undoubtedly follow our understanding of the logical status of the argument, but this is not a contributory factor to that status. For a contrasting view, see *A Companion to Epistemology,* ed. Jonathan Dancy and Ernest Sosa (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), under **"proof."**

I. THE QUESTION

In making this attempt, it would be well to begin by bringing Aquinas's text before our eyes.

The third way is based on what need not be and what must be, and runs as follows. Some of the things we come across can be but need not be, for we find them springing up and dying away, thus sometimes in being and sometimes not. Now everything cannot be like this, for a thing that need not be, once was not; and if everything need not be, once upon a time there was nothing. But if that were true there would be nothing even now, because something that does not exist can only be brought into being by something already existing. So that if nothing was in being nothing could be brought into being, and nothing would be in being now, which contradicts observation. Not everything therefore is the sort of thing that need not be; there has got to be something that must be.

Now a thing that must be, may or may not owe this necessity to something else. But just as we must stop somewhere in a series of causes, so also the series of things which must be and owe this to other things. One is forced therefore to suppose something which must be, and owes this to no other being than itself; indeed it itself is the cause that other things must be.'

The argument seems to fall naturally into two parts, the first ending with the conclusion that there has to be something that must be, and the second with the conclusion that this something owes its necessity only to itself, and is the cause of other things' having to be. To make this division more obvious, I have split the argument into two paragraphs. Various objections may be raised to each part, the most obvious to the first being that from the premise that everything at some time is not, it is fallacious to conclude that at some time nothing exists, and, to the second, that it is false that one must stop somewhere in a series of causes. It will become clear that, as it turns out, neither of these objections touches the argument which results from restructuring it on the basis of principles inherent in it.

2 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 2, a. 3. All references and quotations are from the Dominican edition, volume 2, Timothy McDermott, O.P., ed. (London: Blackfriars and Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1964).

II. THE THREE PRINCIPLES AT WORK IN THE THIRD WAY

Let us try, then, to state clearly the assumptions or principles on which the argument rests. There are three, and we shall discuss each in turn.

Principle 1

Something that does not exist can only be brought into being by something already existing. This seemingly self-evident principle is a version of the old axiom, *ex nihilo, nihilfit,* and is related to the modal principle that possibility does not of itself entail actuality. This principle underlies Aquinas's entire account of productive causality, if not causality in the broadest sense of the four Aristotelian causes:' In efficient causality, in which transformational interaction takes place between already existing entities, something already actual in some respect is a necessary and sufficient condition for the communication or evocation of that actuality to or in a potential subject which is, precisely as being in potential, open to the determination which that actuality is. This is what is expressed in the causal principle *omnis agens agit sibi simile:* every agent tends to communicate the very actuality which belongs to it as agent. [4] Thus, being potentially in a given state is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for attaining it in actuality-doubtless the water composing the polar ice-cap is capable of boiling, but in the permanent absence of any actual source of heat, it must remain frozen. This implies a logical, though, *pace* Hume, not necessarily a temporal, priority of cause over effect and, if a priority, a distinction between effect and cause also.

This applies equally in the more radical case of coming into existence. It is not enough to say that something is possible for it also to exist in reality. Something else must account for its actually coming into being. Thus, something that comes into being is logically, if not temporally, consequent on that which brings it

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[1] See Etienne Gilson, *Le Thomisme* (Paris: Vrin, 1989), 228, 230ff. See also Joseph Legrand, S.J., *L'univers et l'homme dans la philosophie de Saint Thomas* (Bruxelles and Paris: Desclee de Brouwer, 1946), vol. 1, book 3, sec. 1, chap. 1.

[4] See Aquinas, *STh* I, q. 6, a. 1, where the principle is translated as "what a thing does reflects what it is."

into being; that which brings it into being is logically, if not tem-
porally, prior to it. Moreover, this is to say that entities related in
this way are necessarily distinct, though perhaps not separable.
Thus, in sum, nothing can bring itself into existence, just as
nothing can reduce itself from potentiality to actuality, and for
the same reason: it would have to be logically prior to itself and
logically consequent on itself, a proposition that is incoherent. In
this way, this principle is unlike a Kantian synthetic a priori
judgment, because it is not the case that its denial presents us
with a logically coherent, though never-to-obtain situation:
rather, to deny it involves incoherence, namely the proposition
that something be at once prior to, and consequent on, itself.

Principle 2

"Some things," we are told, "can be but need not be, for we find
them springing up and dying away." To know that something
either comes to be or passes away is to know that it does not have
to be, for if it did have to be, it would be incapable of either of
those two kinds of change. Likewise, if something is incapable of
those two kinds of change, it follows that it has to be. In this
way, it is clear that the two notions, namely, that of having to be,
and that of being incapable of coming to be or passing away, are
mutually implicative, and therefore equivalent. So also for what
need not be: to say that something need not be is equivalent to
saying that it can come to be and can pass away. But to speak of
things which have to be and of things which need not be, even
disregarding whether or not such things exist, is to speak of
diverse ways in which, for want of a less crude terminology,
things relate to (their) existence, that is, to speak of their mode of
existence. In the case of something that has to be, whether there
is such a thing or not, *that* it is would be guaranteed by *what* it
is, namely, that it is the kind of thing that has to be. Aquinas, of
course, places God in this category, but the substance of his dis-
agreement with Anselm [5] seems to be that from this he is only
willing to infer the conditional proposition that if God exists, it

[5] Ibid. I, q. 2, a. 1.

is because God has to exist, and not the stronger assertion that
because God has to exist, God does exist. In the case of some-
thing that need not be, on the other hand-about whose existence
there can be no doubt, for we are, and are surrounded by, such
things-what it is is no guarantee *that* it is. Thus we are led to a
key distinction in the thought of Aquinas, namely, between what
something is and that something is, or between essence and exis-
tence.6 Let us consider this distinction for a while.

   I take "essence" to mean "what it is to be y, where y is some
entity," or "what makes a y count as a y"-the primary and fun-
damental determination, therefore, of y as the kind of entity it is.
The distinction between essence and existence can be founded
linguistically in the distinction between the two questions "what
is y?" and "are there ys?," precisely because anything that y is
leaves open the question of whether or not it is. In answering the
former question, I try to state what being y involves. In so doing
I produce a description in Russell's sense,7 or at least a string of
predicates "y"-namely "Fx & Gx & Hx ... ".The beauty of the
Russellian theory in this context, we may note in passing, is the
clarity with which the diversity and connectedness of essence
and existence can be shown in it. It will be clear that the func-
tion of "y" is to disclose y, which is accomplished if and only if "y"
is true of something, that is, if there is at least one y. Thus, if I
ask "what is a unicorn?" I may well receive the answer "a white
horse with a gnarled horn growing from its forehead" or the like,
or, to be true to the formula we gave just now, "x is a horse and
x is white and x has a gnarled horn growing from its forehead ... "
where "x" represents the gap in which the argument of the propo-
sitional function "x is a horse, etc." is to be placed. Such a
description may be construed as an existential claim-"there

6 See Gilson, *L'etre et /'essence* (Paris: Vrin, 1972).

7 Russell's essay "On Denoting" appeared in *Mind,* vol. 14, 1905, and is to be found in
the anthology of his essays (1901-50), *Logic and Knowledge,* ed. Robert C. Marsh
(London: George Allen and Unwin, 1977). It also appears, with relevant essays by other
philosophers, in the useful anthology *Meaning and Truth,* ed. Garfield and Kiteley (New
York: Paragon House, 1991). There is also an excellent treatment of quantification in
Mark Sainsbury, *Logical Forms: An Introduction to Philosophical Logic* (Oxford:
Blackwell, 1991), chapter 4.

exists an x such that xis a horse, xis white … ", or," 'xis a horse, xis white … 'is sometimes true."

May be so construed but not *must* be so construed; we need to modify this account a little to make room for fictive descriptions.[8] Descriptions are fictive when, though potentially true, they do not, or are not intended to, disclose any real entity. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle knew well that there is no such address as 22 lB Baker Street, and no famous detective living there, nor did he mean to be taken as asserting that there was. But his description is potentially true in that there seems to be no contradiction lurking in the chain of predicates to which his stories could be reduced. What lends such descriptions interest is the fact that some subset of them is often true of many. We may say, changing our literary example, that John is something of a Hamlet. But this is merely to say that some subset of predicates in the description we call "Hamlet" actually describes John. Now, it might be objected here that the play *Hamlet* contains little or nothing that might immediately be construed as a description of the main character. This may well be true. Such descriptions are the constructions of critics and interpreters on the basis of the dialogue of the play, descriptions which may be in conflict with one another and perhaps even be internally inconsistent. But the vital point is that if the play works it elicits such descriptions as an integral part of our understanding   and appreciation of it, and that even in a monological discussion and evaluation, such descriptions are integral to the business of interpretation.

So, John is a Hamlet in that he finds difficulty in deciding to act, or the like. The context of utterance is usually enough to tell us what force the descriptive assertion is meant to bear. **If** I deny, rightly, that Hamlet is Prince of Norway or assert, also rightly, that he lives in Elsinore, I am far from asserting the existence of Hamlet or indeed of either of his addresses; all I mean is that the respective assertions do or do not represent accurately what Shakespeare has written.

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[8] For an interesting discussion of this topic, see Charles Crittenden, *Unreality: The Metaphysics of Fictional Objects* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991).

This brings out neatly where the force of the statement is located. There is no conceptual difference between a fictive string of predicates and one intended to be real; existence is not another element of the string. The common feature of real and fictive entities is the presence of a string of predicates; the differentiating feature is what we *do* with that string in each case, and what we do in the case of entities we believe to be real is represented by an entity of a different logical sort from a predicate, namely by the quantifier, whose function it is to assert that the string of predicates, "y," is true of something, that there is at least one y. Answering the question "do ys exist?" means finding out whether "y" is true of anything.

The theory of descriptions is capable of handling wider issues than essence: there can be non-essential descriptions, but it is not necessary to our purpose here to specify the relation between what we might call definitional descriptions and descriptions in general, either definite or indefinite; we can accept as a general principle that what actually exists is what makes some descriptions true, and vice-versa. To be, as the slogan has it, is to be the value of a variable. This will not be all we want to say regarding the meaning of "to be," but the asymmetry between assertions of existence and predicational or relational expressions is thereby nicely brought out: these latter expressions always form part of "y," while existence is always on the side of the quantifier: "– is sometimes true, " "– is never true, " and so on.

The existential quantifier, though never a first-order predicate-a predicate, that is, whose argument is a name or an index-word-might very well be construed as a kind of metapredicate, taking at least first-order predicates as its arguments, that is, "y is sometimes true, where y is a finite string of first-order predicates. " **If** this is so, however, it would also appear that the existential quantifier is not symmetrical with many other higher-order expressions, if these latter be taken to have a purely linguistic or logically determined range. The predicate "x is tautologous," if it is correctly applied, is so on linguistic or logical grounds alone, whereas an expression of the kind " 'y' is sometimes true" is not. To know that there are no unicorns is not to know something about nothing, but rather to know something

about everything, namely, that for any y, y is not a unicorn, that
is, the description "y is a unicorn" is never true of anything, while
to know, on the other hand, that there are elephants is to know
that the description "y is an elephant" is sometimes true, or, is
true of something. However, whether or not there are elephants
or unicorns, and therefore whether the corresponding predicate
or string of predicates is ever true of anything, is surely not dis-
coverable by logical analysis alone. That it is not is of ontological
significance, and will be of importance in this argument, for it
represents the contingency of the putative entity in question.
Whatever may be the case with divine reality-and Aquinas
argues against Anselm that the case is even here the same-no
inspection of the string of predicates can ever oblige us to employ
the existential quantifier, though the discovery of inconsistency
can prevent us from doing so. However, to make the claim that
" 1y' is true" cannot be applied in virtue of linguistic grounds
alone, is merely to analyze what we have already claimed in a
more succinct fashion as a general principle: what actually exists
is what makes some descriptions true.

There is another important distinction to be made between
essence and existence. Let us suppose that it is the actually exist-
ing y that makes "y" true. The description "y is an elephant" is
true in the case of Jumbo, because Jumbo is an elephant. But
although Jumbo could not be an elephant unless he existed, it is
not the fact of Jumbo's sheer existence that makes the descrip-
tion "Jumbo is an elephant" true: it is Jumbo's being an elephant
which, as such, does so. Thus, there must be a determination or
structure in y that is described (however imperfectly) by "y"; that
is, there must be a really existing structure, essence, that makes
y y. In sum, what makes my description true is an actually exist-
ing structure which is determined in this or that way, and which
is revealed partially in my description. **If** there is no such struc-
ture, then either language does not reveal or what it reveals is a
linguistic rather than a real item. Both of these conclusions
amount to the same thing, namely, that there are no true propo-
sitions, which is paradoxical, or that there are no true first-order
propositions-in other words, although we can make no true
statements about the world, we can do so about language, which

seems perverse. Thus, what language reveals, when it succeeds in revealing (i.e., when "y" is true) at a first-order level, is real essence.

For Aquinas and philosophers of Thomistic inspiration, existence is the primary actuality, distinct from, and prior to, all others, for which essence is the corresponding potency; it is really distinct from essence, though obviously not separable from it. "Really distinct" for such philosophers means that the distinction is not merely logical but reflects something in the structure of reality as such. To deny that there is a real distinction seems to mean that there is just a distinction to be made between descriptions that really describe-and what makes them true is a unitary existing-essence, a reality structured in a certain way, where there is no hiatus represented by the dash in the expression "existing-essence"-and descriptions that do not.

We need not, I think, embark upon a discussion of the old Scholastic question of the real distinction between essence and existence. But there are some observations that are crucial for us to make. We saw in our analysis of the logic of descriptions that to know that a putative entity must have this or that property is not to know that it exists, and the fact of its existence cannot be inferred from those properties, either singly or together. Let us look at the difference from a more ontological point of view. For a thing to have properties, it must exist. But anything that exists, as we saw, has a structure, is a definite something of some sort. Thus, for a thing to exist it will have to have certain properties, namely the essential property of being this or that kind of thing, and then all the properties necessarily involved in being that kind of entity. If unicorns exist, they must be mammals, in which case it must be true of every existing unicorn that it have a heartbeat. That it has a heartbeat is a necessary condition for its existing-a *conditio sine qua non.* This seems to be part, at least, of the sense of the Scholastic doctrine that essence is the limitation of existence. Essence, in that view, would be seen as that set of conditions which must be fulfilled when an entity of a given sort exists. Those conditions are fulfilled only if and when the entity exists, for as long as it exists. To say that it exists is to say, likewise, that those conditions are fulfilled.

It would, of course, be wrong to say that, since this condition
must be fulfilled in an entity, it is necessary that it exist. We cannot
infer from the proposition "since elephants exist, it is necessary
that this elephant have a heartbeat" the further proposition that
"since this elephant has a heartbeat, it is necessary that it exist."
This would be to misunderstand the use of the modal operator "it
is necessary that … "and in consequence to make the possession
of some quality a sufficient, and not just a necessary, condition
for existence. To do this would, in turn, be to make existence con-
sequent on essence or on some essential trait: because y is of such
a kind, or because y has such a property, y must exist. If this were
the case, the existence of y would no longer be contingent.

Thus, if I say "John is alive because his heart is beating," this
means that since being alive for a mammal involves having a
heartbeat, it is sufficient for me to know that John has a heart-
beat for me to be able to infer that he is alive. This sufficiency,
clearly, touches what I can know, and is not a sufficiency in the
real order: in reality, John has a heartbeat because he is alive, he
is not alive because he has a heartbeat. This, indeed, is the very
meaning of contingency: that the whole which is essence *is* only
contingently, and that existence supervenes not because any
(essential) property requires it. The best way of putting it is
indeed the Thomistic way: if existence is actuality, essence as a
totality is open towards (i.e.,is in potential towards) that actuality.

Aquinas was well aware of the significance of these issues. As
he himself puts it (though, disappointingly, not in the Third
Way):

What belongs to a thing over and above its own essence must derive
from somewhere, either from that essence itself … or from an external
cause. *H* the existence of a thing is to be other than its essence,that existence
must either derive from the essence or have an external cause.•

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[9] Aquinas, *STh* I, q. 3, a. 4: "Primo quidem quia quidquid est in aliquo quod est praeter
essentiam ejus oportet esse causatum, vel a principiis essentiae … vel ab aliquo exteri-
ori. … Si igitur ipsum esse rei sit aliud ab ejus essentia, necesse est quod esse illius rei
vel sit causatum ab aliquo exteriori vel a principiis essentialibus ejusdem rei." I have
modified the English translation a little.

The first of these quoted sentences seems to be an application of
Principle 1 above, for if something that does not exist can only be
brought into being by something already existing, or, more primi-
tively, if nothing comes from nothing, then what belongs to a
thing over and above its own essence must derive either from
that essence or from elsewhere. The very meaning of contin-
gency, moreover, as we have just seen, is that existence is other
than essence, in that, that a thing is is not consequent on what it
is: in sum, there is no feature Fx such that if Fy, y exists, though
there are many features Gx such that, since y exists, Gy, and, if
not Gy, then y does not exist. This, we may add, is a fair defini-
tion of what it means to be an essential feature. Therefore, y
must have an external cause, where "external" here means one
that is distinct from, and hence logically prior to, y's essence. In
more Thomistic terms, the entity's essence remains at most a
receptivity to, a potential for, its existence, and not a productive
cause of it. To explain the difference between the fact that y can
be and the fact that y is, some other factor, apart from the possi-
bility of y itself, must be invoked, and this factor must be actual
rather than merely possible.

    Moreover, this state of affairs obtains as long as the entity
exists; what is contingent is always so, and at no time is its exis-
tence consequent   on its essence. Therefore   at all times its
existence derives from a cause external to its essence. This cause
cannot be identical to producers or parents because their action
is limited to a period of time rather shorter than the duration of
the entity's existence.

    Let us be clear what this means. For every moment that a con-
tingent entity exists, since this existence is not necessitated by
any essential property, it must derive from some source other
than the entity itself, its parents or producers. Moreover this
derivation is not of some property or other which the entity itself
possesses, but of the entity itself, in its totality, that is, as existing,
for as long as it exists. This derivation, then, is simply the grant-
ing of existence to something which is of itself capable, receptive,
and, we might say, !imitative, but not productive of it. Such a
granting is, therefore, nothing less than creation, where this term

is not understood merely as a synonym for the first event in the
history of the universe, but as the granting of existence as such
to, or better, as, that which is capable of receiving it, for as long
as it exists. Creation is coterminous and cotemporal with all con-
tingent existence, and so is not really distinct from conservation.

It would then not be difficult to show that the source of exis-
tence is unique, for that which grants existence as such must be
all powerful-that is, capable of actualizing any coherent situa-
tion-and hence all perfect, and by a Boethian argument [10] it
would be possible to show that any two creating, and hence
all-perfect, entities must be indiscernible, and so identical. There
is at least one source, but there is at most one source as well.
Hence anything that creates is *the* Creator, so that an infinite
series, or indeed any series, of creative causes is indeed impossi-
ble, but not for the reason that Aquinas seems to have thought.
In this way, anything that exists is either the Creator or a created-
that is, contingent-entity.   The Creator cannot be contingent,
for then there would have to be a creator distinct from it, which
creates it, and this, as we have just seen, is impossible. So, if A
creates B, then B is non-divine and creates nothing itself, and A
is created by nothing. Thus, in sum, the argument points to the
existence of the unique and necessary source of all existence; and
this, as Aquinas would say, everyone would call God.

But from the fact that a given entity is always contingent, has
our inference, that its existence requires to be derived from some
external cause for as long as it exists, been, perhaps, a little too
enthusiastic? Do we need to invoke a factor other than the pre-
sent existence of something to explain its future existence (i.e., its
continuation in being) or, indeed, to explain its present existence?
If something is-and its origin is understood in terms of, for
example, its producer or parent-why not say that it just is, or

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[10] Boethius, *De Trinitate* 3: "Ubi vero nulla est differentia, nulla est omnino pluralitas,
quare nee numerus; igitur unitas tantum" ("But where there is no difference, there is no
sort of plurality and accordingly no number; here, therefore, is unity alone") *(Boethius,*
Loeb Classical Library, vol. 74). Aquinas refers relatively frequently to Boethius in his
treatment of the existence and nature of God in *STh* I, qq. 2-11; there are no fewer than
twelve references to him there.

just continues to be? This brings us to a consideration of the third principle contained in the Third Way.

Principle 3

The third principle, namely a thing that need not be, at some time does not exist-I take the "once was not" *(quandoque non est)* to mean "at some time is not"-is more difficult, because it seems not to carry with it the kind of intuitive conviction that the others possess: it may not be an incoherent notion that something (e.g., matter) has always existed, and always will exist, yet still remains contingent. In effect, this principle highlights the temporality which of necessity accompanies contingency. To be contingent is to be in time; even something that, though contingent, always is, is precisely for all time, it lasts through time. Its contingency consists in the fact that it might not have existed, and, since it now exists, in the possibility of its ceasing to be at some future time. By contrast, to be necessary is simply to be, and to fail to have any temporal conditions whatever. It seems that this principle amounts to the following: to say of an already existing thing that it need not exist is to say that its future existence is not guaranteed by its mere existence now. Thus, it may be or not be at a future moment.

Such a conclusion would give equal weight to the possibility of a thing's existing in the future and to that of its ceasing to exist in the future, but would such an equiparation be correct? Would it not be better to say that, in the case of a contingent entity, since it exists now, it will continue to exist unless and until some event takes place that will prevent its further lasting? To admit that there are some entities that seem to be temporally self-limiting, such as animals or certain unstable elements, would then be simply to claim that such a canceling event is guaranteed to happen by virtue of the essence of the entity in question, and the longer the entity lasts, the more likely this event is to happen. In any case, what is in question here is a tendency on the part of already-existing, though contingent, entities to go on existing. This is the substance of an objection made by Anthony Kenny in his treatment of the Third Way:

To say that something has a tendency to go on existing is merely to say that if something exists at t_1 and not at t_2 some explanation of the cessation of its existence is called for. The existence of Coroner's courts is evidence of the widespread desire for such types of explanation."

Kenny's witty example makes clear the kind of explanation called for: feeble old Murgatroyd died of heart-failure, but robust young Clutterbuck died because he was poisoned. But let us be clear as to what requires explanation here, and what does not. What the coroner wants to know is, "how?" and "why?", or, in the latter case, perhaps more exactly "why now, rather than at some other time?" What she therefore does not need to find out is that the cessation of existence was always a possibility for both, the possibility that is the ultimate vulnerability which contingency bespeaks. Things that spring up and pass away certainly do so in accordance with the exigencies of the kind of being they are, but this does not deny that even if they exist at one moment the possibility of their non-existence may be realized the next. **If** this were not so they would be invulnerable for that length of time. Thus it must be correct to say that, equally, they may be or not be at a future moment, even though they now are, and we must explain why one possibility is actualized rather than the other. We might add, *pace* Kenny, that philosophers are interested in the reasons for the realization of both possibilities equally, while it is the business of Coroners to favor the one over the other. However that may be, it would seem that although it is a necessary condition that x exist now for x to continue to exist from now, it is not a sufficient condition, for if it were, this would do away with its capacity to cease to be at any future moment, the threat of which is coterminous with its contingency. In sum: x is at t_1 and not at t_2 for reason r_1; x is at t_1 and still is at t_2 for reason r_2; whatever r_2 may be, it is not simply the existence of x at t_1.

But let us not yield the objection so easily. Do we ever need, or is it ever legitimate to look for, such a reason as r_2? The answer

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[11] Anthony Kenny, *The Five Way: St. Thomas Aquinas' Proofs of God's Existence* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 62.

seems to lie in precisely what we are called upon to explain. As we have already remarked, it is the business of the Coroner to seek out reasons of the r_1 variety. That people are alive and well, and how they are so, though no doubt gratifying, is no occasion for calling her skills as Coroner into play. The same goes, *mutatis mutandis,* for other sorts of explanation, including the scientific. All such explanation is based on the regularities rooted in the structure of things, and hence belongs to essence. Existence is reduced to mere occurrence. The philosopher however practices the discipline that examines Being as such and the properties that belong to Being of itself. This in turn means that the question resolves itself into that of the possibility of metaphysics as such. Now, although this question goes beyond the limits of this essay, certain issues are worthy of note. God is not an explanation in the scientific sense, because God is not a thing among other things, nor is creation an event among other events, and the business of pure science seems to be the explanation or prediction of some events on the basis of others, given that such events occur in a discoverable pattern, itself the object of scientific research. Being able to posit the existence of God will not of itself aid in that enterprise, and indeed is neutral to it; it is a grave error to imagine that God and, say, the Big Bang or the theory of evolution are rival theories to explain the same series of events. Likewise, neither science nor philosophy is capable of explaining everything; all they can do is localize our lack of knowledge. To say, in particular, that God exists is not equivalent to the assertion that everything is now explained, for God at the least remains mysterious. However, it does make a difference if we are able to posit the existence of God, for it means that the source and heart of all existence is not brute, but ethical, and that meaning is not a cloak thrown over sheer absurdity in and by human intention, but is real, objective, and living.

