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PSALM 22: *VOX CHRIST!* OR ISRAELITE TEMPLE LITURGY?

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AT A CONFERENCE in New York City in 1988, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger encouraged biblical scholars and theologians to continue to work toward a suitable synthesis between the historical-critical approach to biblical interpretation and the more decidedly theological and spiritual approach characteristic of most traditional or "pre-critical" exegesis.

> You can call the patristic-medieval exegetical approach Method A. The historical-critical approach, the modern approach ... is Method B. What I am calling for is not a return to Method A, but a development of a Method C, taking advantage of the strengths of both Method A and Method B, but cognizant of the shortcomings of both.[1]

While these matters are, of course, more complex than A-B-C, the schema may be a helpful one.[2] I share the cardinal's basic

[1] The quotation is taken from a roundtable discussion summarized in Paul T. Stallsworth, "The Story of an Encounter," in Richard John Neuhaus, ed., *Biblical Interpretation in Crisis: The Ratzinger Conference on Bible and Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1989), 107-8. See also Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, "Biblical Interpretation in Crisis: On the Question of the Foundations and Approaches of Exegesis Today," The Erasmus Lecture, in ibid., 1-23.

[2] Strictly speaking, we are dealing not with two specific "methods" but two general approaches. A series of basic principles unites the work of exegetes as diverse as Origen and Chrysostom, Bernard of Clafrvaux and Thomas Aquinas, so that we may speak of a single dominant patristic-medieval approach to exegesis, which Cardinal Ratzinger has labeled "Method A." When we turn to consider those biblical commentators whose work falls under the umbrella of "historical-critical" exegesis, the diversity of specific methodologies is perhaps

position, namely that both Method A and Method B have their strengths and weaknesses and that the development of a Method C is both possible and desirable.[3] I would merely add that several approaches that do not fall neatly under either Method A or Method B might also have a contribution to make to a Method C synthesis. These range from traditional Jewish exegesis to some of the newer methodologies which emerged as rivals to historical-criticism in the latter half of the twentieth century (e.g., narrative criticism).

One of the most important points of contrast between traditional exegesis and historical-critical exegesis concerns the interpretation of the Old Testament and its relationship to the New Testament. Method A reads the Old Testament Christologically, sometimes to the point of disregarding its context in Israelite history, whereas Method B interprets the Old Testament on its own terms, sometimes to the point of severing its link to the New Testament.[4] Method C, I suggest, would integrate these two

even greater. But in this case too, fundamental principles of exegesis shared by these scholars may be identified, justifying the label "Method B."

[3] Much valuable work toward this goal has been done already. For a bibliographic essay covering topics such as "pneumatic exegesis" and "salvation history," see Henning Graf Revendow, *Problems of Old Testament Theology in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985). For a balanced discussion of the prospects for recovering patristic-medieval exegesis, see Denis Farkasfalvy, "A Heritage in Search of Heirs: The Future of Ancient Christian Exegesis," *Communio* 25 (1998): 505-19. Other helpful resources include: Stephen Fowl, ed., *The Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997); Christopher A. Hall, *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998); John H. Hayes, ed., *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation,* 2 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999); Henri de Lubac, *Medieval &egesis,* vols. 1-2, *The Four Senses of Scripture,* trans. Mark Sebanc (vol. 1) and E. M. Macierowski (vol. 2), Ressourcement (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998-2000); Donald K. McKim, ed., *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998); Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (Boston: St. Paul Books & Media, 1993); Anthony Thistleton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1992); as well as the works mentioned in notes 4-7 below.

[4] This is not to suggest that all Method B exegetes have been unaware of this danger. For a bibliographic essay on twentieth-century attempts to articulate the relationship between Old Testament and New Testament, see Henning Graf Reventlow, *Problems of Biblical Theology in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986).

approaches by discerning the genuine organic connections between Old Testament and New Testament. [5]

For this to occur, the New Testament's own Christological interpretation of the Old Testament must not be regarded as merely one among many possible "readings." It is rather the hermeneutical key that discloses the inspired "logic" of the Old Testament. Christ is the *telos* at which the divinely orchestrated trajectories of the Old Testament's various component parts converge. But these theological and spiritual trajectories of the Old Testarnent cannot be discerned on the basis of the *telos* alone. The exegesis of a given Old Testament text must be allowed to unfold according to principles and categories intrinsic to that text. This unfolding will be aided by historical and literary-critical tools and procedures but must not be hampered by positivist or historicist presuppositions and goals.[6] The Old Testament is to be read on its own terms but also under the guiding light of Christ. In the end these two will be found to be one and the same, since "the Spirit of Christ" was already present to Israel prior to the Incarnation, exercising an influence upon the authors of the Old Testament and preparing Israel for Yahweh's eschatological kingdom (1 Pet 1: 11).

The Book of Psalms presents a unique challenge in this regard. No other book of the Old Testament has been so thoroughly assimilated by Christian tradition, yet there are few books of the Bible for which the respective exegetical conclusions of Method A and Method B diverge so widely. This has been especially true for the past one hundred years or so, in which the scholarship of the Psalms has been dominated by the form-critical approach of

[5] Cardinal Ratzinger speaks elsewhere of the "inner continuity and coherence of the Law and the Gospel" and of the "inner continuity of salvation history" Uoseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Many Religions-One Covenant: Israel, the Church and the World,* trans. Graham Harrison [San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999], 36, 68).

[6] As Francis Martin notes, "There is a difference between getting behind a text in order to use it as a source for the history of early Christianity and as a norm for judging the meaning of the text (historical criticism), and the historical and philological study that facilitates the communicative effort of the text itself. The first makes the text a servant of extraneous preoccupations, the second seeks to serve the text" (uLiterary Theory, Philosophy of History and Exegesis," *The Thomist* 52 [1988]: 593).

Hermann Gunkel. *As* Brevard Childs notes, because form criticism clarifies the original sociological and liturgical context of the Psalms, it makes the Church's traditional use of the Psalter seem "highly arbitrary and far removed from the original function within ancient Israel. With one stroke Gunkel appeared to have rendered all pre-critical exegesis of the Psalter invalid."[7] Childs goes on to note that this situation has, somewhat paradoxically, made Christian scholars anxious to reconcile the two approaches and "bridge the gap between critical exegesis and the actual faith of the church."[8]

Psalm 22 presents an interesting case in point. It is frequently quoted or alluded to in the New Testament, and it is treasured in Christian tradition as a unique prophetic witness to the Passion of Christ. Historical-critical exegesis poses a serious challenge to this traditional view, but Christian scholars who practice historical-critical exegesis seem eager in the case of Psalm 22 to account for, if not to justify, its use in the New Testament. The remainder of this article will examine Psalm 22 as a test case for Method C exegesis, in hope of offering a modest contribution to a much larger project.[9] We shall consider: (1) the Method A interpretation of Psalm 22 as the *vox Christi,* (2) the Method Battempt to locate this psalm in an Old Testament Israelite context, (3) various attempts to reconcile this Old Testament setting with the New Testament use of Psalm 22, and (4) a Method C attempt to describe the organic connection between the psalm in its Old Testament context and Jesus' quotation of it from the cross (Matt 27:46; Mark 15:34).

I. METHOD A: THE *VOX CHRISTI*

While the New Testament quotes or alludes to a small handful of verses from Psalm 22, the Church Fathers take the process to

[7] Brevard Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 510.

[8] Ibid., 511.

[9] According to Ratzinger, the development of a Method C synthesis will require "[a]t least the work of a whole generation" ("Biblical Interpretation in Crisis," 5-6).

its logical conclusion by referring the entire psalm to Christ's death and Resurrection. But the Fathers do far more than this. They do not treat Psalm 22 as a typological foreshadowing, nor is the reference to Christ understood to be the psalm's spiritual sense. Rather, in Psalm 22 the Fathers hear the *vox Christi*, the very words of Christ as he prays to the Father upon the cross, and this is treated as the psalm's *sensus litteralis.*

The Fathers assume that King David was the human author of Psalm 22, but they demonstrate no desire whatsoever to locate the psalm in David's life or in any other Old Testament context. David is merely a mouthpiece, through whom "the Prophetic Spirit speaks in the name of Christ."[10] He is "the king and prophet who spoke these words" but "endured none of these sufferings."[11] It is important to note that this interpretation was forged in an apologetic context. For Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Lactantius alike, it is not enough to ignore the Old Testament context of Psalm 22; they must emphatically deny that it even has one. If Trypho the Jew or Marcion of Pontus can refer this psalm to David or another Israelite, its authority as a unique prophetic witness to Christ may be doubted. But the apologists argue that this is impossible. "David himself did not suffer this cross, nor did any other king of the Jews."[12] Rather, Psalm 22 contains "the entire passion of Christ, who was even then prophetically declaring His glory."[13]

Two commentators of the Antiochene School challenged the *vox Christi* interpretation and sought an Old Testament context for Psalm 22. Diodore of Tarsus and his student Theodore of

[10] Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 38, in Thomas B. Falls, ed., *Writings of Saint Justin Martyr*, Fathers of the Church 6 (New York: Christian Heritage, 1948), 74. According to Athanasius, Psalm 22 "tells the manner of the death from the Savior's own lips" *(Ad Marcellinum* 7, in Robert C. Gregg, ed., *Athanasius: The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus,* Classics of Western Spirituality [New York and Toronto: Paulist Press, 1980], 105).

[11] Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 35 (Falls, ed., 72).

[12] Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 3.19, in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Christian Library: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325,* vol. 7, *Tertullian Against Marcion* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1868], 158); cf. Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 97; Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 4.18.

[13] Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 3.19 (Roberts and Donaldson, eds., 158).

Mopsuestia hold that this psalm describes the afflictions suffered by David during the revolt of Absalom.[14] It is spoken "by the person of David," not "by the person of the Lord."[15] Diodore grants that the psalm contains certain "partial likenesses" to the Passion of Christ, but these do not disrupt the basic "plan" *(hypothesis)* of the psalm taken as a whole.[16] He notes how one detail after another "fits David" better than it "fits the Lord,"[17] but even those details which "ended up" fitting the Lord's Passion first "happened historically" to David.[18] Theodore's interpretation is, if anything, even more strict. Christ merely borrowed a line from Psalm 22 to speak of his own sufferings, and this in no way justifies taking the psalm as such to refer to him.[19]

This Antiochene exegesis of Psalm 22, however, stood no chance of dislodging the *vox Christi* interpretation. The latter found an authoritative voice in Augustine and was widely disseminated with the popular *Expositio Psalmorum* of Cassiodorus.[20] Meanwhile Diodore and Theodore were condemned as heretics.

At the same time, Cassiodorus's detailed exposition has the unintended effect of exposing three serious weaknesses in the traditional interpretation. First, passages which do not seem appropriate on the lips of Christ are given strained interpretations. For example, how can the celibate Christ speak of "my

[14] Cf. Diodore of Tarsus, *Commentarii in Psalmos* 21.1 (on the ascription of the commentary in question to Diodore, see Jean-Marie Olivier, ed., *Diodori Tarsensis Commentariiin Psalmos,* vol. 1, *Commentariiin Psalmos1-L* (Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca 6; Tumhout: Brepols, 1980], lxxiii-cviii); Theodore of Mopsuestia, *F,xpositionisin Psalmos* 21.1.

[15] Diodore, *Commentariiin Psalmos* 21.1. Where not otherwise indicated, translations are mine.

[16] Ibid., 21.1, 19.

[17] Ibid., 21.2b et passim.

[18] Ibid., 21.19.

[19] Theodore, *Expositionis* 21.1.

[20] According to the former, in Psalm 22 "the Passion of Christ is ••• plainly recited as if it were a gospel" (Augustine, *Ennaratioin Psalmos* 21.2.2). According to the latter, "the Lord Christ speaks through the whole of the psalm," and thus "it appears not so much as prophecy, but as history" (Cassiodorus, *Expositio Psalmorum* 21.1, in P. G. Walsh, ed., *Cassiodorus: "Explanationof the Psalms,* vol. 1, *Psalms 1-50,* Ancient Christian Writers [New.York and Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1990], 216).

seed" (v. 31)? Cassiodorus answers that "seed" here refers to "the works which He revealed on the earth at the time of His incarnation."[21] Second, over this exposition of the literal sense, an equally arbitrary interpretation of the spiritual sense is sometimes superimposed. On the line, "my tongue cleaves to my jaws" (v. 16), Cassiodorus comments: "His tongue denotes the apostles as preachers, who cleaved to Christ's jaws in maintaining His commands."[22] Third, and most critical for our purposes, the *vox Christi* interpretation forces Cassiodorus to deny Old Testament Israel its rightful place in the psalm. The phrase "seed of Israel" (v. 24) must be interpreted so as to refer to Christians.[23] Indeed Israel only figures into the psalm as the enemies of Christ. The "calves" and "fat bulls" who surround the psalm's speaker (v. 13) "are clearly the Jewish people."[24]

Thomas Aquinas's exposition of Psalm 22 is more sophisticated and less arbitrary than that of Cassiodorus. For example, Thomas relates the phrase "my tongue cleaves to my jaws" (v. 16) to Christ's silence during his passion (citing Ezek 3:26 in support), an interpretation that goes back to Justin Martyr.[25] This seems preferable to the comment of Cassiodorus cited above. But in the end Thomas's exposition serves to confirm the authority of the *vox Christi* interpretation with its inherent limitations.[26] Thomas is emphatic that the psalmist speaks "in the person of Christ praying" *(in persona Christi orantis)*[27] and that the reference to

[21] Cassiodorus, *Expositio Psalmorum* 21.32 (Walsh, ed., 233).

[22] Ibid., 21.16 (Walsh, ed., 224).

[23] Ibid., 21.25 (Walsh, ed., 230). It is perfectly legitimate to find references to the Church in the Psalter when it is read according to the spiritual sense, but such spiritual exegesis must be built upon a solid interpretation of the literal sense.

[24] Ibid., 21.13 (Walsh, ed., 222). It is easy to see how such an interpretation might encourage anti-Semitic attitudes, rather than an appreciation for Israel's place in salvation history.

[25] Thomas Aquinas, *In Psalmos Davidis Expositio* 21.12; Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 102-3.

[26] Initially Thomas seems to acknowledge a level at which the words of the psalm bear some relation to David's trials, while these in turn symbolize the sufferings of Christ *(In Psalmos* 21.1). In practice, however, Thomas only carries this two-level approach through his explanation of the psalm's superscription, after which he never again mentions David.

[27] Ibid., 21.20.

Christ's Passion is the psalm's ..literal sense."[28] Thus Psalm 22 is still effectively denied an Old Testament context.

But along with its patent weaknesses, the Method A interpretation of Psalm 22 has certain strengths. First, it takes seriously the foundational New Testament insight that the "Spirit of Christ" was already present to Old Testament Israel, "bearing witness in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the glories to follow" (1 Pet 1:11).[29] Second, it does justice to the fact that Christ himself takes up this prayer and makes it his own precisely at the most pivotal moment in salvation history, and to the fact that all four evangelists make allusion to Psalm 22 in recounting his Passion. In other words, the *vox Christi* interpretation respectfully follows a seminal intuition regarding this psalm, one that traces back to the apostolic Church and indeed to the Lord himself-who, we should remember, was an Israelite and thus ought to have had some idea what the psalm really meant.[30]

Finally, by listening to Psalm 22 as a prayer offered by Christ during the extremity of his suffering, the more astute of the Method A exegetes are able to disclose something of this text's remarkable spiritual quality. Thomas, in particular, shows real *Textgefuhl* when he comments on the psalm's splendid imagery. For example, the phrase, "like water I am poured out" (v. 15), suggests to him a complete effusion of life. "If oil is poured out, some remains in the vessel, and if wine is poured out, at least some aroma remains in the vessel. But from water nothing

[28] Ibid., 21.1.

[29] According to **John** H. Reumann, this verse alludes to Psalm 22 "as a whole" ("Psalm 22 at the Cross: Lament and Thanksgiving for Jesus Christ," *Interpretation* 28 [1974]: 41).

[30] With respect to the question of historicity, it seems more likely that Jesus actually quoted the opening line of Psalm 22 from the cross than that it was placed on his lips by the early Church or the evangelists, though the point is disputed. In the cautious estimation of Raymond Brown, the historicity of this logion is "a possibility not to be discounted" *(The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels,* vol. 2, Anchor Bible Reference Library [New York: Doubleday, 1994], 1088). Reumann concludes his treatment of the question as follows: "In short, we find the *evidence and arguments for genuineness* in the logion of Mark 15:34 to *fall short of definite proof* that Jesus said it" ("Psalm 22 at the Cross," 57; emphasis in original). But how could one ever hope to find definite proof in such a case?

remains."[31] On the other hand, "Upon you was I cast from the womb" (v. 11) suggests total dependence on God and thus "the perfection of hope."[32] Taken together, these two comments adumbrate an important insight into Psalm 22, namely, that this prayer illustrates dramatically how an exalted hope may be present in the midst of the deepest desolation, indeed how total reliance on God can only be perfectly realized through an experience of God-forsakenness. As one recent commentator has noted, this juxtaposition of complaint and trust, which is characteristic of the entire psalm, is already found *in nuce* in its opening line. The one who complains of being forsaken by God still calls upon Yahweh as "my God, my God."[33] The line quoted by Jesus, then, is an epitome of the psalm's spirituality.

II. METHOD B: THE OLD TESTAMENT CONTEXT

Like the Antiochene school, modern historical-critical exegesis strives to locate Psalm 22 in its proper Old Testament context. But unlike Diodore and Theodore, Method B commentators reject the idea that this context is to be found in the life of King David.[34] Indeed, since the advent of the form-critical method in the late nineteenth century, the tendency has been to locate most psalms not "in particular historical events, but in the cultic life of the community."[35] Accordingly, Psalm 22 is said to have been composed for use in the Temple liturgy.[36] It begins as a prayer of lament and petition (vv. 2-22) to be offered by "persons who were severely sick and threatened by death."[37] It continues with a

[31] Aquinas, *In Psalmos* 21.11.

[32] Ibid., 21.7.

[33] J. Clinton McCann, Jr., "The Book of Psalms: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections," in *The New Interpreter's Bible,* vol. 4 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 762.

[34] Hermann Gunkel (Die *Psalmen,* 5th ed. [Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968], 94) rejects Davidic authorship on the basis of Psalm 22's relatively late vocabulary and its advanced theology (e.g., the anticipated conversion of the Gentiles in vv. 28-29).

[35] Childs, *Introduction,* 509.

[36] Cf. James L. Mays, *Psalms* (Louisville: John Knox, 1994), 106.

[37] Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50,* Word Biblical Commentary 19 (Waco: Word Books, 1983), 198.

jubilant hymn of praise "in the midst of the assembly" (vv. 23-27), and it concludes with an exalted eschatological vision of universal homage to Israel's God (vv. 28-32).

Scholars variously explain the abrupt transition between verses 22 and 23. Many hold that the petitioner received an "orade of salvation" from a Temple functionary at precisely this point.[38] Others (correctly, in my opinion) question the grounds for such an assumption.[39] In any case, Psalm 22 is "the basis of a liturgy, in which the worshiper moves from lament to prayer, and finally to praise and thanksgiving.'"[40] As we shall see, this dynamic and dramatic character of the psalm and the "movement" of prayer which it is designed to engender are crucial to understanding its theology and spiritual function. Psalm 22 has a sort of "plot" in which something "happens."[41]

Of particular concern to Method B scholars has been the liturgical and theological identity of the psalm's speaker, the "I" who laments, petitions, and praises God. Having already swept aside the patristic-medieval view that the speaker is Christ and the Antiochene view that he is David, early form critics also rejected the traditional Jewish view, which held that the "I" represents Israel as a collective; rather, they maintained that the speaker is simply an individual Israelite.[42] This does not mean that Psalm 22 originated with the sufferings of a particular Israelite, but simply that it was composed for and made available to any suffering Israelite who might come to the Temple to petition Yahweh. This is part of a more general form-critical trend, which views the sufferings described in the individual laments throughout the

[38] Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59: A Commentary,* trans. Hilton C. Oswald (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 298; Reumann, "Psalm 22 at the Cross," 44; Craigie, *Psalms 1-50,* 200; McCann, "Book of Psalms," 763.

[39] Cf. Rudolf Kilian, "Ps 22 und das priesterliche Heilsorakel," *Biblische 'Zeitschrift* 12 (1968): 172-85.

[40] Craigie, *Psalms 1-50,* 197.

[41] Mays, *Psalms,* 108.

[42] Cf. Gunkel, *Psalmen,* 94. For the traditional Jewish view, see Mayer I. Gruber, ed., *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms 1-89 (Books I-III) with English Translation, Introduction and Notes,* South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism 161 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 126.

Psalter as stereotypical, like those found in other Ancient Near Eastern laments.[43]

Other scholars, however, were quick to point out that Psalm 22 seems to differ from other laments in precisely this regard. Its extremely graphic images suggest a physical suffering so severe and a spiritual trial so intense that one can hardly think of an "ordinary member" of the Israelite community. For Hans-Joachim Kraus, the speaker is "an archetypal figure," and in Psalm 22 "the 'archetypal affliction' of Godforsakenness is being suffered in a mortal sickness."[44] Still other scholars returned to something akin to the traditional Jewish interpretation. For Alphonse Deissler the speaker of Psalm 22 represents Israel, and this explains why he possesses both collective and individual traits.[45] Earlier Charles Briggs had compared the sufferer of Psalm 22 with the figures of Mother Zion in the book of Lamentations and the Servant of Yahweh in Isaiah 40-55. In all of these texts, individual sufferings are "combined with national experiences." The speaker of Psalm 22 is thus taken to be an "idealized" representation of the early post-exilic remnant, harassed by neighboring nations.[46]

Without turning Psalm 22 into an historical allegory, as Briggs virtually does, we might still locate it within certain theological developments of the exilic and early post-exilic periods. Indeed, several twentieth-century commentators associate Psalm 22 with *anawim* piety, a spiritual development that finds its earliest articulation in Zephaniah (seventh century B.C.), comes to classic expression in Lamentations 3 (sixth century B.C.), and

[43] Cf. Childs, *Introduction,* 519; John Barton, "Form Criticism (01)," *Anchor Bible Dictionary,* vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 840. A. A. Anderson describes Psalm 22 as containing "more or less stereotyped language" *(Psalms 1-72,* New Century Bible [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1981], 185).

[44] Kraus, *Psalms 1-59,* 294. Similarly, Mays describes the speaker as "a special case of the type" or "prototypical" *(Psalms,* 108).

[45] Alphonse Deissler, *Le Livre des Psaumes 1-75,* Verbum Salutis 1 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1966), 111.

[46] Charles A. Briggs and Emilie G. Briggs, *A Critiwl and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms,* vol. 1, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1906), 190-91. It is precisely this interpretation that Gunkel rejected *(Psalmen,* 94-95), presumably because it connects a psalm of individual lament to specific historical events, a procedure that goes against the canons of form criticism.

encompasses a large number of Psalms.[47] In verses 24-27, the speaker of Psalm 22 addresses a group of *anawim* ("afflicted, lowly, humble ones"), whom he also refers to as his "'brethren." In verse 25, he calls himself an *ani* (functionally, the singular of *anawim)* and refers to his suffering *asanut* ("affliction"; a cognate noun). Kraus is correct to reject the notion that we are dealing here with a distinct "religious party" or faction in ancient Israel.[48] Nevertheless, the *anawim* are "'brothers ... in a religious sense," a group constituted by a shared "theological spiritual identity."[49]

The *anawim* are those who "fear" and "seek" Yahweh (vv. 24, 27). By also calling them "the seed of Jacob" and "'the seed of Israel" (v. 24), the psalmist does not mean to suggest that Israel *secundum carnem* and the *anawim* are coterminous groups. Rather, the *anawim* are thus identified as "the true Israel."[50] *AB* James L. Mays puts it, the *anawim* are "thinking and speaking about themselves and their relation to God in a way that is beginning to redefine what it means to be Israel."[51]

This is a crucial point. Mays has indicated, in a more satisfactory way than Briggs, the manner by which the speaker of Psalm 22 might be said to represent IsraeL For Briggs the representation takes place on a literary plane, by a sort of symbolism or allegory. The sufferer of Psalm 22 stands fo:r Israel. As Gunkel notes, this is problematic, since the speaker also addresses other pious Israelites.[52] Who, then, would *they* represent? But for Mays the sufferer of Psalm 22 is an *ani,* indeed the "prototypical" member of the *anawim,* and it is only *as* an *ani* that he represents Israel. That is, the *anawim* are those who most fully assume the true identity and vocation of Israel, and the

[47] The classic treatment is that of Albert Gelin *(The Poor of Yahweh,* trans. Kathryn Sullivan [Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1964]), who refers Psalm 22 to this movement (84). Hans-Joachim Kraus's survey of the theme of the "poor" in the Psalter *(Theology of the Psalms,* trans. Keith Crim [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986], 150-54) is valuable for its rigorous methodology but reductionist in some of its conclusions.

[48] Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms,* 153.

[49] Mays, *Psalms,* 111.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid., 111-12.

[52] Gunkel, *Psalmen,* 94.

sufferer of Psalm 22 most fully manifests the spiritual character of this group. Thus, "the figure in the psalm shares in the corporate vocation of Israel."[53]

III. THE SEARCH FOR A SYNTHESIS

There is a consensus among historical-critical commentators that Psalm 22 is not predictive of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ. It is neither "prophetic" nor "messianic."[54] This conclusion is based on solid form criticism, which observes that, in terms of genre, Psalm 22 is neither a prophetic oracle nor a royal psalm. Thus it was not "intended" to be a prediction of the sufferings and subsequent glory of Christ.[55] Such an interpretation would seem to sever Psalm 22 from its New Testament use and its Method A interpretation.

But some scholars maintain that this discrepancy between traditional exegesis and form-critical analysis only forces one to consider the relationship between Psalm 22 and the Passion narratives from new angles. Kraus looks for the "inner connections" between the two and finds them in the "archetypal" character of the psalm and of the afflictions it describes. Jesus' praying of Psalm 22 on the cross indicates that he "'identifies himself with the entire fullness of suffering.'"[56] Similarly, Claus Westermann holds that Christ "has descended into the depths of human suffering of which the psalm speaks."'[57] Thus, according to A. A. Anderson, "the real point of contact between the Psalmist

[53] Mays, *Psalms,* 113.

[54] Gunkel, *Psalme-,i,*94; *Deissler,Psaumes 1-75,* 111; Kraus, *Psalms 1-59,* 301; Anderson, *Psalms 1-72,* 185; McCann, "Book of Psalms," 169.

[55] Anderson, *Psalms 1-72,* 185. One might perhaps argue that Psalm 22's superscription ("... a psalm of David") makes it messianic in its canonical form. This interesting suggestion (made to me by Scott Hahn) deserves separate treatment since it raises thorny issues. What is the precise force of the phrase "of David"? Should the superscriptions (which are rather unstable in the ancient versions) be regarded as canonical and inspired in the first place?

[56] Kraus, *Psalms 1-59,* 301; cf. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50,* 202.

[57] Claus Westermann, *The Living Psalms,* trans. J. R. Porter (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1989), 298; cf. Deissler, *Psaumes 1-75,* 112.

and Christ is the reality of suffering and faith, not simply the poetic language."[58]

This Method B effort to locate the true continuity between Old Testament and New Testament at the level of "'reality" rather than at the level of language or concepts provides a promising point of synthesis with Method A. Thomas Aquinas teaches that while the literal sense of Scripture is a matter of words signifying "things" (that is, realities), the spiritual sense is a matter of these same things having a signification of their own. Thus, for example, "the things of the Old Law signify the things of the New Law."[59] We might posit, then, that the *words* of Psalm 22 refer to Old Testament realities, namely, the suffering of Israel's *anawim* and their "habitual, trustful recourse"[60] to Yahweh (the literal sense), and that these realities themselves, not the words of the psalm as such, "signify" in some manner the sufferings of Christ and his recourse to the Father on the cross (the spiritual sense).

But precisely there is the rub. What could "signify" mean in such a statement? If the Israelite author of Psalm 22 does not seem to have intended his text to be predictive, how can we imply that the Old Testament realities of which Psalm 22 speaks have a proleptic and not merely coincidental correspondence to New Testament realities? Method A would presumably make appeal at this point to divine inspiration, noting that God is author of both Sacred Scripture (the words) and Sacred History (the "things"). But Method B exegetes seem reluctant to do the same.[61] Deissler,

[58] Anderson, *Psalms 1-72*, 185.

[59] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 1, a. 10. See also the discussion of Eric Auerbach's distinction between figural and symbolic interpretation in Francis Martin, "Critique historique et enseignement du Nouveau Testament sur !'imitation du Christ," *Revue Thomiste* 93 (1993): 243.

[60] Gelin, *Poor of Yahweh*, 84.

[61] Briggs may imply a divine purpose in the composition of Psalm 22. For him, however, we are not dealing with Old Testament realities signifying New Testament ones but with an Old Testament "ideal" or "concept" that somehow "prepares" for the historical experience of Jesus. The author of Psalm 22 "idealises the sufferings of Israel" and presents pious followers of Yahweh with "a comforting conception of a divine purpose in their sufferings." Briggs goes on to suggest that "this ideal was *designed* to prepare the minds of the people of God for the ultimate realisation of that purpose of redemption in a sufferer [Jesus] who first summed up in his historical experiences this ideal of suffering." He concludes that Psalm 22 is "in this sense" messianic *(Psalms*, vol. 1, 192; emphasis added). "Designed" by whom?

wntmg in the 1960s, employed the then popular notion of *Heilsgeschichte* in order to link Psalm 22 to Jesus Christ, in whom salvation history reaches its "culminating point." But while such categories seem to imply at least some sort of divine providence over history, Deissler insists that Psalm 22 is "not a prophetic text, and still less a prediction." [62]

Perhaps this is merely to agree with Thomas that the signification of the realities of Sacred History goes beyond the signification of the mere words of the biblical text. On the other hand, we may be glimpsing a problem inherent in Method B. How can historical-critical exegesis, with its tendency toward positivism, accommodate a developed notion of divinely directed and revelatory history, much less a truly operative notion of biblical inspiration? Does Method B have trouble with the idea of inspiration precisely because it does not have an adequate philosophy of history, or for that matter, of human action? In other words, is the failure to perceive or allow for a "vertical dimension" of events the cause of Method B's failure to allow for a "vertical dimension" of texts? [63]

Perhaps the observation, valid in itself, that Psalm 22 is not prophetic or messianic in its literary genre serves as a smoke screen. Is Method B capable of proclaiming any Old Testament text of any genre to be truly predictive of New Testament events? And if not, how can it continue to appeal to "salvation history" in order to find the "real connection" between Old Testament and New Testament? Not surprisingly, the notion of *Heilsgeschichte,* in the sense of God's salvific self-disdosure in real history, has been dying a slow death in biblical scholarship recent decadeso Thomas L Thompson, for example, maintains that the term *Heilsgeschichte* is to be retained only in the sense of "a form of theologically motivated *Tendenz* in Israel's view of its past." As concept of revelation" or "a view of the history of Israel itself as salvific," it has been "largely discredited. "[64]

Briggs does not say.

[62] Deissler, *Psaumes 1-75,* 111.

[63] For the relationship between these two, see Martin, "Literary Theory," 596.

[64] Thomas L. Thompson, "Historiography (Israelite)," *Anchor Bible Dictionary,* vol. 3 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 209.

Many recent commentators on Psalm 22, while not subscribing to this position explicitly, seem to have accepted its terms implicitly. They view the connection between the psalm and Christ's Passion not in terms of a divinely directed and salvific sequence of events but entirely as a matter of interpretive hindsight. According to Peter C. Craigie, for example, Psalm 22 is "not messianic in its original sense or setting," but "it may be interpreted from a NT perspective as a messianic psalm"; thus in the hands of the evangelists it "takes on the appearance of anticipatory prophecy."[65] For Patrick D. Miller, Psalm 22 provided the early Christians with "interpretive clues to the meaning of the Passion" and thus served as a "hermeneutical guide."[66] Similarly, J. Clinton McCann states that the psalm supplied the evangelists with "a rich resource ... for articulating the meaning of both the cross and the resurrection."[67]

These statements are true as far as they go, but they do not go far enough. Is there not the risk of reducing everything to interpretation? As long as we speak only of how the psalm is interpreted from a New Testament perspective and do not demonstrate the appropriateness of this interpretation from an Old Testament perspective, a Christological reading of the psalm will appear arbitrary or merely imaginative. A yawning chasm will remain between the Testaments, and no synthesis will have been achieved between Method A and Method B.

N. METHOD C: THE ORGANIC CONNECTION

The single most important point of contact between Old Testament Israel and the New Testament Church is, of course, Jesus himself.[68] This observation has a special pertinence to our

[65] Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 202.

[66] Patrick D. Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 109. Cf. Mays, *Psalms*, 106.

[67] J. Clinton McCann, *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms: The Psalms as Torah* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 173.

[68] N. T. Wright has challenged the validity of the way New Testament scholarship has tended so to distance Jesus from both Israel and the Church that he seems neither rooted in the former nor in any way responsible for the latter (see N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory*

discussion of Psalm 22. Jesus' use of this classic *anawim* prayer from the cross is consistent with the overall Synoptic presentation of his relationship with the Father,[69] which is one of profound intimacy[70] and complete dependence-traits that are by no means lacking even from the Johannine portrait. In fact, the Marean and Matthean "My God, my God" discloses the same essential spirituality as the Lucan "Into your hands" and the Johannine "I thirst," which are also drawn from the Psalter.[71] In other words, we have a range of witnesses supplying the basic contours of the Israelite piety of the historical Jesus. They indicate that in his hour of trial he prayed as one of the *anawim.*[72]

As we have seen, for some scholars the essential link between Psalm 22 in its Old Testament context and Jesus' use of it on the cross is the reality of human suffering, generically speaking, and Jesus' profound participation in this reality. But it would be a grave mistake to minimize or omit from consideration the Israelite context of the sufferings described in Psalm 22 and the Israelite context of Jesus' own sufferings. If Jesus enters into human suffering, he does so as an Israelite who enters into Israel's sufferings. Indeed, by taking up the prayer of the *anawim* he identifies himself as one who has assumed and is living out Israel's

of God, vol. 2 of *Christian Origins and the Question of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996]).

[69] The Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes are classic expressions of *anawim* piety. In Matt 11:29, Jesus identifies himself as "meek and humble of heart."

[70] According to Brown, because Jesus feels forsaken on the cross, he "no longer presumes to speak intimately" to God as "Father" but uses "my God," which is "the address common to all human beings" *(Death of the Messiah,* 2:1046). In my opinion, this view does not take sufficient account of the fact that Jesus is taking up the words of a sacred text. In any case, while the feelings of abandonment may be very real, the words "My God, my God" hardly suggest a diminishment of intimacy (cf. Brown's own note 41 on the same page).

[71] Naturally, there are differences in presentation. In Luke and John, Jesus is more composed and decisive, both in the garden and on the cross, than he is in Mark and Matthew. The Lucan "Into your hands" (Luke 23:46) is taken from Psalm 31 (v. 6), which, like Psalm 22, embodies an individual's act of trust in the midst of affliction and persecution. The Johannine "I thirst" (John 19:28) may allude to Psalm 22 itself (v. 16; so T. Worden, "My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?" *Scripture* 6 [1953-54]: 15; Brown, *Death of the Messiah,* 2:1073), while it also echoes Pss 42:2-3; 63:2; 69:4.

[72] So Barnabas M. Ahern, preface to Gelin, *Poor of Yahweh,* 8 (implied by Gelin himself on p. 87); cf. Mays, *Psalms,* 114.

true identity and vocation. To appreciate this, we must return once more to the Old Testament context of Psalm 22 and examine certain aspects of the *anawim* piety that this psalm embodies.

First, what is most distinctive of, and fundamental to, the Israelite context of Psalm 22 (and the rest of the Old Testament) is revelation. The *ani* does not use the expression "my God" to refer to his personally chosen image for unknowable transcendence but to call upon Yahweh, the savior of Israel. The *ani* is a member of a community of faith which extends from "our ancestors" (v. 5) down through the present generation and to future generations (vv:. 31-32). The sarcasm of those who ridicule him betrays their antagonism toward this faith (vv. 8-9), so that we might even say that the *ani* is, in a sense, persecuted for the word of God. Through this ordeal the *ani* will gain a deeper understanding of who Yahweh is and will bear witness to God's "name" (v. 23).

Second, the *ani* is one who is keenly aware of his total lifelong dependence on God. Yahweh is, as it were, the midwife who pulls him "'from the womb" (v. 10) and the undertaker who lays him "in the dust of death" (v. 16). And for the entire intervening period he is "'thrown upon" God (v. 11). It is true that all human beings are in fact utterly dependent on God, but those who are seriously afflicted or poor or denied justice[73] are more likely to recognize this utter dependence. Their "troubles drive them to rely on Yahweh alone." They are mocked for this very thing. They flee to take refuge in "the precincts of the sanctuary" and "with great intensity ... turn to God."[74]

Third, God allows the *anawim* to experience vulnerability. This is described in extreme terms in Psalm 22, where the *ani* is

[73] Kraus names such traits as characteristic of ihe "poor" in the Psalms but then cautions: "These features of social justice should not be transformed too readily into a religious or spiritual interpretation" *(Theology of the Psalms,* 152). Certainly there is a risk of overspiritualizing the term *anawim;* but is it not equally mistaken to undersprirualize it? Does Kraus not make the same error as those whose interpretation he criticizes, insofar as he fails to realize that, at least in this case, concrete circumstances and spirituality are quite inseparable?

[74] Ibid.

stripped of his clothes, bound hand and foot, surrounded by his enemies, and stared at (vv. 17-18). Equally striking are the images by which the *ani* speaks of his intense physical pain (vv. 15-16). They suggest a keen awareness of his own mortality. The image of water being poured out, for example, recalls the proverbial saying of the woman of Tekoa: "We all must die-like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again" (2 Sam 14:14). This is the ultimate vulnerability, and it presents the ultimate spiritual trial. For, to Old Testament Israel, death *means* estrangement from God.[75]

The crucial question is how the sufferer will respond to all of this. It is not affliction itself that makes one an *ani* but the manner in which one undergoes affliction.[76] Every affliction calls for an act of trust, and the most severe afflictions will prove whether or not one is a true *ani*. To bring one's affliction to the Temple and to take up this prayer is itself an act of faith; it is to choose to let oneself be guided through the experience of trial by the words of a liturgy.

Psalm 22 is a model *anawim* prayer. "To use it was to set oneself in its paradigm."[77] The prayer is designed to lead the sufferer through a process. This process begins with a frank acknowledgment of feelings of abandonment, an articulation of the experience of God-forsakenness. The profound emotions of a spiritual trial are released as the sufferer laments his deplorable condition; he feels like "a worm and not a man" (v. 7). But the genius of this prayer is that it helps the lamenter to be brutally honest with God while remaining within a framework of faith, intimacy, and reverence. Words of lamentation and complaint are interwoven with words of petition and even praise. Furthermore, by phrasing his complaint as a question ("why have you forsaken me?") the sufferer opens himself to an answer.

[75] This traditional view, represented by texts such as Psalm 88, gave way only very gradually to a hope for post-mortem union with God. Such hope emerged precisely in the context of *anawim* spirituality (e.g. Ps 73; Wis 2-3).

[76] Cf. Mays, *Psalms,* 112.

[77] Ibid., 106.

The turning point of the psalm and the decisive moment in the liturgy come with verses 20-22. This passage places the divine name upon the sufferer's lips, followed by a string of confident and very personal petitions ("Hasten to help me.... Rescue my soul. ... Save me"). These words call for a great act of faith on the part of the lamenter, commensurate to the severe trial through which he is passing. If he is allowing himself to be led by the words of the liturgy, he will begin to experience a real change at this point, an interior renewal. Before circumstances change, there must be a change of attitude and a renewal of commitment. Otherwise the affliction will not have served its purpose as a means of purification and deepening of trust.

Next, the psalm leads the worshiper into a hymn of praise. Whereas he formerly was "the reproach of mankind and despised by the people [of Israel]" (v. 7), he now experiences renewed fellowship with other Israelites, especially fellow *anawim* (vv. 23-27), and proclaims the kingship of Yahweh over the Gentiles (vv. 28-31). His mockers had assumed that his severe affliction was a sign of God's displeasure and distance, and he himself had been tempted to draw the same conclusion. But now, aided by the words of the psalm and under the influence of the spirit of prayer of which the psalm-liturgy is a vehicle, he recognizes that God has not "hidden his face" but has "listened" to his cry for help. Moreover, he realizes now that Yahweh is not the sort of God who "despises" or "detests" the "affliction of an afflicted one" *(anut ani;* v. 25).

In some respects, this last point is the most significant theological claim in the entire psalm, and it may help us to locate Psalm 22 in the larger context of Israel's theological development during the exilic and early post-exilic periods. In particular, we have in mind the simple but profound insight that affliction, far from necessarily indicating divine disapproval or the condemnation of sin, may often be "the painful means chosen by God to lead man to total surrender, to a form of denudation in His presence, to a dramatic purification of faith," as Albert Gelin so aptly expresses it.[78] This truth (which finds a variety of

[78] Gelin, *Poor of Yahweh,* 45-46.

articulations in Lamentations, Job, Isaiah 40-55, Genesis, and the Psalter) became a key element in post-exilic Israel's new awareness of her true identity and vocation. At least some Israelites came to understand that it would not be through a glorious renewal of the Davidic-Solomonic Empire that Israel would realize its destiny as "a light to the nations" (Isa 42:6). On the contrary, only a humble, docile remnant could inherit "the everlasting covenant, the sure promises made to David," and thereby assume David's vocation to be "a witness to the peoples" (55:3-4). Those who accept this call to be the "Servant of Yahweh" constitute the true Israel.

Something of how suffering and witness are connected may be indicated in the remarkable final verses of Psalm 22, where the universal dimensions and eschatological orientation of Yahweh's kingship are proclaimed. Apparently it is precisely Yahweh's saving action on behalf of the *ani* that the Gentiles are to "remember" and on the basis of which they will "turn to Yahweh" and come under his rule (v. 28; cf. v. 31).[79] Thus none of the sufferings of Israel's least ones-of all those anonymous *anawim* who prayed in the spirit if not the actual words of Psalm 22 down through the centuries-is permitted to fall through the cracks of historical contingency. Rather, they are all gathered up into a divine plan of salvation, which not only extends to "the ends of the earth" (v. 28) but mysteriously unfolds in history in such a way as to encompass both those who have already "gone done into the dust" (v. 30) and those who are "yet to be born" (v. 32). God's universal salvific will is forever founded on his particular historical dealings with Israel.

Psalm 22, then, gives post-exilic Israel a way of praying that prepares her for the eschatological kingdom of Yahweh. It teaches Israel that she will discover her true identity and fulfill her vocation insofar as she lives and prays as the *anawim.* It may even imply (though not so clearly as Isa 55:3-4) that the *anawim* will replace the Davidic monarchy as the instrument through which Yahweh will usher in his universal reign. Thus, while it does not

[79] So Mays, *Psalms,* 112-13; cf. Gelin, *Poor of Yahweh,* 86-87. One cannot help but think of 1 Cor 11:26 and 2 Tim 2:8 in such a context.

contain the word or concept "Messiah," it refers to that which is truly "messianic." As Mays expresses it, the *ani* of Psalm 22 participates in "the corporate vocation of Israel and the messianic role of David."[80]

On the cross Jesus takes Psalm 22 upon his lips as an Israelite who had lived his life as an *ani* and who now faced his ultimate trial. Finding himself surrounded, and mocked for his trust in God, and seeing his clothes divided among his assailants, the particular appropriateness of this psalm must have impressed itself upon him. He prayed the opening line of Psalm 22 both to express the depth of his suffering and desolation and to make a solemn act of trust in God.[81] In other words, this psalm presumably helped him to pray through his trial, just as it was designed to do. As he experienced the total vulnerability of having his hands and feet nailed to the cross,[82] as his arms and legs were wrenched at the joints, and as he felt the life pour out of him like water, what other prayer in the entire tradition of his people could have served him so well?

But it is clear that Jesus did not see himself as just another Israelite, or even as just another *ani.* By habitually calling upon God as "Father" throughout his ministry, Jesus had indicated that he embodied Israel's unique filial relationship to God (see Exod 4:22), and indeed that he himself was the true Israel.[83] Moreover, he was convinced that his own suffering and death would usher in the eschatological kingdom of God. Nor is it implausible to suggest that meditation on Psalm 22 had played a part in his coming to this conviction. As the quintessential *ani,* Jesus would live out Israel's spiritual destiny.

N. T. Wright has made a strong case that the historical Jesus, already during his ministry and especially in his final trip to

[80] Mays, *Psalms,* 113. At the same time, it is doubtful whether anyone prior to the time of Christ would have understood the speaker of Psalm 22 to be the Messiah.

[81] I agree with Brown that it is unlikely that Jesus recited the entire psalm from the cross *(Death of the Messiah,* 2:1087 n. 129), but it is not unreasonable to suppose that in praying its first line he had in mind the psalm's "whole meaning" (Gelin, *Poor of Yahweh,* 87).

[82] Regarding verse 17b ("they have bound (?] my hands and my feet"), see Gregory Vall, "Psalm 22:17b: 'The Old Guess,'" *journal of Biblical Literature* 116 (1997): *45-56.*

[83] Cf. Roch Kereszty, "God the Father," *Communio* 26 (1999): 260-65.

Jerusalem, not only considered himself the Messiah, but quite deliberately acted out a messianic drama.[84] Wright demonstrates how Jesus derived his understanding of messiahship from the Scriptures and notes how remarkably well Psalm 22, with its pattern of suffering and restitution, matches "Jesus' mindset, aims and beliefs."[85]

This raises the possibility that Jesus quoted Psalm 22 not only for his own sake but for the benefit of the witnesses surrounding him, as a final, albeit cryptic, proclamation of his identity and of the salvation-historical significance of what he was at that moment undergoing. If so, the misapprehension of his words by some of those present (Matt 27:47-49; Mark 15:35-36) appears tragically ironic, whereas the New Testament use of Psalm 22 as an interpretive key to the Passion shows itself to be a matter of fidelity to the Master's dying words.

Accordingly, Psalm 22 reveals that Jesus' Passion was the ultimate act of *anawim* piety. As he hung upon the cross and poured out his life, Jesus made a conscious and deliberate decision to entrust himself to God. He did this, moreover, with all his Israelite "brethren" (v. 23) and "all the dans of the nations" (v. 28) in mind. Jesus experienced fully humanity's alienation from God, and in the midst of this very experience he rendered God perfect devotion on humanity's behalf. Because of who Jesus is, and because of the intensity of his love for God and neighbor, his act of humble submission is salvific for aU human beings, provided they conform themselves to his way of relating to God-that is, provided they too become *anawim* (cf. Heb 5:7-9).