To return, then, to the question implicit in the last paragraph but one: if r_2 is not simply identical to the previous existence of x, then what is it? It will be obvious that any answer to this question dovetails with the argument we deployed in discussing

Principle 2. In brief, since r_2 cannot be productive causes, any
essential feature of x, or the previous existence of x, it follows
that it must be the source of sheer existence which all would
agree in calling God.

Another question remains. Has the existence of God anything
to do with reasons in the sense of r_1, that is, causes of x's ceasing
to be? In general, we might ask the larger question, if God is the
source of all existence, are there any other causes than God? Or,
to put it another way, are we obliged to choose between invok-
ing the same cause for everything, and giving non-divine causes
their due? This would seem to be the sense of Aquinas's second
objection, namely:

everything we observe in this world can be fully accounted for by other
causes, without assuming a God. Thus natural effects are explained by
natural causes, and contrived effects by human reasoning and will.
There is therefore no need to suppose that a God exists."

In attempting to answer such questions, it is necessary to keep
one thing before our minds, namely that divine causality is never
to be conceived as in competition with finite causality: the act of
creation is the granting of the sheer existence of the finite, not the
modification or alteration of that existence. God stands to all
that is not as Laertes or Gertrude stands to Hamlet, but as
Shakespeare does. There is no particular moment or event or
phase of existence that can be attributed to God any more than
any other; the whole of existence as such is what, as we have
tried to show, must be attributed to God. Since the Divine is the
source of existence, and since existence encompasses all attributes,
phases, and moments, in particular as well as in general, it fol-
lows that it is the englobing context of all interactions between
entities. We need not, therefore, choose one form of causality at
the expense of the other in the most general account we can give
of what there is: it is not a question of coordination but of sub-
ordination. A transforming or efficient cause works by commu-
nicating the actuality which is its own precisely as cause to some
situation which is possible in accordance with that receptivity

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[12] Aquinas, *STh* I, q. 2, a. 3, obj. 2.

which is the potential of the other participating entities; but this
is subordinate to the granting of existence to the participants, or,
equivalently, and perhaps more simply, on condition that they
continue to exist throughout the communication of actuality
which is their interaction. In this way, the assertion of God's exis-
tence is not the assertion of a deadening occasionalism which
ascribes transformation to Divinity alone; it is, rather, a recogni-
tion of the real but subordinate status of transformational
causality, subordinate in the sense of being logically and really
dependent on actual existence, which is, as such and as a whole,
the work of the Divine.

Clearly, all this bespeaks a far more radically intimate relation
of Creator and created than is allowed for in metaphors of creation
as making, since what is made, when complete, stands free of its
maker's activity. Nevertheless, some sense of the all-pervasive
presence of the Divine is doubtless essential to religion, and is to
be found, expressed poetically, if not philosophically, in many
contexts. But in the present writer's view, the best metaphor we
have of divine creativity is not to be found in artisanal making,
nor even in literary composition, and certainly not in the watch-
maker or the architect. It is to be found in music, or more pre-
cisely, in singing. Rhythm is the essence of all music, just as time
is the essence of the created and contingent. The singer needs
nothing external to herself in order to sing; she is her own instru-
ment, requiring only her own ability to sing. The song relies
more closely on the singer than any other kind of artifact on its
producer, for it has no other being than in her voice: when she
sings, it is made real; when she ceases to sing, it ceases. Each
moment of the song offers an indefinitely great number of possi-
ble continuations and resolutions which, if she is composer as
well as singer, she can choose or reject, not at random, but artis-
tically, respecting the inherent logic of the melody she has chosen
to create. Each moment of the song is thereby beginning and
end, culmination and promise, a part wherein the totality, in
which that moment is significant, is virtually contained. But
even this metaphor does not let us in, at least directly, on the care
of the Divinity for the created, which must be coterminous with

the Divinity's creating; for how else is it possible to understand
the divine call to existence than as vocation to and by love?

Ill. SOME OBJECTIONS AND REPLIES

Finally, let us, following Aquinas's excellent example, end by
resolving some objections. The first one to be met is the Kantian,
since it is widely believed that Kant was successful in his attempt
to show that the kind of argument we have been considering is
impossible. [13] We are here interested, however, in those con-
tentions of Kant's that are independent of his epistemology.
There are two, namely that the ontological argument is falla-
cious, partly because it treats "exists" as a predicate, and that
what Kant calls the cosmological argument, which is that in his
system to which our argument would most closely correspond, of
necessity collapses into the ontological argument. We must ask,
first, does our argument treat "exists" as a predicate?, and sec-
ond, is it resolvable into the ontological argument?

The answer to this first question is easily given, because it will
be apparent that our treatment shows the difference, rather than
assuming any identity, between such assertions as "x exists" and
"x is red," relying as it does upon the distinction made in predi-
cate logic between a predicate and a quantifier. The second ques-
tion may be answered as follows. Our argument does not begin
with the notion of necessary being, nor does it assume it. The pic-
ture of God as necessary source of existence is constructed in the
course of the argument, on the basis of the discoverable structure
inherent in reality, which comes under the heading of the dis-
tinction between essence and existence. We discover what con-
tingency means, show that this contingency requires a cause to
account for its existence, on the basis of the modal principles that
nothing brings itself into existence and that potentiality of itself
is insufficient to account for actuality, and then show that this
real cause must be therefore unique and necessary. This seems to
answer the salient Kantian objection; whether it agrees, particu-

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[13] See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* trans. and ed. Norman Kemp Smith
(London: Macmillan, 1973), "Transcendental Dialectic," book 2, chapter 3, sections 4 and
5, for Kant's treatment of the ontological and cosmological arguments.

larly in terms of the modal premises, with Kant's conception of the limits of knowledge is important only if one accepts Kant's epistemological views.

A second objection is found in Hume, who asks,

why may not the material universe be the necessary existent ... for aught we can affirm it may contain some qualities which, were they known, would make non-existence appear as great a contradiction as that twice two is five.[14]

This is a much stronger objection. The universe is the set of everything that exists. Now, if we assume that everything in the universe comes to be and passes away, it is clear that the subject of Hume's unknown necessity is matter itself. Is there some necessity, hidden in the nature of brute matter, that makes its non-existence impossible, or a contradiction? Even if we want to say that the coming into being of an entity is a real though infinitesimal addition to the universe, and its passing an equally infinitesimal impoverishment, are we finally forced to say that since every entity in the universe is material, there is no real coming into existence nor passing away, but only the endless arrangement and rearrangement of necessarily existing matter?

It would seem that there are at least three ways of answering this objection. First, we might say that science seems to have discovered a first event-the so-called Big Bang-in the history of the universe. If this is so then matter had a beginning, so there can be no absurdity in the non-existence of matter, and so matter cannot be the sort of thing that has to be. This, however, might be too simple, because this first event might not really be such. It seems to be possible that we live in an Empedoclean universe, which goes through periods of destruction and regeneration in the course of vast intervals of time, and that there might be an infinite series of Big Bangs, each of which is followed ages later by a Big Crunch, itself followed by another Big Bang. Whether or not this is so is a problem for physics, but let us assume that it is: where does that leave us?

Second, we might follow the example of Stephen Priest, who, in another philosophical context, cuts the Gordian Knot as follows:

[14] David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion,* part 9.

Like consciousness,*matter does not exist* [emphasis in the original]. I have three grounds for this. First, everything that can be said about the physical world can be said in terms of physical objects or space-time events, their structures, and the relations between them. "Matter" is redundant. Secondly, the onus is on the proponent of matter to prove that it exists. Thirdly, the empirical inaccessibility of matter and the ineffability of the concept are accounted for at a stroke by my view: there is no such thing as matter.[15]

This is a very interesting view. The scientific notion of matter seems conceptually "heavy," containing notions like "elementary" particles, which themselves resolve into further particles, and so on. However, it might be possible to maintain that the notion essential to all uses of the term is that of "event in space-time," as Priest suggests. Everything, whether a person or a proton, is such an event. This is a far cry from the solid, heavy, opaque stuff that is usually meant (by non-scientists), and which Hume probably meant, by the term "matter." Thus, to say that things are material is not to say that they are "made of" particles of a certain kind, but that, in virtue of being material, they occur in space-time. There is no matter apart from entities, of whatever sort, that occur in space-time. This makes materiality a function of the entity rather than the reverse. Such a reversal would once again bring us close to what Aquinas meant by "matter," which could never exist independently, but only as the medium in which form was incarnate, and which, as *principium individuationis,* by lending the entity location in space and time, made it numerically distinct from all other entities of like kind.[16] But if all this is so, it is very hard to see how such events could qualify as Hume's necessary matter, because an event is by definition fugitive and perishing. We are brought once again back to the musical analogy, where the universe becomes an endlessly complex polyphony, with immeasurably many voices coming in and falling silent.

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[15] Stephen Priest, *Theories of the Mind* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), 222.

[16] See Joseph Bobik's essay "Matter and Individuation" with the comment and discussion following, in *The Concept of Matter in Greek and Medieval Philosophy,* ed. Ernan McMullin (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965).

Third, there can be no logical absurdity in the non-existence of matter. If the ontological argument does not work it is because existence, having to be, is not the result of some feature or constellation of features. But supposing that matter had to be, this would lead to a surprising conclusion, namely that matter simply is, without any temporal, and therefore also without any spatial, condition in its existence. This would, in effect, be to remove it from space and time altogether, which is obviously untrue and (if it is correct to say that matter is event in space-time) even a contradiction. Such nonsense would merit Aquinas's downright condemnation of David of Dinant and his ilk.[11]

The final objection is the one Aquinas himself starts with, and is the strongest possible argument against the existence of God: "If God existed, nobody would ever encounter evil. But evil is encountered in the world. God therefore does not exist."[18]

We are under no illusion that our argument solves this difficulty; indeed, it renders it more poignant, in that God is shown clearly in it to be creative in every aspect and moment of creation, precisely insofar as it exists. But if this is so, then God is present in the bacilli that cause the disease, and in the blade used by the torturer, and in the mind of the torturer himself, precisely insofar as these exist. How is this consonant with the care and love we suggest to be coterminous with divine creativity? And if, as we say, our argument offers apparently so little help in this agonizing question, why raise it, especially now, almost as an addendum, at the end of our discussion? We raise it for several reasons. The first, and probably the most important, is that it should be raised. No one who argues that God exists can simply ignore this question, and it is as well to indicate that the question exists, even if we have little in the way of an answer to it (if, indeed, it allows of one). Further discussion must not only take the form of criticism and defense of the argument, it must also steer itself in the direction of this question, and must navigate around it. Moreover, in the context of this argument, in

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[17] "qui stultissime posuit Deum esse materiam primam" ("who most stupidly declared God to be prime matter": my translation) (Aquinas, *STh* I, q. 3, a. 8).

[18] Ibid. I, q. 2, a. 3, obj. 1.

which the divine intimacy with creation is so much a feature, it
is worth noting that God is present not only in the bacillus and
the wicked man, but also in the victim and the one who suffers,
and this is itself a statement worth making.

STRIVING FOR PERSONAL SANCTITY
THROUGH WORK

JOHN R. MEYER

Chicago, Illinois

T HE FIRST ATTEMPT to develop a speculative theology of work appeared in the late 1940s and early 1950s with Gustave Thils's *Theologie des realites terrestres* and Marie-Dominique Chenu's *Pour une theologie du travail.* [1] Their ideas on the relationship between time and eschatology strongly influenced the magisterial teaching crystallized in *Gaudium et spes* 39.[2] While Chenu used the general doctrine of Saint Thomas Aquinas to discuss the objective aspect of work-a collaboration in God's original work of creation-we will focus on Christian biblical anthropology as a basis for integrating the subjective dimension of work with one's divine vocation. [3]

To that end, and in order to present a coherent theology of work along Thomistic lines, I will evaluate work on the basis of

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[1] See G. Thils, *Theologie des realites terrestres* (Paris: Desclee, 1947); M. D. Chenu, *Pour une theologie du travail* (Paris: Seuil, 1955).

[2] See J. L. Illanes,"Trabajo, caridad, justicia," *Scripta theologica* 26 (1994): 571-608.

[3] There have been several philosophical and theological investigations on work from the viewpoint of Saint Thomas. Here is a representative sampling of the modern literature: J. de Finance, *.P.tre et agir dans la philosophie de saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1945); H. Rondet, "Elements pour une theologie du travail," *Nouvelle revue de theologie* 77 (1955): 27-48, 123-43; P. Delhaye, "Theologie du travail," *Ami du clerge* 67 (1957): 433-35, 449-55; *J.* Janssen, "Doctrina S. Thomae de obligatione laborandi," *Ephemerides Lovanienses* 1 (1924): 355-68; B. Montagnes, "Les emplois du qualificatif 'saecularis,"' *Revue de sciences philosophique et theologique* 55 (1971): 231-49; G. Todoli, *Filosofia del trabajo* (Madrid: lnstituto Social Leon XIII, 1955); E. D. Almeida, "Valor actual del concepto tomista de trabajo," *Estudios philosophicos* 1 (1960): 214-24; K. V. *Truhlar, Il lavoro cristiano: Per una teologia del lavoro,* Italian translation of *Labor christianus: Initiatio in theologiam spiritualem systematicam de labore* (Rome: Herder, 1961).

a few fundamental insights, both anthropocentric and theocentric,
taken from sacred Scripture. The importance of this approach is
borne out by scholars who find it difficult to integrate the human
and divine elements of this activity. One author, for example,
claims that work is simply an end in itself since there is no
religious motivation to work, [4] and another asserts that since
one's work and life are sacred, there is no such thing as purely
secular work: our entire life is both a sacrosanct service to
mankind and worship of God. [5]

   The inherent dignity of man, who is created in the image and
likeness of God, demands that a Christian theology of work
begin with or at least include and build upon this datum of revela-
tion. Similarly, Catholic social doctrine contains several impor-
tant principles concerning work, all of which underscore the
invaluable worth of the human person. [6] Work should be ordered
to man and to the increase of his personal dignity,[7] which for all
intents and purposes means to grow in spiritual union with God.

   [4] M. Volf, *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work* (New York and Oxford:
Oxford University Press, 1991), 195-201.

   [5] E. S. Dale, *Bringing Heaven down to Earth: A Practical Spirituality of Work* (New
York: Peter Lang, 1991).

   [6] Among these principles we could list the following: (1) the priority of human over eco-
nomic values, labor over capital; (2) the transcendent and permanent value of work; (3)
the primacy of the subjective over the objective dimension of work; and (4) the human
person as the decisive center of man's being and economic activity. The Church has
always condemned the Marxist vision of work, or any other ideology espousing atheism
for that matter, because "[a Marxist regime] totally reduces man to the sphere of eco-
nomics and the satisfaction of material needs" *(Centesimus annus* 19.4). Materialistic con-
sumerism can be just as injurious to the integrity of the human person, albeit for differ-
ent reasons. Pius IX wrote that communism is contrary to natural law *(Qui pluribus,* 9
November 1846), and Pius XI condemned Marxist socialism *(Quanta cura,* 15 May 1931)
and the philosophical principles of dialectical and historical materialism *(Divini redemp-
toris,* 19 March 1937). And John XXIII explained that the acknowledgment of a change
in movements that take their origin from erroneous doctrines requires the prudent judg-
ment of an authoritative declaration of ecclesiastical authorities, and such an evolution
in Marxism has never been recognized by the Church (Paul VI, Address, 22 May 1966;
cf. *Populorum progressio).* Cf. J. L. Illanes, "Trabajo, productividad y primacia de la per-
sona," *Scripta theologica* 23 (1991): 469-89, esp. 478-85. An atheistic vision of life fails to
appreciate man as gifted with an immanent life (an interior life) that enables him to
transform the world and himself by way of his actions.

   [7] See Gerald A. McCool, "The Theology of John Paul II," in J.M. McDermott, ed., *The
Thought of John Paul I: A Collection of Essays and Studies* (Rome: Editrice Pontificia
Universita Gregoriana, 1993), 49; cf. *Laborem exercens,* 13.

Moreover, as a continuation of creation, work enables men and women to improve the world around them and to participate in the paschal mystery of Christ. [8] As both a service to others and a concurrent activity with God, work is directed towards fulfilling the divine will, which elevates purely secular concerns to participation in the creative act of God and union with him in Jesus Christ.

I. THE EMERGENCE OF A CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY OF WORK

Although Aristotle criticized Plato's utopian view of society and the promotion of institutional regulation therein, Aristotle too believed that personal worth was determined by the social class to which one belonged: alien, slave, artisan, or freeman. The Greek *polis* was a highly diversified society composed of a relatively small proportion of educated men, who, because of their special moral stature, were freed from menial work; work was done only by those incapable of higher intellectual activity. The factor that set the intellectual "non-working" class apart from the rest of men was the ability to deliberate: those citizens who were able to make good judgments on the fortunes of the polity represented the entire community. [9] Such an elitist view relegated work to the status of a second-class activity.

For a Christian, in contrast, work is not a sociological category but a primary anthropological law of human nature. In the Old Testament we read that man was born to work just as the birds were born to fly (cf. Job 5:7) and that work is a divine vocation (cf. Gen 2:15). Therefore, work not only reflects man's natural way of being, but is also a concrete way of giving glory to God. When a man's worth is measured (or determined) solely by the office he holds, he is absorbed into his work and loses his personal identity, being transformed into the instrument of an abstract category of economic activity. The primary danger of our day is the temptation to consider work as a conquest of nature, pure human competition, or a means to earthly success;

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[8] Cf. John Paul II, "Address to the World of Work," in the English edition of *L'Osservatore Romano,* 29 March 1995, p. 4.

[9] See E. Voegelin, *Order and History,* vol. 3: *P/,ato and Aristotle* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 321-31.

in other words, modern man tends to reduce the concept of work
to the vanquishing of nature and/or one's enemy.[10]

   Pope John Paul II emphasizes the subjective dimension of
work based on the revealed truth that man is created in the
"image of God." Man is "a subjective being capable of acting in a
planned and rational way, capable of deciding about himself,
and with a tendency to self-realization. [11] But God also gave the
command to "subdue the earth" (cf. Gen 1:28) which first
requires the dominion of self. Self-control and a virtue ethic are
definite preconditions for good work, as well as aids for man in
ordering himself to God. Hence, man's anthropological condi-
tion as a free agent of activity, an acting subject who freely deter-
mines his temporal and eternal destiny, is the very foundation of
Christian work. Indeed, one of the reasons why the Word of God
became a man-like us in all things but sin-was to show us
how to work for God. [12]

   The encyclical letter *Centesimus annus* presents work as an
important hermeneutic key to a more personal and communal
understanding of man's inherent creativity. [13] This creativity is
not limited to human inventiveness or ingenuity alone; rather, it
is a share in the creative action of God. Furthermore, only by
evaluating both what man produces and what changes he brings
about within himself (with God's help of course) does one see the
complete value of work; the subjective changes do not alter our
nature but rather perfect our personality. Thomas called these
two dimensions of work *transitive* and *immanent* actions. In the
former an effect is brought about outside the agent; in the latter,
a more perfect quality appears in the acting person. [14] Moreover,

   [10] See J. J. Sanguinetti, "L'umanesimo del lavoro nel Beato Josemaria Escriva:
Riflessioni filosofiche," *Acta philosophica* 1 (1992): 264-78.

   [11] *Laborem exercens,* 6.

   [12] Cf. Heb 2:17; 4:15; Phil 2:5-8. *Gaudium et spes* 22.2 says, "This circumstance consti-
tutes in itself the most eloquent 'Gospel of Work,' showing that the basis for determining
the value of human work is not primarily the kind of work being done but the fact that
the one who is doing it is a person."

   [13] Cf. S. Hauerwas, "In Praise of *Centesimus Annus," Theology* 95 (1992): 416-32.

   [14] "Duplex est actio. Una quae transit in exteriorem materiam; ut calefacere et secare.
Alia quae manet in agente; ut intelligere, sentire, et velle. Quarum haec est differentia:
quia prima actio non est perfectio agentis quod movet, sed ipsius moti; secunda autem
actio est perfectio agentis" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 18, a. 3, ad 1).

the objective goodness of the first assures the perfecting of the subject. [15] This explains why work must be done with integrity and quality if it is to be offered to God; human activity cannot become divine unless it is well done from a material point of view. [16] This is especially important if one proposes to convert work into prayer as Saint Paul attests: "Whatever you do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col 3:17). "It's not enough to want to do good; we must know how to do it, and, if our desire is real, it will show itself in the effort we make to use the right methods, finishing things well, achieving human perfection. [17]

The world of work is able to offer human beings an opportunity to participate in the creative action of God because of their self-transcending nature. [18] Our natural orientation is to act not only in the interest of self but also for the common good. Considered in a more philosophical sense, human transcendence is rooted in the subsistent spiritual nature of the person whose soul is the subject of understanding, perception, imagination, memory, emotion, and language. [19] Man becomes more fully human not by surpassing his given nature, as modernity supposes, but rather by opening his freedom to divine transcendence and the service of the common good. [20]

One way to foster working for the common good is to enshrine noble human aspirations in a rule of law that is based on a

[15] See the discussion of J.-M. Henri-Rousseau on the relationship of transitive and immanent actions in the acting subject according to Thomas in "L'etre et l'agir," *Revue Thomiste* 54 (1954): 267-97; 488-531.

[16] Michael E. Giesler, "Opus Dei and the Sanctification of Work," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* (February 1988): 29.

[17] Josemaria Escriva, *Christ Is Passing By* (Chicago: Scepter, 1974), no. 50.

[18] The definition of the human person in *Christifideles laici* is useful here: the human person is "a responsible 'subject,' endowed with conscience and freedom, called to live responsibly in society and history; and oriented towards spiritual and religious values" *(Christifideles laici,* 5).

[19] For a more detailed discussion of the transcendental nature of the human person according to man's ability to think and communicate, with thought and language as the differentiating feature of the human being, see David Braine's *The Human Person: Animal and Spirit* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 512-45.

[20] See the interesting thoughts of Louis Dupre in "The Modern Idea of Culture: Its Opposition to Its Classical and Christian Origins," in Ralph Mcinerny, ed., *Modernity and Religion* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 1-18.

correct conception of the human person. As long as law respects
the dignity of the person, almost any form of government will fur-
ther the objective good of society. By contrast, a contractarian
view of justice jeopardizes respect for the dignity of the person,
because moral principles are based on a fair agreement among
interested parties rather a virtuous ideal. [21] Such an egalitarian
vision was unrealistic for Plato and Aristotle, which may explain
why they preferred aristocracy to democracy or oligarchy. [22]

   Although the common rule of law helps prevent abuses of
individual   rights   and   promotes   fair   working   conditions,
Christian love is an unconditional gift of self that is expressive of
God's own love or *agape.* Christian love is a conquest, a victory,
an achievement, not over others but over the self; it is, or at least
it should be, an enactment of God's will. Such a vision of work
is the antithesis of the modern notion of a disengaged freedom,
in which the person is liberated from all external authority and
aspires to be governed by procedural theories of reasoning, with
no preset moral criteria or standards.

[21] See A. Macintyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, Ind.:
University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 112 and 216.

[22] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 5, 1131a24-29; cf. A. Macintyre, *Whose Justice?
Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 103-6.
When *Centesimus annus* favors free-market economies that promote economic initiative
and reward the creative subjectivity of the citizen, it is because such societies are "the
most efficient instrument for utilizing resources and effectively responding to needs"
(Centesimus annus, 34). But a sound footing in law is an absolute necessity to protect the
rights of workers and the dignity of the individual person.

   Yves Simon and Jacques Maritain argued that democracy is the norm for organizing
society according to natural law, but neither of them demonstrated that there exists an
egalitarian mass in the body politic. Most modern societies are composed of interdepen-
dent political and economic communities possessing hierarchical features that corre-
spond to the differentiated functions of the individuals. Cf. E. A. Goerner, "Aristocracy
and Natural Right," in *American Journal of Jurisprudence* 17 (1972): 1-13. The economic
life of society should include all its able-bodied members who wish to work. Active par-
ticipation contributes to their own personal development and growth, which is, or should
be, the principal aim of community life. A true community of persons recognizes the lim-
itations of individuals and compensates for those deficiencies by embarking on a mutual
commitment to the good of all. See G. Grisez, *The Way of the Lord Jesus,* vol. 1: *Christian
Moral Principles* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983), 56-61

II. THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR CHRISTIAN WORK

Our attempt to develop a theology of work requires that we address two scriptural themes: (1) work as a mission from God, and (2) work as participation in God's creative action. These two fundamental points are described in both the Old and the New Testaments, with the creative life of God being continued in and through human work.