Finally, a Method C study of Psalm 22 can increase our appreciation for the epiphanic quality of Jesus' death on the cross. This is the single act in all of history by which the inner life of the Blessed Trinity is most fully revealed, and Jesus' quotation of Psalm 22:2 (like his other "last words") discloses an interior dimension of this divine-human act. Far from indicating that the Father had turned his back on Jesus' praying of

[84] Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God,* especially chs. 11-12 (=pp. 477-611).
[85] Ibid., 600.

Psalm 22 (or even its first line) would have confirmed his abiding intimacy with the Father and assured him that God "does not despise or detest the affliction of an afflicted one" (v. 25).

At the same time, Jesus' quotation of Psalm 22:2 expresses real human spiritual desolation, and this fact must not be swept aside with facile explanations. The paradox of desolation in the midst of unbroken communion can, however, be illuminated through meditation on the Incarnation, in conjunction with our Method C interpretation of Psalm 22. The communion of being and love which the Son has with the Father in the Holy Spirit from all eternity is now (from the first moment of the Incarnation) lived in and through a concrete humanity.[86] Thus, after having related to the Father for thirty-some years by means of a somatically based human intellect, imagination, and will (all mysteriously united to his divine personhood), on the cross Jesus experienced the violent rending asunder of the body-soul unityo[87] Psalm 22 accents the somatic dimension of such a spiritual trial in typically Hebraic fashion. The dissolution of those bodily members which symbolize spiritual capacities is described poetically in the most concrete of termso

My heart has become like wax,
melting within my breast;
my palate is dry like a potsherd,
my tongue deaves to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death. (Vvo 15b-16)

Death involves for all of us a surrender of the human faculties by which we have related to God throughout our lives. It is thus the ultimate spiritual trial and life's culminating opportunity to make a perfect act of faith, hope, and love. Death, therefore, is itself a paradox, since that which came into the world because of sin (Rom 5:12) has become by grace our last and best chance to reverse Adam's usurpation of his own life by rendering ourselves

[86] "The Son of God ... communicates to his humanity his own personal mode of existence in the Trinity" *(Catechism of the Catholic Church* §470).

[87] Of course, Christ's body and soul each remain united to the Word, and the body-soul unity is to be reestablished and glorified through the Resurrection.

back to God. Of course, this transformation of human death is effected precisely by Christ's self-offering on Golgotha, by which he consecrated his humanity (in solidarity with all humanity) perfectly to the Father. But in Psalm 22 we see Israel already participating-by prophetic anticipation and however imperfectly-in Christ's Passion.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

By describing Psalm 22's function as a model prayer of post-exilic *anawim* piety and relating this function to Jesus' own use of this psalm, we have attempted to demonstrate something of the organic continuity between Old Testament and New Testament. But if this exercise is to contribute to the development of the "thoroughly relevant hermeneutic" for which Cardinal Ratzinger is calling,[88] we must insist that we are not dealing here with a clever appropriation of an Old Testament text on the part of Jesus or the early Church, nor with a spontaneous evolution of religious ideas and experiences. Rather we discern in both the composition and the intended use of Psalm 22 a divine "directedness" and forward-leading intentionality at work in Israel's history. In accord with we wish to take quite seriously the New Testament's claim that the pre-incarnate Word was already active among Old Testament Israel.

At the same time, we would not restrict this activity to isolated moments of textual inspiration. According to Method A, Christ spoke through David, but what he says through David in Psalm 22 is disconnected not only from David's own life but from Israel's broader historical experience. For Method B, by contrast, Christ has nothing to do with the composition of Psalm 22, nor with its use by Israel during the Old Testament period. Rather, either Jesus or the early Church, or both, drew upon the psalm as a resource or interpretive guide in order to make sense out of Jesus' Passion and death. The remarkable similarity between Psalm 22 and the Passion narratives, contemporary exegetes imply, must be

[88] Ratzinger, "Biblical Interpretation in Crisis," 6.

due to some combination of historical contingencies, Jesus' self-interpretation, and the evangelists' intertextual hermeneutic. The one conclusion which Method B would seem to wish to avoid is that Psalm 22 was actually composed for Jesus, that it is in any real sense prophetic, predictive, or messianic.

Our proposal is not merely that God was involved in the composition of Psalm 22 but that the "Spirit of Messiah" (1 Pet 1:11) guided and inspired the entire process by which *anawim* piety developed in Israel, a process that takes in not only the inspired composition of Psalm 22 but also its intended use. Moreover, this process was part and parcel of the broader "divine pedagogy" by which the Blessed Trinity was teaching and forming Israel and preparing her for the advent of the Messiah.[89] When the Messiah came, he was led, in his humanity, to an understanding of Israel's true identity and vocation-and therefore to an understanding of his own identity and vocation-by the liturgical and spiritual traditions that he himself, in his pre-existent divinity, had formed among his people and by the very Scriptures that he had likewise inspired.

[89] Cf. Gelin, *Poor of Yahweh*, 74; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* S53. This position has something in common with, but should not be confused with, a "social theory" of inspiration. It is important to maintain a technical and restrictive sense for the word inspiration, one which pertains specifically to the Holy Spirit's involvement in the composition of the Sacred Text itself.

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THE CHRISTOLOGICAL TURN IN RECENT LITERATURE ON ORIGINAL SIN

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FOR MOST OF ITS HISTORY, the *locus classicus* for the discussion of original sin, antedating even Augustine with whom the phrase "original sin" first appears, was Romans 5:12.[1] Recent years, however, have seen this passage supplanted by another drawn from the Pauline corpus, namely, Colossians 1:16.[2] The Romans passage had long been taken as proof of our union in the first man and his sin, but it is our antecedent relation to Christ that has occupied the attention of contemporary

[1] For the use of Romans 5:12, see Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 3.9.64; Origen, *Contra Celsum* 6.36; Ambrose, *De excessu fratris Satyri* 2.6; Rufinus, *Expositio symboli* 23. It was in his *Ad Simplicianum* 1.1.10 that Augustine first coined the phrase *peccatum originale*.

[2] Authors as diverse as Henri Rondet (cf. *Original Sin: The Patristic and Theological Background*, trans. Cajetan Finegan, O.P. [New York: Alba House, 1972), 264) and Juan Luis Segundo (*Evolution and Guilt*, trans. John Drury [New York: Maryknoll, 1974], 83) have made explicit use of the passage. With most, one finds the passage unmistakably at work, though without direct citation (e.g., Karl Rahner, "The Sin of Adam," *Theological Investigations* 11, trans. David Bourke [London: Darron, Longman & Todd, 1974; New York: The Seabury Press, 1974], 255). It is not necessary for the purposes of this paper to enter into the debate concerning the authorship of Colossians. Questions about the letter's authenticity first arose in the early nineteenth century, and both sides continue to have their defenders. A summary of the arguments may be found in Werner G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. Howard C. Kee (rev. ed.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975), 340-46. Kümmel himself favors attribution to St. Paul. For a look at some of the more recent contributors to the debate, see Thomas J. Sappington, *Revelation and Redemption at Colossae*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series, ed. David Hill and David E. Orton, vol. 53 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 22-24. All biblical passages quoted in this paper will be taken from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

theology. "Original sin," writes Brian McDermott, "says something profound and true about human history, insofar as it can be thought of *sine Christo."* But in fact, he continues, the world is not without Christ and it never has been. "Structurally, thanks to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, all of history is *in Christo* and *ad Christum.* "[3] The idea of the primacy of Christ and the universal offer and action of his grace *ab initio,* to which sin has always been subsequent and subordinate, has been the predominant influence in Catholic work on original sin over the past thirty years. And with the ascendancy of this Christocentrism, one may argue, reflection on sin has returned to its roots. For it is precisely Christ whom Paul takes as the key to understanding the nature and extent of sin.[4]

There is, however, still another benefit that has come with the new emphasis on Christ, beyond that of reminding us how much more the grace of God has abounded "in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ" than sin has condemned (Rom 5:15). It is the benefit of shifting attention away from the issue of the first man's sin, or the first couple's, or whether there was a first couple rather than a first human community, or whether human communities have arisen separately in different places at different times, or whether any sin has or could implicate the entire race, has or could be transmitted, or whether there could possibly have been such a place as paradise and in what sense human sin may have affected creation. All these questions have proven to be somewhat embarrassing in the face of contemporary science. If the central claim is that all grace is *gratia Christi* and that, in one way or another, everyone is in need of it, then the issue of whether and how this universal need is tied to the sin of Adam becomes of secondary importance. The same is true of the problem of evil, physical and moral. What is primary is that Christ reverses evil; it is of less moment whether and how Adam introduced it. In fact,

[3] Brian O. McDermott, S.J., "The Theology of Original Sin: Recent Developments," *Theological Studies* 36 (1977): 509. The same point is made verbatim by Stephen J. Duffy, "Our Hearts of Darkness: Original Sin Revisited," *Theological Studies* 49 (1988): 621.

• It is for this reason, A. M. Dubarle argues in *The Biblical Doctrine of Original Sin,* trans. M. Stewart (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964), 147, that the doctrine of a universal transmission of both the penalty and the guilt of sin is distinctively Christian.

it has seemed to many theologians that so long as Christ's primacy is asserted in faith, the problem of evil may be addressed entirely from the standpoint of experience. And indeed the tendency has been to situate the theology of sin within a general evolutionary view of the world. In such a view physical evil is understood as a function of the law of entropy governing matter, and moral evil is a necessary feature of the beginning stage of psychological development, gradually and only incompletely overcome as the drives of the id are brought under control by the superego. [5]

Yet the implications of this view are unsettling. Human history is represented as being, of its nature, a condition of defect and sin. Salvation, rather than operating in and through history as its true medium, is essentially eschatological; it is the transcendent force of Christ overcoming the recalcitrance of history, driving it on to a somewhat extraneous, even if predestined, end. "A more processive, evolutionary perspective," Stephen Duffy has recently written, views original sin, "not as the disastrous residue of some primal crime but as a present conflict between our history and the dynamics of the ultimate. It is the contradiction between what human beings are and what they are called to become in Christ." [6] It is not, Duffy explains, the old Manichean idea that to be finite is to be evil, but rather that because we are finite we must begin in evil. "'Original sin,'" he states,

[5] McDermott offers Sharon Maclsaac and Pierre Grelot as two theologians who have drawn upon depth psychology, and Freud in particular, in their analyses of original sin (see "The Theology of Original Sin"). N. P. Williams, in the eighth and final of his famous Bampton Lectures for 1924 *(The Ideas of the Fall and Original Sin* [London: Longmans, 1927]), although Neo-Platonic in his description of the Fall as a fragmentation of the World Soul (made in the image of Christ, who has continued to sustain this Soul, and has been guiding it through history to reintegration and completion), adopted the lexicon of the Darwinists to describe the effect of sin within us as a conflict between our appetitive instincts and an enervated herd instinct.

[6] Duffy, "Our Hearts of Darkness," 617-18. This reading of the words in Colossians 1:16, "in him all things were created," to mean that all things were created unto Christ, who draws them to himself despite the presence of sin, has been widely followed for some time now. In illustration, see the survey by James L. Connor, S.J., "Original Sin: Contemporary Approaches, "*Theological Studies* 29 (1968) 215-40, particularly the synopses of A. Hulsbosch (231), Alfred Vanneste (237) and Engelbert Gutwenger (238).

is a code word for a *mise en situation,* an involuntary existential condition that is natural to humans as disordered and incomplete. Human evil, therefore, must be grasped as underdevelopment by reference to a future goal and as statistical necessity in an evolving universe. It is difficult to imagine a world created for development and the becoming of freedom where evil is not a structural component. [7]

Of course the doctrine of creation, as traditionally understood, had never supposed that the world was "created for development and the becoming of freedom." The belief was that the sovereign God had created freedom as complete, though not perfect, and a human order that was mature, even if not possessing its final form. What Duffy describes is more reminiscent of the classical belief in the inherent instability of an that exists outside the divine. Hence the irony that at the very moment when theology has rediscovered the significance of relating Christ to creation, it has burdened itself with something of the same pessimism that haunted the pagans. The purpose of this essay is to determine whether there may not be a way out from under this burden.

I

We will begin by offering a brief history of the use of Colossians 1:16. The passage under discussion reads as follows:

15He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; 16for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities--aH things were created through him and for him. 17He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19For in him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell, 20and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

It is commonplace today to take Christ as the subject of this passage: Christ as pre-existing creation in verses 15-16, and Christ

[7] Duffy, "Our Hearts of Darkness," 619.

become "historic" through the incarnation in verses 17-20,[8] though actually no subject is expressly named. The lines immediately preceding (vv. 13-14) speak of our having been transferred by God to the kingdom of his beloved *Son,* "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." Many commentators believe that 1:15-20 comprise a Christian hymn that has been inserted here by the letter's author,9 perhaps accounting for why no name is mentioned until verse 24, when it is indeed the title "Christ." It has even been maintained that the author deliberately sought to bring a Christie association to the hymn by interpolating the phrase "of the church" in 1:18a.[10] This is not a matter of mere semantics. As Martin Hengel observes, despite the fact that the title "Christ" is used in the Pauline letters as a virtual second name for Jesus, it is always a name with a meaning-the anointed one who bought the promises of the old covenant with his blood.[11]

Nevertheless, exegetes routinely assume that the title "Christ" implied in verse 16 may be regarded as just another way of speaking of divine Wisdom (which name Paul applies to Christ in 1 Cor. 1:24) or the Word (which Paul never uses at all). Hence, when it is said in 1:16 that "in him all things were created," the meaning is that God created all things through his Word, or through his Wisdom.[12] So G. B. Caird states that Colossians 1:16 is widely considered to be "one of the three New Testament

[8] Eduard Lohse, *Colossians and Philetnon,* trans. William R. Poehlmann and Robert J. Karris, ed. Helmut Koester, Hermeneia Series (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 46f.

[9] The theory, however, is disputed by G. B. Caird, in *Paul's Letters from Prison,* New Clarendon Bible Series, gen. ed. H.F. D. Sparks (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), *174-75.*

[10] See Lohse, *Colossians and Philetnon,* 42-43.

[11] Martin Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul,* trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1983; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 65, 72. Hengel writes that the name Jesus, the shortened form of Joshua, was "extraordinarily popular" among first century Jews (74). He goes on to add (75) that even before his conversion, Paul would have been familiar with the double name from its use among the Jerusalem Hellenists. See also Nils Alstrup Dahl, *Jesus the Christ,* ed. Donald H. Juel (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 117-18.

[12] See Lohse, *Colossians and Philetnon,* 49-52, and n. 129; Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians,* trans. James W. Leitch, bibliography and references by James W. Dunkly, ed. George W. MacRae, S.J., Hermeneia Series (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 144-45.

examples of Wisdom or Logos Christology" (the other two being John 1:1-14 and Heb 1:1-4)[13] which reflect the influence of the Hellenistic Judaism one may find, biblically, in such passages as Proverbs 8:22-31; Wisdom 7:22-30; Sirach 24:1-22; Baruch 3:9--4:1, and extra-biblically in the thought of Philo.[14]

If this interpretation of the "'in him" (tv mhli!) of Colossians 1:16 to mean "Christ or the Word" is standard today, it was also standard among the early writers of the Church, in particular Origen, who made the greatest use of this passage in his work. Origen understood the verse as teaching that the transcendent God created the world through his Word as an instrumental and exemplary cause, that in the Word, God both guides and unifies what he has created.[15] This became the established reading for the Alexandrian tradition.[16] Interestingly enough, the sixth-century writer Pseudo-Dionysius referred to Colossians 1:16 for the sake of enumerating the levels of heavenly beings created by God,[17] and relied instead on verse 17 to speak of God, rather than simply the Word, as the Source who is drawing all things back to himself.[18] Notwithstanding the Areopagite's enduring authority, it is the Alexandrian Logos theology that one encounters in the medieval commentaries.[19]

Colossians 1:16 was brought to new theological prominence, as J. A. Lyons has shown, by the nineteenth-century rise of science.[20] It first appeared among Protestant writers-not

[13] Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison,* 176.

[14] See Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Philo,* vol. 1 of Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947), 238.

[15] Origen, *De princ.* 1.7.1; 2.6.1-3; 2.9.4; 4.4.4; *Comm. in]oh.* 2. 8.

[16] See Athanasius, *Contragentes* 41-42; *Orat.* 2.18, 66; *Ad Afros* 4. Of the Word, Basil of Caesarea wrote, "The cause of being comes from Him to all things that exist, according to the will of God the Father. Through Him structure and preservation are given to all things, for He created everything, and dispenses well-being to all things, according to the need of each" (On *the Holy Spirit* 7, trans. David Anderson [New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980], 23-24).

[17] Pseudo-Dionysius, *Celestial Hierarchy* (PG 3) 200D, 210A, 205D.

[18] Pseudo-Dionysius, *Divine Names* (PG 3) 593D, 637B, 700B, 820A, 936D-937A.

[19] See, for example, Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 46, a. 3; *In ep. ad Col.* lect. 4 (Vives, vol. 21), 384-86.

[20] I am entirely indebted for the following survey to Fr. Lyons's illuminating *The Cosmic Christ in Origen and Teilhard de Chardin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982). Fr. Lyons fell victim to cancer and died tragically at the age of 45, just before he finished this study,

surprisingly, perhaps, given the Protestant regard for biblical study, and the disregard under which this study had been languishing among Catholic theologians for centuries. Yet the traditional Protestant focus on individual salvation, and on Christ's relation to his Church, was a source of resistance to the new talk of Christ as the "cosmic" head and redeemer of the universe.[21] It was the work of systematic theologians that underlay the cosmological turn, reasoning that the fact of Christ's divinity implied a transcendent role as savior.[22] Scholars began to realize that here was the basis for a new apologetic, a Christ-centered response to the view of reality being promulgated by science.

E.W. Grinfield, in *The Christian Cosmos* (1857), attempting to recover the insights of the early Fathers, advanced the idea that Christ is the world's creator. He believed that it would be a way of commending Christian belief to the scientific mind if the claim that Christ, the image of God, is impressed upon things were understood as explaining the laws of nature and our capacity to discover them.[23] The great exegete J. B. Lightfoot was an influential proponent of the thesis that Colossians 1:16-17 represents a Pauline development of Philo's doctrine of the Logos as God's mediator with creation, and the principle of order and unity in the world. Like Grinfield, he maintained that belief in Christ not only accords with science, but explains the possibility of science and establishes the ground of the phenomena with which science deals. Christ, he wrote in his Colossians commentary of 1875:

essentially his dissertation for Oxford. He was paid a singular honor by his director, who completed the work according to instructions Fr. Lyons gave the week before his death, and who saw it through to publication.

[21] Leonhard Usteri in the 4'h edition of his study of St. Paul's thought *(Entwickelung des Paulinischen Lehrebegriffes in seinem Verhiiltnis zur biblischen Dogmatik des Neuen Testamentes* [Zurich: Orell, Fiissli and Co., 1832) first uses the term "cosmic" in connection with Christ to describe how the significance of calling Jesus "son of God' came to be shaped among early Christians by the thinking of Hellenistic Judaism and Greek philosophy (Lyons, *The Cosmic Christ,* 11-12).

[22] Among these pioneers, Lyons considers in particular the contributions of I. A. Dorner, Richard Rothe, and H. L. Martensen.

[23] Lyons, *The Cosmic Christ,* 22-23.

impresses upon creation that unity and solidarity which makes it a cosmos instead of a chaos. Thus (to take one instance) the action of gravitation, which keeps in their places things fixed and regulates the motions of things moving, is an expression of His mind. [24]

It was in fact science, in the form of evolution, that led theologians to go beyond what was still basically a classical view of the transcendent Logos. More than the repository of the divine ideas, who imparts intelligible order according to the Father's design, the Logos, Christ, is also immanent, joined to humanity, and is carrying creation back to God. Henry Drummond in *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* (1883) described nature as imbued with a dynamic principle of evolution, impelling it on to ever-higher levels of development, and yet as being unable of itself to make any advance. God has had to intervene repeatedly, first to raise inanimate creation to life, then to raise humanity from living creatures, and finally, through Christ's redemptive incarnation, to bring humanity, and with humanity all of nature, to himself as creation's destined end. [25] In a similar vein, J. R. Illingworth argued that the doctrine of God creating the world in Christ actually strengthened the theory of evolution. For the Darwinian mechanism of natural selection acting on randomly occurring variations in a species cannot account either for the progressive advancement in life, nor for the unity that dearly underlies the great diversity of things. Illingworth not only assigned Christ the role of evolutionary principle, but he spoke as if Christ, by virtue of his Incarnation, inaugurated a new, ecdesial species, animated by his own energy, which by a "spiritual process" has been passed on through the generations. [26] In the book *Divine Immanence* (1898), he wrote of the Incarnation:

It is not merely an event in the history of man, but an event, at least as far as our earth is concerned, in the history of matter; analogous upon a higher plane to the origin of life, or the origin of personality; the appearance of a new order of being in the world. [27]

[24] Quoted in ibid., 24.

[25] Ibid., 25.

[26] J. R. Illingworth, "The Incarnation and in *Lux Mundi*, ed. C. Gore (1889), 208, quoted in Lyons, *The Cosmic Christ*, 26.

[27] Quoted in Lyons, *The Cosmic Christ*, 27.

J. W. Buckham voiced what had become a very widely held view when he said in *Christ and the Eternal Order* (1906) that Christ alone can explain the evidence of an evolutionary movement, not only from the simple to the complex, but from "an indefinite incoherent homogeneity, to a definite coherent heterogeneity." Increasingly, as Lyons puts it, theologians were arguing that when we look around us we see a universe, not a chaos. And if there is a cosmos, there must be a cosmic Christ.[28]

One of the earliest Catholic writers to be drawn to the Colossians passage was the French Thomist Pierre Rousselot. He frequently cited Colossians 1:17b, "in him all things hold together,"' at times using the Vulgate *"omnia in ipso constant!'* But unlike many of his predecessors, Rousselot was not speaking of the role assigned by Philo to the Logos of unifying a multiple world. Instead he seems to have been thinking of the Incarnate Christ's activity of "sealing" things by joining them to himself. In other words, Rousselot distinguished very carefully between Christ as creator and his salvific function as redeerner-redemption, however, extending beyond believers to encompass the entire world. Christ, he said in the draft work *La renaissance de la raison* (ca. 1913), "sanctifies aH our sensible world, to which he belongs and which, having been created in him as the Word, has been renewed by him as Emmanuel."[29] Later, in an essay published in 1928, some thirteen years after his death in World War I, he noted that the Pauline teaching that believers are actively engaged, in Christ, with building up the body of Christ, is "expanded in the Epistle to the Colossians and in the Johannine writings, even to affirming the 'recapitulation' of the absolutely entire creation the Word of God made flesh."[30] Roussdot did not deny that the world needs a unifying principle, nor that this principle is Christ; he denied only that it necessarily is Christ. Rousselot called his principle the "metaphysical Adam."[31] He took the view, in some respects having its antecedent in medieval

[28] Ibid., 33.

[29] Ibid., 156.

[30] Grace d'apres saint Jean et d'apres saint Paul," in *Recherches de science religieuse* 18 (1928): 95; quoted in Lyons, *The Cosmic Christ,* 154.

[31] Lyons, *The Cosmic Christ,* 156.