In the first two chapters of Genesis, God gives Adam a twofold mission of self-dominion and general stewardship over the rest of creation. Some early Church Fathers interpreted the Hebraic terms *selem* (image) and *demut* (likeness) (cf. Gen 1:26) as referring to Jesus Christ himself, the archetype of divine imaging, whom all persons are urged to imitate. The Garden of Eden, then, was not simply a place, but a condition created for man and his perfection. Adam and Eve were placed there to work the earth and to cultivate the life of God in themselves. Far from being an onerous task, work was a constitutive element of man's personality in this prelapsarian world. This interpretation is supported by scriptural references to the obligation to work *prior* to the Fall, the implication being that work was not a punishment but a primal responsibility. Certainly, the difficulties one encounters in work are indicative of original sin (cf. Gen 3:19), but those same difficulties make work more meritorious in God's eyes.

The Yahwist account of creation (Gen 2:4-25) presents the earth as incomplete before the creation of man. The Hebrew expressions *le 'obdah* (to cultivate it) and *le shomrah* (to take care of it) suggest that the first man was called to cultivate virtue in himself as well as the soil outside himself. [23] To be sure, the cultivation of greatest import is self-cultivation. We see this indicated by the Hebrew verb *shamar* (to guard), which means "to care for" a person, a city, or even the ark of the covenant; it also signifies the moral task of guarding the ways of the Lord by fulfilling his commandments. [24] Indeed, the commandment "you shall not

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[23] See F. Vattioni, "Il lavoro nei primi capitoli de Genesi," *Studi sociali* 1 (1961): 109-19.

[24] Cf. J. M. Casciaro and J. M. Monforte, *Dios, el mundo y el hombre* (Pamplona, Spain: EUNSA, 1992), 455.

steal" (Exod 20:15; Deut 5:19; Matt 19:18) actually includes the
duty to work, as St. Paul so clearly states: "If any one will not
work, let him not eat" (2 Thess 3:10; cf. 1Thess4:11).

God cultivated paradise with man's work, comments St.
Augustine, and he cultivated man through the work of divine
grace.[25] In other words, man's work develops and finishes God's
original work of creation, objectively speaking, while God him-
self finishes perfecting us through the work we carry out as act-
ing subjects in his service. In short, work serves as the means to
gain full access to and use of sanctifying grace. But how does this
occur?

While the classical societies of Greece and Rome despised
manual labor, the Jews of antiquity held it in high regard;[26] Jesus
admonished his disciples to see work as closely allied with their
divine vocation (cf. Eph 4:28; 1 Thess 4:11). Nevertheless, the
relationship of vocation to work has changed considerably in the
last few centuries, in large part thanks to the insights of certain
religious writers who believed that the late medieval Church
made too sharp a distinction between the sacred and the secular
realms.

One of these was Martin Luther. In his opinion, the distinction
of the sacred and the secular created two classes of Christians,
the holy and the less than holy, so he extended the notion of voca-
tion to include all stations of life. Unfortunately, he envisaged
work as essentially a human service, neither God's work nor
capable of being done for God.[27] And St. Paul's notion of *klesis*
(vocation) seemed to confirm this opinion: "everyone should
remain in the *state* in which he was called" (1 Cor 7:20). God

[25] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram,* 8.10.21-22.

[26] *Laborem exercens* lists various occupations which contrast the notion of work in the
Old Testament with that of the New. The professions enumerated here include that of
doctor, pharmacist, artist, blacksmith, potter, farmer, scholar, sailor, builder, musician,
shepherd, and fisherman. Cf. Sir 38:1-3; 38:4-8;Exod 3:1-5 and Sir 38:27; Gen 4:22 and
Isa 44:12; Jer 18:3-4 and Sir 38:29-30;Gen 9:20 and Isa 5:1-2;Eccl 12:9-12 and Sir 39:1-
8; Ps 107:23-30 and Wis 14:2-3a;Gen 11:3 and 2 Kgs 12:12-13;22:5-6;Gen 4:21; Gen 4:2;
37:3; Exod 3:1 and 1 Sam 16:11;Ezek 47:10. See *Laborem exercens,* 26.2.

[27] Cf. M. Luther, "Church Postils," in J. N. Lenker, ed., *The Precious and Sacred
Writings of Martin Luther* (Minneapolis: Lutherans of All Lands, 1905),36.

summons a person to a particular task in the Church, and yet
there is no distinction of rank according to office because we gain
no merit in virtue of the service performed for God and others.
"Man is not justified before God by what he does or does not do
in relation to other men," explains Donald Heiges; "perfection is
demanded for all men-not just of those in the cloister. And men,
regardless of where they live, are all incapable of perfection ....
The salvation of both monks and masons depends entirely upon
the unmerited grace of God. [28] In a similar vein, Dietrich
Bonhoeffer described man's good works as a *bearing* of the cross
of Christ; work does not, therefore, contribute directly to holi-
ness because justification is not by works-they simply manifest
and praise God's glory.[29]

However valuable Luther's extension of the notion of voca-
tion was, his notion of work itself and its connection with God's
creativity was limited. In the best of circumstances, good human
work would manifest God's presence but it could not be done
"for God" or "with God." In contrast, Catholic theology describes
work as *sharing* in God's creative action, as imitating the life of
Christ, and as building up the human and heavenly community
of humanity. All three of these activities are based on the biblical
revelation of man as created in the image of God, and the
restoration of our personal relationship with him through divine
grace. Thus, in a broad sense, all that a Christian does is a col-
laborative work with God.

Let us now examine the interplay of grace and work with the
help of scriptural texts, insights taken from philosophical theology,
and a few remarks on the role of subjective intention in work
activities.

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[28] Donald R. Heiges, *The Christian Calling* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958),
45.

[29] "Men are not to see the disciples but their good works, says Jesus. And these works
are none other than those which the Lord Jesus himself has created in them by calling
them to be the light of the world under the shadow of his cross. The good works are
poverty, peregrination, meekness, peaceableness, and finally persecution and rejection.
All these good works are a *bearing* of the cross of Jesus Christ. It is by *seeing* the cross
and the community beneath it that men come to believe in God" (D. Bonhoeffer, *The
Cost of Discipleship,* 2d ed. [New York: MacMillan, 1974), 133-34).

III. WORK AS A CONCURRENT HUMAN AND DIVINE ACTIVITY

Leo XIII described the Church's social doctrine as a body of moral principles rooted in the Christian tradition and founded on values appreciated and developed by living the gospel. Similarly, *Centesimus annus* speaks of inculcating the principles of the gospel into economic life as the basis and motivation for action in a Christian society (cf. 57). Of the many moral principles we find in the gospel, charity is clearly the most important one. Thomas understood charity to be an infused inner disposition reflecting the presence of the Holy Spirit who is seen in acts of faith, hope, and moral virtue. [30] In fact, according to him, no virtue is possible without charity [31] because all things issue from it as from a principle and all are ordered to it as to an end.[32] Charity gives a new direction to human actions, not as a simple moral addition, but as a principle of action in the order of causality.[33] By throwing oneself into work, then, for love of God and love of neighbor, one can grow in charity by using the grace already present within oneself.[34]

[30] See Aquinas, *STh* 1-11, q. 108, a. 1. Thomas discusses why prescriptions and prohibitions are still needed in the New Law. The goal of a Christian life is to enact all that derives from the promptings of grace and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the soul. Human freedom is operative within this legal context and is truly free when good habits lead man to do what is in accord with his nature, and the Holy Spirit informs such action: "gratia Spiritus Sancti est sicut interior habitus nobis infusus, inclinans nos ad recte operandum, facit nos libere operari ea quae conveniunt gratiae, et vitiare ea quae gratiam repugnant" (ad 2).

[31] Ibid.11-11,q. 23, a. 4, ad 1; and a. 7.

[32] Thomas Aquinas, *In Joannes,* c. 15, lect. 2, 6: "secundum Gregorium, dicendum est, quod caritas est radix et finis omnium virtutum. Radix quidem, quia ex caritate confirmata in corde hominis movetur homo ad implenda omnia alia praecepta ... omnia praecepta quasi ad hoc ordinantur ut homo benefaciat proximo.... A caritate omnia procedunt sicut a principio, et in caritate omnia ordinantur sicut in finem. Nam, sicut dixit Gregorius, ut multi arboris rami ex una radice prodeunt, sic multae virtutes ex una radice generantur: nee habet aliquid viriditatis ramus boni operis, si non manet in radice caritatis."

[33] Aquinas, *STh* 1-11, q. 100, a. 10.

[34] In his *Commentarium in quatuor libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi (Sent.),* Thomas explains that grace increases in the soul (i.e., charity is augmented), not by an addition of charity to charity, but "per hoc quod subiectum subiecto additur": by that which is added to the subject by the subject (I *Sent.,* d. 17, a. 2, sol.). This means that one is better disposed to enact the charity that is infused in the soul by the Holy

Charity was not completely absent from the attitudes of Romans and Greeks, yet even the manumission of urban slaves-relatively common in Rome (Athenians were not as lenient) [35]-bore marks of self-interest. The early Christians, on the other hand, used this practice for reasons of charity. [36] Paul expresses this view in his letter to Philemon, urging him to accept the slave Onesimus as a brother (cf. Phil 8-20). This no doubt reflects the attitude of most Christians, who interpreted Paul's admonition in Galatians 3:28, "neither free nor slave, [II] quite literally, believing that baptism created a new, spiritually free, person. [37]

Aquinas criticized both Aristotle's account of the nature of work and its social impact. While for the Athenian philosopher the supreme good for man was purely human (naturalism), with societal virtue Uustice) based on quantitative proportionality, Thomas considered the supreme good both human and divine. The Christian notion of justice is subject to charity because the latter completes the former. Perhaps most important of all, Thomas emphasized that the human person is the acting subject of work, which enabled him to avoid separating man from his

Spirit. And since man is the lord of his actions (homo est dominus sui actus), he can act with all his abilities (or virtues) or only in part: "quando actus caritatis procedit ex tota virtute habentes et quantum ad virtutem naturae et quantum ad virtutem habitus infusi, tune unus actus disponit, et meretur augmentum caritatis, ut statim fiat" (I *Sent.,* I, d. 17, a. 3, sol.).

[35] See William L. Westermann, *The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1955); and Thomas E. J. Wiedemann, "The Regularity of Manumission at Rome," *Classical Quarterly* 35 (1985): 162-75. Westermann (149-59) suggests that the condemnation of slavery by Christianity took centuries to develop, and that St. Paul primarily emphasized the mystical freedom of all men and women who believe in God, whether free or slave.

[36] The ad hoc group-sponsored manumission procedures in Greek and Roman society were a self-serving practice that offered the owner many advantages, none of which were especially charitable. The loans given to slaves were based on legal obligations of continued service, in such positions as procurators or business managers, or even as highly valued proteges who added dignity to the master's social status.

[31] *J.* A. Harrill, "Ignatius, Ad Polycarp. 4.3 and the Corporate Manumission of Christian Slaves," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1 (1993): 120-21. While Aristotle (and ancient Greeks in general) considered friendship a highly sought prize, a shared allegiance in the common project of creating and sustaining life in the *polis,* Christianity introduced the idea of love as the motivating force of true friendship.

work as Aristotle had done. [38] By supplementing the Aristotelian
ethic of justice with charity, virtue assumed a new exigency in
work, even to the point of moving Christians to overcome social
injustices. [39] But how does the practice of virtue, and charity in
particular, contribute to the common good?

Several years ago Jacques Maritain championed an integrated
view of personal holiness in which work played an essential role
in the struggle to commit oneself to the pursuit of sanctity in
ordinary things. [40] From a different perspective, and in a more
effective way, Josemaria Escriva said that professional work "is
a witness to the worth of the human creature. It provides a
chance to develop one's own personality; it creates a bond of
union with others; it constitutes a fund of resources; it is a way
of helping in the improvement of the society we live in, and of
promoting the progress of the whole human race. [1141] In short,
since man is essentially a social creature, the effort to live virtues
at work necessarily influences the good of others in a positive
way.

One must admit, nevertheless, that the exhortations of Jesus
and Paul on work tell us little about the *modus operandi* of grace
in work. For an explanation of this feature let us refer briefly to
the debate on the concurrent   action of God in human activities.

A commonly held Christian tenet says that the general action
of God creates the world, maintains it in existence, and empowers
its nature. As St. Luke records the Apostle Paul saying, "In him
we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28)-in God we
are made, conserved in existence, and called to union in the com-
munity of divine persons. Just as individual members of the
community need the mediation of intermediate societies in order
to reach perfection, so too we need the grace of Christ to be
transformed   into God-like creatures. For the Christian, this

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[38] See Giuseppe Cenacchi, *fl Lavoro nel Pensiero de Tommaso d'Aquino, Studi
Tomistici* 5 (Rome/Pontifica Accademia di S. Tommaso d' Aquino: Coletti Editore, 1977),
28-29.

[39] Cf. Macintyre, *After Virtue,* 162-66; idem, *Whose Justice?, Which Rationality?,* 182-
96.

[40] J. Maritain, *Humanisme integral* (Paris: Aubier, 1947), 128-32; see also 296-312
("Annexe-Structure   de !'action").

[41] Josemarfa Escriva, *The Forge* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Scepter, 1988), no. 702.

grace accompanies incorporation into the Church at baptism, integrating us into the "corporate person" of Christ. [42]

The Pauline corporate personality of Christ helps us understand the theological value of work as cooperation with Christ and as building up the body of Christ. Thomas considered the causality of God neither as pure *occasionalism* nor as mere *conservationism,* but rather as the complementary action of God and man. Such a view was made possible by distinguishing each one's particular mode of operation. [43] The theologians who espoused occasionalism affirmed that God alone brings about effects in nature, but this reduces man's intention in work to arbitrariness (only God is a genuine efficient cause). In the case of mere conservationism, on the other hand, God contributes to effects in the world by creating and conserving substances and their active and passive causal powers. Here man is the real protagonist.

Both parties agreed that God is an immediate (conserving) cause of human actions and the effects of those actions. But is God acting *immediately* or simply in the being *(esse)* of man? [44] At a minimum, God is a mediate cause of the effects of human acts: since God is present in man as the First Cause of his being and of his nature, he mediates any and all human work. Yet Thomas makes the important observation that an effect produced jointly by God and by creatures *is not* just the conjunction of two

[42] Cf. H. de Lubac, *Catholicism: A Study of Dogma in Relation to the Corporate Destiny of Mankind,* trans. L. C. Sheppard (New York: Longmans, Green & Co, 1950), 69 and 167; Peter Damien, *Liber qui appellatur Dominus vobiscum,* c. 5 and 10 (PG 64:235 and 239): "The whole Church forms, in some sort, but one single person. As she is the same in all, so in each one is she whole and entire; and just as man is called a microcosm, so each one of the faithful is, so to say, the Church in miniature."

[43] Here I am following some of the more salient points discussed in an article on God's action in man by Alfred J. Freddoso, "God's General Concurrence with Secondary Causes: Pitfalls and Prospects," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 68 (1994): 131-56.

[44] Thomas writes that "the *esse* of all creatures depends on God in such a way that … they would be reduced to nothingness if they were not conserved in being by the action of God's power" (Dependent enim esse, cuiuslibet creaturae a Deo, ita quod … in nihilum redigerentur, nisi operatione divinae virtutis conservarentur in esse) *(STh* I, q. 104, a. 1).

independently produced effects.[45] When God concurs with a sec-
ondary agent to produce a given effect, his immediate causal
contribution and that of the secondary agent are complementary,
with neither rendering the other superfluous. [46] In other words,
when man works so does God, but God acts through our sec-
ondary causality to complement the work we do. Hence we can
say that man's work is, in a certain sense, a true sharing in the
efficient causality of God.[47]

   Two essential elements of concurrentism are of interest to us
here. First, secondary agents (like man) cannot produce effects
without God's general concurring causality; second, when God
acts as a general concurring cause his influence alone is *insuffi-
cient* to produce the effect of the secondary agent. Both man and
God are necessary complements in human action and work. In
actions involving God and man their cooperative action consti-
tutes a single cause producing a unitary effect. And although
man's causality is contingent and God's is necessary, the result-
ing effect is dependent upon the influence of both, even though
the resulting perfection is ascribed primarily to God.[48]

   While God and man truly work together in any human
endeavor, man causes effects *in quantum ad eius fieri,* inasmuch
as a product or an effect *comes to be.* Here Thomas provides the

   [45] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* III, c. 70: "Patet enim, quod non sic idem
effectus causae naturali et divinae virtuti attribuitur, quasi partim a Deo, partim a nat-
urali agente fiat, sed totus ab utroque secundum alium modum, sicut idem effectus totus
attribuitur instrumento, et principali agenti etiam totus."

   [46] Freddoso, "God's General Concurrence with Secondary Causes," 145.

   [47] Thomas cites the *Liber de causis* numerous times in his early writings, such as the
Scriptum super libros Sententiarum and the *Summa contra Gentiles,* in order to correct
the serial causality characteristic of Proclus. The fundamental axiom of the Neoplatonic
system was *causa prima plus influit in ejfectum quam causa secunda,* "the first cause has
a greater influence on the effect than the secondary cause." For Thomas this axiom
referred to efficient causality and not to formal causality as espoused by Proclus in his
Elementatio theologica. See Leo Elders's discussion in "Saint Thomas d'Aquin et la
Metaphysique du 'Liber de Causis,'" *Revue Thomiste* 89 (1989): 427-42.

   [48] "Quia causa prima magis influit in effectum quam secunda, ideo quidquid perfec-
tionis est in effectu, principaliter reduciter ad primam causam" (Thomas Aquinas, *De
Potentia,* q. 3, a. 7, ad 15). Many of the following ideas of Thomas are discussed at length
by Joseph Martin Graham in his *Secondary Causal Influx According to Saint Thomas
Aquinas,* Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1961.

example of a building contractor. Once the house is built its continued existence depends upon God who alone determines the nature and the qualities of the materials used in its construction. It stands as a work of God, confected through the transient work of man,[49] and it bears a primary resemblance to the human builder in whose mind it was conceived.[50] Clearly, then, the structure must be well-designed and well-built, otherwise it will fail to be serviceable to man and acceptable to God.

If God is at work in all created substances in a general form of concurrence, it stands to reason that his action is even more effective when man freely chooses to work *for* God. Moreover, man's unique nature allows him to discern God's designs and thereby contribute directly to creation by doing his will; this is a new and important feature of the subjective dimension of work. When man opens himself to *workfor* God, he also opens himself to a wellspring of grace that elevates his actions from within, making them both human and divine. The one essential proviso of course is that the work one performs be well done, humanly speaking, because we cannot offer anything defective to God (cf. Lev 22:20).

Another metaphysical insight of Thomas is valuable for evaluating work, namely, his distinction between production *ifacere)* and the perfecting of the working subject *(agere).*[51] This distinction is controlled by assigning priority to the intellect over the

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[49] "Et ideo remoto aedificatore, non tollitur esse domus, cuius causa est gravitas lapidum quae remanet; sed fieri domus cuius causa erat; et similiter remota causa essendi, tollitur esse" (Aquinas, I *Sent.,* d. 37, q. 1, a. 1).

[50] "Causa primaria dicitur plus influere quam secunda, in quantum eius effectus est intimior et permanentior in causato quam effectus causae secundae; effectus tamen magis similatur causae secundae quia per earn determinatur quodam modo actus primae causae ad hunc effectum" (Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate,* q. *5,* a. 9, ad 10; cf. *De Pot.,* q. 1, a. 4, ad 3).

[51] In his early discussions on manual work Thomas states that work has four principal ends: (1) it allows one to procure material sustenance; (2) it is a means to avoid laziness; (3) it contributes to mortification or domination of a rebellious body; and (4) it allows one to acquire the requisite financial resources to give alms to the poor *(STh* 11-11, q. 187, a. 3; cf. *Quaestio de opere manuali,* a. 1; *Contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem; Quodlibetum* VIII, q. 6, a. 2; *Commentarium in libros Sententiarum* IV, d. 15, q. 2, aa. 1, 3, 4).

will.[52] The act of the intellect conceiving an idea (i.e., a work pro-
ject) precedes the actual execution of the task by the will; as the
form of the entire work, the intellect imprints its *ratio* on the
resultant product. But the true value of a work (its inherent
worth) is measured against the concept of that intellectual con-
struct in the mind of God, because "intellectus vero divinus est
mensura rerum" (divine intellect is the measure of things).[53] Here
the intention of the agent must be in agreement with the principal
artificer of reality who directs all activity to its proper end:
"necesse est omnia quae habent quocumque modo esse, ordinata
esse a Deo in finem" (all things that exist in whatsoever manner
are necessarily directed by God towards some end).[54] Hence the
good artist, or in our case the good worker, does not make him-
self good by way of art or by way of work; rather, the habit or
virtue of making "good art" or doing "good work" enables him to
judge what ought to be done so that the artifact is truly good:
"perfectio artis consistit in iudicando.[1155]

In work even as in art, the intellect operates with two modes
of operation: speculative and practical. The practical intellect is
ordained to good outside itself, while the speculative intellect
possesses good within itself (it contemplates the truth).[56] Thus,
the speculative action of the mind in work (or the intellectual
habit of art), is the determining factor of its value. Simply put,
the worth or goodness of a human work depends on the quality
of the work done, which is measured not by the satisfaction or
pleasure the worker derives from it but by an objective standard
of goodness that ultimately lies in God.[57] In short, in order to
work well one must first determine what is a good work in one's

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[52] Thomas Aquinas, *In decem libros ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nicomachum expositio* I,
lect. l; cf. *De Verit.,* q. 8, a. 6 and *De Pot.,* q. 10, a. 1 for a discussion of immanent and
transient actions.

[53] Aquinas, *STh* 1-11, q. 90, a. 1, ad 3.

[54] Ibid. I, q. 22, a. 2.

[55] Ibid. 1-11, q. 47, a. 8. For a more detailed discussion on this point see Ralph
Mclnerny's *Art and Prudence: Studies in the Thought of Jacques Maritain* (Notre Dame,
Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 149-50.

[56] Aquinas, *STh* 1-11, q. 3, a. 5, ad 2.

[57] Ibid.,1-11, q. 57, a. 3.

particular area of expertise, then decide how to execute that work, and finally, do it and finish it well.

While it is true that man opens himself to God primarily through receiving the sacraments and living the theological virtues,[58] work also contributes to human sanctification by enlisting the dynamic energy of grace when one's intention is to work for God and with God. In addition to providing the metaphysical foundation for acting and the intellectual standard for measuring the inherent value of our work, God unifies and subordinates various mediate purposes in life to its ultimate end.[59] Saint Augustine offers a fitting expression of this divine/human synergy: "our good works, which, though taking place in us, we recognize as His."[60] Similarly, Karol Wojtyla asserts that "the glory of God is the prime norm of all reality, and the consummation of all things will depend upon the degree to which God's glory has been manifest.[61] When the intention in work is to glorify God we liberate the fruit of our labor from its temporal limitations, reserving it in heaven as a fitting sacrifice offered to God. By our intention, we "save" the fruit of our work from its exclusively temporal fate and return it to God.[62]

In contrast to the prevalent contemporary view of work, in which knowledge is concerned primarily with the nature and control of things ("objects of use" instead of cues to self-knowledge and means to holiness),[63] the Christian ethical tradition teaches

[58] Cf. J. Maritain, *Humanisme integral,* IO. Thomas teaches that the sacraments are instrumental causes because grace is a certain shared similitude with God's divine nature (cf. 2 Pet 1:4), acting on virtue as a divine impetus from its principal agent, God, enabling man to ordain his life to God. "Causa vero instrumentalis non agit per virtutem suae formae, sed solum per motum quo movetur a principali agente. Unde effectus non assimilatur instrumento, sed principali agenti" *(STh* III, q. 62, a. 1).

[59] Cf. John Paul H's discourse at "UNIV '80" on 1 April 1980: "The Moral Dimension of Study and Research," in]. V. Schall, ed., *The Whole Truth about Man: John Paul II to University Faculties and Students* (Boston: Saint Paul, 1981), 171.

[60] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram impeifectus liber* 4.17.29.

[61] K. Wojtyla, *Sign of Contradiction* (New York: Seabury, 1979), 181.

[62] S. Wyszynski, *Work,* trans.]. Ardle McArdle (Chicago: Scepter, 1960), 81.

[63] Cf. R. Spaemann, "Teleologfa Natural y Acci6n," *Anuario filos6fica 2412* (1991): 273-88. The author suggests that teleology has been converted into a tendency toward self-conservation: what is of most importance is to preserve what one now is rather than to struggle to become what God has destined us to become. See idem., *Reflexion und Spontaneitiit: Studien uber Fenelon* (Stuttgart, 1963), 50-64.

that man's essential greatness is due not to what he makes but to
how he dominates himself. The virtuous person acts to serve others
and not only him or herself, actingfor love and *to* love; this *agape*
is a unitive power that transforms the lover into the beloved and
makes of the two one.[64] For this reason, in order to sanctify work
and to sanctify oneself in work, one must unite the intention of
the activity to the glory of God, thereby collaborating with God in
the execution of divine providence. As intellectual creatures who
participate as executive agents of providence, we have the abili-
ty, Thomas asserts, both to establish order and to execute that
providence, with the former being a share in God's own intellec-
tual power.[65] In the end, the greatness of Christian work rests on
the fact that it is an act of Christ and an act done with Christ,[66]
an activity that serves as a means of union with God himself.[67]

As a determination of our divine vocation, work possesses two
principles or elements: (1) the actual activity one engages in, and
(2) the response one gives to God in that work. In other words,
one's vocation is not just the communication of a divine message,
invitation, or teaching, but rather a light and an impulse that is

[64] Cf. Saint Denis, paraphrased by Alphonsus Rodriguez in *Practice of Perfection and Christian Virtues* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1929), 533.

[65] Cf. Aquinas, *ScG* III, c. 78: "Nam cum ad providentiam requiratur dispositio ordinis, quae fit per cognoscitivam virtutem et executio, quae fit per operativam, creaturae rationales utramque virtutem participant, reliquae vero creaturae virtutem operativam tantum. Per creaturas igitur rationales omnes aliae creaturae sub divina providentia reguntur." See also *STh* 1-11, q. 91, a. *2* and *Veritatis splendor43* for more details on man's sharing in the intellectual life of God.

[66] Michael Schmaus, *The Essence of Christianity* (Dublin: Scepter, 1961), 161. Assigning the foundation of Christ's action in us to intention may appear opposed to the emphasis placed on the moral object of action in *Veritatis splendor* 76-78. My point is that the value of an act is not solely measured by its objectivity, which must be ordainable to God (i.e., the act cannot be intrinsically evil) and well done; the ordering of an action to God is dependent upon the acting person who assigns it a purpose or *raison d'etre.* See my discussion of the role of the intellect and the will in the process of making moral choices in *"Veritatis Splendor:* Intellect, Will, and Freedom in Human Acts," Angelicum 72 (1995): 217-42; and Martin Rhonheimer's explanation of the intentional element of the moral object in "'Intrinsically Evil Acts' and the Moral Viewpoint: Clarifying a Central Teaching of *Veritatis Splendor," The Thomist* 58 (1994): 1-39.

[67] Cf. Emile Mersch, *Theology of the Mystical Body,* trans. Cyril Vo\lert (Saint Louis: Herder, 1951), 619.

applied to our daily life and work; [68] it is an internal grace and light that guides us along the way shown by that light. [69]

IV. PARTICIPATION IN GOD'S WORK OF REDEMPTION

Since participation in the creative act of God is not limited to the visible effects of work, prolonging God's presence in the world through work also shares in the redemptive mission of Christ. This is possible because the incarnation of the Word restored human nature to its original purpose, which is to sanctify all created realities, both material and spiritual. Jesus himself worked with his hands, thought with his mind, and loved with a human heart. Thus human work is now a redeemed and a redemptive activity in which vocation, work, and contemplation merge into a harmonious service of love. The Old Law, which proclaimed the arduous nature of work, is now obsolete because humanity has received a new heart and a new spirit in Christ (2 Cor 3:3-6; cf. Ezek 36:26-27). "By faith comes the acquisition of grace to resist sin," writes St. Augustine; "by grace the soul procures healing from the disease of sin; by the health of the soul liberty is given to the will; from this freedom of the will arises the love of righteousness, and from this love of holiness proceeds the accomplishment of the law." [70]

The power to restore all created things to God is first and foremost an effect of the sacrament of baptism, in which a person enters into the common priesthood of the faithful, and is sacramentally conformed to Jesus Christ, the eternal high priest. The Christian call to holiness does not alter the ecclesiological status of the faithful, nor does it require them to leave their ambient social structure or change the type of work they do. The novelty of the Christian who works for God is that he uses his freedom in the context of love for God and service of neighbor in whatever good and noble human activity he chooses to engage. [71]

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[68] Cf. F. Ocariz, "The Vocation to Opus Dei as Vocation in the Church," in P. Rodriguez, F. Ocariz, and J. L. Illanes, *Opus Dei in the Church: An Ecclesiological Study of the Life and Apostolate of Opus Dei* (Princeton: Scepter, 1994), 87.

[69] Cf. Aquinas, I *Sent.,* d. 41, q. 1, a. 2, ad 3.

[70] Augustine, *De spiritu et littera* 30.52 (PL 44:233).

[71] Cf. P. Rodriguez, *Vocaci6n, l'rabajo, Contemplaci6n,* 2d. ed. (Pamplona, Spain: EUNSA, 1987), 54.

Several years ago Karol Wojtyla wrote that man infuses his spir-
itual countenance on the world by sanctifying work, sanctifying
himself in work, and sanctifying others at work. [12] Unlike cultual
sacrifice, then, which only an ordained minister can offer, the
"spiritual sacrifice" of the faithful is a direct gift of self to God (cf.
Rom 12:1-2; 1 Pet 2:5-6) in imitation of the suffering Servant of
Yahweh (cf. Isa 53).[73] Christian sacrifice gives a new meaning to
work by helping us see our professional activity as a moral task
that is based on a constant dialogue with God and, at the same
time, is aimed at the salvation of souls.

   When God gave his own Son to save mankind (cf. John 3:16-
17) and to counter the moral evil of sin resulting from the world's
submission to Satan (cf. Rom 5:12; 2 Cor 4:4), he restored the
original dignity of humankind. Jesus' death was the hour of
greatest triumph, glorification, and victory; it was on Calvary
that he attracted all things to himself (cf. John 12:31ff.). Just as
the serpent raised by Moses cured the infected Israelites (cf.
Num 21:4-9), Christ too was raised on high so he could be seen
by all men (cf. John 3:14-15). The cross is an eloquent expression
of filial obedience, a *conditio sine qua non* of God's works, an
obedience tested (and even learned) by Christ through suffering
(cf. Heb 5:8). Even the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane was an
oblation to God (cf. Mark 14:33-36). "He puts before us the image
of a prayer that springs from the agony itself," comments Albert
Vanhoye, "an intense prayer which constituted a priestly offer-
ing.["74] Here the promise of the New Covenant was fulfilled by
God placing his eternal Law into the hearts of men (cf. John 6:45,
citing Isa 54:13), replacing the Old Law with the interior action
of God. Unlike the world, which sees the crucifixion as simply
demeaning, John sees it as the definitive exaltation of God and
all humankind (cf. John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32-34); the cross is the

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[72] K. Wojtyla, "L'evangelizzazione e l'homo interiore," *Scripta theologica* 7 (1975): 352.

   "' See Andre Feuillet's discussion in *Jesus and His Mother,* trans. L. Maluf (Still River,
Mass.: St. Bede's, 1984), 227-31; cf. E. G. Selwyn, *The Epistle of St. Peter* (London:
Macmillan, 1964), 161.

   [74] A. Vanhoye, *Old Testament Priests and the New Priest according to the New
Testament* (Petersham, Mass.: Saint Bede's, 1986), 125.

external sign of the attraction of God's love,[75] and his death is the supreme moment of the glory offered to God.[76]

Although professional duties and responsibilities may appear to surpass our natural abilities at times, the divine grace Christ won on the cross is always at hand. "[It] is the task itself, the sanctification of work, that appears like an unfolding of that divine gift I receive in Christ: work … is the matter *by which we actualize the grace that comes to us from Christ.*"[77] The confluence of God's Word and grace enacts the kingdom of God in us, and in the world around us, by elevating human endeavors to be assimilated to the Eucharist, doing the will of God and sharing in Christ's sacrificial priesthood (cf. Heb 3:14) in work. The desire to do what is pleasing to God is not only an affirmative response to his divine will, it is also an effective way of serving others. This is why external observances of ritual sacrifice do not suffice for the Christian; our very life must be transformed into a generous offering of obedience to God and fraternal service.78

Saint Augustine described human love as a weight drawing man out of himself towards others and God.[79] Certainly, man's interiority grows when he manifests love in deeds, even though no one is more prone to discord than fallen man.[80] True love moves us to "cling to the truth and live righteously,"[81] to live virtuously and with well-ordered love,[82] which fosters union of the contemplative and active aspects of life. "The attraction of leisure ought not be idle exemption from duty," Augustine points out, "but the quest or discovery of truth, both for his [i.e., man's]

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[75] See J. Terrence Forestell, "The Word of the Cross: Salvation as Revelation in the Fourth Gospel," in *Analecta Biblica* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1974), 111-12.

[76] Cf. *J*. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 363-68.

[77] P. Rodriguez, "La Economfa de la Salvaci6n y la Secularidad Cristiana," *Scripta theologica* 9 (1977): 96-97.

[73] Cf. Vanhoye, *Old Testament Priests,* 224.

[79] Augustine, *Confessiones* 13.9.10 (PL 32:848-49).

[80] Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 12.27 (PL 41:376).

[81] Augustine, *De Trinitate* 8.7.10 (PL 42:956; CCSL 50:284): "Haec est autem vera dilectio ut inhaerentes veritati iuste vivamus."

"'Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 15.22 (PL 41:467).

own progress and for sharing with others." [83] For Thomas, the tension between the active and the contemplative life is converted into a positive dialectic; work predisposes man to contemplation of the good he wishes to accomplish. Thus, the active life actually precedes the contemplative life,[84] and all science and art are ordered to the perfection of man himself. [85]

   Faith is always an affirmation or a response of those who are first touched by God, a mystery that deals with the innermost depths of divine reason itself. [86] In work, writes Blessed Josemaria Escriva, man builds on a divine foundation that is given by God, making his faith operative in all aspects of his life: "when a Christian carries out with love the most insignificant everyday action, that action overflows with the transcendence of God .. ., the Christian vocation consists in making heroic verse out of the prose of each day. Heaven and earth seem to merge ... on the horizon. But where they really meet is in your hearts." [87] Working for the glory of God by employing virtues, both theological and moral, that make our work a true work of God, an *operatio Dei,* allows his grace to divinize our nature. The concurrent action of God and man enables us to act and work supernaturally. Indeed, when man strives to work for love of God, by fulfilling God's divine will at work, he sanctifies himself and the task he carries out, becoming more human and divine in the process.

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[83] Ibid., 19.19 (PL 41:647; CCSL 18:686):"In otio non iners vacatio delectare debet, sed aut inquisitio aut inventio veritatis, ut in ea quisque proficiat et quod invenerit ne alteri invideat."

[84] Aquinas, *STh* II-II, q. 182, a. 4, ad 1.

[85] Aquinas, *In Matthaem,* proem.

[86] Joseph Ratzinger writes that "everything that exists is thought that has poured forth. The Creator Spirit is the origin and the supporting foundation of all things" (T. Ratzinger, *A Turning Point for Europe? The Church in the Modern World: Assessment and Forecast,* trans. B. McNeil [San Francisco: Ignatius, 1994], 105).

[87] Josemarfa Escriva, "Passionately Loving the World," a homily given on 8 October 1967, reproduced in *In Love with the Church* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Scepter, 1989), 55.

AQUINAS'S ACCOUNT OF DOUBLE EFFECT*

THOMAS A. CAVANAUGH

University of San Francisco
San Francisco, California

D OUBLE-EFFECT REASONING (DER)-often called the "principle," "rule," or "doctrine" of double effect-is often, if not always, attributed to Thomas Aquinas *tout court.'* Yet, I will argue, Thomas's account substantially differs from contemporary double-effect reasoning (DER) insofar as Thomas considers the ethical status of risking an assailant's life while contemporary accounts of DER focus on actions causing harm foreseen as inevitable. [2]

Of course, if DER applies to cases in which harm is foreseen as an inevitable result of an otherwise good action, it will apply

[1] The standard article on the history of DER is Joseph Mangan's "An Historical Analysis of the Principle of Double Effect," *Theological Studies* 10 (1949): 41-61. J. Ghoos differs with Mangan over exactly where in Aquinas's work the sources of DER can be found: *J.* Ghoos, "L'Acte a Double Effet: Etude de Theologie Positive," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 27 (1951): 30-52. In fact, what Ghoos notes, although not explicitly, is the conflation by Thomas's interpreters of two distinct strands in Aquinas's work: the indirect voluntary of *Summa Theologiae* 1-11, q. 6, a. 3 and double effect of *STh* 11-11, q. 64, a. 7. For a more recent consideration of the history of DER see L.1. Ugorji, *The Principle of Double Effect: A Critical Appraisal of Its 1raditional Understanding and Its Modern Reinterpretation* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1985).

[2] See Jeff McMahan, "Revising the Doctrine of Double Effect," *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 11 (1994): 201-12; Warren Quinn, "Actions, Intentions, and Consequences: The Doctrine of Double Effect," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 18 (1989): 334-51; and Joseph Boyle, "Toward Understanding the Principle of Double Effect," *Ethics* 90 (1980): 527-38.

to cases in which harm is foreseen as being a possible result. The reverse, however, need not obtain. For example, one might think that it is ethical for an ironworker knowingly to risk his life doing dangerous work while one would not think it ethical for the ironworker knowingly to do work from which his death would follow inevitably. Thus, one might think that it is ethical to risk causing harm that one would not think it ethical to cause inevitably. I will argue that Aquinas holds something like this in his account of DER

I. QUESTION 64, ARTICLE 7, AND *PRAETER INTENTION EM*

The *locus classicus* of double-effect reasoning is Aquinas's discussion of homicidal self-defense in *STh* II-II, q. 64, a. 7.[3] Question 64 occurs within Aquinas's consideration of vices opposed to commutative justice. It concerns what Aquinas considers the greatest injury committed upon one's neighbor against his will: his death.

In article 7, Thomas asks whether it is licit to kill a man in self-defense. He offers a number of objections, two of which are voiced by St. Augustine. The first comes from his epistle to Publicola; the second Thomas takes from *De libero arbitrio.* In the latter Augustine asks, "How are they free from sin in the sight of divine providence who, for the sake of these contemnible things, have taken a human life?" (obj. 2). Aquinas notes that among the slight goods that men may forfeit against their wills, Augustine includes corporeal life. Augustine appears to rule out homicidal self-defense.

Aquinas interprets Augustine as not permitting the *intentional* taking of an aggressor's life. He has noted earlier in his discussion of war *(STh* II-II, q. 40, a. 1) that Augustine thinks it licit for one charged with the public good to take life during a war. Accordingly, Aquinas considers the bailiff and the soldier to be agents who may in self-defense and as public officials intentionally take the life of an aggressor. Thus, in q. 64, a. 7, the self-

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[3] Unless noted otherwise, references to Aquinas's work will be to the *Summa Theologiae* (Roma: Editiones Paulinae, 1962); translations by the author.

defense of particular interest is that of the *private* individual, as such, taking the life of an assailant.

The corpus of q. 64, a. 7 reads:

Nothing prevents one act from having two effects, of which only one is intended, the other being *praeter intentionem.* Now moral acts receive their character *[speciem]* according to that which is intended, not, however, from that which is *praeter intentionem,* since this is accidental, as is evident from what has been said earlier.' Thus, from the act of self-defense, two effects may follow: one, the conservation of one's own life; the other, the death of the aggressor *[occisio invadentis].* Since what is intended is the conservation of one's own life, such an act is not illicit: it is natural for each thing to preserve itself in existence for as long as it is able. Nevertheless, some act proceeding from a good intention may be rendered illicit if it is not proportioned to the end *[proportionatus fini].* Thus, it would not be licit if someone defending his own life were to use more force than necessary. But, if he repels force with moderation, his defensive act will be licit: for, according to the jurists, it is licit to repel force by force, with the moderation of a blameless defense *[cum moderamine inculpatae tutelae].* Nor is it necessary for salvation that a man forego an act of moderate force in order to avoid the death of another: since one is more responsible *[plus tenetur]* to care for *[providere]* one's own life than someone else's. But, since to kill a man is not licit except for the public authority acting for the sake of the common good (as is evident from what was previously said [article 3]), it is not licit for a man *to intend to kill* another man in order to defend himself, except for those who have public authority. These, intending to kill a man in self-defense, refer this to the public good. This is evident in the case of a soldier fighting an enemy, and in the case of a minister of the judge fighting *[pugnante]* against thieves. Nevertheless, even these would sin if they were moved by private animosity.

What does Thomas mean by the phrase *praeter intentionem?* I will argue that in q. 64, a. 7, he uses it to refer to a characteristic, but not exclusive, result that is not accidental, nor intentional, nor inevitable. I will argue that Aquinas understands justified private homicidal self-defense to be an action in which the defendant *risks* killing the assailant.

To do something that one foresees as inevitably resulting in the death of the assailant is not to risk the assailant's life knowingly. To risk the assailant's life knowingly is not to do something

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[4] Editors normally cite ibid. 11-11, q. 43, a. 3, which concerns scandal, and I-II, q. 72, a. 1, which concerns the inordinateness of sin.

that one foresees as inevitably resulting in the assailant's death.
Yet contemporary accounts of DER paradigmatically   apply to
knowingly causing inevitable harm. In this respect, Thomas's
account is substantially   different.

II. *PRAETER INTENTIONEM:* INTENDED OR ACCIDENTAL?

To what does *praeter intentionem* refer? In this section I argue
against three interpretations   of this phrase. First, it clearly does
not refer to what one intends; second, it does not refer to some-
thing intended in *some special sense;* and, third, it does not refer
to an accidental consequence of one's action.

With respect to what *praeter intentionem* in q. 64, a. 7 means,
Aquinas refers his reader to an earlier article. There he main-
tains that: "Active scandal is accidental when it is outside the
intention *[praeter intentionem]* of the agent: as when a man by
his inordinate   deed or word *does not intend* to give another an
occasion of downfall, but only to satisfy his will." [5] Clearly,
Aquinas does not use *praeter intentionem* to refer to what one
does intend.

Yet, as Steven Windass notes, by *praeter intentionem* Aquinas
has been taken to mean that "you can in case of necessity kill in
self-defense, provided that *in a special theological sense* you do
not intend to do so." [6] Some interpreters of Aquinas do attribute
to him an idiosyncratic   doctrine concerning intention. Joseph M.
Boyle, Jr., notes, "Aquinas is one of the chief architects of the tra-
dition in which the doctrine of direction of intention was devel-
oped." [7] We find an account of the direction of one's intention in
Pascal's famous parody of Jesuit casuistry, in the seventh letter
of *Les provinciales.* There Pascal presents his famous Jesuit's
infamous *grande methode de diriger l'intention.* [8] According to
Pascal's Jesuit, by following this method one can stroll about the
dueling green, not intending to fight one's opponent, but intend-
ing to walk about. Of course, if one's opponent attacked, one

[5] Ibid. II-II, q. 43, a. 3.

[6] Steven Windass, "Double Think and Double Effect," *Blackfriars* 44 (1963): 261, ital-
ics in original.

[7] Joseph M. Boyle, Jr., *"Praeter intentionem* in Aquinas," Thomist 42 (1978): 649.

[8] Blaise Pascal, *Les provinciales* (Paris:Editions de Cluny, 1943), 243.

could defend oneself. This, following the logic of the method of directing one's intention, would not be dueling. [9] Aquinas himself, however, nowhere articulates such a doctrine.

Boyle claims that such a doctrine grounds DER: "The doctrine of the double effect presupposes at least this: that one can *direct his intention* to the good effect of his action and withhold it from the bad effect if the latter is not a means to the former." [10] Such a direction of intention or withholding of intention would itself be intentional. Insofar as DER theorists think that intentions are ethically relevant, they will presumably think that intentions with respect to one's intentions (second-order intentions) are also ethically relevant. Of course, directing one's intention would be a second-order intention. [11]

DER does not repose-indeed, may not be able to repose-on the direction, withholding, or paring of one's intentions. It does, however, rest on one's being able to foresee harm without intending harm. It is at best an infelicity to speak of not intending some foreseen harm as directing one's intention away from the foreseen harm. If there were such a method of intention, it would found a "morality of gestures and poses." [12] In any case, Aquinas does not propose such a morality, nor does he use *praeter intentionem* to refer to some special way of intending.

Aquinas says that what is *praeter intentionem* is *per accidens*. He has been interpreted as meaning that it is accidental in the sense of being an accidental consequence. For example, referring to q. 64, a. 7, Anthony Kenny claims, "In the context it is not clear whether Aquinas is justifying accidental killing in the course of a struggle or intentional killing when this is the only way to avoid being killed." [13] Yet Aquinas explicitly denies the

[9] For an extended discussion of Pascal's critique, its fairness and its influence, see Stephen Toulmin and Albert Jonsen, *The Abuse of Casuistry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

[10] Boyle, *"Praeter intentionem* in Aquinas," 649-50, emphasis added.

[11] See Elizabeth Anscombe on this point: *Intention* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1957), 47.

[11] Jonathan Bennett, "Whatever the Consequences," *Analysis* 26, no. 3 (1966): 91.

[13] Anthony Kenny, *The Anatomy of the Soul: Historical Essays in the Philosophy of Mind* (Great Britain: Harper and Row, 1973), 140.

justifiability of a private individual's intentional killing of an aggressor (q. 64, a. 7 and ad 2). Does Aquinas mean to speak, as Kenny suggests, of an accidental killing in the course of a struggle?

What would it mean to say that one accidentally killed another in the course of a struggle? It would mean that one were engaged in pushing and shoving and pulling another and that the aggressor's death came about, say, by his tripping, falling, and breaking his neck. Such a death would result accidentally, just as someone could die while engaged in friendly horseplay.

If this is what Aquinas means when he claims that what is *praeter intentionem* is accidental, then he has brought out an unwieldy concept to attend to what almost every action-theorist acknowledges: an agent is not responsible for consequences that accidentally result from his actions. Moreover, in the very next article Aquinas asks whether an agent who has killed a man by chance *(casualiter occidens hominem,* a. 8) is guilty of homicide. He answers in the negative. This point already would have been addressed if what is *praeter intentionem* were *per accidens* in the sense of being an accidental consequence.

Kenny is not alone in his interpretation. Steven Windass, in a separate investigation, understands Thomas to consider the attacker's death as an accidental consequence. Offering what he takes to be Aquinas's position, Windass says, "it is lawful to repel force by force; if this results in the death of the attacker, the death will be *accidental."* [14] As noted, there are good reasons internal to Aquinas's discussion to think that he does *not* mean that the death of the assailant will be accidental. Windass notes that "it would be very odd [of Aquinas] to discuss the permissibility of different kinds of accident." [15] I agree. It would be *very* odd of Thomas to use such a distinction to discuss kinds of accidental consequences. I take this to be a reason to think that he does not so use *praeter intentionem.*

III. INTENTION AND THE ETHICAL ANALYSIS OF AN ACT

In *STh* I-II, q. 12, Aquinas considers intention. In a. 1 he claims, "intention, just as the very word implies, means to tend

[14] Windass, "Double Think and Double Effect," 260, emphasis added.
[15] Ibid., 260-61.

to something *[in aliquid tendere]*". Since the will *(voluntas)* moves the powers of the soul to their appropriate ends, it is evident, Thomas asserts, that intention is an act of the will. He argues that intention is the act of the will with respect to the end "as the term towards which something is ordained" *(STh* I-II, q. 12, a. 1, ad 4).

According to Thomas, we will the end, we choose the means, and we intend the complex end-through-means. Using his example, when we intend health, we intend health-by-means-of-medicine. We choose medicine-for-the-sake-of-health. How does Aquinas understand the agent's intention to relate to the goodness of the agent's act?

Thomas offers an elaborate account of the goodness and badness of human actions in *STh* I-II, qq. 18-21. For the sake of understanding his statement in q. 64, a. 7, it is not necessary to articulate his entire analysis. Nevertheless, what he has to say about the relation of the intention of the end to the moral analysis of the goodness or badness of an act requires attention.

Each aspect of an action relates variously to the others. This reflects the Dionysian dictum that goodness is integral; evil, the lack of such integrity, vitiates what otherwise is morally good *(STh* I-II, q. 19, a. 6, ad 1).[16] For the moral assessment of an act, three aspects of the act require attention: what is being done (the deed or object), the circumstances in which it is done, and the end or reason it is done *(STh* I-II, q. 18, a. 1). According to Thomas, therefore, the intention of the end is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for a complete analysis of the action's ethical status.

In this light, it becomes clear what Aquinas means in q. 64, a. 7 when he asserts that "moral acts receive their character according to what is intended, not according to what is *praeter intentionem,* for this is *per accidens."* Clearly, he asserts that what is *praeter intentionem* is not essential to establishing the agent's action as good or as bad.

If an assailant's death results from a private individual's justified act of self-defense and the death is neither intended nor

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[16] "Bonum ex integra causa, malum ex quocunque defectu."

accidental, how is the death further, and positively, characterized? In q. 64, a. 7, Aquinas proposes and contrasts two cases of homicidal self-defense, that of a public official and that of a private individual. I will contrast these two cases in order to characterize, in a positive manner, the death of an assailant in the case of a private individual's justified homicidal self-defense.

IV. Two CASES CONTRASTED

Aquinas holds that an officer of the polity-a "police officer," in contemporary terms-can *intend* to take the life of his aggressor as long as he uses minimal force *(proportionatus fini),* refers the slaying to the common good, and does not harbor animosity against the attacker (q. 64, a. 7). In the case of a private individual's justified homicidal self-defense, Thomas accepts the slaying of the assailant as long as it results from the use of minimal force and is *not intentional.* Both cases have the requirement that the force used be *proportionatus fini.* I take this to mean that the force used must be minimal; that is, not more than is necessary for the preservation of one's life.