Neoplatonism, that the unifying ground of the multiplicity of physical things lies in their idea, held in a subject's consciousness; and he reasoned that only a human consciousness can fill the need for a point of unity that is at once immanent in the physical world and related as mediator to God.[32] This mediator would be the true head of humanity. It is unclear whether Rousselot identified the metaphysical Adam with the first man. Because of sin, Christ has taken on flesh. And by virtue of his Incarnation, Christ is our head; he is the metaphysical Adam, called the second Adam. There is no way of knowing how else the role might have been played. Hence Rousselot used three different names for Christ, corresponding to his three separate tasks: Word, for Christ as creator; Second Adam, for Christ as metaphysical unifier; and Emmanuel, for Christ as sanctifier and elevator of creation.

Rousselot gave credit for the idea of a metaphysical Adam to Maurice Blondel.[33] Blondel struggled his whole career long with the question of an absolute ground underlying the diversity of reality, of an absolute truth that makes possible our relative knowing, and of whether it is not necessary that this ground be immanent in the world. It seemed to him that to demonstrate the need in ontology or epistemology for a principle that is both transcendent and immanent would be the beginning of a Christian philosophy. But, would one then say that humanity, made to receive the divine life, might have performed this role, or does created reality bear the mark of having been intended, from the very beginning and apart from sin, for intimate and transformative union with God through the Incarnation? "Perhaps," he wrote in *L'Action* (1893):

> Destined to receive the divine life within himself, man might have been able to play this role of universal bond and to suffice for this creative mediation, because this immanence of God within us would be as the magnetic center which would tie all things together, like a bundle of needles invisibly bound together by a powerful magnet. But also in order that, in spite of everything, the mediation might be total, permanent, voluntary, in a word, such as to insure the reality of everything which undoubtedly was able not to be, but which, being as it is, requires a divine witness, perhaps a Mediator was needed who would make

[32] Ibid., 156-57. Cf. John Scotus Eriugena, *De divisione naturae,* 4.7-8.

[33] Lyons, *The Cosmic Christ,* 157, 159.

himself patient of this integral reality and who would be like the *Amen* of the umverse.... [34]

Regardless of whether creation as such requires a divine Mediator, Blondel argued, this creation as it exists is made whole, entire, by the presence within it of Emmanuel. He frequently cited Colossians 1: 17b in connection with this point. [35] He also made use of an expression that Leibniz first proposed when explaining transubstantiation, and spoke of Christ as the *vinculum substantiate* of the world. "The *Vinculum,"* he said in *Une Enigme historique* (1930):

is, as a matter of fact, not only a physical nature, a metaphysical essence, an immanent finality: it is also, without prejudice to all that, the supreme magnet, which attracts and unites from above, step by step, the total hierarchy of distinct and consolidated beings; it is that without which or rather He "without whom everything that has been made would become again as nothing."

He continues by comparing the incorporating action of the *vinculum* in the world to that of Christ in the Eucharist, where He sustains the distinctive qualities of the bread and wine while uniting them to himself:

For, if inferior nature admits of being transposed into a new earth and heaven where the Word, a and w, *primogenitus omnis creaturae,* is the sole light, the unique aliment and. the universal "binding," *in quo omnia constant,* the *Vinculum* is not a transnaturalizing clasp but an embrace which binds them while respecting their nature. [36]

This universal action of Christ m the world, umtmg and transfiguring, Blonde! referred to as his doctrine of

[34] Maurice Blonde!, *L'Action* (Paris: F. Akan, 1893), 460-61; trans. Oliva Blanchette (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 420. See also Blondel's *Letter on Apologetics* (1896), trans. Illtyd Trethowan (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), 201-3, and 203 n. 1 where Blonde! wonders whether, rather than man filled with grace, man united to the Word as the illuminator of the intellect could have played the part of the "universal bond of being throughout all history," or whether there would still be need of Christ's Incarnation.

[35] Lyons, *The Cosmic Christ,* 161 n. 76.

[36] Quoted in ibid., 162-63.

Panchristisme?[37] Plumbing the depths of Christian faith to discover there the centrality for human thought of the Incarnation was, Blondel believed, the only way Christianity could retain any significance for the modern age. In an essay of 1919 he wrote:

> Faced by the horizons widened by the natural and human sciences, one cannot, without betraying Catholicism, rest satisfied with mediocre explanations and with limited views which make Christ into an historical accident, which isolate him from the cosmos like an extrinsic episode, and which seem to make him into an intruder or an exile, *depayse* in the crushing and hostile immensity of the universe.[38]

But it was vitally important to Blondel to keep Christ's place in the universe as metaphysical center separate from his mission to unite creation with the Father. The latter was, for him, an act of gratuity going completely beyond, and being in no way implied by, the equally gratuitous act of creation.[39]

[37] Alexander Dru, "Introduction," in Maurice Blonde!, *The Letter on Apologetics and History and Dogma,* trans. Alexander Dru and Illtyd Trethowan (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), 51. The idea of the metaphysical and cosmological role of Christ runs throughout Blondel's work. See John J. McNeil!, S.J., *The Blondelian Synthesis* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966), 196-97, 204, 216f., 222-23; Henri Bouillard, *Blonde/ et le Christianisme* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1961), 159-63.

[38] Quoted in Dru, "Introduction," 50. The essay was actually a paper Blonde! wrote for a friend, Auguste Valensin, in answer to Valensin's request that he read and evaluate some essays he had sent him that were written by a young Jesuit, Teilhard de Chardin. See Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Maurice Blonde!, *Co"espondence,* notes and commentary by Henri de Lubac, S.J., trans. William Whitman (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 22-27.

[39] It was over this point that Blonde! finally broke with his fellow collaborator on the journal *Anna/es de Philosophie Chretien,* Lucien Laberthonniere. Toward the end of their long correspondence, Laberthonniere wrote, "I cannot admit that there should be supematuralization artificially added to naturalization. I am unable to distinguish as between a creative God and a supematuralizing God. We are not first of all an eternal essence which God then contrives to turn into an existence by individualizing it and multiplying it by some matter or other. • . • In saying I cannot distinguish between a creative God and a supernaturalizing God, I mean to say that I cannot distinguish and separate the incarnation from the creation." Blondel's response was direct: "You conclude that there is no need to distinguish between 'the gifts of the Creator' and the 'gifts of the Incarnation and redemption,' that there is continuity, not to say unity between the natural and supernatural order, orders which abstraction alone discerns artificially. Well, for my part I believe that there is an abyss to cross, and in order not to see it one must not *realize in concreto what God is"* (quoted in Dru, "Introduction," 75-76).

In 1908 and 1909 at the Jesuit theologate at Ore Place, near Hastings, England, and then again in 1913 and 1914 at Paris, Rousselot became a dose friend with and exerted a notable influence on a fellow student named Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, [40] who unquestionably had the greatest impact of any writer in the twentieth century on the Catholic theology of creation. Lyons tells that it was at this time that French theologians first began to use the term "cosmic" of Christ, and attention at Ore Place focused on Colossians 1:17b, which Teilhard would later call "the 'fundamental article' of belief."[41] It was here that Teilhard first read Bergson's *Creative Evolution* (1907).[42] He had already been introduced to the thought of Blondel, perhaps as early as 1900, by their mutual friend Auguste Valensin; and through Valensin, Blonde! would be introduced to Teilhard's written work in 1919.[43] Blondd had deep regard for Teilhard's effort to fashion a system that could provide meaning for those whose faith was being assaulted on every side. Late in life, in a letter to Msgr. Bruno de Solages dated 26 December 1947, Blondel recalled a conversation he had had as a young man with the French philosopher, Jules Lachelier. "How I would love," Blondel remembered Lachdier saying, "to be able to reconcile Darwin and the Bible." Wrote Blonde!, "What consolation he would have found in Fr. Teilhard de Chardin's paleontology and serene faith!"[44]

Yet from his first reading in 1919, Blondel believed that Teilhard failed in one critical respect, reducing grace to a property of nature. Teilhard took a dramatic step beyond either Rousselot or Blonde! and argued that not only is Christ the center of creation, the one head, the prime mover and organizer of this evolving world and its exclusive goal, but he is all these things by necessity. Jesus of Nazareth, he wrote, is the "concrete seed," first germinating in the resurrection and growing to embrace the entire

[40] Lyons, *The Cosmic Christ,* 151.
[41] Ibid., 43, 149.
[42] Ibid., 171.
[43] Ibid., 159.
[44] Teilhard de Chardin and Blonde!, *Correspondence,* 13.

universe.[45] This incorporation of all things into his life and his uniting them with God-hence the name "Christ-Omega"-is in fact Christ's self-formation. Cosmogenesis is identically Christogenesis, he said quite provocatively. The process of creating and assimilating creation Teilhard described as the building up of Christ's third nature, his cosmic nature,[46] and it drew criticism from many, like Andre Feuillet, who nonetheless agreed with Teilhard's Christocentric point of view.[47]

It is not simply that, for Teilhard, the divine decision to create is also the decision to bring about the cosmic Christ; it is that if there is creation, then there must also be redemption. It is a requirement of matter. In his *La Theologiede saint Paul* (1908) with which Teilhard is said to have been familiar,[48] Ferdinand Prat wrote in commenting on Colossians 1:16-17:

> Without him, without uncreated Wisdom, all creatures, unable to endure themselves, would be scattered, broken up and, in mutual conflict, plunged into nothing. He it is who preserves them in existence, cohesion and harmony. *As* the bond of the universe, Philo's Logos exercised the same role.[49]

In an essay from 1917, "Le Milieu Mystique," Teilhard has Christ say very much the same thing:

> It is I who am the true bond of the World. Without me, even if they appear to make contact with one another, beings are separated by an abyss. In me they meet despite the Chaos of the ages and of Space.[50]

[45] "Christianity and Evolution," (unpublished essay of 1945) in Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Christianity and Evolution,* trans. Hague (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), 181.

[46] Lyons, *The Cosmic Christ,* 185f.

[47] Ibid., 64. For evidence of Blondel's early concern with the implication of Teilhard's thought, see Teilhard de Chardin and Blonde!, *Correspondence,* 24-25, 39.

[48] Lyons, *The Cosmic Christ,* 43.

[49] Ibid., 150.

[50] Ibid. Later, in a lecture given at Paris in 1923, Teilhard would speak of Christ as "the principle of universal consistence," the natural and supernatural center of the universe who has been at work since the beginning, gathering up all things in himself that they might be brought back to the Father. See Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, "Pantheism and Christianity," in idem, *Christianity and Evolution,* 71.

For Teilhard, matter is the state of disunited multiplicity. Even though he will say that it is the nature of being to be united, [51] matter inclines by its own activity to even greater disintegration, to conflict and disharmony, slipping toward the state of non being. It is an inescapable fact that creation must begin in multiplicity; unity is what follows. But the consequence is to say that creation must take its start in conflict, and that humanity must begin in sin. "Original sin," Teilhard wrote in 1920:

> taken in its widest sense, is not a malady specific to the earth, nor is it bound up with human generation. It simply symbolizes the inevitable chance of evil ... which accompanies the existence of all participated being. Wherever being *in fteri* is produced, suffering and wrong immediately appear as its shadow. [52]

One recognizes here what is essentially an epitome of the thinking on sin that we reviewed at this paper's outset. It would seem that Teilhard's conflation of nature with grace, his merging creation with sanctification, is due at least in part to his view of created being, which he believes is naturally so deficient that it can have no enduring existence except as taken into the progressively incarnated being of Christ. It is ironic, but nonetheless true, that the traditional teaching of the Fall, precluded in Teilhard's system, extolled the dignity of man, who even if he was a traitor to God's word, was a traitor in freedom. In Teilhard's description, humanity is but the passive soil in which the ultimate, historical seed of Christ's cosmic body is planted.

Having followed the Christocentric tum in theology, we are left with the task of discovering a ground for this Christocentrism other than despair of human history. Significantly, Teilhard interpreted Colossi:ms 1:15-17 as referring, not just to Wisdom upholding creation, but to the incarnate Word, Christ as divine and human. This, the focus on the human element implied, as Hengel maintained, in the tide "Christ," is the direction in which a solution must lie. Hence we move on to a consideration of three theologians who have taken Colossians 1:15-17 in this messianic,

[51] Lyons, *The Cosmic Christ,* 178.

[52] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, "Fall, Redemption, and Geocenttism," in idem, *Christianity and Evolution,* 40.

covenantal sense: Karl Barth, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Donald Keefe.

n

A) Karl Barth

It is of utmost importance, Barth declared in his *Church Dogmatics,* to ask

> how the writers of the New Testament for their part understood the important lit' auwu or f.v auT0; what they meant by associating with God the Father His Son or Word or Jesus Christ in creation .... [W]hether it was the eternal son (or eternal Word) of God as such in his pure deity, that they had in mind; or whether, more inclusively and more concretely, it was the Son of God as the Son of Man, the Word made flesh.[53]

Barth concludes it was the latter. What makes the teaching found in John 1:3; Hebrews 1:1-3; and Colossians 1:15-16 so radical, he states, is the fact that it is Jesus himself whom the authors are assigning "divine causality" in the event of creation. From all eternity, the Father who loves his Son loves him also as Mediator, and for his sake loves the world that will be united with him. The Son made flesh, Jesus, is the justification for the blessings bestowed on creation in the beginning, and the cause of their recovery after the curse of sin. His love and his obedience to the Father is the prototype for ours, his one life with the Church is the union that the first man and woman's could only image.[54] His history is the center and goal of our history; our existence is intended from before all time as the condition for his. The union of God and humanity in Jesus, the covenant, is the intrinsic basis for creation.[55] It is the ordering principle of creation. All the cosmos is utterly Christocentric; but what that implies, then,

[53] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. IH/1: *The Doctrine of Creation,* trans. J. W. Edwards, O. Bussey, and Harold Knight, ed. G. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958), 53-54.

[54] Ibid., 184f.

[55] Ibid., 94-97.

reasons Barth, is that it is also anthropocentric. "Man is the creature," writes Barth:

> of the boundary between heaven and earth; he is on earth and under heaven. He is the being that conceives his environment, who can see, hear, understand and dominate it: 'Thou hast put all things under his feet.' He is the essence of a free being in this world. . . • [T]he covenant between God and man is the meaning and the glory, the ground and the goal of heaven and earth, and so of the whole creation .... When the existence of creation begins, God's dealing with man also begins. For all that exists points towards man, in so far as it makes God's purpose visible, moving towards His revealed and effective action in the covenant with Jesus Christ. [56]

But one must read Barth carefully here. He says that man is the essence of a free being "in this world," meaning that man exemplifies creaturely freedom which *may* be exercised in obedience to God, or simply fail. As it is, human freedom is marked always and everywhere by failure. The first man, Adam, is distinguished only by the fact that he was the first to sin-and trivially at that. He was not only the beginner of sin, but a beginner in sin. None of us has to sin; there is no predisposition to sin passed on by the first man. But each of us does sin, in the first act of our freedom, just as Adam did in the first act of his. "There never was a golden age," Barth writes:

> There is no point in looking back to one. The first man was immediately the first sinner .... That is Adam as seen and understood in the biblical tradition, the man who sinned at once, the man who was at once proud man, the man who stands at that gateway as the representative of all who follow, the one whom all his successors do in fact resemble (in the fact that they all sin at once as well). [57]

[56] Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline,* trans. G. T. Thompson (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1959), 63-64.

[57] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/1: *The Doctrine of Reconciliation,* trans. G. W. Bromiley, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956), 508, 510. One discovers, remarked Balthasar, this theme of sin as a dialectical moment in the human return to the Creator appearing again and again in Barth's work (Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth: Exposition and Interpretation,* trans. Edward T. Oakes, S.J. [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992], 100f, 228-31, 244-48).

Human history is, from beginning to end, Adamic, and impotent to escape the play of sin. There can be no progress, there is no hope, except in Christ and by his work.

'Born of the Virgin Mary.' •.. What is involved here is, if you like, a divine act of judgment. To what is to begin here man is to contribute nothing by his action and initiative. Man is not simply excluded, for the Virgin is there. But the male, as the specific agent of human action and history, with his responsibility for directing the human species, must now retire into the background, as the powerless figure of Joseph.[58]

Barth does not explain why sin is universal. He denies explicitly that it is determined; but it nonetheless appears inevitable, and inevitable because of man's created nature. He calls human freedom an "imperfect mirroring" of God's, for we are creatures of space and time. And this is as much as to say, he writes-using language that may be found in the Platonism of writers from Augustine to Dionysius-that we are fashioned from nothing.

Creaturely reality means reality on the basis of a *creatioex nihilo,* a creation out of nothing. . . • Everything outside God is held constant by God over nothingness. Creaturely nature means existence in time and space, existence with a beginning and an end, existence that becomes, in order to pass away again.. . . The creature is threatened by the possibility of nothingness and of destruction, which is excluded by God-and only by God. If a creature exists, it is only maintained in its mode of existence if God so wills. If He did not so will, nothingness would inevitably break in from all sides.[59]

Barth is representative here of the dark tone that pervades the work of many of his contemporaries, writing as they were in the shadow of August 1914, which, as Heinz Zahrnt observes, slew the easy optimism of liberal theology and gave birth to the theology of the twentieth century.[60]

An even starker picture of creation is drawn by Paul Tillich. His intent, as he fashioned an explanation for the universality of

[58] Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline,* 99.

[59] Ibid., *55-56.*

[60] Heinz Zahrnt, *The Question of God: ProtestantTheology in the 20'1' Century,* trans. R. A. Wilson (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1969), 15.

sin, was to avoid equating multiplicity, materiality, with evil. But the result, critics have said, was to make sin a "structurally necessary" corollary of created freedom.[61] "Man," he writes in his *Systematic Theology:*

> and the rest of reality are not only 'inside' the process of the divine life but also 'outside' it. Man is grounded in it, but he is not kept within the ground. Man has left the ground in order to 'stand upon' himself, to be actually what he essentially is, in order to be *finite freedom.* This is the point at which the doctrine of the creation and of the fall join.... Fully developed creatureliness is fallen creatureliness. The creature has actualized its freedom insofar as it is outside the creative ground of the divine life.[62]

To be outside the divine ground is not just separation, it is "estrangement," an alienation from God that is "unavoidable."[63] Human freedom begins in a "leap" out of essential being, into finite existence and away from the divine. To be, in a fully human sense, is to be fallen.[64] So for Tillich, as for Barth, to speak of Christ as standing at the center of things, as the one in whom all things were made, is to say that the world and humanity were created in view of Christ, who in gracious love has lifted us out of our proper selves into union with the Father.

[61] See Tillich's summary of the remarks of R.H. Daubney, David E. Roberts, and Reinhold Niebuhr in *The Theology of Paul Tillich,* eds. Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961), 342-45. His response is that sin is not part of the essence of things, and therefore not structurally necessary. It is due to the divine decision to create, and to the realization of finite freedom under the conditions of existential estrangement, which *is* necessary. See also Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology,* 3 vols. published as one (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), 2:44.

[62] Tillich, *Systematic Theology,* 1:255.

[63] Ibid., 1:259. Tillich goes on to say in 2:46: "Sin expresses most sharply the personal character of estrangement over against its tragic side. It expresses personal freedom and guilt in contrast to tragic guilt and the universal destiny of estrangement." See also the quotations taken by Niebuhr from a Tillich essay entitled "Propositions," in *The Theology of Paul Tillich,* 220f.

[64] Martin Buber makes the same claim using what Tillich calls "psychological symbols" in his exegesis of the creation and Fall accounts in Genesis. See Martin Buber, *Good and Evil,* trans. Ronald Gregor Smith and Michael Bullock (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), 67-97. Balthasar, in *The God Question and Modern Man,* trans. Hilda Graef (New York: The Seabury Press, 1967), 119f., outlines the appearance in literature of the theme of self-realization through rebellion, Satan as hero.

B) Hans Urs von Balthasar

In his study of Barth, Hans Urs von Balthasar was able to cite a string of Catholic authors, writing in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, who said that the Incarnate Christ is the key to understanding the order of creation and the nature of man. He is the image of God according to whose pattern we were made.[65] It was the peerless contribution of Henri de Lubac's *Surnaturel* (1947) to show that the tradition of both patristic and medieval theology had regarded humanity as having only one final end, union with God, and that this supernatural finality shaped the essence of the human. And yet ever since the patristic period, there had been reluctance to speak of the Incarnation except as *propter peccatum,* that is, except as intended to redeem humanity from sin. The reason, as Aquinas said, was simply that we know of the Incarnation only through Scripture, and Scripture only knows the Incarnation as God's response to sin.[66] Hence Ambrose's *felix culpa.* Barth, or even Teilhard, might say that creation as such is grounded in Christ, since for them it is only as grounded in Christ that creation has an order. But most Catholic writers tended to qualify this by saying that God, from all eternity, saw humanity in light of Christ because he foresaw the corning of sin.

There were, however, exceptions to this hesitation. The first dear example seems to have been the twelfth-century theologian Honorius of Autun.

> The sin of the first man was not the cause of Christ's incarnation; it was, if anything, the cause of man's death and condemnation. The cause of Christ's incarnation was, on the contrary, God's predestining man to deification, and Christ was predestined from eternity in order that man might be deified.[67]

Albert the Great took a position similar to the idea of Pseudo-Dionysius that the Incarnation effects a return of creation,

[65] Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth,* part 3, c. 3.

[66] Aquinas, *STh* III, q. 1, a. 3.

[67] Honorius of Autun, *Libel/us octo questionum de angelis et homine,* q. 2. Quoted in Eugene TeSelle, *Christ in Context: Divine Purpose and Human Possibility* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 39.

through elevation, back to its source.[68] Thomas himself includes this opinion among his list of legitimate explanations for the Incarnation, although, as we saw, his own preference was that it be understood as *propter peccatum:*

> Lastly, the Incarnation puts the finishing touch to the whole vast work envisaged by God. For man, who was the last to be created, returns by a sort of circulatory movement to his first beginning, being united by the work of the Incarnation to the very principle of all things.[69]

But the idea that God's first and eternal intention is that his Son become flesh, the Head of a sanctified humanity united with himself, is most closely identified with John Duns Scotus. Scotus wrote that the human glory of Christ as the incarnate Son of God is the highest possible created good. As such, it would be absurd to propose that it was intended for the sake of anything else, for everything else is inferior. Thus, it cannot be that God's initial intention was to predestine Adam to glory, and Christ in order that Adam not be lost; but rather the intention was the glory of Christ, and Adam's race for the sake of this glory.[70]

Although Balthasar retains an ever-keen awareness that Christ is the last Adam who "is already always the one who has bled, 'the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world' (Apoc. 13, 8) in an 'eternal redemption' (Heb. 9, 12), and who speaks louder with the event of his blood than any murderous events within time," to his own mind Christ is above aH the first-born of many brethren:

> The Church, the angels, Adam, those predestined: they are all in heaven as chosen in him, as redeemed through him, as married to him. So much so that Paul (1 Cor. 15, 44 ff.) sees Adam as on the earth in order that the "last Adam," as the "man from heaven," may be given the decisive, time-transcending task of reunion.[71]

[68] Ibid., 40.

[69] Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium Theologiae,* 201, trans. Cyril Vollert (Herder, 1947); reprinted as *Light of Faith: The Compendium of Theology* (Manchester, N.H.: Sophia Institute Press, 1993), 230.

[70] John Duns Scorns, *In Ill Sent.,* d. 7, q. 3, *dubia;* quoted in TeSelle, *Christ in Context,* 42.

[71] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *A Theological Anthropology* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967), 33.

Balthasar develops a doctrine of creation and of human history that is thoroughly Christocentric, but without either denying the Fall, as did Teilhard, or making it inherently necessary, as had Barth. ..In the words of Saint Paul," he writes, referring to 1 Corinthians 8:6 and Colossians 1:16f., "the world itself must have been framed in Christ Incarnate."[72] Or again, ..the final and, hence, the first idea of the Creator in making the world and making man was •to unite all things in him (Christ), things in heaven and things on earth' (Eph. 1, 10)."[73]

If, however, the human person as free, as intersubjective, as open entirely to the other in being open to God, was created for the sake of the Son taking on flesh in order to unite the Creator with creation, then, reasons Balthasar, humanity must have been made free, and made in a grace-filled intimacy with God. The nature of this grace, he writes in *A Theological Anthropology*, is love. "No man," he observes, "reaches the core and ground of his own being, becoming free to himself and to all beings, unless love shines on him."[74] The first man was ma<le free for God, raised to dialogue with God, by love, But we know from history, Balthasar continues, that man is also a part of nature, led by the impulses of nature. And the instincts, which on the animal level ensure that the individual will act according to what is proper for itself and the species, on the human level draw the individual into himself, and replace openness with self-closure. Furthermore, to be human is to belong to community. The love God gives is given in and through community. The failure of any one member of the first community to respond to God's love would have an effect on every other member of the community, for the strength of each person's love would be dependent upon everyone else's; and the effect would reach down through each succeeding generation.

[72] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *A Theology of History*, trans. from the second German edition (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963; repr. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), 65. Balthasar adds: "It is not, so to say, the divine Logos but the Incarnate Son who speaks of himself as 'him, who is before all and at the end of all, who underwent death and is now alive' (Rev. 2:8), 'the Truth, the faithful and unerring witness, the source from which God's creation began' (Rev. 3:14)."

[73] Balthasar, *A TheologicalAnthropology*, 86.

[74] Ibid., 87.

Hence Balthasar, similarly to Rahner, proposes that the first sinner, weighed down by his condition "as a biological being" having recently emerged "from the animal kingdom," in some manner rejected the gracious love of God, and thereby reduced what had been a community of grace to a community of sin.[75]

Balthasar goes on to wonder, however, whether the fact that the first sinner's freedom touched upon, compromised, the freedom of aH humanity does not require that this first act be located at a "metaphysical point." Such a point, he recognizes, is not "historically demonstrable." Perhaps the main reason why Teilhard denied there ever had been a Fall was that he could find no empirical evidence for one. The only history we know is history under sin. But what if we suppose, asks Balthasar, that this metaphysical point exists outside the temporal process, "above the biological development of man, which would thus be subject already and at its very heart to the law of generation and death and consequently to 'vanity' (i.e., empty futility)"? Then we would be able to "move away from the idea that the Fall affecting the whole temporal condition of the cosmos took place demonstrably at one particular point in the history of the universe." What indines Balthasar to the idea is the problem of human freedom. "True freedom," he states, "can never be the mere result of an unfree process; thus, human freedom must have been involved at some undemonstrable point in the decision of the Creator that man be his partner."[76] Baithasar takes the suggestion no further, but he refers the reader to his discussion of the nineteenth-century Russian theologian Vladimir Soloviev in Balthasar's monumental *The Glory of the Lord.*

Soloviev was the author of a masterful and at times bewildering system, a kind of post-Hegelian Christian idealism. There is much in Soloviev of which Balthasar, while duly impressed, is wary. Yet there are three questions that Soloviev, the man of faith in the modern world, raised which are questions for Balthasar, too: how can an unfree world produce free man? how can a world defined by time produce the human person who we believe wiH, after

[75] Ibid., 88-89.
[76] Ibid., 90-91.

death, live beyond time? and how can it be that "death came into the world through one's man's sin (Rom. 5: 12) and yet must have existed, in terms of evolutionary history, long before the first man"? [77] Balthasar recalls the teaching of Maximus the Confessor that the original sin was committed in the first moment of human freedom,[78] and that several of the Fathers, with Romans 8:19-22 in mind, spoke of the world talcing its shape from that primordial decision. But even here, Balthasar makes no move to draw these insights together.

C) Donald Keefe

In his two-volume *Covenantal Theology,* Donald Keefe embarks on a rigorously systematic analysis of created being, centered on the same event that Balthasar takes as his starting point, though with less sureness, in *A Theology of History:* the new covenant Uer 31:31; Luke 22:20; 1Cor11:25), inaugurated with the *fiat* of Mary, sealed with the blood of Jesus, immanent in history through the Eucharistic life of the Church. This, Keefe maintains, is the full implication of saying, as so many theologians have said, that all things were created in Christ. To be created in Christ means to be created in, created as belonging to the order established by, the covenant of which Jesus who is called "Christ" is the author. [79] This covenant is the primary intention behind creating; it is, as Barth put it, the internal basis for creation. The covenant fulfilled is the participation, in full mutuality, of humanity in the inner life of God. Like Balthasar, Keefe regards God's purpose to have been the creation of a community of human persons, known from all eternity, who share one life with

[77] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics,* vol. 3, *Studies in Theological Style: Lay Styles,* trans. Andrew Louth, John Saward, Martin Simon, and Rowan Williams, ed. John Riches (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 313-15.

[78] On Maximus's position, see Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor,* 2d ed. (Chicago and La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1995), 145.

[79] Whether the talk is of Christ in Colossians 1:16 and Philemon 2:5-8, or the Son in Hebrews 1:1-3, or the Word in John 1:1-3, Keefe, like Barth, understands the reference to be *to* Jesus, God made man, although decidedly unlike Barth he is insistent that this union is as much the effect of human freedom as it is of God's.

himself. That is, they share this life as a distinctively human community, a plurality of individuals, hence bodily, who have come forth as the fruit of the free personal and physical self-offering, one to one, by which Scripture teaches that the human is in the image of God (Gen 1:27).[80] The grace of one life in God is bestowed through Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who has the fullness of grace; he is the font of grace, possessed of the highest grace that can belong to a creature, being united in person to God. Life with the Father is gained only through integration into the life of the Son. Hence the event of the Incarnation is the key to understanding the nature of creation.

The Incarnation is itself covenantal, and this means that it arises out of the free self-donation of the human, man and woman, to the divine. The covenant, rooted in the flesh of Jesus, is born of both his own unwavering obedience to the Father's will, and that of Mary, from whom that flesh was taken. This is the significance of the Immaculate Conception, which teaches that Mary, imbued with grace, was prepared from the first moment of life for her covenantal role. Hence this covenant, the new covenant, is the primordial covenant, the basis for all of the promises given under the Old Law, and for creation itself. Keefe calls it the "metaphysical prius" of creation.[81] It is the terminus-the end point of the Son's mission, received from his Father, to bestow the Spirit-which has been at work since the beginning.

In the introduction to *A Theology of History,* Balthasar wrote that Western philosophy has never been able to solve the problem of how to account for the unity of things without reducing their uniqueness to some abstract concept. Idealism, Greek and German, defended the orderliness and intelligibility of the world, but at the expense of historical particularity; it is the form that is real, or the species, or the eternal. Empiricism asserted that the only thing that is real is the concrete individual. But the individual's concreteness is utterly immanent, exclusively

[80] Hence Balthasar and Keefe, like Barth, view the covenantal order of creation to be, at its root, nuptial. For this nuptial analysis of the human *imago Dei* in Barth, see Barth, *Church Dogmatics,* Ill/1: 184-208.

[81] Donald J. Keefe, S.J., *Covenantal Theology: The Eucharistic Order of History,* 2 vols. (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1991), 1:325.

material; and its intrinsic relation to any other individual might be conventionally assumed, but could never be known. Jesus Christ, he wrote, is the concrete universal. He is the answer that philosophy could never discover. He is the living idea, eternally devoted to the Father, who as Word determines the mode in which all things participate in the being of God. He is the individual standing at the center of history whose personal life is the norm for every other. The freedom of God displayed in creation has its analogue in a free humanity precisely because it is not an abstract idea that gives unity and meaning to history, nor a metaphysical essence, which would bind us as separate expressions of a universal human fate. Rather it is the transcendent Son, kenotically immanent in the world in reflection of his eternal relation to the Father, which has its perfect revelation in the Incarnation. Human nature is a participation in the incarnate nature of the Son. And rather than history giving us the life of the Son, it is the life of the Son that gives us history.

Within the space of existence opened up by God in creation, writes Balthasar, "man is free to make history happen."

> But since this space belongs to Christ, it is in no sense an empty space but one that is shaped and structured and completely conditioned by certain categories. The framework of its meaning is constructed of the situations (the interior situations) of Christ's earthly existence. Man cannot fall out of this space which is Christ's, nor out of the structural form created by his life.[82]

This, for Balthasar, is what it really means to say that everything was created in Christ.

Keefe, in his own analysis, takes this one step further in order to underscore the point that the condition of possibility for a free history rests not only on the response of Jesus, arising out of the free obedience of the Son, but also on the equally free response of Mary. It is indeed the life of Jesus that gives our world its form. But this life is a covenantal life. It is the mutual assent of Jesus and Mary that makes possible history, that grounds creation. Their union is the defining fruit of the grace that the Spirit bestowed on creation from the very beginning, and in virtue of which creation

[82] Balthasar, *A Theology of History*, 71.

is said to have been, not just good, but very good. This is the covenant, Keefe writes, offered to the first man and first woman, the primal couple whose free response was to initiate our history, and whose refusal constitutes the original sin.

"The moment of the fall," Keefe states, "must be the moment of creation, the initial instant of created freedom."[83] To declare that it somehow is an event prior to creation is to lapse into pagan myth. To locate it as an event within creation and history already constituted is to be confronted with the impossible task of trying to explain how it could have shaped its own antecedent. "Inevitably," Keefe observes:

> there is recognized to be something bizarre in the notion of a primordially fallen couple who, concretely actual only in our fallen history, are uniquely responsible for its fallenness. Such a couple would be members of the historical human community, perhaps our neighbors, and certainly someone's. At the same time they are understood to be *ex hypothesi* the sole causes and responsible agents of that fall, in that, although they have themselves never known an instant of integral existence, they alone are freely fallen and freely responsible for the fallenness of all human existence throughout all of history.[84]

Following the Fall, there is no connection between our own history, grounded in the covenant of the two who are known as the second Adam and second Eve, and the first man and woman whose refusal to begin and bind history to the covenant has left its mark on creation. Between the primal couple and ourselves "a gulf is fixed, a surd in creation." There is neither unfallen history nor pre-history; and the failure in theology to realize this has led to the mistaken assumption that "the discoveries at such sites as the Olduvai Gorge" are laden with doctrinal significance.[85] We know of the Fall only by revelation; the measure of the Fall is the grace of life in the new covenant, also known only by revelation. But to deny the Fall is to deny the heart of Christian hope and Christian humanism. "The evolutionary theology of the recent past," writes Keefe,

[83] Keefe, *Covenantal Theology,* 1:320.
[84] Ibid., 1:327.
[85] Ibid., 1:325, 327-28.

has failed, much as had the earlier attempts, by reason of an implicitly dualistic return to the ancient notion that what separates us from eschatological completion is time, materiality itself, as though our redemption were from concreteness, as though the integral human condition were one of abstraction from the limitations of time and space, and the eschaton in consequence were no more than the recovery of that condition of ideal universality.[86]

History, like the world, is fractured. It is weak, it is filled with conflict, and it is mortaL But history, as Balthasar said, is Christ's. No sin could undo its constitution in the Lord's covenant. It is in accordance with the covenant that the Son has been immanent in creation from the beginning, and through the Son, that the Spirit has been at work. If we have a solidarity in sin, we have a prior, ontological solidarity as a community of free persons in Christ, though this union with Christ within history is now present sacramentally, in sign. The covenant is the covenant of the crucified Lord whose sacrifice, present in the Eucharist and uniting us as one body to himself, WM be fulfilled, will attain to the fullness of grace of the good creation finally complete, only with the coming of the Kingdom. "The historical New Covenant," Keefe condudes, "'which, *as primordial,and as eschatologically fulfilled,* is sacramentally immanent in our historical humanity, is the one source of our reality, our solidarity, and our own unique historical significance, freely to be appropriated in the central worship of the Church. "'[87]

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It is one of the great paradoxes of contemporary theology that the effort to retrieve the Colossians text in order to place Christ once more at the center of a contemporary world view, which typically regarded things as shaped by random biological forces or determinative economic forces, brought along with it the same view of physical creation as tottering at the brink of nothingness, and of human history as devoid of intrinsic meaning, that had typified Western thought before the Christian revelation. The

[86] Ibid., 1:331.
[87] Ibid., 1:341.

doctrine of the Incarnation, as Balthasar has shown, provides the only adequate starting point for an attempt to account for the world in all the diversity that modern study has uncovered. It has fallen to Donald Keefe to show that the Incarnation is a matter of covenant; and, in the course of explicating the divine and human mutuality at work in covenant, he has developed a theology whose tremendous breadth and remarkable depth we have merely adumbrated here, as he has followed the trace of human freedom into the heart and the genesis of the physical world. To answer the question first posed by this essay: to say that all things have been made in Christ can indeed be understood as declaring their natural integrity, and not their inherent deficiency, despite the conclusion of so many authors in recent years. But it requires of the theologian a kind of steely resolve, an unflinching readiness to be taken off guard, an unwillingness to tame the implications of faith, to measure its tenets by assumptions drawn from any other source, or of ever bridling the most startling of all human claims, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ.

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AQUINAS ON THE METAPHYSICS OF *ESSE* IN CHRIST

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ONE OF THE MORE controversial issues in Aquinas's Christology has been his position on Christ's *esse*. In a way this is not surprising, given the fact that the metaphysics of *esse* is one of the most discussed aspects of Aquinas's thought. Yet, the case of Christ brings with it an added difficulty due to the fact that St. Thomas held in many works that there is one *esse* in Christ,[1] while arguing in one work, the *Disputed Question on the Union of the Word Incarnate,* that the human nature can be considered as having a secondary *esse*.[2]

[1] The standard texts are: III *Sent.,* d. 6, q. 2, a. 2; *Quodl.* 9, q. 2, a. 2 [a. 3]; *Comp. Theo/.* I, c. 212; and *STh* III, q. 17, a. 2. Throughout the paper I use the following abbreviations to refer to editions of Aquinas's works: (1) Q.D. *De Anima, De Pot.,* and *De Unione* all refer to the texts included in *Quaestiones Disputates,* 2 vols., ed. P. Bazzi et al. (Turin: Marietri, 1949); (2) *Sent.: In quatuor Libras Sententiarum* in *S. Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia,* vol. 1, ed. Roberto Busa, S.J. (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1980); (3) *STh: Summa Theologiae,* ed. Petri Carmello, 3 vols. (Turin: Marietri, 1952); (4) *ScG: Summa contra Gentiles,* ed. Ceslai Pera et al., 3 vols. (Turin: Marietri, 1961); (5) *Quo!.: Quaestiones de Quodlibet,* ed. Commissio Leonina, vol. 25, 1and2 (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1996); (6) *In Boet. de Trin.: Super Boetium de Trinitate,* ed. Commissio Leonina, vol. 50 (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1992); (7) *Comp. Theo!.: Compendium Theologiae* in *Opuscula, III,* ed. Commissio Leonina, vol. 42 (Rome: Editori de san Tommaso, 1979); (8) *De ente: De ente et essentia* in *Opuscula,* Ned. Commissio Leonina, vol. 43 (Rome: Editori de san Tommaso, 1976).

[2] There is no longer any doubt that the *De Unione* is authentic. There remains some question about whether it is to be dated as an early work or a late one, though the general consensus is that it was written shortly before Aquinas wrote the third part of the *Summa Theologiae.* While I am inclined to think it is earlier than this, no definitive resolution of this question will be possible until the critical edition of the text appears. A summary of the standard argument for a late dating can be found in Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., *St. Thomas*

The aim of this article is twofold.[3] The first is critical: I argue that there is no authentically Thomistic sense of *esse* that would allow Christ to have a second *esse* in virtue of his human nature without falling into one of the erroneous doctrines on the Incarnation, which St. Thomas is dearly trying to avoid. My second concern is to articulate and defend what I take to be the foundation of Aquinas's *one-esse* view, the doctrine that Christ's human nature enters into communion with the *esse* of the Word.

I. THE THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The theological framework within which the question of Christ's *esse* becomes a central issue is provided by Peter Lombard's presentation of three different schools of thought on the Incarnation.[4] The first opinion, the *assumptus-homo* theory, held that the Word assumed a man. Thomas rejects this view as entailing the Nestorian doctrine that there are two persons in Christ.[5] The second opinion, the one Thomas accepts, is the subsistence theory. On this view, the Word subsists *in* the human nature. Finally, the *habitus* theory argued that the Word took on the human nature in much the same way as a man puts on a doak. The doak-that is, the humanity-is transformed, while the person remains unchanged. Aquinas rejects this account as failing

Aquinas, vol. 1, *The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 205-7.

[3] For detailed discussions of other issues relevant to Christ's *esse* see A. Patfoort, O.P., *L'unite d'etre dans le Christ d' apres S. Thomas* (Paris: Desdee, 1964); and M.L.-B. Guerard des Lauriers, O.P., "Comptes Revues," *Bulletin Thomiste.* 12 (1963-65): 5-168. The latter work is a very extensive review and critique of Patfoort's book.

[4] I am only concerned with Aquinas's understanding of Peter Lombard's presentation, and not the accuracy of Aquinas's interpretation, much less the accuracy of Lombard's treatment itself. For discussions of this see Lauge Olaf Nielsen, *Theology and Philosophy in the Twelfth Century* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982), 243ff.; and Marcia Golish, *Peter Lombard,* 2 vols. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), ch. 7. Also helpful is Walter H. Principe, "St. Thomas on the Habitus-Theory of the Incarnation," in *St. Thomas Aquinas, 1274-1974: Commemorative Studies,* 2 vols. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974), 381-418.

[5] *STh* III, q. 4, a. 3.

to provide for a sufficiently intimate relation between the Word and its human nature. [6]

This theological background corresponds with Aquinas's philosophical division of being. Both erroneous doctrines are led to admit that Christ has a second *esse* in virtue of his human nature. Since the *assumptus-homo* theorist asserts that the Word assumes a man, he is committed to the view that a *substantial being* is assumed, while the *habitus* theorist is led to assert that the human nature adds an *accidental being* to the Word. [7] It is important to read Thornas's account of *esse* in the texts we are going to examine with this dynamic in mind, for it indicates that his goal is to provide an account of Christ's *esse* that avoids claiming that the human nature adds a new substantial, or accidental, being to the Word.

Having eliminated the above possibilities, it would seem that only two options remain. Either the human nature adds a new *esse* in some other sense or there is only one *esse* in Christ. The following sections will take up each of these possibilities in detail.

II. THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF A SECOND *ESSE*

Could Christ have a second *esse* that was neither substantial nor accidental? If so, one could hold that there is a second *esse* in Christ without falling into either error. This seems to be what the *De Unione* needs in order to provide a workable theory. There are, however, at least three objections to such a project. The first problem is that in the *De Unione* no definite sense is assigned to the second *esse* in Christ, and thus it does no real theological work. [8] Second, it misrepresents the metaphysical function of a common nature, which in Aquinas's metaphysics is purely formal.

[6] *STh* HI, q. 2, a. 6.

[7] Cf. m *Sent.,* d. 6, q. 2, a. 1, sol.; and HI *Sent.,* d. 6, q. 3 a. 2, sol.

[8] This point is also made by Richard Cross, on Nature, Hypostasis, and the Metaphysics of the Incarnation," *The Thomist* 60 (1996): 200. Father Guerard attempts to give a more definite sense to the locution *esse secundarium* by appealing to Aquinas's doctrine of modes of signification. However, I do not see sufficient warrant for this in the text of the *De Unione.* Cf. Guerard, "Comptes Revues," 50ff.

Third, any attempt to assign a definite sense to the *esse* of Christ's human nature within a Thomistic metaphysics would inevitably fall into one of the two Christological errors just mentioned, which Aquinas dearly wants to avoid.

I shall begin by taking up these points in more detail. It is important to note that the texts in which Aquinas concludes that there is one *esse* in Christ seem to assume that the division of *esse* into substantial and accidental being is exhaustive. If this is so, *esse* in a qualified sense *(secundumquid)* must be accidental. Thus, Aquinas is forced to condude that the human nature does not add any new *esse* because to admit otherwise would be to daim that the human nature is an accident, which is the error committed by the *habitus* theorist.

However, the *De Unione* discussion speaks of Christ's human nature as having *esse* in a qualified, although not accidental sense.

> Just as Christ is one simply on account of the unity of the supposit, and two in a certain respect on account of the two natures, so he has one *esse* simply on account of the one eternal *esse* of the eternal supposit. But, there is also another *esse* of this supposit, not insofar as it is eternal, but insofar as it became a man in time. That *esse, even if it is not an accidental* esse-because man is not accidentally predicated of the Son of God, as was said above [art. *1]-nevertheless, is not the principal esse of its supposit,* but a secondary *[esse].* Now if there were two supposits in Christ, then each supposit would have its own principal *esse.* And thus there would be a twofold *esse* in Christ simply. (Emphasis added) [9]

[9] *De Unione,* a. 4: "Et ideo sicut Christus est unum simpliciter propter unitatem suppositi, et duo secundum quid propter duas naturas, ita habet unum esse simpliciter propter unum esse aetemum aeterni suppositi. Est autem et aliud esse huius suppositi, non in quantum est aeternum, sed in quantum est temporaliter homo factwn. Quod esse, etsi non sit esse accidentale-quia homo non praedicatur accidentaliter de Filio Dei, ut supra habitum est-non tamen est esse principale sui suppositi, sed secundarium. Si autem in Christo essent duo supposita, tune utrumque suppositum haberet proprium esse sibi principale. Et sic in Christo esset simpliciter duplex esse." Maritain suggests that this secondary *esse* is a substantial, but not personal, *esse* (Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge,* ed. Ralph Mcinerny [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995], 465-66). This sounds rather dose to the *assumptus-homo* theory, which holds that a supposit, but not a person, was assumed. In any case, it would appear that Thomas's arguments against that position work equally well against Maritain. If a new substantial *esse* is assumed, then a person is assumed. Recall the definition of a person, an individual substance of a rational nature. If we say that the Word, in assuming the human nature, assumed a new substantial being, then we are

Notice that in this passage Aquinas is very careful to deny that either a new accidental *esse* or a new substantial *esse* is added. He does this in order to avoid falling into either of the erroneous opinions concerning the Incarnation that we outlined above. The emphasis Aquinas gives to this point in the text clearly indicates that he had no intention of moving away from the subsistence theory in the *De Unione.* Rather, he claims that the human nature adds a secondary *esse* to the supposit of the Word. This secondary *esse* is an *esse secundum quid* or *esse* in a qualified sense; yet it is not an accident.[10] However, this hardly yields a very satisfactory doctrine, for the *De Unione* does not consider what sort of *esse* this secondary *esse* could be. If it is neither substantial nor accidental, then what is it?

One possibility would be to appeal to the doctrine of *esse essentiae.*[11] This would seem to meet the requirements above as it is a qualified sense of *esse,* but it is not accidental. In fact, this is just the sort of thing a *two-esse* view needs to work. Yet I do not think that this notion can be appealed to within a Thomistic metaphysics. If this is the case, then clearly it will not help the *De Unione* argument.

In order to demonstrate the inadequacy of this alternative, it is important to note that there are ambiguities in both the *De Unione* text and the phrase *esse essentiae.* The *De Unione* only indicates the meaning of *esse secundarium* in negative terms: that is, it is not substantial or accidental *esse.* Nothing positive is said about it. Moreover, with respect to the notion of *esse essentiae,* the genitive can be understood in either a qualitative sense, in which case we would be speaking of "the kind of being which is essence," or it can be taken in a possessive sense, in which case we

committed to the view that the Word assumed an individual substance. Further, in taking on the human nature, God assumes a human intellect and will, which is to say, he assumes a *rational* nature. This means that if a substantial being is assumed in virtue of the human nature, a person is assumed, for a person is simply an individual substance of a rational nature.