Suppose that I am a private individual. Both I and my assailant have swords. We begin to fight with them. I realize that my aggressor has far greater endurance than I and that the only way I can preserve my life is to kill him, say by cutting off his head. According to Thomas, I *cannot* do so because I cannot intentionally kill him. I, as a private individual, would not be permitted so to defend myself. If I were an officer of the state, however, executing my role as such, and I were in this same situation, Aquinas holds it permissible for me intentionally to take the life of the aggressor by cutting off his head.

Thus, while in both cases the force used must be *proportionatus fini,* this corresponds to a larger set of possible responses in the case of the officer of the state, who, according to Thomas, may proximately intend to take his assailant's life. Therefore, he may use a neck-severing sword stroke, for it is proportioned to this end.

In the case of a private individual, minimal force does not include cases in which such force corresponds to an intention to take the life of the attacker. The private individual cannot inten-

tionally take the assailant's life; thus, he cannot use means pro-
portioned to the taking of that life. A neck-severing sword stroke
is such a means. Such a sword stroke is proportioned to the
preservation of one's own life only insofar as it is proportioned to
the taking of the aggressor's life. Therefore, according to
Thomas, a private individual cannot use such a sword stroke.

Thus, when Windass asserts that in asking for double effect's
reading of an ethical act of self-defense, "you can be fairly sure
that ... your original impression of what you could actually *do*
would not be changed," [11] he is right about the pilloried Jesuit of
Pascal's seventh provincial letter, but not about Thomas.

I have assumed that Aquinas would permit the use of a
weapon, and even a potentially deadly one (a sword). A weapon
is an instrument. As an instrument it admits of characteristic
ends. One defending his own life with a sword may not maintain
that his assailant's death results *accidentally* from the employ-
ment of a sword. One of the ends to which sword makers fashion
swords is the taking of human life. Presumably, a sword not fit
for the taking of another's life is not much of a sword.

Using of a sword is different from pushing an attacker, who
then stumbles on the curb, falls, and dies of a broken neck.
Characteristically, pushing, shoving, pulling, scratching, biting,
kicking, gouging, and generally being a great nuisance to an
aggressor does not result in his death. If death were to result
from such acts, it would result accidentally. Because death does
not characteristically result from the ingenious deployment of
teeth, nails, knees, elbows, and fists, one's attacker could not
charge one with endangering his life by so defending oneself.

If one were to use a sword, however, the attacker could claim
that his life had been endangered. This is significant for two rea-
sons. First, although the one defending himself by means of a
sword may not intend to take the life of the aggressor, he is willing
to *risk* taking the aggressor's life. Second, if intending to take
another's life differs from knowingly endangering another's life,
then there is something else besides the assailant's death resulting

[17] Windass, "Double Think and Double Effect," 261, italics in original.

either intentionally or accidentally; namely, the assailant's death resulting as a *risked* consequence.

V. RISKING HOMICIDE

Accidental homicide differs from homicide that results from having endangered life. In an accidental killing, the agent inculpably does not foresee the death. When death results from having knowingly endangered someone's life, however, the agent foresaw the death as a possible consequence of his action. Accordingly, when one kills someone accidentally, one is not ethically responsible for his death; when one kills someone whose life one has knowingly endangered, one *is* ethically responsible for his death.

Does intentionally killing someone differ from killing someone as the result of risking his life? When one intends to take another's life, one certainly endangers his life. Indeed, being the object of someone's intention to kill is probably the most extreme case of having one's life endangered. But is the reverse true? Does one intend to take a life if one endangers that life? For example, does one intend to take one's own life when one endangers one's own life?

Soldiers, stuntmen, race-car drivers, police officers, firefighters, and construction workers knowingly endanger their lives. Do they intend their own deaths? Perhaps some of them do, and perhaps some of them ought not so to endanger their lives even if they do not intend to take them. In any case, it would indeed be an eccentric theory of intention that concluded that anyone who knowingly imperiled his life intended his death. Similarly, there is no reason to say that knowingly jeopardizing *another's* life is to intend his death.

Chancing the assailant's life is precisely what I do if I do not intend to take his life, but knowingly risk it in defense of my own life. I choose to risk his life rather than to forfeit my own, and such a choice on my part is ethically assessable. That the assailant's death characteristically might follow from my using a sword in defense of my life indicates that I am more willing to preserve my life than I am to forego hazarding the assailant's.

As I understand Aquinas, he proposes that a private individ-

ual may not intend to take the life of an assailant, but that he may knowingly risk the assailant's life by defending himself with such force that the aggressor's death, if it results, would be *one* of the foreseeable characteristic consequences of the self-defensive act.

This interpretation may strike some as novel. Nevertheless, it accords with what Aquinas himself implies when he asserts that "the act of fornication or of adultery is not ordered to the conservation of one's own life out of necessity as is the act from which sometimes *[quandoque]* follows homicide" (q. 64, a. 7, ad 4). Aquinas restricts *praeter intentionem,* as he uses it in his consideration of self-defense, to what occurs sometimes, but not always. Thus, in q. 64, a. 7 he does not appear to consider the foresight of an inevitable consequence, for such a consequence would not be said to follow "sometimes."

Boyle offers an interpretation of q. 64, a. 7 that substantially differs from my account. He notes that

the use of *"quandoque"* to describe the frequency of the deadly consequence following from an act of self-defense suggests that the assailant's death is not a natural and totally predictable consequence of the act as such. [18]

Nonetheless, he denies that *quandoque* has this meaning in q. 64, a. 7. He asserts that the assailant's death *is* foreseen as a totally predictable and inevitable consequence of the act of moderate self-defense proposed by Aquinas. Having noted that with *quandoque* Thomas seems to exclude some acts of self-defense, Boyle observes,

There appear to be types of self-defense in which the use of the minimum force needed to preserve one's life does have the assailant's death as a natural and certainly foreseeable consequence. [19]

I agree. There are such instances, such as the neck-severing sword stroke. As I have argued, Aquinas rules out *precisely* such a case. Boyle, however, thinks that Aquinas considers such an act to be ethically in the clear.

[18] Boyle, *"Praeter intentionem* in Aquinas," 658.
[19] Ibid.

Boyle notes that Thomas uses *praeter intentionem* one hun-
dred and forty-three times in his massive *reuvre*.[20] He concedes
that Thomas usually uses this term to refer to consequences that
follow sometimes, or rarely. Yet he also notes that Aquinas (infre-
quently) uses *praeter intentionem* to refer to consequences that
follow always or for the most part. [21] I do not dispute this point. I
do maintain, however, that Thomas does not use *praeter inten-
tionem* in this way in q. 64, a. 7: he does not refer to an assailant1s
death foreseen as inevitable.

Boyle1s interpretation is problematic insofar as he discounts
quandoque in ad 4 and ignores Thomas 1s preponderant use of
praeter intentionem to apply to what occurs infrequently.
Moreover, Boyle does not explain what Aquinas means by *quan-
doque* in ad 4 if he does not mean to restrict *praeter intentionem*
to consequences that do not result for the most part. The onus of
proving that *praeter intentionem* in q. 64, a. 7 refers to a
consequence foreseen as inevitable falls upon Boyle.

In objection to my interpretation, one might argue that *quan-
doque* refers not to homicidal self-defense but to self-defense in
general. Thus, Thomas would be saying that self-defense is jus-
tified, even though the death of the aggressor sometimes follows
from acts of self-defense. This, however, is a non-starter, for the
question is whether homicidal self-defense is justified, not
whether self-defense *simpliciter* is justified. Although it sounds
awkward, one could say that Aquinas argues that when the con-
ditions of DER have been met, a private individual1s act of
homicidal self-defense that is *sometimes* homicidal is justified.

In the standard contemporary cases of DER, such as tactical
bombing that harms noncombatants and palliative morphine
administration to a terminally ill patient that hastens or causes
death, the harm is foreseen as an inevitable consequence of the
action. In his account of a private individual1s justified homici-
dal self-defense, Thomas holds that the defender knowingly
risked the assailant 1s life. This excludes the use of means that one
foresees as inevitably resulting in death, for one could not be said

[20] Ibid., 659, n. 39.
[21] For example, in Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* III, c. 6, para. *5,* cited by Boyle.

knowingly to risk killing the aggressor if one foresaw that one would inevitably kill him. Thus, Aquinas's originating account of DER substantially differs from what DER has become insofar as Thomas restricts his account to cases in which one can be said to risk foreseen harm.

VI. THE SECOND CONDITION OF DER

Aquinas's account of DER is not simply that it is ethically permissible to risk causing the death of one's assailant insofar as one does not intend to kill him. [22] This is only the first condition: the foreseen risked consequence is not intended. In common with contemporary accounts of DER, Aquinas argues that there is a second condition to be met for the risking of the harm to be justified.

It is not necessary for salvation for a man to forego *(praetermittat)* an act of moderate defense in order to avoid *(evitandum)* the death of another, since a man is more responsible to provide *(plus tenetur ... providere)* for his own life than for that of another. (Q. 64, a. 7)

Thomas asserts that one has a greater obligation to watch over one's own life than to watch over another's. Thus, when it comes to preserving lives, *ceteris paribus,* one is more obliged to preserve one's own than another's. Of course, covered by the "other things being equal" clause are such factors as the role one has with respect to the other's life that is at risk. For example, a captain of a sinking ship may be more obliged to care for a passenger's life than for his own.

When one's own life has been put at risk by an assailant, since one is, *ceteris paribus,* more bound to care for one's own life than for another's, one need not forego risking the attacker's life. One

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[22] *Pace* Alan Donagan. Donagan (perhaps misled by the exclusive attention paid by some advocates of DER to the intended/foreseen distinction) asserts, "Finally, the doctrine underlying all forms of the theory of double effect is that what lies outside the scope of a man's intentions in acting does not belong in his action, *and so is not subject to moral judgement"* (Alan Donagan, *The Theory of Morality* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977], 164, emphasis added; see also 122). If this were the case, the second condition would be otiose. Clearly, Thomas understands the first condition to be necessary, but not sufficient for DER.

who would not defend his own life when this entails endangering the life of the attacker might exercise too little responsibility with respect to the good of life in his care. Self-defense may be not only permissible, but even required, when not to defend one's own life is to act with too little care for what has been entrusted to one.

VII. SUMMARY

Aquinas offers the following analysis of an act that is ethically in the clear, but for its risking foreseen harm. First, the harm cannot be intended. Second, the act fulfills some responsibility of the agent that is greater than the responsibility the agent has to avoid the harm.

In his account of a private individual's justified homicidal self-defense, Thomas presents the seeds of DER as it is presently understood. Yet in one important feature his contribution differs from contemporary double-effect reasoning. That feature became evident in his use of *quandoque* to characterize the assailant's death as *risked.*

It requires a considerable, and, as I have argued, ultimately untenable, interpretive stretch to attribute to Thomas the application of *praeter intentionem* in his treatment of a private individual's act of homicidal self-defense to cases in which the assailant's death is foreseen as resulting inevitably. Accordingly, one cannot attribute contemporary double-effect reasoning to Thomas *tout court.*

The point of this paper has been to argue that Thomas does not use DER to justify a private individual's homicidal self-defense in cases in which the aggressor's death is foreseen as inevitable. He does use it in cases in which the assailant's life was risked. If one does not note this difference, one will attribute to Aquinas an idiosyncratic account of intention which he does not have. For example, Jeff McMahan, following the customary interpretation, says:

Aquinas … assumes that it is possible for one to foresee with certainty that one's act will kill one's assailant without intending the killing as a means of self-defense …. To illustrate [this] view, consider:

Self Defense 1: One's only defense against an unjust and potentially lethal attack is to shoot the attacker at close range with a flame-thrower."

McMahan thinks that Aquinas and "the followers of Aquinas" hold that this is an instance of self-defense justified by DER. [24] If one thinks that a defender can shoot one's attacker at close range with a flame-thrower, and that this is *not* intentional, then one seems to rely on a very narrow conception of what it is to intend a means. Furthermore, how would one then argue that, for example, a terror bomber cannot drop bombs on noncombatants *without* intending their deaths? If one can use DER in the case of self-defense presented by McMahan, then one seems able to use it in terror bombing as well. As McMahan notes, such an account of DER "results in an unacceptably permissive doctrine" [25]–the very doctrine parodied by Pascal.

What does Thomas's account imply about the contemporary application of DER to cases, such as death-hastening palliative morphine administration to a terminally ill patient and tactical bombing that harms non-combatants, in which agents foresee the harm as resulting inevitably? Are there ethically relevant differences between self-defense and other cases of DER? [26] These questions deserve consideration; nonetheless, they belong to a paper other than the present one.

[23] Jeff McMahan, "Revising the Doctrine of Double Effect," *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 11 (1994): 202.

[24] Ibid., 211.

[25] Ibid., 212.

[26] Most contemporary theorists do not use DER to justify a private individual's homicidal self-defense. This is remarkable, considering that Thomas's originating account concerned self-defense. However, as Jeff McMahan notes, some theorists do use DER to make such a justification: G. E. M. Anscombe, "War and Murder," in J. Rachels, ed., *Moral Problems* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 288-89; R. L. Phillips, *War and Justice* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 44-46; and J. Finnis, J. Boyle, and G. Grisez, *Nuclear Deterrence, Morality, and Realism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 310-18. Anscombe, however, offers a nuanced account in which the private individual, *if given the authority of law,* may intentionally take the life of the aggressor. This would retain Aquinas's position that what is at issue in the private individual's act of self-defense is the authority to take life.

THE FIVE WAYS AND THE ARGUMENT
FROM COMPOSITION:
A REPLY TO JOHN LAMONT

ANTOINE COTE

University of Ottawa
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

N AN ATTEMPT to vindicate the celebrated "Five Ways,"
John Lamont tries to show that Aquinas's arguments for an
uncaused cause are successful provided they are understood
as resting on an argument from composition.' Lamont further
seeks to show that an uncaused cause must be immaterial and
unique. In this paper, however, I shall argue that even if we
accept the translation of Thomas's various proofs into an argu-
ment from composition, such an argument need in no way be
thought of as implying the existence of an uncaused cause.
Further, I shall show that Lamont's argument for the immateri-
ality of the uncaused cause is problematic and his argument for
its uniqueness unconvincing.

I

Lamont gives the following version of the proof of the exis-
tence of an uncaused cause.

i. There are effects.
ii. To be an effect is to have a cause.
iii. Nothing can cause itself.
iv. Premise (i) states that there are effects that occur in the world-
effects A, B, C, D, etc. Each of these effects, since it is an effect, has a
cause which is different from itself. Now consider the group of all the

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¹ John R. T. Lamont, "An Argument for an Uncaused Cause," *The Thomist* 59 (1995):
261-77.

effects that there are; call this group X. Since the parts of X are effects, X itself is an effect. Since it is an effect, it has a cause. This cause cannot be itself an effect. For if it were it would be a part of X, and so X would cause itself, which is impossible. Thus the cause of X is not itself an effect. Thus there is an uncaused cause of all effects. (262-63)

Let us take a cursory look at the argument before turning to Lamont's justification of it. The first problem arises when Lamont asks us to "consider the group of all the effects that there are." Now such a group is what in more conventional terminology one would call a *class* or a *set.* By definition all the "parts," that is, the members of this set, are effects, but it would be absurd to suggest that the set itself is an effect. Lamont does state in a footnote that he has purposely avoided using the term *sets,* preferring to speak of *wholes* or *groupings.* His reason for doing so is that "[s]ets are abstract objects that are not subject to causal influences." [2] This implies that groups are subject to such influences. But this is precisely what Lamont has to *prove.* He must prove that the group of all the effects that there are is indeed a group in the requisite sense and not a purely mental construct. Such a proof seems all the more necessary when one considers that two out of the three examples of invalid cases of the composition argument given by Lamont in his paper involve precisely such an illicit inference from members of a class to the class itself. It would be unfair, however, to reject Lamont's attempt without first examining the details of his argument. I therefore turn to section I of his paper, where the main arguments are to be found.

One usually thinks of composition arguments as fallacies. Lamont successfully shows that not all composition arguments are fallacious. For instance, although the first of the following two examples is clearly a case of an invalid use of the composition argument, the second is not:

-Every atom in the universe is smaller than a basketball.
-Therefore all the atoms in the universe are smaller than a basketball. (264)

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[2] Ibid., 270 n. 9.

-Each person in the crowd is east of the river.
-Therefore   the crowd is east of the river. (265)

The main problem with composition arguments, according to Lamont, is that no one has succeeded in establishing any universal rules for distinguishing valid from invalid ones. Although it would obviously be preferable if such rules did exist-we would know whether or not they could be applied to the question of God's existence-the fact that they do not should not discourage us, since "there may still be general principles that identify particular types of composition argument as valid or invalid" (267). One example is the principle "composition arguments that refer to the property of 'being entirely made of acertain kind of stuff' are valid" (267). According to Lamont such a principle can be seen to be valid by considering its instances: for example, "all the parts of a thing are made of wood, therefore the thing itself is made of wood"; "all the parts of the thing are made of bronze, therefore the thing itself is made of bronze." Given that the instances are true, we must declare the principle to be valid. Lamont then suggests that the following principle could apply to Aquinas's argument: "If you take a group of things that are all effects, the group itself will be such an effect." Several instances are given in support of this principle. I will quote the first two:

-The destruction of each one of the buildings in the city was caused.
-Therefore, the destruction of all the buildings in the city was caused.

-Each word in the inscription on the monument was caused.
-Therefore, all the words in the inscription on the monument were caused. (267)

As examples of this sort can be multiplied indefinitely, Lamont feels confident that the principle is also true and that Aquinas's argument is valid.

I think that Lamont is right. I think the principle is true and its instances are valid. Yet as I show now, it does not follow from this that use of the principle will necessarily imply the existence of an uncaused cause.

Lamont has stated that there are probably no universal rules that apply to all composition arguments and that are capable of

determining which ones are valid and which ones are not. One
question we can ask however is how we know that certain com-
position arguments are not valid. **If** we can find a particular
instance of a composition argument where the premise is true
and the conclusion false, then the argument itself is not valid.
But how do we know that an instance is not true? One of
Lamont's examples might help us here:

-Each cod in the Atlantic is smaller than a typical blue whale.
-Therefore,   all the cod in the Atlantic put together are smaller than a
typical blue whale. (265)

The reason we know this is invalid is that we *know* that each
individual cod is smaller than a typical blue whale and we also
know that the aggregate formed by all the cod in the Atlantic is
not smaller than any individual whale. Quite simply put, we
know a "model" that makes the premise true and the conclusion
false. **If** such a model were impossible, the argument would be
valid. A composition argument is therefore valid when it is
impossible that the premise be true and the conclusion false.
Now given that composition arguments are always one-premise
arguments, I submit that the only way in which it makes sense
to say that it is impossible for the premise of such arguments to
be true and the conclusion false is to say that the premise and the
conclusion state the very same thing. Take the "building example,"
which Lamont takes as a justifying instance of the composition
argument he sees as necessary for Aquinas's argument to work.

-The destruction of each one of the buildings in the city was caused.
-Therefore,   the destruction of all the buildings in the city was caused.

Lamont is right to say that this is sound. The reason it is sound
however is that to say that "each building out of a group of build-
ings has been destroyed" is to say exactly the same thing as "all
the buildings have been destroyed." I take this to be a minimal
criterion of validity for composition arguments. Now what
about the statement "if you take a group of things that are all
effects the group itself will be an effect"? The only way in which
I can consider this to be deductively valid is in the sense just
defined: the consequent says exactly what the antecedent says. **If**

we accept this as a legitimate case of composition argument then use of such an argument in Lamont's version of Aquinas's proof will not necessarily lead to the postulation of an uncaused cause, as we will see shortly. But there is another way to read the statement "if you take a group of things that are all effects the group itself will be an effect": namely, by understanding the group of effects as an effect singularly different from the effects of which it is the aggregate (that is, by considering that the aggregate belongs to the same category as the elements of which it is the aggregate), and thus as being in need of a singular cause in the same way as those elements. There are some cases where such a supposition is clearly wrong, for instance, "each individual in the group is a man, therefore the group is a man," and some cases where this is not so. But what about the case at hand? Clearly, in order for the composition argument to work the aggregate would have to be an effect in the same sense as the elements, and for this to be true it must either be evident that it is or be proven to be so. But neither is the case, for it is neither an analytic truth that the aggregate of effects is an effect, nor does this follow from any proof in Lamont's paper. He does not see the need of proving it. Amazingly, he *posits* that the aggregate is a "group" and so begs the question as to the legitimacy of such a belief.

Let me return to Lamont's "building argument." Here is one way in which the argument is true without the desired conclusion following. A paraphrase of the conclusion of this argument would be, "there is a cause of the destruction of all the buildings," and this statement is true if there is a cause of each building's being destroyed. The cause of the destruction of all the buildings then is just the sum of the causes of the destruction of each building, and the effect-all buildings being destroyed-is just the sum of the effects, that is, each building's being destroyed.

Let us now see how this applies to Lamont's premise iv above. It was argued that the cause of X (the "group" made up of all the effects that there are) could not itself be an effect, because if it were it would be part of X and therefore X would cause itself, which is not allowed by premise iii. But if glossed as I have suggested, the composition argument used by Lamont in his proof

need not be thought of as implying that X causes itself if there is
no uncaused cause. Indeed, the effect, that is, the sum of all the
effects, does have a cause, namely, the sum of all the causes, and
since no individual effect is itself its own cause, the total effect
will not be its cause either. Now this last statement might be
taken to imply that I am myself making use of the composition
argument. This is correct, but I am doing so in the unproblematic
sense discussed above: by considering the consequent as a mere
repetition of the antecedent in another grammatical guise: that
is, by identifying the total effect with the sum of the individual
effects. Thus the cause of the effect can clearly be a part of X
without that implying that X causes itself. It is a part of X in the
sense that although it is a cause, all singular causes must have a
cause and so are all effects, and therefore must be part of X, but
qua cause they all have an effect that is itself a part of X.

   One might object to my reading of the truth conditions of
premises and conclusion in composition arguments by saying
that it is wrong to think that in valid composition arguments the
conclusion says the same thing as the premise. But if this were
the case, it would mean that there was something more or less in
the premise of composition arguments than in the conclusion, so
that such arguments would not be deductively valid:' If it were
wrong that "there is a cause of the destruction of all the buildings
when and only when there is a cause of each building's being
destroyed" then it would be true either that there is a cause of the
destruction of all the buildings but not of each building or that
there is a cause of each building's being destroyed but that there
is no cause of the destruction of all the buildings, which is plainly
absurd. I conclude that my principle, "in valid composition argu-
ments the conclusion says exactly what the premise says," is true,
and that the use of Lamont's proposed composition argument, "If
you take a group of things that are all effects, the group itself will
be an effect," in no way commits one to the conclusion that the
latter effect must have a cause that is not itself an effect.

   [3] One might argue that they are *not* deductively valid. In that case the composition
argument only lends a certain degree of probability to the conclusion that there is an
uncaused cause.

II

Although Lamont obviously thinks that his argument is sound, he is willing to concede that it is not, in its present form, very interesting, because it allows for the possibility that there may be many uncaused causes or that the uncaused cause may be material. Section V of his paper is therefore entirely devoted to showing that there is only one uncaused cause and that it must be immaterial. As the arguments to be found in that section do not depend on any of the controversial aspects of his discussion in section m, I may briefly look at some of them without appealing to the foregoing.

Lamont's argument against the materiality of the uncaused cause is simple and may be stated as follows:

According to contemporary science all physical things must have causal liabilities, that is, are capable of being affected in some way; therefore, an uncaused cause is not physical.

My principal objection to this argument is that the description of physical things on which it is based is patently incomplete. If it is true that all physical things are capable of being acted upon, it must also be true that all physical things must be capable of acting on something or other. The claim that everything is capable of being acted upon but something in the physical universe is not capable of acting upon something else is one that contemporary science, to which Lamont appeals in his paper, would not, I submit, easily endorse. Lamont's premise must therefore be reformulated in the following fashion:

Every physical thing is such that it is both capable of being acted upon and capable of acting upon something else.

But even this will not do. For saying that all physical things are capable of acting upon something or capable of being acted upon seems to imply that they do not actually act and that they are not acted upon. But of course although it is true that no physical thing actually produces all the effects it is capable of producing nor is affected in all the ways it is capable of being affected, it is wrong to conclude that physical things actually at any time do not affect or are not affected. For instance there is always some

transfer of energy from a physical thing to its environment   and
conversely. So the proper causal description of physical things
would now seem to have to be:

Every physical thing is such that it both affects other things and is
affected by other things.