[10] This aspect of *De Unione,* a. 4 was brought to my attention by Michael Gorman.

[11] The claim that the second *esse* in the *De Unione* is an *esse essentiae* seems to have been first suggested by Charles Rene Billuart, *S. Thomae Aquinatis doctoris angelici Summa theologica,* vol. 4 (furin: Marietti, 1926). See Billuart's commentary on *STh* III, q. 17, a. 2.

would be referring to "the being which the essence possesses."[12] Clearly the qualitative reading will not do the kind of work we need to make the *De Unione* argument meaningful. On this interpretation we are left with a use of *esse* that is just synonymous with essence.

Could the possessive genitive be used to make sense of the *De Unione* doctrine? The work of Etienne Gilson and Joseph Owens has gone a long way to showing why this notion is incompatible with Aquinas's metaphysics. Once we accept the real distinction between *esse* and essence, there would appear to be no room for attributing *esse* to an essence simply in and of itself.[13] From the perspective of Aquinas's doctrine, the distinction to be drawn is precisely between *esse* and essence. Consequently, if the secondary *esse* of the *De Unione* is to be understood as an *esse essentiae*, it would seem that we must abandon, or radically revise, the generally held doctrine of the real distinction between *esse* and essence.[14]

[12] Joseph Owens, "The Number of Terms in the Suarezian Discussion on Essence and Being," *The Modern Schoolman* 34 (1957): 150-53. See also Joseph Owens, "Aquinas on Being and Thing," *Thomistic Papers*, vol. 3, ed. Leonard Kennedy, C.S.B. (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1987), 14-17; and Joseph Owens, "The Actuality of the Thomistic Distinctions between Essence and Existence," in *P.treet savoir*, ed. Jean-Louis Allard (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press), 163-73.

[13] "This controversy [sc. whether there is a real or merely conceptual distinction between essential being and existential being] does not touch the doctrine of St. Thomas, where the entitative distinction falls between the essence and any being whatsoever the essence may possess. If the expression *esse essentiae* is to be used, the distinction of St. Thomas will fall between the *esse* and the *essentiae*- all *esse* that belongs to the essence is entitatively distinct from it. The only being of the essence is existence" Qoseph Owens, *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics* [Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1963], 134 n. 8). Cf. Etienne Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 2d rev. ed. (Toronto: PIMS, 1952), ch. 3 passim.

[14] It is worth noting, however, that the notion of an *esse essentiae* is not merely a later interpolation, though it is often expressed in different terms. Similar notions can be found in other thirteenth-century authors. In St. Albert's earliest treatment of *Christ's esse*, for example, he writes: "Esse autem secundum naturam hanc vel illam, est esse acceptum in comparatione ad naturam facientem esse in hypostasi, et a parte ilia geminatur esse in Christo. Est enim in eo esse naturae humanitatis, et esse naturae deitatis. Et si vellemus proprie dicere, tune diceremus quod haberet tali consideratione non duo esse, sed unum duplex in constituente esse. Esse naturae est esse quod habet natura in se: omnis enim res habet suum esse. Esse naturae humanae in Christo non est esse naturae Dei, neque ilia esse sunt duo sicut naturae" (B. Alberti Magni, *Commentarii in III Sententiarum*, in *Opera Omnia*, ed. S.C.A. Borgnet, vol.

The inadequacy of a *two-esse* view from the perspective of Aquinas's philosophy can also be seen from the fact that the metaphysical role of a common nature is to act as a *"quo est,"* that in virtue of which a thing has *esse.*[15] Indeed, Thomas's texts routinely characterize the *supposit* as that which has *esse.* This is clear from Aquinas's account of the manner in which *esse* follows upon a nature: *"Esse* follows upon a nature *not as a thing having esse,* but as that by which something is: but it follows upon a person or hypostasis as a thing *having esse"* (emphasis added).[16]

Consequently, if we assign some *esse* to an essence, apart from its existence in a supposit, it follows that we turn the essence into a *"quod est,"* a supposit that has *esse.* But, if this is what is meant in the *De Unione,* it would make Aquinas an *assumptus-homo* theorist, which is just what he wanted to avoid. To say that Christ's human nature receives an *esse* other than the divine *esse* would be either to turn the human nature of Christ into a supposit (since the human nature would have *esse)* or, alternatively, to make it an accident of the divine person. Both options are inimical to Thomas's considered, and consistent, acceptance of a subsistence theory of the hypostatic union. Accordingly, I think we must conclude that the *two-esse* doctrine of the *De Unione* is a theological and philosophical aberration.

III. AQUINAS'S ACCOUNT OF THE *ONE-ESSE* PosmoN

It remains to be seen if a *one-esse* view is defensible. Aquinas's concern in raising the issue of Christ's *esse* is to determine the ontological status of the human nature in relation to the divine

28 (Paris: Vives, 1890-99), d. 6, C, a. 5, sol. A more interesting application of this sort of notion can be found in Richard of Middlevilla, *Quodlibet* I, q. 3. This text can be found in *Quaestio de unico esse in Christo a doctoribus saeculi XIII disputata,* ed. Edgardus Hocedez, S.I. (Rome: Gregoriana, 1933).

[15] *STh* III, q. 17, a. 2: "Natura enim significatur per modum formae, quae dicitur ens ex eo quod ea aliquid est, sicut albedine est aliquid album, et humanitate est aliquis homo." This text is entirely characteristic of Thomas's position.

[16] *STh* III, q. 17, a. 2, ad l: "Esse consequitur naturam, non sicut habentem esse, sed sicut qua aliquid est: personam autem, sive hypostasim, consequitur sicut habentem esse."

supposit.[17] In fact, Aquinas solves this problem by applying his doctrine of common natures in a relatively straightforward way, and this is precisely what we should expect, since 'man' is applied to Christ univocally with other men. The difference in this case is that Christ exists as a man in virtue of the divine *esse*, which subsists in the human nature after the Incarnation. This fact leads Thomas to develop his Christology by viewing the human nature as a new part coming to the preexistent divine supposit, which is an already completed whole. Indeed, the entire account of Christ's *esse* is structured around a metaphysical explanation of the differing ways in which something new can come to an *esse completum.*

A) The Distinction between Parts and Accidents

Before examining Aquinas's account in detail it is worth noting one important objection to this approach. Richard Cross has recently argued that Aquinas's account of Christ's *esse* in terms of the part/whole analogy is incoherent. He notes that it is unclear precisely what status a part like a hand or foot has with respect to a concrete human nature in Thomas's metaphysics. Being two-handed or two-footed does not seem to be accidental to a man in the way that being short or tall, black or white, is. As Cross notes, Aquinas refers to hands as parts of human nature. Yet, having such parts does not appear to be essential or necessary for Aquinas either. He holds that it is possible for a supposit to be human even if it lacks such a part (e.g., a baby born without a hand is still human). An essential property, on the other hand, is something that a supposit of that nature cannot lack.[18]

In light of this, Cross objects that if a part like a hand is not included in the intension of a human nature, there is no reason to deny that it adds some new *esse* and above the personal *esse* of the supposit. The same problem arises with respect to the

[17] "[I]l s'agit de savoir en vertu de quel esse 'formaliter' e.xiste l'humanite du Christ" (Patfoort, *L'unite d'etre dans le Christ,* 86 n. 1).

[18] Cross, "Aquinas on Nature, Hypostasis, and the Metaphysics of the Incarnation," 186-90.

hypostatic union. Cross writes, "Analogously, it seems difficult to see both that the assumed human nature fails to give new *esse* to the second person of the Trinity *and* that the assumed human nature fails to be an essential attribute of the divine person." [19]

The underlying problem to which Cross is pointing is the difficulty of finding an adequate and relevant distinction between a part and an accident given that a man can lack a part such as a hand while remaining a man. If this distinction is not feasible, then Aquinas's claim that the human nature is a part would entail that it is an accident and he would unintentionally lapse into the *habitus* theory which he explicitly rejects. However, in the *Summa* Aquinas dearly defends the distinction between parts and accidents. There he notes that if we assert that the human nature is an accident, we have to admit that a new *esse* comes to God in the hypostatic union, since personal *esse* and accidental *esse* are different. However, this is not the case if we treat the human nature as a part: "Being *[esse]* headed, being corporeal, and being animated all pertain to the one person of Socrates: and thus from all these there is only one *esse* in Socrates." [20] Accordingly, dents add *esse,* whereas parts do not. [21]

Moreover, the fact that individual men might be found without a hand or a foot in no way shows that these properties do not follow from the essential principles of human nature. These facts can be reconciled by considering that a nature can be viewed in both an abstract and a concrete manner. This is crucial since St. Thomas, in his commentary on Boethius's *De Trinitate,* points out that the relation of parts to the nature is different in each case, Cross is right to say that parts of a nature have to be included in the "intension" of a term, but this is only the case if we are speaking of the essence in the abstract. Considered in this way

[19] Ibid., 191. Further, Cross sees Thomas's early treatments of this issue as maintaining positions that are dropped in the later discussion of the *Summa.* Cross lists three contentious points (ibid., 193). None of these points is, I think, found in Thomas's *Sentences* or *Quodlibet* 9, at least in the form presented by Cross, but this is tangential to the present issue.

[20] *STh* HI, q. 17, a. 2, c. autem capitatum, et esse corporeum, et esse animatum, totum pertinet ad unam personam Socratis: et ideo ex omnibus his non fit nisi unum esse in Socrate."

[21] This point will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

only the parts that are included in the definition of a thing are essential. In this sense the essential parts of man are a rational soul and a body:

> It belongs to man *per se* that a rational soul and a body composed of the four elements is found in him, hence we cannot understand a man without these parts, but it is necessary to posit these in his definition. Hence these are parts of the species and of the form. But finger, foot, hand and other parts of this kind come after the understanding of man, hence the essential character of man does not depend on these, and thus he can be understood without them. [22]

Aquinas goes on to note that those parts which are not included in the definition are called parts of matter and are not included in the definition of a whole. However, he also writes:

> In this way all signate parts are related to a man, just as this soul, this body, this nail, this bone, and others of this kind. *For these parts are indeed parts of the essence of Socrates and of Plato, but not of man insofar as he is man, and thus man can be abstracted from these parts through the intellect.* Such abstraction is of a universal from a particular. (Emphasis added)[23]

Accordingly, when we move to the case of an individual man, which is what we are concerned with in the case of Christ, we find that integral parts do follow from the essence of the thing. The fact that there might be exceptional cases of men born without hands does not warrant jettisoning this principle, for such exceptions are presumably due to a defect in the matter. In saying that concrete parts are parts of a thing's nature, Cross fails to appreciate Aquinas's distinction between parts of the species or form which fall under the definition, and parts of matter which, although not included in the definition, follow upon the concrete

[22] *In Boet. de Trin.*, q. 5, a. 3, II. 216-25: "Similiter etiam per se competit homini quod inueniatur in eo anima rationalis et corpus compositum ex quatuor elementis, uncle sine his partibus homo inteiligi non potest , set hec oportet poni diffinirione eius, unde sunt partes speciei et forme; set digitus, pes, et manus, et alie huiusmodi partes sunt post intellectum hominis, uncle ex eis ratio essentialis hominis non dependet, et ideo sine his intelligi potest."

[23] Ibid., II. 231-238: "et hoc modo se habentad hominem omnes partes signate, sicut hec anima, et hoc corpus, et hie unguis, et hoc os, et huiusmodi: hee enim partes sunt quidem partes essentie Sortis et Platonis, non autem hominis in quantum homo, et ideo potest homo abstrahi per intellectum ab isris partibus. Et talis absttactio est uniuersalis particulari."

individual nature. Hence, while having certain bodily parts follows upon the essence of man, some men are found without one or another of these because of the imperfect state of the matter that receives the form in this or that case.

The problem is that Cross approaches the issue starting from the ontological status of the parts that make up Christ *qua* human. Thomas's perspective would appear to be the reverse. He begins with an account of the *esse* of Christ, considered as a whole, and gives anaccount of the ontological status of its "parts" only within the perspective of Christ as an *esse completum* prior to the union. It is necessary to provide a more detailed explanation of St. Thomas's approach to this matter.

B) Communion in "Esse"

The part/whole analogy is especially developed in the context of Aquinas's refutation of the view that the human nature is an accident of the Word. The problem is to explain how something new can come to a thing that already has complete *esse* without it being an accident. Accordingly, the typical objection to the subsistence theory is one we might expect to be raised by a *habitus* theorist. It would appear that the human nature has to be an accident, since anything that can be present or absent without destroying the subject is an accident. Obviously whatever comes to a thing after it has complete *esse* cannot be necessary to the thing's existence, as the complete substance already exists without it. Since the human nature comes to the eternally existing Word in time, it must be one of his accidents.[24]

The general principle upon which this objection is based, namely, that anything coming after *esse* is complete is an accident, is a well-established teaching in St. Thomas.[25] The reason for it is

[24] *STh* m, q. 2, a. 6, obj. 2. Also cf. *ScG. N,* c. 40: "Omne quod advenit alicui post esse completum, advenit ei accidentaliter. Sed, cum Verbum Dei sit ab aeterno, manifestum est quod caro assumpta advenit ei post esse completum. lgitur advenit ei accidentaliter."

[25] Cf. I *Sent.,* d. 8, q. 5, a. 2, ad 3; I *Sent.,* d. 17, q. 1, a. 2; I *Sent.,* d. 24, q. 1, a. 3; II *Sent.,* d. 12, q. 1, a. 4; II *Sent.,* d. 13, q. 1, a. 3; ill *Sent.,* d. 5, q. 3, a. 3; ill *Sent.,* d. 7, q. 2, a. 1 ad 5; *ScG* II, c. 58; *De Pot.,* q. 7, a. 1, obj. 9; Q. D. *De Anima,* a. 1, ad 1; and *Comp. Theo/.* I,

offered in the *De Ente et Essentia:* "That to which an accident comes is a complete being *[ens]* in itself, subsisting in its own *esse;* and this *esse* is naturally prior to the supervening accident." Thomas goes on to explain that this is why the new accident does not cause the *esse* of the substance in which it subsists. For this reason, an accident and its subject do not produce something essentially one, but only accidentally one.[26] Clearly, the case of Christ is distinct from these cases, as the union of the human nature with the divine person results in something that is essentially one.[27]

Aquinas responds to the objection by pointing out that there is an exception to the rule upon which it is based, that whatever comes to a complete being is an accident, for it does not apply when a new thing enters into communion with an already completed being:

> What comes after *esse* is completed, comes accidentally, *unless it is drawn into a communion of that complete esse.* Just as in the resurrection a body will come to the preexisting soul: yet not accidentally, since it will be assumed to the same *esse,* in order that, namely, the body will have living *esse* through the soul. But it is not this way with whiteness: since the *esse* of white is one thing, and the *esse* of the man to whom whiteness comes is another. (Emphasis added)[28]

cc. 209 and 212. II *Sent.,* d. 26, q. 1, a. 2 adds the important clarification "non enim invenitur aliqua forma in genere substantiae quae alteri accidentaliter adveniat." This would dearly apply to the case of Christ's human nature, since *qua* man he is obviously in the genus of substance. Also note that I *Sent.,* d. 17, q. 1, a. 2 states the grounds for there being an exception to the general principle slightly differently: "nisi forte assumatur ad participationem ipsius esse substantialis."

[26] *De Ente* 6: "Sed illud cui aduenit accidens est ens in se completum subsistens in suo esse, quod quidem esse naturaliter precedit accidens quod superuenit." See also II *Sent.,* d. 18, q. 1, a. 2, "Et praeterea, cum omnis forma det aliquod esse et impossibile sit unam rem habere duplex esse substantiale, oportet si prima forma substantialis adveniens materiae det sibi esse substantiale, quod secunda superveniens det esse accidentale."

[27] *STh* m, q. 17, a. 1.

[28] *STh* m, q. 2, a. 6, ad 2: "lliud quod advenit post esse completum, accidentaliter advenit, nisi trahatur in communionem illius esse completi. Sicut in resurrectione corpus adveniet animae praeexistenti: non tamen accidentaliter, quia ad idem esse assumetur, ut scilicet corpus habeat esse vitale per animam. Non est autem sic de albedine: quia aliud est esse albi, et aliud esse hominis cui advenit albedo." See also ID *Sent.,* d. 6, q. 3, a. 2, ad 2: "Quamvis adveniat post esse completum, non tamen est accidentaliter adveniens: quia trahitur ad unionem in illo esse, sicut corpus adveniet animae in resurrectione"; and &G *N,* c. 49, "Quia igitur ex unione

What is important about this response for our purposes is not primarily the negative conclusion (viz., that the human nature is not an accident), but rather the way in which Aquinas provides a positive characterization of the relation between the human nature and the *esse completum* of the Son. The human nature is assumed in time in such a way that it *enters into communion* with the completed *esse* of the Son.

Richard Cross has argued that this image of communion does not enter into Aquinas's *pre-Summa* treatments of Christ's *esse* and that its meaning remains vague.[29] Yet Aquinas actually does speak in a similar way in various contexts throughout his corpus and an examination of these cases shows that this position is not merely an *ad hoc* exception.

A notable example of St. Thomas using this notion is in an argument about the human nature being drawn into the personality of the Son. Discussing the appropriateness of the assumption in the *Sentences,* he notes that being a person requires completion and that this sometimes comes about by a conjunction of things that are incomplete of themselves; for example, the union of body and soul brings about a complete being, a man. However, Aquinas points to another case:

> Sometimes one thing preexists complete in itself and another thing is added and completed through its completion [i.e. through the completion of the first thing], just as food which is joined to an already complete man; hence the personal completion must not be from the food, but from the man: and this is properly called "being assumed" in such a way that it is drawn to another's personality.[30]

naturae humanae hypostasis Verbi habet quod sit homo, non advenit ei accidentaliter: nam accidentia esse substantiale non conferunt." For Aquinas's argument that the body is not united to the soul accidentally, see *STh* I, q. 76, a. 1. That the resurrected body is not an accident is argued at *STh* III, sup., q. 79, a. 1, c. and ad 4. In other contexts the notion of *esse completum* or *esse perfectum* is used not, as it is here, to designate a complete individual substance, but to contrast the divine *esse* with that of creatures (e.g. *STh* I-II, q. 2, a. 5, ad 2).

[29] Cross, "Aquinas on Nature, Hypostasis, and the Metaphysics of the Incarnation," 194.

[30] III *Sent.,* d. 5, q. 2, a. 1: "Aliquando autem unum praeexistit in se completum, et aliud additur et completur per completionem eius, sicut cibus qui adjungitur homini iam completo; unde complerio personalis non debetur cibo, sed homini; et hoc proprie dicitur assumi quod sic in personalitatem alterius trahitur." See also ibid., ad 1: "... non recipit additionem distinguentium ipsam, et complentium in esse personae, secundum quae completa esse dicitur; sed aliorum quae personalitatem non causant, non est inconveniens ut additionem recipiat:

In this text we find that "being drawn into another" is not simply a vague metaphor; rather, it is simply what being assumed means in the case where something incomplete in itself is completed when added to an already complete being. In such a case it is the thing that is already complete in itself, and not the thing that is added, which serves to complete the newly assumed part.

This can be clarified further, if we recognize the fact that every form is completed by *esse*. In fact, Aquinas explicitly assigns *esse* the role of completing each thing. In arguing that the *esse* of angels is not an accident he bases his position on this relation between *esse* and completeness:

> Each and every thing receives completion through the fact that it participates *esse*. Hence *esse* completes every form, since it [i.e., form] is completed through the fact that it has *esse*, and it has *esse* when it is in act; and thus there is no form except through *esse*.[31]

Since *esse* completes each form, it follows that we should expect St. Thomas to say that the divine *esse* completes Christ's human nature-and this is precisely what he says. This doctrine is applied consistently in the Christological texts, where we find Aquinas returning again and again to the fact that the human nature is coming to a complete *esse*, the divine supposit, and that this supposit completes that nature, producing the man Jesus Christ.

The same dynamic can be seen in St. Thomas's example of the resurrected body being reunited with the soul. The threat of accidentality arises here, just as it did in the case of Christ's human nature. In the *Disputed Questions on the Soul*, the

sicut Socrates recipit additionem scientiae, nuttimenti, et huiusmodi; et tamen haec non individuant ipsum. Ita etiam natura humana quae additur divinae personae, non causat personalitatem in ipsa, sed ad personalitatem eius praeexistentem trahitur." On the relation between completeness and the person see also *Sih* HI, q. 19, a. 1, ad 4: "Nam esse pertinet ad ipsam constitutionem personae: et sic quantum ad hoc se habet in ratione termini. Et ideo unitas personae requirit unitatem ipsius esse completi et personalis."

[31] *Quodl.* 12, q. 4, a. 1: "unde completionem unumquodque recipit per hoc quod participat esse. Vnde esse est completiuum omnis forme, quia per hoc completur quod habet esse, et habet esse cum est actu; et sic nulla forma est nisi per esse." See also *ScG* II, c. 53, "Esse est complementurn substantiae exsistentis"; and *ScG* II, c. *55*, "Substantia completa est proprium susceptivum ipsius esse."

following objection is raised: if the soul is a complete *esse* in itself, it would appear that the body is united to it accidentally, on the principle that anything that comes to an already complete *esse* is an accident. Thomas answers, "Although the soul has complete *esse,* yet it does not follow that the body is united to it accidentally. Since *that same esse* which is the soul's is *communicated* to the body, in order that there be one *esse* of the whole composite ... " (emphasis added).[32] A more detailed reply to the same objection is offered in the *Sentences Commentary:*

> Whatever comes to a subsisting thing so that from its coming a new *esse* is constituted must come accidentally, *since there can only be one essential esse of one thing;* hence another supervening *esse* would be accidental. But the body coming to the soul is *drawn into the partnership of that esse* by which the soul can subsist, although other forms cannot subsist in that *esse,* in the way that the soul can. (Emphasis added)[33]

The body does not add a new *esse* to the separated soul; rather, the body comes to exist *through* the soul. The *esse* of the soul gives *esse* to the body, while the soul has *esse* in its own right and this very *esse* becomes the *esse* of the composite of body and soul.[34] This is the basis for the Christological parallel; the human nature does not add a new *esse,* rather it exists only in view of the *esse* of the Son who subsists in it.

In applying this teaching to Christ's *esse,* we find that the *Sentences Commentary* adds a further nuance. Here a familiar objection is offered. Since every substantial form gives *esse,* the soul of Christ must give *esse.* But it cannot give eternal *esse,* therefore it must give a second (i.e., temporal) *esse.* St. Thomas answers that there are two kinds of matter/form composites: those

[32] *Q.D. De Anima,* a. 1, ad 1: "Licet anima habeat esse completum non tamen sequitur quod corpus ei accidentaliter uniatur; tum quia illud idem esse quod est animae communicat corpori, ut sit unum esse totius compositi."

[33] II *Sent.,* d. 1, q. 2, a. 4, ad 2: "Quidquid advenit rei subsistenti ita quod ex ipsius adventu novum esse constituatur, oportet accidentaliter advenire, quia unius rei non potest esse nisi unum esse essentiale; unde aliud esse superveniens erit accidentale. Sed corpus adveniens animae trahitur in consortium illius esse a quo anima subsistere potest, quamvis aliae formae non possunt subsistere in illo esse, sicut potest anima."

[34] In a way, this can be viewed as an application of the general principle that form gives *esse* to matter (I *Sent.,* d. 8, q. 5, a. 2, ad 2; see also ibid., ad 3).

that subsist *per se* and those that do not. When a composite thing subsists *per se,* the composite acquires absolute *esse* from the form, but when a composite thing does not subsist *per se,* as in the case of the union of body and soul in Christ, *esse* is not acquired by the composite through the form. In the case of Christ, the composite man does not subsist *per se,* because the human nature is a new-comer which is joined to a pre-existent subsisting thing.[35] This is illustrated by an example of the miraculous healing of a limb:

> If we posit that a man is born without a hand, and a hand is produced separated *per se,* and later it is miraculously joined to him, it happens that the form of a hand subsisting *per se* will cause the *esse* of the hand: *but after it is joined to a man no esse is acquired from the hand's form by the hand, since a hand does not have its own esse.* So too I say that the soul in Christ does not acquire the proper *esse* of a human nature: but from the Son of God *it acquires a relation to the human nature according to his esse,* yet this relation is not something really in the divine person, but only something according to reason. (Emphasis added)[36]

Since a hand is not a complete substance subsisting through itself and apart from others, it does not have its own *esse* any more than it could qualify as a supposit.[37] It is worth comparing this passage to the argument of the *Summa Theologiae* where Thomas writes,

> If it should happen that after the constitution of the person of Socrates, a hand, foot or eye should come to him, as happened to him who was born blind, no new *esse* would be added to Socrates from these, but only a relation to these things.[38]

[35] See also *Sfh* III, q. 17, a. 2, ad 4.

[36] III *Sent.,* d. 6, q. 2, a. 2, ad 1: "Sicut si ponamus hominem nasci sine manu, et manum per se separatim fieri, et postea ei miraculose conjungi, constat quod forma manus causabit esse manus per se subsistentis: sed postquam conjungitur homini, non acquiritur ex forma manus aliquod esse manui, quia manus non habet esse proprium; sed acquiritur homini respectus ad manum secundum suum esse. Ita etiam dico, quod anima in Christo non acquirit proprium esse humanae naturae; sed Filio Dei acquirit respectum secundum suum esse ad naturam humanam, qui tamen respectus non est aliquid secundum rem in divina persona, sed aliquid secundum rationem."

[37] Cf. *Sfh* III, q. 16, a. 12, ad 2; also III *Sent.,* d. 8, q. 1, a. 4, ad 1.

[38] *Sfh* III, q. 17, a. 2: "Et si contingeret quod, post constitutionem personae Socratis, advenirent Socrati manus vel pedes vel oculi, sicut accidit in caeco nato, ex his non accresceret Socrati aliud esse, sed solum relatio quaedam ad huiusmodi."

Here the argument is given an even more central role, concluding the key article on Christ's *esse,* whereas in the *Sentences Commentary* it is merely a response to an objection.

But, what in the end is the ontological status of Christ's human nature when it is considered as a part? In the *Sentences* discussion of the Word as a composite person Aquinas carefully articulates the sense in which the human nature may be thought of as a part of the divine person, noting that the parts are related to the *esse* of a whole in two ways:

> One is, of course, that the *esse* of the whole composite pertains to all the parts: since parts do not have their own *esse,* but they exist through the *esse* of the whole, as was said. The other is that the component parts cause the *esse* of the whole.[39]

Thomas develops his argument for the claim that the Word is composite by arguing that Christ's human nature is a part in the first sense, but not in the second. That is to say, Christ's human nature shares the *esse* of the divine supposit. In this way, it can be called a part of that supposit. It is important to notice the reason Aquinas gives: *parts do not have their own esse, they exist through the esse of the whole.* This is stated as explicitly as possible in the discussion of Christ's *esse* in the *Compendium Theologiae:*

> For it is clear that parts divided individually have their own *esse,* but insofar as they are considered in a whole they do not have their own *esse,* but they exist through the *esse* of the whole. So, therefore, if we were to consider Christ as an integral supposit of two natures, there would be only one *esse* of him, just as there is also one supposit.[40]

[39] III *Sent.,* d. 6, q. 2, a. 3: "Ad rationem totius pertinent duo. Unum scilicet quod esse totius compositi pertinet ad ()ffinespartes: quia partes non habent proprium esse, sed sunt per esse totius, ut dictum est. Aliud est quod partes componentes causant esse totius." See also *ScG* IV, c. 48: "Formae vero et accidentia, et etiam partes, non dicuntur fieri nisi secundum quid, cum et esse non habeant in se subsistens, sed subsistant in alio."

[40] *Comp. Theo/.* I, c. 212: "Manifestum est enim quod partes diuise singule proprium esse habent, secundum autem quod in toto considerantur, non habent singule suum esse, sed omnes sunt per esse totius. Sic igitur si consideremus ipsum Christum ut quoddam integrum suppositum duarum naturarum, erit eius unum tantum esse, sicut et est unum suppositum."

In this light it is easy to see why Aquinas holds that a hand does not add any new *esse* to the body, and by extension that Christ's human nature does not add a new *esse* to the Son. In both cases the *esse* of the part is simply the *esse* possessed by the supposit. However, unlike other part/whole relationships, the human nature, qua part does not cause the *esse* of the whole, which is just to say that the human nature does not cause the *esse* of the divine person.

C) Subsistenceand the One-"Esse"Doctrine

The *SentencesCommentary,* d. 6, q.1, a. 1, provides a useful clarification viewing the problem from the perspective of subsistence. The *ratio* of a substance is that it subsists through itself. However,

> It is impossible, if two things are posited, both of which subsist *per se,* that one of them is the other; because due to the fact that they are numbered, they are different (since difference is the cause of number); and they are not predicated of one another except insofar as they are one.[41]

Subsistence *per se* establishes a thing as a supposit, which is to say that it makes a thing an integral whole in and of itself.[42] Thus, a supposit cannot be a part of another thing which subsists *per se;* otherwise it would not really be a complete whole and it would subsist through another. The application of this principle to Christ's human nature is obvious. In this case, the concrete human nature is, precisely, something which does not subsist *per se,*

[41] III *Sent.,* d. 6, q. 1, a. 1, sol.: "Impossibile est autem, si ponantur duo quorum utrumque per se subsistat, quod unum sit alterum: quia secundum hoc quod numerantur, differunt (cum differentia sit causa numeri); et non praedicantur de se invicem, nisi secundum quod unum **sunt."**

[42] *Roman Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard,* ed. John F. Boyle (working draft), I, d. 23, q. 1: "Subsisting implies a determined mode of being *[essendt],* according as something is a being [ens] *per se,* and this is proper to a substance, for accidents have *esse* and not subsisting•••• All these [i.e. essence, subsistence, substance, person and hypostasis] belong to *esse,* but only substance subsists." See also I *Sent.,* d. 23, q. 1, a. 1, "subsistere autem dicit determinatum modum essendi, prout scilicet aliquid est ens per se, non in alio, sicut accidens"; ibid., "Subsistere dicat esse determinatum." *Quodl.* 9, q. 2, a. 2, "Esseergo proprie et vere non attribuitur nisi rei per se subsistenti."

rather it is the essential or formal element *by means of which* the divine person subsists in a human way, for the concrete human nature in Christ is united to another of a higher dignity. Since it is united to another thing which subsists through this nature, clearly the nature itself does not subsist *per se,* but through another.[43]

A similar point is made in the *Quodlibetal Questions* where Thomas argues that neither the human nature, nor any part of it, can subsist *per se.* Such a claim could only be admitted only if there was a union *secundum quid,* and not *simpliciter.* Something can only have a part which subsists through itself if it is united to that part in some limited respect, as stones are united in a pile, or as two people are united through mutual love. In such cases, there is certainly a union, but the things are not united absolutely. Aquinas explains the metaphysical grounds for this fact stating, "For that which is one thing, subsisting through itself simply, contains nothing [i.e. no part] subsisting through itself actually, but perhaps it does potentially."[44] Neither forms nor accidents subsist *per se.* This can be understood more clearly if we recognize that, for Thomas, subsistence *per se* is a necessary and sufficient condition to be a complete *esse.*[45] Once something subsists *per se* it has a complete *esse* in its own right and consequently, distinct from other things.[46] Hence, while we can say there are many individual parts in Christ, hands, feet, etc., none of these subsists through itself, but through the one supposit of Christ. On the other hand, there is only one supposit subsisting *per se* in Christ and, consequently, one *esse.*[47]

[43] See *ScG N,* c. 49: "Non autem Verbum Dei subsistentiam habet ex natura humana, sed magis naturam humanam ad suam subsistentiam vel personalitatem trahit: non enim per illam, sed in illa subsistit." See also *STh* ID, q. 16, a. 12.

[44] *Quodl. 9,* q. 2, a. 1: "Quod enim est simpliciter unum et per se subsistens, nihil continet actu per se subsistens, sed forte in potentia."

[45] *STh* I, q. 104, a. 4, ad 3: "Formae et accidentia non sunt entia completa, cum non subsistant."

[46] *In Boet. de Trin.,* q. 2, a. 4, obj. 2 and ad 2.

[47] A shorter version of this paper was presented to the Thomas Aquinas Society at the International Congress for Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 2001. I received several useful questions and suggestions from those in attendance. I would especially like to thank Michael Gorman for supplying me with his as yet unpublished work on this topic, and

SUMMARY

In this paper I have argued that a *two-esse* view must either fall into one of the Christological errors Thomas rejected, or else reject the Thomistic distinction between *esse* and the nature in which it subsists. At a more general level I have tried to show the importance of contextualizing Aquinas's arguments both historically and doctrinally. At the historical level, presenting Aquinas's account in light of the three opinions set out by Peter Lombard makes it much dearer why he is so adverse to allowing Christ's human nature to add a new substantial or accidental *esse*. At the same time, presenting Aquinas's position in terms of the metaphysical distinction between *esse* and essence shows that his experiment with the *two-esse* view in the *De Unione* fails to give the term *esse* any dear sense, leaving us without a natural analogue for understanding Christ's *esse*. Alternatively, on the *esse essentiae* reading of the *De Unione*, *esse* is assigned a sense that is at odds with one of the most fundamental aspects of Aquinas's metaphysics, the real distinction between *esse* and essence.

I have also tried to show that viewing the human nature as a part is defensible and that Aquinas's claim that the human nature enters into "communion'" with the Son is meaningful. Here again the metaphysical background of Aquinas's account of the supposit as a whole and the distinction between parts and accidents is crucial to understanding the coherence of his theological position. In this perspective, Aquinas's *one-esse* doctrine has been shown to follow directly from two well-established facts: namely, (1) Christ's human nature comes to a completed *esse*, and (2) that this nature is not an accident

John F. Boyle for inviting me to present this paper in Kalamazoo as well as generously letting me use texts of the *Roman Commentary* he has edited. I am also grateful to E. J. Ashworth for suggesting corrections to my translations and to Floyd Centore who commented on an earlier draft of this paper.

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THE METAPHYSICS OF CHAOS: A THOMISTIC VIEW OF ENTROPY AND EVOLUTION

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EVERY BEING in the universe bears in itself the imprint of divine causality, for it is an actualization of a particular exemplar residing eternally in God's mind, brought into reality by its participation in divine existence: *"Signatum est super nos lumen vultus tui, Domine."*[1] It is therefore quite natural to expect that the divine imprint is equally refracted in laws of nature that govern interactions among existing bodies. Because scientists today do not generally admit of immaterial principles in the universe, it is the primary task of Catholic philosophers of science to demonstrate that the sciences that investigate nature are ordered towards their ultimate cause-God, *Ipsum Esse Subsistens.* In this way these philosophers can reclaim the achievements of science as an integral part of the Church's heritage. In the opening questions of his *Summa Theologiae*,[2] St. Thomas Aquinas states that reason and revelation must converge because they both ultimately originate from divine causality. So it would seem that rational scientific methodologies can be used in the service of sacred theology.

In a previous artide,[3] I have argued that this inspiration of St. Thomas can be brought to fruition in the case of quantum

[1] Psalm 4:7. Metaphysically, this presupposes the conclusion that "causa prima est universalis omnium causa ex qua sortitur quamdam universalem causalitatem in res naturales" *(In De causis,* prop. 3., iect. 3 [no. 77]).

[2] *STh* I, q. 1, a. 5.

[3] W. P. Grygiel, "Quantum Mechanics: A Dialectical Approach to Reality," *The Thomist 65* (2001): 223-38.

mechanics, one of the most influential physical theories of the twentieth century. This theory was effectively purged of the probabilism imposed by Heisenberg's uncertainty principle through an alternative interpretation proposed in 1953 by David J. Bohm. With causality thus restored on a micro-molecular level, quantum mechanics can be reconciled with the Aristotelian concept of causality. Despite its dialectical character, it may thus be acknowledged as a *scientia media* in the Thomistic sense,[4] making it a valuable tool for investigating scientific demonstrations. Unfortunately, its stochastic incarnation according to the Copenhagen interpretation has supported materialistic and atheistic positions as to when and how the universe came to be and the mechanisms involved in its continuing organization.[5]

A more basic thoery concerned with this point is thermodynamics, particularly as it is used in the theory of dissipative systems postulated by Ilya Prigogine. This latter treats specific conditions in which the organizational potential of the universe may be derived out of chaos.[6] In the probabilistic approach, thermodynamics seems to correlate well with Darwinian evolution, for it implies that natural organization originates from a combination of processes governed strictly by chance, thus apparently eliminating finality from the universe. Strictly speaking, however, this correlation is dialectical and not demonstrative, either scientifically or philosophically, since it applies only to selected and limited segments of reality. Although within the range of the principles specified this correlation may be theoretically valid, it does not apply apodictically throughout the entire complexity of the universe.

This essay will argue for the compatibility of the second law of thermodynamics with Thomistic metaphysics, showing that in the extrapolated limit of its applicability the law exhibits a radical

[4] *In Boet de Trin.,* q. *5,* a. 3, ad 4.

[5] C. J. Isham, "Creation of the Universe as a Quantum Process," in R. J. Russell, W.R. Stoeger, G. V. Coyne, *Pbysics, Philosopby and Theology: A Common Quest for Understanding* (Vatican City State: Vatican Observatory, 1988).

[6] I. Prigogine and I. Stengers, *Order out of Chaos: Man's New Dialogue with Nature* (New York: Bantam Books, 1984).

discontinuity and implies a resolution to a threshold of utter metaphysical simplicity. Since this accords analogically with divine simplicity, the second law proves to be consistent with the existence of God as the ultimate cause of the universe. Whether such consistency could rise to the status of a metaphysical demonstration is uncertain at the present time, owing to a lack of confidence in the absolute values of entropy. [7] In one way or another, the task evidently extends beyond the scope of a typical thermodynamical study of an isolated physical system. *As* a consequence it requires the use of philosophical tools that treat the entire complex of beings simultaneously, or, as Stanley Jaki terms it, the totality of the universe:

> For to know that the total number of stars, or the total amount of gravitational matter, cannot be infinite if their distribution is homogeneous in the Euclidean space, is not the same as to know that there is a strict totality of things. The first knowledge is scientific, that is, a knowledge about some quantitative properties of things already existing. The other knowledge, or to know that there is a strict totality of things, is philosophical. [8]

To achieve a mutual adaptation between philosophical methodology and the terminology of the second law of thermodynamics, it is necessary to investigate the compatibility of this law with the origins and mechanisms of organization in the universe taken as a whole. I propose to use the Darwinian theory of evolution as a hypothetical model of these mechanisms. This may seem questionable at first glance, yet it facilitates the achievement of the main objective of this study, while also providing unexpected insights into the theory of evolution itself.

As typically formulated, evolution is a materialistic theory in the sense that it presupposes an inherent self-organizational capability of matter and rejects any immaterial principles that may be responsible for the design of existing entities. Thus the paradigm of evolution seems well suited for testing the sensitivity of the second law of thermodynamics to causality and the

[7] L. Elders, *La philosophiede la nature de saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Pierre Tequi, 1993), 153.

[8] S. L. Jaki, *Is there a Universe?* (New York: Wethersfield Institute, 1993), 10.

purposeful ordering of the universe. Furthermore, since evolution and its various modulations have recently reached the commonly accepted and yet all-too-often unchallenged status of scientific orthodoxy,[9] philosophers should be made aware of the inconsistency of this theory with the fundamental laws of natural science. In particular, evolution must face the basic question of its continuous applicability over the entire spectrum of existing beings, from the most simple to the most complex, especially since the alleged scientific evidence in its support covers only selected narrow steps in the postulated development of species.[10] The aim of this study will then be suitably achieved by subjecting evolution to the scrutiny of the second law of thermodynamics as applied to the full spectrum of complexities observable in nature. As a result, an intriguing behavior of this law at the threshold of utter simplicity is encountered, and this turns out to provide an appropriate platform for reconciling thermodynamics with a Thomistic view of reality, both earthly and divine.

I. UNDERSTANDING "MESS"

Scientific terminology is often regarded as impenetrable-rightly so, since most of its definitions of specialized terms are convoluted and burdened with extensive prerequisite knowledge. The case of a somewhat enigmatic quantity such as entropy, however, is quite different, for it can be described simply as a measure of "mess." According to its physical definition, it refers to a number of possible realizations available in a system under

[9] Evolution understood in a strict Darwinian sense is still advocated today by influential scientists holding prestigious professorial chairs in renowned universities. Richard Dawkins, professor of zoology at Oxford University, has gained a considerable acclaim in this regard by publishing his "evolutional credo" entitled *The Blind Watchmaker*.

[10] The surprisingly narrow focus of each evolutional study can be easily discerned by merely reviewing the content of such a prestigious magazine dedicated to interdisciplinary biological research as *Nature*. For example: C. D. Schubart, R. Diesel, S.B. Hedges, "Rapid Evolution to Terrestrial Life in Jamaican Crabs," *Nature* 393 (1998): 363; S. O. Poore, A. Sanchez-Haiman, G. E. Goslow, "Wing Upstroke and the Evolution of Flapping Flight," *Nature* 387 (1997): 799.

study.[11] In 1852 the German physicist Rudolf Clausius formulated the second law of thermodynamics, stating that any process occurring spontaneously in nature effects an increase in the magnitude of the overall entropy of the universe. Here entropy is taken as a measure of the energy that is not available for work in any physical process. In another way of putting it, a fundamental property of matter is a built-in tendency towards increasing disorder and ultimate self-destruction.

Since every spontaneous process in the universe increases its total entropy, any instance of self-ordering demands a specific complementary situation wherein one center is losing its entropy (i.e., increasing order) while another center is increasing its entropy (i.e., decreasing order). Moreover, the increase in the absolute value of entropy in the one center must be greater than the decrease in the other. This means that the center that is the donor of order (the acceptor of entropy) must be more highly organized than the center that is the acceptor of order (the donor of entropy). Does this also entail that the universe is ruled by "mess"?

If one wishes to transcribe this picture into a standard Aristotelian description in which a local increase in organization accompanies the exchange of entropy, it might be considered as a typical case of movement from potency to act. As St. Thomas explains: "Whatever there is within things must be either a cause or what is caused, for otherwise there would not be order."[12] Yet, a typical difficulty arises as one attempts to justify such a process in terms of Aristotle's four causes. Etienne Gilson remarks on the nature of this difficulty:

This world of ours is a world of change; physics, chemistry, biology can teach the laws according to which change actually happens in it; what these sciences

[11] The notions of a macro- and microstate play important roles in thermodynamics and serve the proper definition of entropy. When two identical apples are distributed between two identical baskets, one can have one apple in each or one basket containing two apples and the other empty. The macrostate described by the total weight of baskets and apples is thus accomplished twofold according to these two microstates-distributions.

[12] *ScG* III, c. 107

actually cannot teach us is *why* this world, taken together with i.ts laws, its order and its intelligibility, is, or exists.[13]

Like other scientific laws, the second law of thermodynamics describes processes in terms of a change in physical quantity (e.g., the change in the magnitude of entropy), but it does not provide an insight into the natural cause of the resulting organization.[14] As a consequence, when operating within the framework of scientific laws one might gain the impression that chaos truly reigns in the universe. Furthermore, physics is unable to handle microstates individually, because their dimensive magnitude forces one to use statistical methods to compute mean values for large ensembles of partides. In any event, it seems that the problem of "mess" that is often claimed as a property of nature arises on grounds that are as much epistemological as they are ontological. Yet the Angelic Doctor does not exclude mathematical demonstration from the physical sciences, for he concedes that phenomena can be explained by quantitative changes, though this is achieved as through a "remote cause."[15] It is precisely in virtue of this remote cause that the second law of thermodynamics permits valid demonstrations of properties inherent in physical systems as they really exist, in this case through the number of microstates virtually present in the systems.

[13] E. Gilson, *God and Philosophy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1941), 71.

[14] Exhausting explanation of the insufficiency of mathematical apparatus in the causal description of the physical world can be found in Vincent Edward Smith's *Philosophical Physics* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950) in the chapter entitled "The Science of Mobile Being." Smith shows that in empiriological physics-a science that operates strictly in the second degree of abstraction, that is, in the domain of quantity-"Cause and effect tend to be absolutely equivalent. ... For the law of entropy is abstracted from the very causes and effects whose order it is supposed to regiment. Hence, according ro strict empiriological physics, the distinction between cause and effect cannot be made .... Causality tends to mean mere functionality in empiriological physics. But a function is by no means the same as causation in the philosophical science of nature .... There is no true causal interplay in functionality; there is only parallelism between one quantity and another."

[15] *In I Post. Anal.*, lect. 25, no. 6.

II. IN PRINCIPIO ERAT... ?

The method implemented by Charles Darwin in the development of his theory of evolution is reductively descriptive. Having rightly observed large discrepancies of external features within a species, he concluded that random changes of environmental conditions would naturally select (i.e., sort out stochastically) those individuals that happened to exhibit mutations favoring their survival. The characteristics of the species that have genetically retained the mutation would progressively alter, thereby leading to significant changes over long periods of time. Finally, entirely new and more highly organized species could emerge.

Although this explanation was proposed at a time when science offered no state-of-the-art experimental methods to study the biochemistry of living organisms, Darwin was still aware of the existence of exceedingly complex and specialized organs such as the eye. Therefore it is now almost imperative that, in any effort to substantiate the validity of an evolution of species in general, one must account for so-called "molecular evolution," that is, the graduated evolution of molecules and the chemical processes in which they are involved. Undeniably, such graduated evolution is responsible for vital processes in all living organisms from the simple plant to the human being. Darwin apparently thought that his external observations were sufficient in his time to account for what later turned out to be a "black box."

Since philosophers of science usually have limited access to biochemical studies, it is natural to resort to the work of those who carefully analyze biochemical data. Happily, a study by an American biochemist, Michael Behe, entitled *Darwin•sBlackBox: A BiochemicalChallengeto Evolution,* serves this purpose well, for it provides a body of biochemical information that is specifically oriented towards the problem of evolution. In this light, Behe's commentary with regard to molecular evolution is worth citing:

Molecular evolution is not based on scientific authority. There is no publication in the scientific literature-in prestigious journals, specialty journals or books-that describes how molecular evolution of any real, complex, biochemical system either did occur or even might have occurred. There are assertions that such evolution occurred, but absolutely none are supported by pertinent experiments or calculations. Since no one knows molecular evolution by direct experience, and since there is no authority on which to base the claims of knowledge, it can be truly said that … [t]he assertion of Darwinian molecular evolution is merely bluster.[16]

Having discerned a certain freedom in defining the initial conditions for evolutionary studies and being aware of relatively narrow interpolations between species (e.g., fish through reptiles to mammals), one might be encouraged to extrapolate to ground zero. One might postulate that the primordial universe was indeed a mixture of the simplest and presumably least complex forms of matter such as, for instance, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen, all with an inherent potency for self-organization. Indeed, such was the foundation of the philosophical standpoint of one of the most influential, if not more radical, fathers of evolutionism, Herbert Spencer. Spencer postulated that the heterogeneity of the universe actually self-evolved from an initial homogeneous mass by gradual folding, multiplying, and twisting.[17] The very simplicity of this integrative view reminds us of the necessity of making the transition from a particular scientific question to an overall philosophical view. Such a transition is required if we are to demonstrate how the diversified totality of beings in the universe came into existence and then assess its proper relation to the second law of thermodynamics.