From this description we then rightfully conclude that a being of
which it cannot be said that it both acts and is acted upon is not
a physical being. The problem is that although Lamont's God
fits this description *so do other kinds of being,* such as a being
that neither affects nor is affected by anything else. Now a
being that neither affects nor is affected is not the same thing as
a being that is not capable of acting upon something else nor
capable of being acted upon. It might be the case that it neither
affects nor is affected because (a) it is incapable of being affected
or (b) it does not actually affect anything although it is capable
of doing so. I therefore conclude that Lamont's conclusion,
although correct, is not correct for the reason he thinks, and is
correct in a problematic way. The reason for this has to do with
the second "attribute" of God which Lamont believes necessary
to establish but which he thinks does not follow from the
composition argument: God's uniqueness.

   According to Lamont and traditional natural theology, there
cannot be several uncaused causes. Lamont explains: "If the
argument is not to fail of its purpose, the possibility of there
being more than one uncaused cause, and of the uncaused causes
belonging to the natural world, must be ruled out" (2 73).

   It is important to notice that Lamont wants to disprove the
possibility of many *partial* uncaused causes. He explains that "an
effect has several causes when (i) there is no one thing that has
brought it about, and (ii) there are several different things, each
of which contributed to its happening, none of which is sufficient
by itself for its happening, and all of which together have
brought it about" (274). Lamont seems to think that there is only
one way in which it makes sense to suppose that there could be sev-
eral uncaused causes: namely, that they be partial uncaused
causes. It is possible, however, that there are several uncaused
causes, all of which are capable of causally bringing about the

universe, but only one of which actually does so, a possibility that seems all the more plausible if we accept the definition of a physical thing as a thing that affects and is affected by others. Suppose that there is an infinite number of uncaused causes and therefore that creating the universe is possible for each one; one can suppose that one of these will actually cause the world, although it is not necessary that any one in particular will. In any event, we cannot take Lamont's purported proof of the falsity of the hypothesis that there are several partial uncaused causes as sufficient proof of the uncaused cause's uniqueness. To this, of course, one might retort that all that needs to be proved is that the *actual* cause of the world is unique, regardless of whether there are many other unactualized uncaused causes. My reply is that the theist who is content with this view of God's uniqueness seems to have logic on his side, but I suspect that few theists would see this as an acceptable position.

To sum up: Lamont, following Peter Geach, tries to show that Aquinas's proofs for the existence of God can be construed as a valid composition argument. I have argued that insofar as we can reduce the Five Ways to a composition argument, such an argument in no way yields the desired conclusion. The failure of Lamont's attempt is explained by the fact that he makes the proof of God's existence into a deductively valid composition argument only by begging the question with respect to the fundamental issue, namely, that the sum of all effects is really a group in need of a singular cause different from the causes of any of the effects of which it is the aggregate. Finally, inspection of Lamont's reasons for arguing in favor of God's immateriality and uniqueness reveals that such attributes could be seen to be validly predicated of God only by excluding alternative hypotheses which Lamont does not even envisage.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Stmggle for Theology's Soul: Contesting Scripture in Christology. By
WILLIAM M. THOMPSON. New York: Crossroad, 1996. Pp. xii + 310.
$39.95 (cloth).

We can hardly exaggerate the importance of William Thompson's new
work. After studying contemporary attempts to build a new Christology in *The
Jesus Debate,* Thompson focused his attention on what holiness has con-
tributed to Christology throughout the history of the Church *(Fire and Light:
The Saints and Theology* and *Christology and Spirituality).* In his new work
the thorough and sympathetic study of contemporary Christologies and the
Bible, of the fathers and mothers of the Church, and of the insights con-
tributed by the saints has resulted in a remarkable outline for a new synthesis.
The study's scope is broad enough to invite responses not only from Roman
Catholic but also from Protestant and Orthodox scholars. My impression is
that the best theologians of the Christian tradition have long been awaiting
the emergence of such an approach. In fact-as the comments on the cover
confirm-some of them have enthusiastically welcomed the courage
Thompson displays in calling for a new-and yet, in the best sense of the
word, traditional-approach to Christology.

Perhaps Professor Thompson's greatest merit consists in realizing the spir-
itual hunger of both theologians and rank and file Christians for a real
encounter with Jesus Christ. When studying the relationship of the saints to
Christ, he saw that they had a qualitatively more realistic knowledge of Christ
than could ever be achieved by the conceptual-analytical approach of bibli-
cal scholars. Thompson calls the former a "participatory knowledge" in the
very reality of Christ, a knowledge that presupposes and fosters faith, love,
and the commitment to follow in Christ's footsteps. At the same time, it
became obvious to him that the saints gained this participatory knowledge by
reading and understanding the Scriptures within the community of the
Church. Thus, with a vast and solid knowledge of Scripture, of patristic,
medieval, and modern theology and spirituality, Thompson was able to develop
the integrating method of his theology. Modestly, he calls his method "a 'fam-
ily practice' style of biblical scholarship, meaning by that one in which bib-
lical study and theology form a united whole" (ix). He is aware that in our age
of specialization and fragmentation the re-establishment of "communion
between Bible and theology" is not an easy task but a struggle, if we intend
to take into account the vast amount of accumulated specialized research. In
fact, the struggle is not simply on the level of academic work. In order to

know Christ with participatory knowledge, the theologian must engage in a
struggle against his or her own sinfulness for a continuous conversion that
should lead to a "deep, meditative kind of knowing" (3). Thompson is com-
mitted to this struggle with a real boldness (reminiscent indeed of Paul's *par-
rhesia)-we* might even say, with the inspiration and inner compulsion of the
one who found a forgotten treasure: he confesses that unlike his other studies
"this book 'wrote itselr through me" (ix).

Thompson believes that the struggle for the knowledge of Christ through
Scripture is "a contest for the very soul of theology as a whole" (5), since
Christ is the center of all theology. He understands "contest" not merely in
the sense of struggle, but as witnessing: the Scriptures bear witness along
with the community of the Church (the original meaning of the verb *contest* is
con-testifu:ari, "witness or testify together") to Christ himself.

Yet, "the Bible is the Church's book and in fact it came into being through
the mediation of the Church" (8). Thus, Scripture and Church tradition
should not be separated or opposed. We need to study the whole work of
Thompson to grasp his understanding of this "perichoretic" relationship (257
n. 11). On the one hand, the Scriptures are normative for all theology in the
sense of patristic and high medieval theology. In the words of St. Thomas:
"We should not say of God whatever is not found in Sacred Scripture either
explicitly *[vel per verba]* or implicitly *[vel per sensum]"* (11). On the other
hand, the Scriptures can be understood in their transcendent reference to the
reality of Christ only in the Spirit-led tradition of the Church: the Spirit leads
us to the incarnate Word and to the Father so that we are truly in Christ and
Christ is truly in us, and we are truly children of the Father (16). This mutual
indwelling in love of the Christian and the triune God through the Spirit (an
indwelling that does not imply parity between the partners) is the ultimate
ground of the participatory knowledge that is the foundation of all genuine
theology. Thus, theological knowledge is not neutral, but committed, not only
theoretical but also practical, since it is based on and leads to the practice of
the theological virtues. It "engages us on all the levels of our being" (25).
From all this it becomes evident that theology and spirituality, while clearly
distinguishable, ought not to be divorced from each other. Their separation in
the late Middle Ages impoverished both. Of course, Thompson understands
spirituality not as a "subjectivistic reduction of the fullness of Christian rev-
elation" but as "the meeting or encounter between the triune God of Jesus
Christ and the Christian, the communion between both and so the reality of
both" (19). Thus theology emerges from spirituality (since it is an articulation
in the Church of the participatory knowledge deriving from the indwelling of
the Holy Spirit) while at the same time, "in its more differentiated form, the-
ology can in turn enrich the spiritual life even while being a manifestation of
that spiritual life" (20).

Seen through Thompson's presuppositions and method, Christian revela-
tion may be compared to a threefold perspective on a painter's canvas: the

incarnate Word, the center of revelation, is the ground on the canvas "leading to the background of the Trinity and opening out onto the foreground of Church, society, and cosmos" (21).

The studies following this expose of presuppositions and method provide a rich sampling of how Thompson applies his method to some key aspects of Christology, discussing in each chapter the threefold perspective of Christocentrism, Trinitarian background, and ecclesial, social, and cosmic foreground. In a manner at once self-effacing and provocatively hold, he identifies his view as the one "that flows from participation in the very movement of Christian revelation itself' (30).

First, he presents a Christological interpretation of the psalms (chap. 2), showing their twofold role: they prefigure the multiple dimensions of the *Gestalt* (form) of Christ as the fulfillment of all God's dealings with his people in history; at the same time, they articulate all of God's revelation in the form of praise. The fact that Jesus and the Church used and are constantly using the Psalter shows the need for Christology to become doxology. Our participatory knowledge of the mystery of Christ results in psalmody: even our complaints and cries for rescue will end on a note of trust, gratitude, and praise.

The third and fourth chapters are theological meditations on the three synoptic Gospels and on John, respectively. Thompson advocates a "non-invasive approach to the Gospels," meaning that it consciously resists the temptation to mutilate the text for the purpose of separating what is (allegedly) historically certain from what is historically dubious. He "wants to do christology from within the movement of the Gospel texts (and of Scripture as a whole)" (65). He wants to explore the possibility that the Gospels themselves "affirm and foster their own kind of critical spirit" in their pluralistic approach to the one story of Jesus (65; cf. 96-99). In each Gospel God's revelation through Jesus Christ is mediated through the faith of the disciples, the same faith in all four Gospels yet in a diversity of forms. What is true about Matthew is true about all the Gospels. If one takes away the "middle," the concrete shape of faith of each Gospel, one can have no access to Christ (78-79). Only by appropriating faith in its different aspects and conforming to its demands can we know by participation the reality of Jesus (96-97). If we try to understand the historical aspect of Jesus by isolating it from the middle which is faith in all its aspects, we distort history itself: we end up in historical rationalism or relativism (99-100).

With Barth Thompson considers the Gospel of John "the Gospel of the Gospel itself' and its author the *"doctor primus"* (104-5). If God's glory, his shining splendor, can he perceived only through the faith of the evangelists, then this divine light shines with incomparable luminosity through the Gospel of John. It is there that we understand the full dimensions of the mystery of Christ: in Christ "we have God's very Self given us, not simply gifts

from God" (123). This Word who has become Jesus leads in the Spirit to the Father: the Gospel of John reveals to us the mystery of the Trinity.

Chapter 5 deals with the Wisdom theme in Christology. Thompson acknowledges the growing significance for contemporary theological sensitivity of seeing in Jesus the incarnate Wisdom of God. But retracing the history of interpretation of Proverbs 8:22-31, he shows that, for other reasons, Wisdom was equally important in the patristic period for articulating the eternal divinity of the second Person of the Trinity. If we acknowledge that Jesus is God's incarnate Wisdom, this facilitates the analogous attribution of female characteristics to God, opens a way to understand the role of Wisdom in creation, and helps us build a bridge between Christianity and the great religions of the East. Not only is the word *wisdom* feminine in the great languages of the Bible and tradition *(hokma, sophia, sapientia),* but Wisdom is described to a large extent with female images in the Old Testament and at times also in the devotional writings of the saints. God's Wisdom is displayed in the creation of the world: thus the person through whom God has created is the same one through whom God has re-created everything, through his incarnation and redemption. Finally, the great religions of the East, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, are products of wisdom and lead to acquiring wisdom. The theme of wisdom then provides a way to a fruitful dialogue with them.

Chapter 6 explores the crucial soteriological question: what does that "astonishing exchange" between the incarnate Son and sinful humankind mean, the theme that began with Paul, unfolded in liturgical and patristic texts, and has been again and again explored by theologians up to our own age? Thompson's carefully researched, tentative answer is that we need to affirm more than Jesus' solidarity with or participation in our sinful condition if we want "to capture the full force" of the Pauline texts (Rom 8:3; Gal 3:13; 2 Cor 5:21) (192-93). He proposes "substitutionary atonement" not as a necessary truth of Christian faith but as a "rich contribution" (197) to understanding the mystery of our redemption: Christ has taken the place of sinful humanity in enduring the burden of all sins so that we may be forgiven and share in God's own life. How did the fact that God's incarnate Son himself endured our sinful condition redeem us from sin? Thompson, quoting Newman, wants to leave the mystery unexplained. Yet he indicates that the ultimate explanation why Jesus' enduring of our alienation from God is redemptive lies in God's love, at work in Jesus (195). Thompson rightly points out that the substitutionary theory does not dispense us from our active cooperation with Christ's redemption; on the contrary, Christ "takes our place by healing and further actuating our freedom and responsibility" (193).

Chapter 7 provides the best illustration-at least for me-of the fruitfulness of Thompson's approach: it shows the inseparable connection between Christology and spirituality. The theologian has to become like the child Jesus. Only then can he identify with all the victims needing salvation, share

the delights of divine play in creation, and enter into the life of the triune God.

Thompson's work gives us hope-hope that the renewal of theology, based on a balanced harmony of *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento* (enrichment by the sources and responsiveness to contemporary needs), which appeared so promising in the works of theologians like Congar, de Lubac, and Balthasar, will continue in the mainstream of American theology. At the same time, I suspect that Thompson would be the first to admit that the work of integration has only begun. Of the many issues that, in my opinion, remain to be confronted I would like to outline only two.

First, one needs to elaborate the philosophical-theological foundations of "participatory knowing" in general and, specifically, in matters theological. Affective knowledge, wisdom *(sapientia)* based on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and an ontological conformity with Christ, is a necessary foundation and hoped-for consequence of proper theological knowledge, but it is not identical with it. Every saint had the supernatural gift of wisdom, but not every saint was a theologian in the strict sense of the word. Here differentiation must precede integration. (The wisdom tradition in the fathers and mothers of the Church and the treatise of St. Thomas on the gift of wisdom [*STh* II-II, q. 45] may provide the starting point.)

Second, Thompson's synthesis appeals only to those who have already practiced this method, in some way or other. Those who accept only the method of literary and historical criticism in dealing with the Scriptures need to be shown that the very logic of the critical method demands that it be transcended (not abolished!) by those who apply it to the Bible.

ROCH KERESZTY, 0.CIST.

University of Dallas
Dallas, Texas

Thomas Aquinas and His Legacy. Edited by DAVID M. GALLAGHER. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1994. Pp. 220.

Thomas Aquinas and His legacy offers the analyses and keen observations of some of the more prominent Thomistic philosophers on the contemporary horizon. It is impossible, within the short compass of the present review, to do ample justice to the various speculative threads that are woven through this collection. Several distinct themes, pursued by authors of proven distinction, are well articulated and placed in their historic context. Yet perhaps most interesting is what is not said, but which nonetheless leaps from the

page to the alert observer: namely, the systematic speculative focus of the authors.

For several years, there has been an underlying tension affecting the Thomistic intellectual community. Under the strong impetus of the unchallengeable greatness of Etienne Gilson, whose systematic philosophic intelligence coexisted with the *habitus* of the historian, the renascence of medieval historical inquiry was enormous. However, this very event tended to eclipse systematic inquiry in favor of more historical research. While great figures such as Gilson and Anton Pegis never failed to approach issues in a systematic vein, many lesser lights assimilated only the historical *habitus* while properly speculative life waned. What resulted was an imperialism of the historical *habitus* at the expense of philosophy.

This imperialism suffers by contrast with St. Thomas's use of history which is, as they say, a "cut to the chase." For example, "Aristotle says 'x' and gives three reasons, a, b, and c; on the contrary, Augustine says 'y' because of d, c, and e; but I respond that it should be said that..." Thence flows Thomas's own analysis, followed by his responses to objections. Both his *Summae* are filled with such considerations; and few can imagine that he exhausted the fertility of the principles that he employed. St. Thomas could not *afford* the luxury of aggrandizing historical competencies that distracted from his speculative focus. This virile speculative engagement, which adverts to historical competencies only as a necessary auxiliary (he did, after all, consult Moerbeke), does not accord well with Gilson's *caveat* that "No philosopher can know that he is a Thomist unless he also be an historian" (Etienne Gilson, *History of Philosophy and Philosophical Education* [Milwaukee: Marquette, 1948], 19-20). And this prescription, quite apaii from the greatness of Gilson, immersed Thomistic thought in several decades of methodological confusion. Like a mistake in the oxygen mixture of a diver, this prescription, though not devoid of substance, nonetheless finally threatened suffocation.

Gilson's thesis would apparently legislate that speculative *eros* be permitted only to historians. Of course, such a self-defeating stance by Thomistic philosophers has had the only outcome it could have had: it has withdrawn Thomism from the speculative marketplace where, by consequence, other teachings become predominant. Clearly, the danger of historical method imperializing over philosophy, and seeking to dictate where it ought not to do so, is visible.

By contrast the message of the method and example of St. Thomas is clear: we must depend upon others-not only historians and linguists, but also the great articulate minds of the past-if we wish to philosophize. Such dependence is ineluctable even in the historian (was he not instructed by others? did his historic comprehensions arise in a vacuum?). But in philosophic life this dependence is made good through speculative responsibility and accountability rather than through chimeric historical omniproficiency. The retreat of Thomism from the cultural arena began the day that the primacy of

philosophic *eras* and *habitus* were suppressed as secondary to historical learning. And indeed, why should one dignify methods with the appellation "Thomist" when they are contrary to Thomas's express (and recommended) methods?

The very criteria of historical relevancy themselves are *philosophic.* The very *ratio* under which we find this rather than that speculative matter to be worthy of attention is itself of the speculative order. It is thus in relation to theological and philosophic reasons that one judges historical research to be valuable. Yet the tail of historical study has grown far longer than the body of speculative engagement, in some cases almost leading a life of its own. In the years following 1945 Thomistic philosophy passed from being nourished upon historical reflections to being devoured by them. One need but enter a bookshop with a compendious philosophy section to discover-as I did recently upon entering an enormous Borders Bookshop-a small sign: "for books on the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas see 'historical studies.'" Upon dutifully seeking out the historical section, one finds precisely no Thomistic philosophy.

Thomas Aquinas and His legacy is an exiguous but real sign that the long winter through which Thomistic philosophy has suffered is ending. The authors for the most part respect the uses of historical reference and employ them precisely as such. But the overriding emphasis is speculative, and one notes in the authors a superbly systematic focus upon the issues at hand. One has no doubt which is the auxiliary art, and which is the master: the philosophic *habitus* is in fine display. Even those issues requiring greater historical contextualization manifest this jeweller's eye for systematic rigor.

Stephen Brown's essay on "Henry of Ghent's *De reductione artium ad theologiam* " is a pellucid study. It is a timely one as well, reminding one of the antiquity and power of the theme of the reduction of philosophy to theology, a theme found even more stringently in certain contemporary authors (e.g., prominent theologians of the *Communio* circle). This issue, which separates the doctrine of Henry of Ghent from that of St. Thomas, persists in separating Thomas's teaching from that of von Balthasar and others to the present day. To realize the antiquity of the dispute is to see how fundamental are the issues upon which it turns.

David Gallagher's "Aquinas on Goodness and Moral Goodness" addresses an issue of major systematic importance to be found in St. Thomas's moral philosophy and ontology. Thomas is at times sophomorically misread as suggesting that because the good is conve1tible with being, "whatever is, is moral." This error signals the importance of a distinction in St. Thomas's thought between ontological goodness and moral goodness. In a sense, moral goodness is a species of ontological goodness. Gallagher penetratingly points out that moral goodness, as the goodness owing to an agent's operations, must be distinguished from other types of good. The perfections of being healthy, wise, and beautiful are not specifically moral-but they are perfections. As

Gallagher puts it, "if by ontological goodness we mean simply the goodness that is found in being as such, and if, in addition, we recognize that being includes both substantial and accidental being, then moral goodness, far from being opposed to ontological goodness, is a specification of it."

This distinction between the initial good of the agent's existence and the supervening levels of being and good necessary to the perfection of the agent through action is crucial. While in some sense it is good that a creature exist, and that it have the capacity for action, according to St. Thomas:

> it is evident from what has been said that, though God has His own perfect and complete goodness, in accord with His simple existing being, creatures do not attain the perfection of their goodness through their being alone, but through many things. Hence, although any one of them is good in so far as it exists, it cannot be called good, without qualification, if it lack any other things required for its goodness. Thus, a man who is destitute of virtue and host to vices is indeed called good, relatively speaking; that is, to the extent that he is a being, and a man. However, in the absolute sense, he is not good, but evil. So, it is not the same thing for any creature to be and to be good without qualification, although each of them is good in so far as it exists. In God, however, to be and to be good are simply the same thing. *(ScG* III, c. 20)

In his essay "The Principle of Plenitude" Alejandro Llano does yeoman's service by freeing the text of St. Thomas from rationalistic distortion. He offers rejoinder to authors such as Arthur 0. Lovejoy who mistakenly interpret Thomas as holding a view like that of Leibniz, according to which God is constrained by His wisdom to create the ontologically most perfect world. Llano masterfully and penetratingly exposes the metaphysical reason why Aquinas does not hold such a teaching.

Distinguishing "predicamental participation" and "transcendental participation" Llano explains that the first pertains to the participation of the individual in the essential order. The perfection thus participated is completely possessed by each participating substance and "does not exist outside the participants." Such perfection is insusceptible of gradation and hence cannot be made better by God, any more than God can make the number "four" better (any change will render it no longer to be "four"). But over and above essential perfections is transcendental perfection-and such perfection, Llano reminds us, "is *never* completely possessed by the participants, and does exist outside the participants." Possession of such pure perfections as wisdom and goodness-and even more so possession of "ontological perfection: that is, being as actuality *(actus essendi)"-admits* of grades of perfection (unlike simple form, which is either possessed or not).

To the essentialist the root perfection, dignity, and ontological value of things resides in their essences. The activity of the Creator, on such a view, will end by being constrained by the excellence of the divine essence to bring about that essential state of affairs that is most perfect. But if the root perfection, dignity, and ontological value of things resides in their being, then there can always be a more perfect world. St. Thomas insists *(STh* I, q. 8, a.

1) that "Existence is that which is innermost in each and deepest in all, as it is formal with respect to every reality." Finite things are not *ipsum esse-they* are necessarily limited in their being. Hence Llano observes that "Even the expression 'the best of all possible worlds' makes no sense, because everything that can possibly exist can only exist in a limited manner." No possible universe is of unsurpassable excellence, because *ipsum esse subsistens per se* is not causally exhausted by any possible set of creaturely effects: all are surpassable, for all are finite.

Llano also provides sterling criticism of reductionist modal logics that reduce the framework of possibility from its metaphysical rootedness in being into a mere extensional relation between time and truth. As Llano puts it, "The statistical model for modalities is a conceptual framework which explains some logical and epistemological consequences of the ontological structure of things, but it is not to be confused with this real structure." The realization of one possibility is based upon the same metaphysical ground as the realization of a contrary possibility: namely, the reality of substances mixed with potentiality. It is possible that Socrates be sitting or not sitting *(in sensu divi..w)* "because he could be not sitting *now.* Socrates had and has the possibility of being seated and the possiblity of being standing." Possibility realized remains possibility. The actualization of some possibility does not *eliminate* the potentiality upon which it is based, and upon which its contrary can be based. Llano's stress upon the metaphysical foundation of possibility is an apt and ever-timely rebuke to the omnipresent logicism of much Western thought.

Thus far I have spoken of only three essays. It should be noted that John Hittinger's analysis in "Jacques Maritain and Yves Simon's Use of Thomas Aquinas in Their Defense of Liberal Democracy" is quite possibly the very best thing ever written on the subject. Hittinger not only ably and incisively interprets St. Thomas's teaching, but fairly presents and criticizes Maritain and Simon's distinct views of the matter. This is an essay that by itself justifies the price of the book. Likewise, the opening essay by Kenneth Schmitz, "The Root and Branch of St. Thomas's Thought" is a masterful exposition of the multiple aspects (and what with Hopkins we may call "inscapes") of the metaphysics of *esse.* The other essays that here escape treatment-by Gracia, Reichberg, Mahoney, Blanchette, Wallace-should not escape the reader's thoughtful consideration. Each is carefully sculpted, rigorously reasoned, and finely written. Rather than gild the lily I instead beg the reader to discover and contemplate it: these essays deserve a wide, alert readership.

The present volume is a cornucopia of Thomistic analysis and insight. One further comment is in order, however. David Gallagher pens the splendid lines in his introduction that "tradition serves intellectual freedom because it serves as a means to truth, and to truth grasped in the way most appropriate to free knowers: because it is *seen* by the knower to be true. The desire for truth so grasped gives rise to tradition in the first place, and it alone can

vouchsafe a tradition's continuance and progress." In the light of the closing
of the Pontifical Institute for Medieval Studies, these words cannot be too
carefully meditated. The heart of the Thomistic tradition is its paradigmatic
openness to reality. When mere historical labors trump such openness, the
result is speculative suicide. "The tradition" is first speculative and systematic,
properly participated through philosophic *habitus* and *eros;* it is only secon-
darily and in auxiliary fashion an historical matter (being and truth are not
only in the past!). What defines the tradition is its speculative content, which
is its form and *ratio.* Where the speculative life is strong, the need for
medieval historians of ideas will strongly persist. But where the speculative
life is improperly subordinated to the historical *habitus* and weakened, no
such need for medieval history will persist. Thomists who wish to philoso-
phize in the present, in a living tradition, rather than conve11 the thought of
St. Thomas into an object of intellectual forensic pathology, must bear this in
mind. No higher praise can be spoken about *Thomas Aquinas and His legacy*
than this, that it makes a good beginning.

STEVEN A. LONG

ChristendomCollege
Front Ro)'al, Virginia

At the Center of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol
    Wojtyla/Pope John Paul II. By KENNETH L. SCHMITZ. Washington, D.C.:
    The Catholic University of America Press, 1993. Pp. x + 170. $24.95
    (cloth); $11.95 (paper).

Not long after Karol Wojtyla was elected pope, a wry remark began circu-
lating back at the Catholic University of Lublin, in Poland, about a very dif-
ficult book he had written on moral phenomenology, entitled *The Acting
Person.* He had written the original Polish work ten years ago with, it was
said, full foreknowledge that he would one day be pope and that he would
then require it as reading for priests in purgatory.

Let's face it: Wojtyla's philosophical writing is difficult. Whatever the
cause-his persistent eff011s to penetrate ever more deeply into the hea11 of
an issue, the sustained depth and intricacy of his discussions, or a convoluted
phenomenological style of writing influenced possibly by Scheler-it cannot,
apparently, be blamed wholly on faulty translations. Even Wojtyla's best
interpreters face a daunting challenge in trying to explain the often dense,
enigmatic, seemingly imponderable passages of his philosophical writings.

Kenneth Schmitz, professor of philosophy emeritus at Trinity College,
University of Toronto, and professor of philosophy at the John Paul II Institute

for Studies on Marriage and Family in Washington, D.C., has provided an
excellent, concise introduction to Wojtyla's philosophical anthropology. In
less than 150 pages, he examines a broad spectrum of Wojtyla's writings-
ranging from his early dramas through his philosophical studies to his later
theological works-and   distills from them a reasonably coherent philosophi-
cal view. One thing that undoubtedly helps give this book a certain stylistic
accessibility is the fact that it originally took the form of the 1991 McGivney
Lectures at the John Paul II Institute in Washington. Yet neither the author's
facility in explaining Wojtyla, nor the book's brevity, nor its deceptively non-
technical-sounding title, should mislead the reader. This is no bedtime read.
It is a challenging primer in Wojtyla's philosophy, which, like Wojtyla's
philosophy itself, rewards study but requires patience.

One of the most technically useful features of the book, for the serious stu-
dent, is an appendix contributed by John Grondelski on "Sources for the
Study of Karol Wojtyla's Thought." This is subdivided into sections on (1)
resource centers for the study of his pre-pontifical thought; (2) an extensive
bibliography of his books and articles in several languages on the subjects of
theology, philosophy, marriage and family; (3) a list of his statements in the
commissions of the Second Vatican Council; (4) anthologies of his writings;
and (5) helpful secondary literature.

Most discussions of Wojtyla's philosophy note his primary interests in the
areas of ethics and moral phenomenology. If they are discerning, they will
also note that these interests are developed within the broad tradition of
Christian personalism, and that they are informed by traditional commit-
ments of metaphysical realism represented by the great philosophers of the
Middle Ages. Schmitz amply supports all of this. But what he manages to
demonstrate particularly well is how Wojtyla's philosophical interests are
worked out in the context of a profoundly Christian understanding of the
nature and destiny of human beings that runs as a deep undercurrent beneath
all of his writings, from his earliest plays to his latest encyclicals.

Schmitz's first chapter is devoted to Wojtyla's plays, the earliest of which
were written and clandestinely performed during the dark war years under
Nazi occupation. "Let theater be a church where the national spirit will flourish,"
Wojtyla once declared. One receives the impression that these plays must
have been severe intellectual productions, sublimating nationalist feelings
into deeply symbolic, biblical, and metaphysical themes. Great attention is
given to defining relations between the spoken word and reality, to ethical
associations, to justice, truth, and social solidarity. Frequently recurring
themes-such   as loneliness, selfishness, love, and redemption-take   on a
deeper religious significance in the postwar plays, such as *The Jeweler's
Shop,* which deals with married love, estrangement, and longing for fulfill-
ment; or *Radiation of Fatherhood,* which probes the relationship between the
choices of self-isolated loneliness and of fatherly love. One can't help think-
ing that Wojtyla's loss of both of his own parents early in life must have given

him a heightened sensitivity to such matters, even as they spill over into theo-
logical encyclicals on the heavenly Father's love *(Dives in misericordia)* or the
motherhood of Mary *(Redemptoris mater).*

Chapter 2 treats the development of Wojtyla's philosophical anthropology
as represented in his lectures on ethics at the Catholic University of Lublin
(1954-57). Schmitz describes the influence of traditional figures (such as
Aristotle, Aquinas, Augustine, Bonaventure, and St. John of the Cross, on
whom Wojtyla wrote a doctoral dissertation in Rome), specific varieties of
Thomism (Garrigou-Lagrange, Marechal, Gilson, Maritain, de Finance,
Fabro), *la nouvelle theologie,* Christian personalism (Blonde!, Mounier,
Maritain, Marcel, Ricoeur), and especially Kant's ethics and Kant's phenom-
enological critic, Scheler, on whom Wojtyla wrote his *Habilitationsschrift* in
Lublin.

Wojtyla's interest in modern philosophy, particularly in phenomenology
(Scheler, Husserl, von Hildebrand), Schmitz notes, is not driven by any desire
to reform traditional Catholic philosophy or to replace it with some sort of new
hybrid. He sees in the traditional metaphysics of the great medieval thinkers
a secure understanding of the real order. What animates him, rather, is an
interest in bringing contemporary philosophical methods and insights to the
traditional understanding of human nature and moral action. From beginning
to end, Wojtyla's writings embody the two concurrent foci of Vatican II, which
sought to update the Church in continuity with its established traditions:
aggiornamento and *ressourcement.* This means that Wojtyla is necessarily
critical of certain dimensions of contemporary thought that he finds defective,
even as he is appreciative of other positive aspects that shed new light on old
truths.

Accordingly, he praises Kant's view of the dignity of the person, respect,
duty, will, and moral agency; but he criticizes the purely noumenal and a
priori character of his ethics as a defect stemming from his systemic inability
to derive metaphysics from experience. By contrast, he finds Scheler's
strength in his focus on the interiority of "lived experience," the intuition of
values, and his view of persons as the ultimate "bearers" of values. Yet he
also notes that Scheler's positive focus on experience, consciousness, and
intuition comes at the cost of slighting a proper understanding of action, will-
ing, and being. "Essence" in Scheler's value theory is not the "being" of clas-
sical metaphysics, but an ideality indifferent to existence. Scheler's "person"
is not a substantial moral agent, in the classical sense, but the subjective
unity of lived-through experience. Scheler employs a methodological reser-
vation, claims Wojtyla, that prevents him from acknowledging the experience
of the "I" as causal originator of ethical action. Hence, active willing is sub-
ordinated to passive feeling, and the deliberate, decisional character of ethical
action is not kept adequately in view. Appealing to the metaphysical realism
of Aquinas, Wojtyla argues for the convertibility of "good" (in the practical
order) into "being" (in the theoretical order), and so offers a reconstruction of

a moral phenomenology in which values are not merely "intentional contents" of experience, but real features of existing persons, and we actually experience our own causality as rational-moral agents.

Chapter 3 traces the maturation of Wojtyla's phenomenology in *The Acting Person.* Schmitz handles with diplomacy the delicate subject of the heavy-handed editing and revising of the English translation of this work by a collaborator-editor, which resulted in an English edition (1979) that is nearly unintelligible, barely resembles the Polish original, and systematically suppresses references to traditional philosophy and classical m{!taphysics. His discussion will help remove the mistaken impression that Wojtyla in this work abandons his Aristotelian-Thomistic commitments, or even that they are related to his phenomenological interests in merely an external way.

Schmitz also examines here Wojtyla's fascinating disagreement with the view of most phenomenologists that consciousness as a whole is essentially "intentional" and actively involved in the "constitution" of the objects of which it is conscious. Wojtyla limits these to functions of "cognition," which he distinguishes from consciousness as a whole, in order to preserve the realistic posture of consciousness as "mirroring" its objects. He regards consciousness, in turn, as merely a relative "aspect" of the self, in contrast to the idealistic inclination to turn it into a self-sufficient absolute. Likewise, he transforms the operation of phenomenological "bracketing" from excluding existence and causal factors into including them in the integral human reality, but highlights the aspect of "consciousness as such" for special consideration. His animus throughout is the desire to preserve the integral interiority of the actual person, who, after all, is the real subject of consciousness, willing, and action.

Chapter 4 examines the theological dimensions of Wojtyla's anthropology in his *Discorsi* and encyclicals as Pope John Paul II. In his *Discorsi,* or "Wednesday Talks," of 1979-80, which Schmitz describes as nearly as challenging as his philosophical works, Wojtyla examines some of the deepest themes precious to the Christian understanding of humanity in a sustained meditation on the opening chapters of Genesis. These themes include the disclosure of man's creation in God's image, the original solitude that distinguishes man from other creatures, the creation of a suitable companion of different gender, the disclosure through sexuality of mutual self-knowledge and self-realization, the misuse of freedom and transition from innocence to guilt and shame, the condition of alienation and longing for original unity.

In his encyclicals, Schmitz notes, John Paul is conscious of carrying out the intentions of Vatican II, and gives special attention to the constitution on *The Church in the Modern World,* especially to the famous section 22, "On Christ the New Man," which, according to Schmitz, "forms the very center of his Christian anthropology." Essentially, Christ as the New Adam reveals man to himself as the embodiment of the mature, authentic humanity that God intended for him from the beginning. In the encyclical *On the Mercy of*

God, this truth about our humanity is drawn up into "the very revelation of
the mystery of the Father and His love." Authentic humanism, for Wojtyla,
cannot avoid being theocentric.

Chapter 5 offers a concluding assessment of Wojtyla's philosophical pro-
ject, summarizing and weighing essential elements of his anthropology. One
of the most prominent themes to emerge here is that of the momentous shift
to subjectivity with the advent of modernity, and Wojtyla's appraisal of it.
Wojtyla is intensely aware of this shift, not only as a shift towards subjective
consciousness as a kind of apotheosis of the experiencing subject, but also as
a shift away from a classical metaphysical apprehension of being, including
the being of the human subject. He offers a detailed analysis of the shift. He
is critical of the way it has drained off the interior content of things, convert-
ing knowledge into "meaning," good into "value," and reality into "objectivity."
He is critical of how it has eclipsed the divine "interiority" of things-the
ontological connectedness of all beings with their Source. He is critical of
how its absolutization of "mind" has denatured "matter," setting "nature" as
an object over against "mind," divesting it of its interiority, and augmenting
a culture of materialistic self-aggrandizement.

But he is also appreciative of certain positive developments that have
accompanied this shift, such as a new appreciation of the subjective, experi-
ential dimensions of human existence. Even if modernity is misguided in the
way it has conflated interiority with subjectivity, Wojtyla regards its insights
into consciousness and "lived experience" as vital for understanding personal
subjectivity. Metaphysics "takes up human interiority in the medium of
being," as Schmitz notes, "but not in the medium of experience." For such
reasons, in *Redemptor hominis,* John Paul calls upon the Church neither
wholly to endorse nor wholly to condemn modernity. Something can be
learned from it.

PHILIP BLOSSEH

Lenoir-Rhyne College
  Hickory, North Carolina

Divine Meaning: Studies in Patristic Hermeneutics. By THOMAS F. TORRANCE.
    Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995. Pp. 439. $49.95 (cloth).

This book brings together twelve essays on patristic hermeneutics written
over the course of several decades. In so doing it provides valuable access in
a single volume to studies of great merit, and one can hope that these essays
will thus receive the wider attention they certainly deserve.

Although the individual studies can be consulted each in its own right for
the hermeneutics of the authors in question, it is not difficult to discern an

underlying interest and concern that unites all of the essays around a central set of themes. Clearly Athanasius of Alexandria and the hermeneutics that are developed around the Nicene controversies form not only a large part of the book (four essays covering nearly half the book) but they are also an important key for Torrance in determining what would constitute a legitimate biblical hermeneutic. The other fathers studied-Athenagoras, Justin, Irenaeus, Melito, Clement, and Hilary-are all examined for how they shed light on the themes that emerge with particular force in the studies on Athanasius.

"The account of Athanasius' theology usually advanced by patristic scholars is one that takes its departure mainly from the thought associated with the Catechetical School in Alexandria, and in particular from the teaching of Clement and Origen" (p. 179). But for Torrance, this emphasis is clearly unbalanced. He looks rather to the episcopal tradition of Alexandria, going back through Alexander and his predecessors, and to the Alexandrian scientific tradition (as a guide for what constitutes appropriate theological reasoning) for the decisive influences on Athanasius. Apart from Athanasius, Alexandrian Christianity never managed to confront Gnosticism with the same critical force that we find in Irenaeus, and for Torrance it is in a tradition like that of Irenaeus that we must locate Athanasius. "Athanasius entirely rejected the cosmological and epistemological dualism of Hellenism, Gnosticism and Origenism" (p. 181). These were not suited to measure the full force and significance of the incarnation, for not even Origen had managed to overcome the Platonic divide between noetic realities and the world of sense. Once the Logos is placed clearly on the side of God and it is this one who is incarnate in Jesus Christ, then "the epistemological centrality of the Incarnation" becomes clear: "it has opened up for us knowledge of God *in himself*' (p. 186). This central reality of the incarnation, measured in its many implications, controls all of Athanasius's reading of the biblical text and the theological statements that result. "The true *logic* of theological statements is the economy of the *Logos* of God, and is discerned only in penetrating through the words of the Scriptures to the interior logic of the relationship of the Incarnate Son to the Father" (p. 272).

The other studies collected in this volume all serve to reflect and shore up the hermeneutic that is brought to such clarity by Athanasius. Indeed, it is especially enlightening to see how much ground was prepared for Athanasius by Irenaeus or how in their own ways similar concerns are expressed already by a Melito or a Justin. Torrance himself seems to take to heart the concerns of the authors he studies. Repeatedly throughout the volume he cites approvingly these fathers' suspicion of allegorical exegesis, as well as his own suspicions. Thus, for example, in studying Irenaeus's "immense attention to typological interpretation," Torrance is concerned to emphasize that "at no point, however, does he [Irenaeus] engage in allegorical exegesis (such as we find in Origen's writings) which presupposes the very disjunction between

the   and the   which he rejected, and which
yields a spiritualised notion of truth detached from history. He is concerned,
instead, with the remarkable relation between shadow and reality or type and
fulfilment actualised in the Incarnation" (p. 66). What God did *in history, in
this world of the senses* in Jesus Christ-this   is the concern that emerges
again and again in the authors studied here. The essay on Melito of Sardis
throws the theological significance of this into clear light. Again, approvingly,
Torrance explains that for Melito, "Salvation is ... nothing less than the
direct action of the Lord God Almighty himself in the physical conditions of
time and place on earth, but it is presented with a profound sense of its
relevance for the desperate plight of men in their earthly and historical
existence" (pp. 90-91).

   The only Latin father to whom an entire study is devoted is Hilary, and the
choice is, of course, not accidental. Before turning directly to Hilary, the
author has already noted that the influence of the theological method that
Athanasius derived from his keen perception of "the immense epistemological
significance of the *horrwousion"* is "particularly discernible in the writings of
Hilary" (p. 227). In each essay Torrance has been concerned to drive home
the significance of the hermeneutical principle whereby these fathers insisted
that the text itself cannot control the interpretation. Rather it must be con-
trolled by the divine realities in history to which the text refers. The same
point is still emerging after four hundred pages in the final study, devoted to
Hilary: "we must pass beyond the stage of building up theological statements
through the citation of biblical statements, and ground theological statements
upon the Truth itself through inquiry into the relation between biblical
statements and the Truth to which they direct us" (p. 421).

   Each essay is impressive for the immense learning it shows, and we should
be grateful to the author for the depth of his theological reading of these
patristic texts, for his very serious grappling with hard issues. Surely the
studies will be of interest to patristic scholars, even if for them not all of the
material will be new and there are some interpretations and slants with which
one could argue. But I would hope also for a different audience for this book;
namely, theologians who are dealing with hermeneutical questions from a
contemporary perspective, indeed, all theologians who wish to be sure and
clear about one of the most important foundations of the theological edifice-
how the Bible is read appropriately. Torrance's already well-established
stature within that contemporary community of theological discourse *requires*
that these, his patristic studies, receive serious review there and not just
among patristic specialists. For in this book there is made available to us a
large body of evidence that will not permit the fathers to be characterized as
practitioners of a style of biblical interpretation that we have now surpassed.

   Of the many issues that appear in these pages and must be faced by those
who would read the Scriptures today according to a theory that is developed
at sufficient theological depth, I can draw attention here to at least several.

As already mentioned, virtually every essay contributes to the sensitivity that these fathers had to letting their biblical hermeneutic be developed under the force of the biblical events themselves and the text that bears witness to them. This is a theology of revelation derived from revelation itself, constantly wary of the human tendency to make our own intellect and what it can grasp the measure of God. The presupposition is that both the biblical events and the text that speaks of them are a divine action and a divine word, and an appropriate theory of interpretation must let itself be shaped at every turn by this fact. Of course, the biblical text is also a human word speaking of human events, but precisely here there emerges "the immense epistemological significance of the *homoousion."* For these human words and events are likewise nothing less than the very action and word of God in our midst. For interpretation this will mean that the human words of the text will bend and be reshaped in their meaning under the weight of the immense, divine realities to which they refer. It is impossible to offer particular citations here; the entire book is saturated with this line of thinking and such conceptions must be heard and met by those engaged in the contemporary hermeneutical debates.

Letting a theory of interpretation be shaped by faith's presupposition that we have here to do with a divine word will not render such a theory somehow less "scientific," as many may fear. For us too the Alexandrian scientific tradition which so influenced Athanasius can be instructive. For there were two kinds of demonstration: "that which we use in geometry and kindred sciences in which we argue necessarily to certain conclusions from fixed premises or axioms, and a different kind of demonstration in which through questioning we allow our minds to fall under the compelling evidence of the reality of things" (p. 180). It is this latter that is clearly appropriate for theology, then and now. Every science must be suited to the study of its subject matter. For a theology that wants to be "faith seeking understanding," the appropriate scientific method will take into account that the subject matter is nothing less than God himself present and active for us in Jesus Ch1ist. We meet again "the immense epistemological significance of the *homoousion."*

Several cautions should be expressed, one of a general nature, one more specific. First, I find the author's suspicion of alleg01ical exegesis too strongly stated. True, he is shaped by the legitimate hesitations of the fathers he studies, but the overall effect is to disqualify this tradition of exegesis altogether. This is to dismiss too much of the tradition too easily; rather, the insights of this method must likewise be brought to bear on the development of contemporary theories of interpretation. We could wish for a study on allegory that would move at the same theological depth as this study does. It is too facile to suggest, as the author does, that allegory might be useful homiletically but not for doctrinal purposes (p. 105, n. 40), for although allegory clearly can be misused, many fathers used it precisely to achieve a deepened grasp of the already established doctrines whose roots are in historical events conceived

as the action of God. To speak in allegory's defense with categories that the
author himself develops, we might say that allegory too can reflect and be
shaped by the weight of the divine realities and words it means to penetrate.

My specific caution concerns the following remark: "The influence of
Origenistic exegesis is most apparent in Hilary's first work, the *Commentary
on Matthew* ... " (p. 392). Is this correct? The common wisdom on this work,
after the studies of Jean Doignon, is that this is the one text of Hilary that
reflects a pure and ancient Latin tradition of exegesis *before* Hilary's contact
with the East. If this is correct, it alters the significance the author assigns to
what he regards as a retreat from this kind of exegesis in Hilary's later work.
This is something for the specialists to work out, but in any case what
remains especially interesting in Hilary's exegesis is the meeting of two
different traditions and not merely an "Origenist exegesis" that modifies
itself.

As a final word I would draw attention to the author's first word, his
Introduction. This is elegantly written and should not be overlooked. It intro-
duces the book well, but it also summarizes it. Here the contemporary rele-
vance of the patristic hermeneutic is expressed most clearly. Hermeneutics
must be a *theological* pursuit and it "cannot but be under the impact of the
dynamic Word of the living God" (p. 13).

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JEREMY DRISCOLL, O.S.B.

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Mount Angel Abbey and Semiruiry
St. Benedict, Oregon

Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo
Rome

Embodying Forgiveness: A Theological Analysis. By L. GREGORY JONES.
    Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1995. Pp. xix+ 313. $28.00 (cloth);
    $18.00 {paper).

Forgiveness is a form of internalized *ressemimem,* and to crave forgiveness
is to demonstrate the most abject kind of self-hatred. Or forgiveness means
an ahistorical obliteration of the past: "forgive and forget." Or it means leav-
ing victims exposed to the continued harms done to them by their oppressors,
whom the victims have a "Christian duty" to forgive. Or forgiveness is at best
an eschatological possibility-"eschatological" here meaning "in the sweet
by-and-by"-with   but limited relevance to the realities of life in a violent
world. Consider these varied objections to the concept of forgiveness, and
then consider the words prayed in Christian churches Sunday after Sunday:

"forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us." How do we understand God's forgiveness, how do we understand our own obligation to forgive, in light of such objections?

Questions like these are at the heart of *Embodying Forgiveness: A Theological Analysis,* by L. Gregory Jones, a United Methodist theologian who teaches at Loyola College in Baltimore. This book aims to fill a gap in contemporary theological ethics: there has not been a full-scale treatment of the subject in quite some time. Jones argues that whatever forgiveness means, it must not be used as a pious slogan to mask unpleasant truths about ourselves and the world we inhabit. In this sense the book seeks to offer a kind of critique of pure forgiveness, motivated precisely by the conviction that Jesus of Nazareth summons his followers to lives patterned on the forgiveness he embodied.

The book is divided into three major parts. Part 1 is a ground-clearing exercise aimed at distinguishing authentic Christian forgiveness from false versions, and asserting that while forgiveness often seems helpless against evil it is not without its own peculiar power. Chapter 1, "Rejecting Cheap Grace," tells the story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whose vision of "costly grace" led him to situate concepts like conversion, repentance, and forgiveness in the concrete life of the *communio sanctorum.* Jones interprets Bonhoeffer's story as a twofold struggle: against the sheerly private conception of forgiveness found in middle-class Christianity, and against the despairing view that the Nazi evil had rendered the Church's gospel of forgiveness otiose. If we view the world as "too light," Jones tells us, forgiveness is trivialized; if we view it as "too dark," forgiveness is trumped. Much of the rest of the book is devoted to exploring and resisting these twin temptations. Thus in chapter 2, "Therapeutic Forgiveness," Jones offers a telling critique of psychological views that focus exclusively on "the wrongs others do to me," leaving the fat, relentless ego fully in control; while in chapter 3, "Forgiveness Eclipsed," he explores-and rejects-the possibility that human beings are so addicted to violence that forgiveness is simply pointless.

In part 2, Jones turns to theological construction. Chapter 4, "Characterizing the God Who Forgives," begins with an exploration of Jesus' proclamation and enactment of forgiveness against its Jewish background. This aspect looms large in what follows, since Jones wants to show that an authentically Trinitarian conception of grace can answer the charge of antinomianism leveled by Jewish critics such as Emmanuel Levinas. Jones's Trinitarian theology is eclectic, with large borrowings from Karl Barth (especially in Christology) and contemporary authors such as Rowan Williams and John Milbank. It culminates in a theology of the Spirit as the forgiving presence of Christ in "the diverse, irreducibly particular histories, habits, and situations of specific people's lives" (131). This pneumatological claim is of central importance for Jones. Because God's grace touches us with the hard specificity of the Spirit, it is not an abstract "You are accepted!" that releases us

from the need for repentance and conversion. Chapter 5, "Forgiveness, Repentance, and the Judgment of Grace," explores classic issues of the relation between grace and gift, pardon and transformation. Flannery O'Connor's first novel is offered as parable of a cultural Protestantism that, while it obsessively invokes the name of Jesus, lacks the "wise blood" of Catholic communal practices through which it might learn the real demands of discipleship. Chapter 6, "Practicing Forgiveness," goes on to explore what these practices are. It is as Christians learn to forgive and to be forgiven in a communal context shaped by baptism, Eucharist, reconciliation, prayer, and healing that forgiveness comes to be embodied in the Church. The complex baptism-Eucharist-reconciliation has historically raised difficult questions about the nature and extent of Church discipline, which Jones addresses as the art of "maintaining permeable boundaries."

Like the third part of a Thomistic article, part 3 of the book is devoted to the answering of objections. If, as Jones consistently maintains, a theological understanding of forgiveness must be grounded in a specifically Christian understanding of God, how are Christian conceptions related to non-Christian ones? And if that understanding must be practical, just what do we mean by *praxis?* Chapter 7, "The Craft of Forgiveness," addresses the first question using Barth's notion of "secular parables of the truth," and the second by sketching an Aristotelian-Thomist picture of forgiveness as a *habitus.* But if forgiveness is ordered toward reconciliation, how do we regard cases where an absence of repentance seems to make reconciliation impossible? Chapter 8, "Loving Enemies," presents a strong argument that forgiveness does not need to wait on repentance-this   against the oddly moralistic accounts of Christian philosophers such as Swinburne-along with some quite unsentimental reflections on anger, punishment, and the possibility of hell. But if God bids us forgive, how can this be reconciled with the memory of unspeakable suffering? Chapter 9, "Is This a Story to Pass On?", wrestles with the question of seemingly unforgivable sins through narratives that challenge any all-too-quick moves toward universal harmony: Dostoevsky's "The Grand Inquisitor," Simon Wiesenthal's "The Sunflower," and Toni Morrison's *Beloved.* It is here that Jones is most clearly and effectively a practitioner of narrative ethics.

Reflection on this remarkably wide-ranging book should begin with the title, which is not simply *Forgiveness* but *Embodying Forgiveness.* That forgiveness must be embodied means that it cannot be reduced either to an interior attitude or to isolated acts of absolution and penance; as the author frequently reminds us, it is rather a way of life. One implication of this view is that Christian forgiveness has no unitary essence, but consists of a complex web of beliefs, practices, and moral skills. This helps explain the extraordinary diversity of the topics addressed here, from the doctrine of hell to the virtue of hope, from subtle Trinitarian dialectics to the moral significance of memory and anger. Such richness serves the cause of embodiment. It can also

lead, however, to an occasional lack of focus, especially as the book's argu-
mentative strategy tends toward the discursive rather than the analytic.
Keeping clear the many analogical uses of "forgiveness" would have been
easier had Jones offered at least a provisional definition of the term, if only
to show how inadequate any such definition must be.

Jones could not be clearer, however, about the end to which forgiveness is
ordered, an end he characterizes using the great Pauline word "reconciliation."
People are mistaken, he writes,

> if they think of Christian forgiveness primarily as absolution from guilt; the pur-
> pose of forgiveness is the restoration of communion, the reconciliation of
> brokenness ....
>
> In its broadest context, forgiveness is the way in which God's love moves to
> reconciliation in the face of sin. This priority of forgiveness is a sign of the peace
> of God's original Creation as well as the promised eschatological consummation
> of that Creation in the Kingdom, and also a sign of the costliness by which
> such forgiveness is achieved. (5)

Jones consistently maintains the evangelically catholic conviction that
God's forgiveness, "mov[ing] to reconciliation in the face of sin," precedes
our own. Although a major thrust of the book is to offer a critique of cheap
forgiveness-it is no accident that the chapter on Bonhoeffer comes first-
.the suggestion is never made that the practice of forgiveness might somehow
constitute a condition for deserving grace. Rather, the life of forgiveness is set
forth simply as the place where the crucified Lord is to be found, part of the
very shape of the life that begins with baptism.

As befits the topic, this is very much a praxis-oriented book. By *praxis*
Jones means first of all the shared practices of the Christian community that
form believers in the habits of discipleship. These practices include not only
activities normally identified as sacraments, such as baptism, Eucharist, rec-
onciliation, and the anointing of the sick-Jones quietly urges that anointing
be restored to its sacramental status within Protestantism, and makes similar
hints about reconciliation-but also intercessory prayer and the ongoing
tasks of mutual discernment and truth-telling among members of the com-
munity. Jones's interpretation of these practices as schools for the knowledge
of forgiveness is insightful and often compelling. John Howard Yoder has
termed this overall approach "sacrament as social process," and I would sim-
ply add that it needs to be situated within an account of sacrament *as sacra-
ment,* the gratuitous enactment by God of God's own forgiving presence.
Jones by no means denies this, though I sense that his anti-antinomian
intentions lead him to underplay it at times.

The concern for *praxis* also manifests itself in the unusual prominence
given to biography, fiction, and film in a work of theological ethics. Jones
claims in the introduction that the stories he uses are not just "illustrations,"
but "integral elements of my theological arguments" (xv). Indeed, any
account of practicing forgiveness should be able to draw on stories that alert

us to some of the messiness and ambiguity involved. As will always be the
case in this genre, some of the stories work better than others. Virtually any-
thing Flannery O'Connor ever wrote could be deployed against American pop
psychology and/or religious hucksterism, and Jones makes effective use of
both *Wise Blood* and the story "Revelation" (one factual correction: in the
novel Enoch Emery's "new Jesus" is not a statue, but a mummy; it seems
important that Enoch's ersatz messiah is actually dead). On the other hand,
while the recital of Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven* vividly underscores Jones's
broadly Augustinian view of the nature and limits of evil, it was not clear to
me how the film itself helps to advance the discussion.

More telling than critiques of particular readings, however, might be the
observation that the narratives tend to focus on what might be called limit-
situations: Bonhoeffer in the midst of the German Church struggle,
Maximilian Kolbe at Auschwitz, the protagonist of *Unforgiven* trying to
decide whether he should resume a life of violence. Such stories advance
Jones's aim of not making forgiveness too easy for us, and of insuring that we
do not construe the world as "too light" and so tum forgiveness into sheer
sentimentality. The risk Jones runs is that of undermining his other, in its own
way deeply Bonhoefferian, agenda: that of locating forgiveness as a craft, a
habitus, squarely in the midst of the mundane and ordinary. A *habitus* is tested
in extreme situations, but not necessarily formed there. Granted that this is
not a handbook of practical theology, some case histories of a more quotidian
kind would have helped strengthen the Aristotelian-Thomist side of the
argument.

This book possesses virtues I have hardly touched on, among them its ecu-
menical character, its thoughtful approach to Jewish-Christian concerns, and
its engaging and often eloquent style. Professor Jones is to be commended for
offering a powerful synoptic vision of Christian forgiveness. His book should
be read and discussed widely.

JOSEPH L. MANGINA

Ithaca, New York

Wisdom's Watch upon the Hours. By BL. HENRY Suso. Washington, D.C.: The
    Catholic University of America Press, 1994. Pp. 346. $39.95 (cloth).

Wisdom's Watch upon the Hours, Henry Suso's masterpiece, was one of the
most popular devotional books in Western Europe during the fourteenth cen-
tury and afterward. The two rivals were *Meditations on the Life of Christ* by
St. Bonaventure and *The Life of Christ* by Ludolph of Saxony. The *Watch* man-
ifests Suso's poetic and romantic temperament as well as his rather sor-
rowful life.

In the first book Suso describes, by way of a charming dialogue between Wisdom and the Disciple, the growth in love between Christ and the soul. He illustrates how souls are drawn to God and especially how a certain youth was so attracted. This young man, probably Suso himself, had sought to wander from God but Divine Mercy pitied him and by sweetness drew him so that he experienced delight in wisdom. Then the youth heard that Wisdom was an exquisite bride and so he began to long for her in love but his love was immature. The devil, being envious of the youth's growth, tempted him. Wisdom explained to the youth how worldly lovers overcome numerous trials for the sake of their earthly love. As the youth matured in love he eventually reached a point at which he was filled with great delight and was so fully formed that his heart's love could no longer fluctuate. From this time the youth, who is the Disciple in the dialogue, became preoccupied with his spouse Wisdom.

Then the Disciple prays to know Wisdom better in order that he might fulfill what she asks. While praying in this manner the Disciple pleads with Christ to show himself in his Passion since he doesn't understand how Jesus can appear lovable in his tortured state. Christ states that the Disciple should question for whom and why He was so disfigured. He must see the tortured Christ with the eyes of love. Since Wisdom is Christ there is some confusion now and throughout the *Watch.* The spouse is Christ and yet He is repeatedly addressed in feminine terms. Though the *Watch* employs the imagery of bride and bridegroom to describe the spiritual journey, it departs from the usual reference to Christ as the bridegroom and the soul as the bride, as found, for example, in St. Bernard's *Sermons on the Song of Songs* and St. John of the Cross's *The Spiritual Canticle.* Thus the imagery in the *Watch* is somewhat distracting.

In chapter 3 of book 1 there is a superb description of spiritual darkness which seems to characterize Suso's life. The Disciple is filled with compassion for Christ and agrees to suffer with him. But he asks why Wisdom gives him bitterness when he seeks sweetness. Wisdom answers:

> This is the way by which one must go, this is the gate through which access to that longed-for goal is given.... Act with constancy, and stand steadfastly in the front line of the battle, for it is not fitting for a servant to take his ease when he sees his master struggling so strenuously. (82)

Then in an exquisite prayer the Disciple requests compassion. Wisdom answers that one must be conformed to Christ and defines the way to become conformed to Him.

The Disciple, subsequently, experiences his wretchedness. He remembers the embraces and other favors that Christ had bestowed on him and how he had fled from Him. Now he feels that he has lost Christ and wonders why he deserted Him. He is filled with desolation and questions who will comfort him. He declares: "From now on I cannot be consoled but it will be my greatest consolation to accept no consolation" (91).

The thought of having brought sadness to the Beloved is misery for the Disciple, a misery so great that he longs for death. He even speaks of despair but Wisdom explains that despair is dangerous and, instead, portrays his mercy in an exquisite manner. So the Disciple turns to the Father of mercy.

The Disciple then laments over the dearth of fervor in both men and women whom Christ by his passion calls to true love. As the Disciple ponders he has a vision that seems to describe the contemporary Church. He sees pilgrims before the ruins of an ancient city. As he questions Wisdom about the vision he is taught that the city is the Christian religion. Wisdom describes the offenses against poverty, chastity, obedience, charity, and piety as well as the practice of strange new devotions. Some religious have worldly hearts but others are lights shining in the darkness. There is, moreover, persecution of the faithful. Some of God's people are constant in trial and implore his help. As a result the ram with two horns, who was seen in the vision, begins to lose his power. Wisdom asserts that a person should never despair in any adversity and never forsake the way of justice.

In chapter 6 Suso turns to the nature of the love of the Spouse who is Eternal Wisdom. He recalls that in his youth he vowed that he wouldn't give his love to a flower that would perish. Then one day a flower appeared on a mountain top and spoke to him. He turned to her in love and asked her name. When she responded "Eternal Wisdom," the Disciple wondered who would give her to be his beloved bridegroom. At this point the image changes, for now Wisdom is called the bridegroom. A superb picture of Wisdom is then drawn. The Disciple states that his beloved (Wisdom) is his only treasure but he fears to lose the love of his beloved because others love his beloved with a more burning love. Wisdom tells him that he is somewhat blinded by his love and proceeds to purify him. The Disciple then portrays with poetic charm his search for the Beloved as well as the sweetness and joy of Wisdom.

In an illuminating chapter (8), Suso explains how divine visitations operate and how the soul should conduct itself during this experience. When the beloved is withdrawn it seems to the Disciple that there is chiefly "labor and sorrow": "For as often as anyone is gladdened and rejoices in the beloved's presence, so often is he saddened and mourns over his absence. And this is that joyless and most afflicting rule of love" (136).

He had sought to avoid this suffering in earthly love and now finds the same trial in divine love. The absence of the Beloved causes him to thirst for and love him {another instance of the bride/bridegroom ambiguity). Wisdom answers that all creation speaks and every page of Scripture is a love letter. The Disciple responds that anything that is not the Beloved counts for little. Thus all the longings of his heart urge him on to find his Beloved. So he calls as in the Song of Songs (6:12) "Return, return." His lament is lengthy and is based on the Song of Songs (5:17). Obviously the Disciple doesn't like the uncertainty of Wisdom's coming and going. In his longing he complains about

the way Wisdom treats him. In response Wisdom chides him and teaches him
that perfect travelers seek for nothing so much as for conformity of their
actions to Wisdom's will just as Christ sought only to do the will of the Father.
The Disciple admits that he has spoken much and has craved only that which
is sweet. Wisdom states that the perfect disciple's love is such that "he would
not have such longing for spiritual delights that he would prefer to seek for
them more than to receive what in itself is the highest good" (142). In con-
trast the imperfect followers seek the things that are the Beloved's rather than
the Beloved.

The Disciple then asks to know the countersigns of Wisdom's presence.
When Wisdom tells him to examine himself, he answers in words similar to
those of St. Bernard: "when you turn away from me your gracious face ...
when you withdraw your inward consolation ... suddenly the wretched soul
is changed and is made as it were languid" (143). The Disciple employs
numerous picturesque images to describe what occurs when the Beloved
arrives. Wisdom explains that this is the game of love. The Disciple seeks to
know how to conduct himself during this game. Wisdom replies that he
should be mindful of the times of absence during the Beloved's presence and
the periods of presence during the Beloved's absence. In this way he will not
take pride in the Beloved's presence nor become depressed during his
absence. Wisdom continues:

> And so that I may add some good news for you ... you must know that this most
> divine spouse for whom you labor wants to be asked, takes delight in men's ser-
> vice. For who ever obtains what will satisfy love, even in trivial matters, so soon?
> So let a lover ask and beg and implore, and do not let him give up; and I promise
> him truly that I shall come to fulfill his heart's desire. (147)

The Disciple then questions Wisdom about the reasons why those persons
dear to her suffer much affliction. He enumerates his many sufferings from
the time of his boyhood. Thus Suso who is the Disciple presents his s0lTOwful
life's journey. He states that God seems indifferent to the destruction of his
servants. Wisdom responds that suffering is a test by which one proves
oneself and that the Disciple must realize that he is on a journey.

There follows a vivid description of the tortures of hell and the joys of
heaven. The essential reward in heaven is the perfect union of the soul with
God which causes the soul to experience ultimate joy. All his tribulations will
have passed away. The joys of heaven are so immense that the Disciple
desires to remain there but Wisdom asserts that there are many battles to be
fought yet. Heaven has been manifested to the Disciple so that he may know
how to return there and be more able to bear adversity.

Wisdom then teaches the Disciple how profitable it is to bear various
kinds of suffering. The Disciple understands suffering as the mystery of
espousal with Eternal Wisdom who tries her lovers with tribulation. Though
the Disciple requests clemency, Wisdom says that it is time for him to join

the company of valiant men who patiently suffered. As examples the great fig-
ures of the Old Testament as well as the Apostles and martyrs are mentioned.
Suffering is presented as salutary for growth since through tribulation a per-
son becomes like the suffering Christ and is drawn into his embrace. In an
especially beautiful chapter (14) Wisdom instructs the Disciple on the value
of remembering constantly Christ's Passion. This pondering on the tortured
Christ drives away inordinate sorrow for oneself. The true disciple longs to
suffer with Jesus and to die with Him. Wisdom reveals to the Disciple that
scorn and detraction will be his cross. In fact, he will appear vile and despi-
cable in the eyes of others but he must bear this trial patiently. He should not
be shaken by persecution but, rather, gladdened by it. Moreover, he must
always be ready to forgive the persons who persecute him. Other ways of imi-
tating the suffering Christ are fleeing worldly comforts, forsaking earthly profits
and consolations for the love of Christ, leaving dear friends or relatives for
Christ, putting aside one's own will and treating gently those who have been
hostile. In all these experiences the memory of Christ should always be kept
in mind.

Book 1 of the *Watch* is a charming, poetic account of the spiritual journey.
Book 2, in contrast, is a collection of various topics, some of which develop
the thought of book 1. It is more tedious reading. In chapter 2 Suso discusses
the knowledge that is most profitable: the knowledge of how to die. He warns
the reader about the horror of a sudden death and urges him to dispose him-
self by means of a complete confession while he is healthy and strong. Then
he presents a vivid, sobering description of death. Wisdom responds with
most helpful advice: when a person reaches the point of death he should com-
mit himself to God's mercy and put the passion of Jesus between himself and
judgment. The Disciple answers that his song is "My God, my Mercy" (301),
and proceeds to extol God's mercy and gentleness. Certainly this song is most
appropriate for Suso in his sorrowful journey or for any person who realizes
his sinfulness.

In explaining how many of the faithful may be wedded to Divine Wisdom
Suso emphasizes that many persons want the gift of betrothal to Wisdom but
do not work to obtain it. In a final, brief chapter he presents the myriad fruits
of the marriage to Wisdom.

Book 1 of the *Watch* is, indeed, charming in its description of the journey
to spiritual marriage. However, I question why this treatise would be consid-
ered one of the three most popular treatises of the fourteenth century. It seems
to me that *The Dialogue* of St. Catherine of Siena, the great Dominican
woman of the fourteenth century, surpasses by far in theology and charm
Wisdom's Watch upon the Hours by Henry Suso.

                                                  SR. MARY ANN FOLLMAR

            Providence College
                Providence, Rhode Island

Participation and Substantiality in Thomas Aquinas. By Rum A. TE VELDE.
    Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995. Pp. xiv+ 290 (cloth).

Dr. Rudi A. te Velde introduces his epilogue with a summary of what in his judgment he has accomplished in *Participation and Substantiality in Thomas Aquinas.*

> In this study I have examined the structure and meaning of participation in Aquinas' metaphysics of creation. We have seen how the Neoplatonic conception of a causality through participation is adapted and transformed by Thomas within his metaphysical   of creation. Participation is applied first and foremost to the being of creatures; it signifies the (causal) relation of origin between God and creatures, between the infinite Being itself and the many finite beings, each of which participates in being according to its essence. Participation defines the way in which finite things have being. It expresses their mode in terms of an "identity in difference": things *are* but are not identical with their being. What it means to be for each thing is partly the same, partly different: for a horse to be means to be a horse, that is, being, which as such is universal, is limited to the specific nature of a horse. A horse, like any other creature, has only a part of being; its nature provides certain positive possibilities but at the same time it denies a horse certain perfections, such as the perfection of intellectual cognition. It enjoys the perfection of being, but only to a certain degree. (280)

This study of the metaphysics of creation is like a long meditation on the fourth way, yet there is no sense of repetition; each chapter examines a different aspect of the Creator, and brings various insights to the being and operations of God. Te Velde takes metaphysical principles such as potency and act, substance and accidents, matter and form, essence and the act of existing and studies them in the light of God as *esse ipsum.* It all keeps returning to that starting point of God as *esse,* and creatures, the effects of his generous goodness, reflect in their finite ways his infinite being and goodness. Participation, in this context, is understood as something receiving in a particular fashion what belongs to another universally, that is, absolutely.

There are three divisions to the book, each having several chapters enlarging on the theme of that division. The first part, "The Tension between Substance and Participation" studies God as Goodness itself and shows how creatures have their goodness by participation. The starting point of the analysis is an early work of Aquinas, his commentary on the *De hebdomadibus* of Boethius. Te Velde shows the relationship of this work to *De Veritate,* q. 21, also dated between 1256 and 1259, Aquinas's first Parisian period. One of te Velde's objectives is to show how St. Thomas developed in his use of participation as he acquired a greater knowledge of the Neoplatonic sources. Boethius had asked how creatures are good-by participation or by substance? St. Thomas, in treating the issue, has occasion to clarify several meanings of participation and to lay the foundation for his own solution which, as indicated, returns to God as *esse ipsum* who causes the creature to have being and goodness in its limited way.

> Nevertheless this substantial goodness is by participation because every created substance has being by participation. The question how things are good by participation and at the same time in an intrinsic, substantial way, is solved by Aquinas by introducing a difference between the essence and its *esse* on the level of substantial being. Insofar as a creature is a *being* hy participation and derives its being from Goel who is essential being, it is also *good* hy participation, and by an intrinsic form which is a likeness of God's essential goodness. (34)

In part 2, "Participation and the Causality of Creation," te Velde studies the composition in the receiving principle and that which is received. The problem relates to the status of the receiving principle, the essence, before it is actualized by its *esse.* "At this same time, however, this 'something else' cannot be a presupposed subject. Without *esse* there is nothing, not even a receiving subject" (87). The answer lies in the direction of the very nature of creation for "the receiving subject must come into being at the same time as the being that is received. The question, therefore, is whether the universal production into being can be made intelligible in terms of composition."

This problem leads te Velde into a reflection upon the work of Cornelio Fabro, L. B. Geiger, Etienne Gilson, and John F. Wippel on participation. He judges that their interpretation involves a "double participation." While all would follow Aquinas in rejecting Avicenna's theory of the essence's reality as a possible being waiting to be actualized through receiving *esse,* the question remains, how does the Creator bring *esse* to the essence?

> One cannot simply presuppose the alterity of a creature, or the "other" in the creature, to what it receives from the cause. In other words one cannot tacitly presuppose a (possible) essence in the creature, which is subsequently constituted into a relation with Goel as the origin of being and is actualized in this respect. Creating does not simply mean the actualization of a possibility; creation denotes the origin of things according to their entire being, *principium totius esse.* The distinction between essence and *esse* in each creature should he interpreted in the light of this universal origin. (91)

While every student of St. Thomas knows that in creatures there is a composition of essence and *esse,* in which the *esse* is limited by the essence it actualizes, there is a temptation, te Velde argues, to try to imagine the essence awaiting its actualization by the act of existing. Further consideration makes one realize that apa1t from knowledge in the mind of the Creator, essences have no reality in themselves prior to the Creator causing the creature to be. Here te Velde reviews the subtle metaphysics of St. Thomas on this problem as he contrasts what he judges is the authentic position of Aquinas in contrast to what he judges are misunderstandings on the part of Fabro and Geiger. This is a bold move on the part of a graduate student writing his dissertation and in some ways begging to differ with his seniors in Thomistic interpretation. But he makes a persuasive case that will provoke response.

> That a creature becomes with respect to its being can only he expressed hy relating that which is created (that which is = *id quod est)* to its being *(esse).* This "something" is not a pre-existing subject; it is precisely that which is created.

> Thomas sees no problem here: "While granting being God simultaneously pro-
> duces that which receives being; and so it is not necessary that he acts on the
> basis of something pre-existing."" The emphasis lies on the *"simul":* creation
> should not be seen as a double act of producing a recipient of being and granting
> being to it. "That which is" is created by the fact that being is attributed to it.
> .

This analysis is only marred by the fact that footnote 55 says that the text is from *De Potentia* q. 3, a. 1 ad *16,* when it is actually from ad *17.* Actually, one is impressed with the extraordinary range of Thomistic texts that were studied in the production of this dissertation. Te Velde did his work under the guidance of Professor Jan Aertsen at the Free University in Amsterdam, defending it publicly in June 1991. He also thanks in his introduction Professor Hermen Berger and Carlos Steel of the Catholic University of Leuven. The bibliography, however, is balanced with American as well as European sources.

In part 3, "Degrees of Participation and the Question of Substantial Unity," te Velde is concerned to show how Aquinas is able to reconcile his metaphysical gradualism, based on participation, with the substantiality of created beings. This section has its sources more in the philosophy of Aristotle, especially hylomorphism as developed in the metaphysics of Aquinas. While not writing a historical study as such, te Velde puts the controversy over the unicity of the substantial form in its historical context, reflecting upon the contributions of Avicebron and John Peckham as he presents St. Thomas's solution to the problem.

Te Velde's study is significant for its examination of the ways St. Thomas transforms his Aristotelian commitment with his use of the Neoplatonic prin- ciple of participation. What emerges from this synthesis is what makes Aquinas an original, neither just repeating Aristotelian formulas nor being taken over by Neoplatonism. "The Neoplatonic conception of paiticipation thus undergoes an important transformation in Aquinas, since for him there is in fact but one transcendent source of participation from which all things derive their distinct perfection" (211).

In reflecting on the order of the universe, the plurality and diversity of creatures, te Velde shows that St. Thomas brings out the fact that no single creature would suffice to represent the abundant goodness of God. This good- ness is reflected in the multiplicity of forms standing in a hierarchical order arranged, as it were, by the wisdom of the Creator. An issue is raised by te Velde on how it is that God gives *esse* while forms "give being" to matter. He resolves the question by bringing out how form both specifies the substance and brings *esse* to the composite for Aquinas.

> Form is act and hence it makes a thing to be in act. The causality of form with
> regard to *esse* must be taken fully seriously. That formal causality depends upon
> the universal causality of God does not necessarily mean its effect is restricted to
> only the formal side of being, as if the act of being were the exclusive effect of
> creation, which was never the opinion of Thomas. (222)

As a long-time teacher of undergraduate courses on the human person, I appreciate te Velde's presentation of the role of the substantial form in the living composite. As he paraphrases St. Thomas's disputed question *On the Soul,* "It is proper to the substantial form that it gives being as such *(simpliciter),* for is through the form that a thing is the thing it is *(hoc ipsum quod est)"* (246).

It is gratifying to see in this post-Vatican II age, which supposedly has turned religious students away from the writings of the Angelic Doctor, a new Thomistic scholar bringing such knowledge and deep understanding of the texts to the Thomistic tradition. The range of te Velde's metaphysical analysis of the use of participation as a principle in St. Thomas's thinking about matter and form, substance and accidents, essence and *esse,* the divine ideas and the whole understanding of creation is impressive. There is no question, however, that this emphasis on the Neoplatonism of Aquinas will challenge other scholars to issue their corrections.

DESMOND J. FrrzGERALD

University of San Francisco
San Francisco, California