III. TOGETHERING THE TOTALI1Y

According to the second law, each process occurring spontaneously in nature must increase the total entropy of the universe. The question that must now be addressed is not whether

[16] M. E. Behe, *Darwin's Black Box* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 185.

[17] H. G. Wells, *First and Last Things: Confession of Faith and Rule of Life* (London: Watts, 1929), 30.

the universe is finite or infinite, but rather what enters into its totality and togetherness-a question more philosophical than scientific. "Totality" connotes a certain essential unity of the universe whereby the human mind can conceptualize it and strive to give it a proper definition. The relationship between finiteness and form has already been commented on by St. Thomas:

> Now it is manifest that a natural body cannot be actually infinite. For every natural body has some determined substantial form. Since therefore the accidents follow upon the substantial form, it is necessary that determinate accidents should follow upon a determinate form; and among these accidents is quantity. So every natural body has a greater or smaller determinate quantity. Hence it is impossible for a natural body to be infinite.[18]

Although in the framework of Newtonian mechanics the idea of an infinite universe was conceivable, later developments such as the gravitational paradox,[19] Olber's paradox,[20] and some indications of Einstein's general theory of relativity[21] suggest that the infinite totality of the universe can no longer be maintained on the basis of physical science.

According to the formulas developed by Gibbs,[22] entropy is a direct measure of the dissipation of useful energy in the universe. Since the infinite is not measurable,[23] the determination of a numerical change in entropy can occur only when entropy has a finite value. Thus the second law of thermodynamics is valid only for a finite universe. Such a universe can therefore be viewed as a dosed system, that is, as one having a certain totality that is able

[18] *STh* I, q. 7, a. 3. Cf. *In Phys.*, lect. 8, no. 4.

[19] S. L. Jaki, "The Gravitational Paradox of an Infinite Universe," in *Cosmos in Transition: Studies in the History of Cos-mology* (Tucson: Pachart Publishing House, 1990), 189-212.

[20] S. L. Jaki, *The Paradox of Olber's Paradox* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1969).

[21] H. A. Lorentz, A. Einstein, H. Minkowski, and H. Weyl, "Cosmological Considerations on the General Theory of Relativity," in *The Principle of Relativity: A Collection of Original Memoirs on the Special and General Theory of Relativity*, Eng. trans. (London: Methuen, 1923), 177-88.

[22] Any junior-level textbook of physical chemistry can be consulted for a simple account of the most basic approach to phenomenological thermodynamics originating from the works of Gibbs. For an exhaustive exposition see: D. Elwell, A. J. Pointon, *Classical Thermodynamics* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd. 1972).

[23] *STh* I, q. 10, a. 4.

to communicate with the enigmatic "outside" (if there is any) by means of an exchange of mass and energy. *As* will be seen, this assumption of finiteness is of great significance for the coherence of the argument here being presented. Clearly, a local ordering associated with a decrease in entropy can occur freely if and only if there is a greater increase in another location, with the result that the total change in entropy adds up to a positive number.

No one will contest that evolution, like every other process in nature, must have fallen under control of the second law of thermodynamics. And there is no doubt that in order to reach the degree of organization observed on Earth today, entropy must have been greatly increased somewhere else in the universe. While current states of affairs offer many complexities sufficiently potent to impose organization-for example, programmed machines, robots, computers, etc.-one must seek a similar source in primordial nature that could account for the beginnings of this organization. This turns out to be nothing more than what has been called "molecular evolution." What organizing principle functioned in nature when at the outset it consisted *only* of a mixture of the simplest atomic and diatomic gases? Where might one find the potential for self-organization in such a radically primitive environment? To be specific, how could a biological macro-molecule such as DNA be produced should there be no possibility of satisfying the second law of thermodynamics with a further increase of entropy somewhere else in the universe? The only complete solution would require that knowledge of the structure of this molecule be precontained in the ensemble of hydrogen, nitrogen, and oxygen molecules. Ipdeed, St. Thomas writes:

> Some have maintained that creatures proceeded from God by degrees, in such a way that the first creature proceeded from him immediately, and in its turn produced another, and so on until the production of corporeal creatures ... No secondary cause can produce anything, unless there is presupposed in the thing produced something that is caused by a higher cause.[24]

[24] *SI'h* I, q. 65, a. 3; see *ScG* I, c. 42: "Quod sufficienter fit uno posito, melius est per unum fieri quam per multa .... Omnium diversorum ordinatorum ad invicem, ordo eorum ad invicem est propter ordinem eorum ad aliquid unum .. Nam quod aliqua diversa in

Empirically speaking, the combined entropy of a mixture of simple gases would have to be smaller than the entropy of the resulting molecule of DNA That is contrary to the facts of science, as can be shown by a simple calculation based on thermodynamical data. Although a collection of atoms and simple molecules is capable of existing in the form of DNA, the transition of these particles from DNA-in-potency to DNA-in-act demands their direct interaction, and this not just with one but with a lengthy series of highly specialized centers of organization.

Molecular evolution could not get started by itself, and if it really did take place, the original "push" had to be applied from outside the universe, from an agent that is in some mysterious yet fundamental way different from any other. This conclusion is necessary in virtue of the assumption discussed above, namely, that the universe is a finite and closed system. Any pantheistic concept of an external agent, assuming its even minimal identity with a finite nature, must be excluded, for the simple reason that such a situation would necessitate an exchange of entropy between it and the unordered environment that preceded nature's self-organization. A finite agent possessing such a high degree of organization would require its own preexistent cause with a greater organization, and so *ad infinitum.* Clearly, at each step of such a series one always encounters the same difficulty: that of not being able to point to a more organized agent that can offset the entropy desired for the formation of the inferior state and still satisfy the second law of thermodynamics. The only viable solution to this problem is to postulate the existence of an external agent that is fundamentally distinct and different from anything else in the entire universe.[25]

habitudine aliqua uniantur, non potest esse ex propriis naturis secundum quod sunt diversa: quid ex hoc magis distinguerentur. Nee potest esse ex diversis ordinarionibus: quia non potest esse quod unum ordinem intenderent ex seipsis secundum quod sunt diversi."

[25] II *Sent.,* d. 17, q. 1, a. 1, ad 5: "It is not the same to be diverse and to be different, since the difference is said in relation to something, and so it is necessary that, properly speaking, all things differing differ by something. But diverse is said without qualification, since those things which are diverse are not diverse by something but of themselves, for if it were necessary that all things diverse differ by something one would proceed to eternity."

IV. PUSHING THE EXTRAPOLATION

The idea of an extrapolation through species requires further qualification. If the extrapolation is done in an absolute way, if one can see the process of evolution as a continuum extending all the way back to something *simpliciter* most primitive, a primordial atmosphere containing oxygen, hydrogen, etc., could not qualify as that primitive something by any stretch of the imagination. The structure of an atom is, after all, a unique complexity containing elementary particles: electrons, protons and neutrons, quarks. So, did atoms evolve? If they did, from what? Elementary particles have mass, charge, spin, and symmetry, but can anyone reasonably attribute to the electron an evolutionary development of a spin of one-half? By force of necessity we must approach a conceptual threshold of absolute simplicity from which everything, even the least complex entity, would have evolved.

Absolutely speaking, anything totally lacking in complexity would be entirely simple. One could not point out different elements or characteristics within it, or separate it into parts, and its entropy would have to be zero. If it lacks composition altogether, it must either lack a composition of potency and act or it must contain one or the other. If pure potency, it would not actually exist, or would never have existed, to initiate a process of evolution. Therefore, the only solution is to posit pure act. But it is not difficult to see that an entity characterized as pure act would exhibit very peculiar properties. If it lacks potency, it cannot become anything; it is therefore neither mutable nor immutable, and nothing can proceed from it *per se*. Better yet, it must have always existed, for there is no principle in it necessitating that it become something other than it is.

At this point one senses that our discourse sounds familiar, and rightly so. It resembles St. Thomas's reflections on *esse* as the most proper effect of God, along with his complementary exposition of the attributes of God as *Ipsum Esse Subsistens.*[26]

[26] *SI'h* I, qq. 2-26.

However, one must stress that this result was deduced simply by subjecting evolution to the scrutiny of the second law of thermodynamics-as applied to the totality of the universe and not to a narrow region thereof. Again, no transition by means of motion (in the Aristotelian sense of the term, under which evolution qualifies) can originate from *Ipsum Esse Subsistens.* Thus it seems evident that evolution as a process of general ordering in the universe cannot commence simply from conditions of increasing entropy, which the second law imposes on any spontaneous process in nature. Only in the opposite case, that of decreasing entropy, would self-ordering be possible, and this is dearly against the findings of science. Obviously, the first transition between *Ipsum Esse Subsistens* and the universe from which God is most fundamentally diverse must have occurred entirely without motion. According to St. Thomas, of course, when motion is eliminated only a relation remains, and such a relation bears the name of creation. [27]

V. THE QUEST FOR CAUSALITY

One could rest the case here and claim that what has been said is already a sufficient achievement. The law of entropy has been shown to converge implicitly but with absolute metaphysical simplicity to the most proper effect of *Ipsum Esse Subsistens.* Though the foregoing has not included any account of causation, it does not rule out the presence of divine causality within the ambit of creaturely activity. Change of entropy is a quantity indicative of *how* spontaneous processes in nature occur but not *why* they happen. The foregoing could therefore lead to a deistic model in which God, having bestowed a minimal ordering on a homogeneous primordial universe, left it to its own stochastic development. Under these conditions evolution indeed might be seen as a valid process of self-organization.

Fortunately, however, one can move one step further in the quest for a coherent view of causality in the universe. The

[27] *STh* I, q. 45, a. 3.

thermodynamic treatment of the directionality of the universe based on the second law has been likened to a clock that has been wound up and left to unwind slowly.[28] However, it has been observed that upon careless dismembering a wound clock will burst out its parts in every direction. To prevent this, one must build the clock with constraints to facilitate its unwinding in orderly fashion. Vincent Edward Smith applies this analogy to develop an intriguing hypothesis that involves an interplay of opposing fundamental forces that govern the universe:

> Thermodynamics informs us that the universe is running downhill. But there must be braking principles in the process. Otherwise, there is no reason why this downhill drive should not attain infinite speed and crush out all determination and distinction, even in appearances. The multiplicity of determination is an index of a multiplicity of such resistive principles.[29]

Such an account attests to a basic duality that is found in every physical body in the universe. The duality contains in itself two principles: one destructive, the other conservative. The latter prevents the rate of decay from reaching infinity in a small increment of time. Through a comparison of the properties of electrons and atoms, Smith establishes a correlation between the extreme reactivity of an electron and its structural simplicity, in contrast to the significantly lower reactivity and relatively high structural complexity of the atom. From this example it seems reasonable to infer that the principle of conservation is consistent with form understood in an Aristotelian sense, while the principle of dissipation is consistent with the Aristotelian notion of matter. Since these two principles are present in one individual being, it can be concluded that the second law of thermodynamics corroborates the notion of a hypostasis, that is, of a concrete nature existent in each substance making up the universe. And, when one admits the reality of natures, one must by the same

[28] G. Keane, *Creation Rediscovered: Evolution and the Importance of the Origins Debate* (Rockford, Ill.: TAN Books and Publishers, Inc., 1999), 132.

[29] V. E. Smith, *Philosophical Physics* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1950), 216.

token implicitly affirm a final end to which natural substances are destined.

VI. DEISTIC NON SUFFICIT

The above argument is a further unfolding of a mutual relationship between the principle of utter simplicity derived from the second law of thermodynamics and the picture of the universe provided by Thomistic metaphysics. This law not only does not contradict the inference that God, *Ipsum Esse Subsistens,* created the universe, but it also implies that he impressed on it an abundance of ordering principles, as is evident in the great diversity of individual natures. The use of the term "nature" here is anything but unintended; it reflects precisely the sensitivity of the law of entropy to the finality of created beings. As a result, this scientific law precludes the scenario in which the created universe was left by God unattended to its own stochastic development. On the contrary, the unquestionable plenitude of complexity and diversity observable in nature indicates that God must have introduced *ab initio* a corresponding amount of order in the universe. This was required to assure a potential for the propagation of divine causality through secondary causes,[30] as well as to compensate for the generation of entropy as required by the second law.

At this point one may raise a simple question: If indeed the organization was much greater at the beginnings of the universe, is there any purpose for evolution at all? Interestingly enough, Charles Darwin himself seems to have feared the inevitability of such an inference:

> If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down.[31]

[30] *STh* I, q. 22, a. 3.

[31] C. Darwin, *Origins of Species* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 154.

In light of its implicit resolution to an utter metaphysical simplicity, the second law of thermodynamics may be seen as consistent with divine creation and causality, as well as with all their implications articulated within a Thomistic metaphysics. *As* a result, its application, not to say its exploitation, to justify atheistic and materialistic conceptions of the origins and development of the entire universe, such as evolution and self-organization emerging out of chaos, proves to be ill founded. The explicit neutrality of scientific theories with respect to causality is just another instance of how, through ignorance of the fundamental forces of nature, modern science has practically been forced to bestow on matter an inherent self-organizational ability. A propos of this situation is Stanley Jaki's observation: "all the philosophy embedded in modern scientific cosmology reflects a trend to prefer a universe which is 'becoming' to a universe which 'is.'"32

To sum up, granted that thermodynamics does not offer a strict demonstration of God's existence, it does offer assistance to the Catholic philosopher of science insofar as it exhibits an intriguing compatibility with the Church's teaching on God the Creator. *As* remarked above by Etienne Gilson, the philosopher's task is to rise constantly above the discursive level of reporting *how* things happen to justify *why* they happen, and in so many specific ways. Indeed, the many scientific laws thus far discovered describe relations between various natural phenomena, and in so doing imply some sort of composition as the basic reality on which they operate. This is not surprising, since complexity and plurality are objects of everyday experience and so are reflective of the very actuality of metaphysical principles that are most fundamental throughout the universe.

32 S. L. Jaki, *Is there a Universe?* (New York: Wethersfield Institute, 1993), 36. This citation is an excerpt of Jaki's commentary on the work of P. Kerszberg, *The Invented Universe.* This is reminiscent of such famous theories of self-ordering as the theory of dissipative, non-equilibrium systems developed by Ilya Prigogine that was mentioned at the beginning of this essay. According to this theory, a spontaneous organization in matter can occur under such conditions in which a particular system is pushed off far from equilibrium, i.e., is subjected to external stimuli of significant magnitude (pressure, temperature, change of concentration etc.).

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WHEN A LIE IS NOT A LIE: THE IMPORTANCE OF ETHICAL CONTEXT

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IN HIS ARTICLE "Lying and Speaking Your Interlocutor's Language," [1] Alexander Pruss argues persuasively that the principle of speaking one's interlocutor's language together with a distinction between the salient and nonsalient properties in a given communicative process allows one to say that a person who, having Jews in her basement, answers the Gestapo, "No, there are no Jews in my house," is speaking truthfully, and would be lying if she said, "Yes, there are Jews in my house." Pruss suggests that the correct principle against lying, compatible with the *editio typica* of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* [2] would state: "Never say what is false in your interlocutor's language (i.e., in the language you expect him to understand your statement within) with the intention of deceiving him." [3]

Continuing to use the example of hiding Jews in one's basement, I will argue that the ethical context in which a communication occurs is just as important as speaking the interlocutor's language. In order to demonstrate this, I will first examine Aquinas's *quaestio* about lying. This question is found in his treatise on the virtue of truthfulness (*STh* II-II, qqo 109-13), a virtue that perfects human beings with regard to the fact that language as well as external actions manifests something internal,

[1] *The Thomist* 63 (1999): 439-53.

[2] "Lying is the most direct offense against the truth. To lie is to speak or act against the truth in order to lead someone into error" (CCC 2483).

[3] Pruss, "Lying," 453.

and thus is about communication. Second, I will examine the meaning of ethical context and its importance in determining whether or not a "lie" is always a lie as Aquinas understands it.

I. TRUTHFULNESS AND LYING[4]

For Aquinas, truth is a part of the virtue of justice in two ways. First, just as the virtue of justice has reference to another person, so too does truth, inasmuch as it is a communication to another person. Second, just as the virtue of justice establishes a certain objective equality between persons, so too does truth, making signs match facts *(adaequat enim signa rebus existentibus circa ipsum).*[5] Truthfulness falls short of justice, however, from the standpoint of the quality of indebtedness. Whereas justice carries with it a legal obligation, truthfulness carries with it a moral one. It is out of a sense of honor *(ex honestate)* that one owes it to another person to express the truth. Without this moral debt *(debitum morale),* the mutual trust needed to live together in society could not be maintained.

Now the manifestation of the truth *(manifestatio veritatis)* is an act of the will *(actus voluntatis).*[6] A.s such, it is a human act *(actus humanum*). A.s an act of the will, the manifestation of the truth is not simply the sign relationship between the spoken word and thought *(intellectus).* Unlike animals, for whom "language" is brought about by a natural instinct, through a naturally determined correlation of sign and signified, human beings grasp and establish the relationship between sign and signified through an ordering act of the reason.[7] If truthfulness is grounded in an act of reason that specifies the will, false speech, in what one expresses, the willingness to express it, as well as the intention to

[4] ln this section, I am following Martin Rhonheimer's analysis of lying in *Natural Law and Practical Reason: A Thomist View of Moral Autonomy,* tr. Gerald Malsbary (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000) 452-58.

[5] *STh* II-II, q. 109, a. 3.

[6] Cf. *STh* II-II, q. 109, a. 3, ad 2.

[7] Cf. *STh* II-Il, q. 110, a. 1: "quae quidem manifestatio sive enuntiatio est rationis actus conferentis signum ad signatum."

deceive, is an act that is contrary to reason, an act that destroys the rational ordering of communication. [8] Therefore a voluntarily false correlation between sign and signified is always opposed to the nature of human communication and the virtue of truthfulness. Such willed false correlations are lies and morally evil.

A person is not, of course, always duty-bound to manifest the truth. One may, in fact, be obliged to omit such a manifestation. But this can be done only as long as interpersonal communication or the orientation of the will directed for the good of the other, which good is the virtue of justice, is not disturbed.

Now that we have determined what a lie is for Aquinas, we can now ask the question: how would he view the case of the woman, named Helga, telling the Gestapo that she was not hiding Jews in her house? Pruss provides one answer which, I believe, would be in harmony with Thomas's analysis. [9] For Helga, according to Pruss, the meaning of the word "Jew" is different from the meaning attached to the same word by the Gestapo. For her, the Jew is a human being worthy of respect and protection. For the Gestapo, the Jew represents a danger to society and should be exterminated. When she says that she is not hiding "Jews" in the house, Helga is asserting that she is not hiding people who are dangerous to society and worthy of extermination. There is no false correlation here between sign and signified. Nor does she willfully intend to deceive the Gestapo with respect to the people they are looking for. For, in fact, she is not hiding such dangerous people in her house. To assert to the contrary, by admitting that she was hiding Jews, as the Gestapo understood it, Helga would be lying. [10]

While Pruss's proposal may be helpful in "easing the consciences" of those who might find themselves in Helga's situation or one similar to it, it requires a kind of mental gymnastics that, without some preparation regarding the fine distinctions that it entails, seems unrealistic. I can weH imagine

[8] Cf. ibid.

[9] Cf. *Sfh* H-H, q. 111, a. 1.

[10] Cf. Pruss, "Lying," 444-47.

that most people in Helga's situation would "lie" to the Gestapo and, without the mental gymnastics of Pruss's analysis, conclude that it would be morally permissible to do so given that human lives are in danger. But such a lie, understandable as it is, would still be a lie, something disordered in itself and, as such, would be an unlawful wrongdoing, [11] even if used to rescue another. [12]

Yet, there is something counter-intuitive to Aquinas's apodictic definition and application in such borderline cases as the one Helga faces. Intuition, I wager, would lead most reasonable and good people, who in other situations would not intentionally utter a falsehood in order to deceive, to lie to the Gestapo in order to save innocent human lives. From whence comes this intuition? I suggest that it comes out of the simple desire to save innocent human lives which, in the context, appears more important than speaking the truth. Context, in other words, plays a crucial role in determining how one is going to act. Does the context in which Helga "lied" to the Gestapo stand up to a Thomistic analysis? Let us see as we explore the importance of context.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF ETHICAL CONTEXT

To qualify an action, such as lying, as intrinsically evil (i.e., as disordered in and of itself) is a moral judgment. Such a qualification must relate necessarily to the *genus moris* rather than to the *genus naturae*, that is, an action as determined at the physical-ontic level, where it cannot be subject to a moral qualification. To arrive at the *genus moris*, where a moral judgment can be made regarding an action, entails taking into account the ethical context of the action. [13] Martin Rhonheimer describes the ethical context as

[11] *STh* H-U, q. 110, ad 4: "Non licet autem aliqua illicta inordinatione uti ad impendiendum nocumenta .."

[12] Cf. ibid.

[13] Cf. Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason,* 476.

the context into which a certain action is integrated through the ordering act of the practical reason: it is the *suppositum,* of the person, or the context of moral virtues, all of which transcend the level of the mere *fmes naturales!*[14]

Let us examine these ideas in more detail.

Imagine that your flight was canceled because of some mechanical problem with the plane. Due to the time of day, the airline agrees to put you up at an airport hotel for the night. You arrive at the hotel, check in, and are given a card to unlock the door to your room. You do so and much to your surprise find that the room is already occupied and that the occupants, a male and female, are lying on the bed naked and clearly engaged in an act of intercourse. Rather than interrupt them, you discreetly withdraw from the room, make your way to the front desk, explain the mix-up, and ask for another room.

What can you ascertain from what you saw? The only thing that you can determine is the *genus naturae,* that is, the physical level of the action which, in this case, is a couple having intercourse. To arrive at the *genus moris* of what you saw, you would need to know more information. Is the couple married? In that case, what you witnessed was an act of marital intercourse. Is the couple married, but not to each other? Then, you would have seen an act of adultery. Were they unmarried? That would be an instance of fornication. Was there a lack of consent on the part of one of them? That may be a case of sexual assault or even rape. But none of this can be determined by you, as the observer, unless you were bold enough or rude enough to interview the couple that you have walked in on. But even that would not be sufficient. Was the married couple using contraception? Did both parties involved in an objective act of adultery know that the other person was married? Was the unmarried couple engaged to be married? Or did one or the other pay for the services rendered? In the case of the sexual assault, were mixed signals given? Was judgment clouded by alcohol or drugs? To complicate matters

[14] Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason,* 476.

further: what kind of knowledge, freedom, or consent of the will were operative in each of these cases?

Given both the external (the physical act) and the internal (will, knowledge, and freedom) elements of an act, it should be obvious that the *genus moris* of what you saw when you entered that hotel room (the *genus naturae)* can only be determined if you place yourself in the perspective of the acting persons.[15] It is only from that perspective that you can know what is the "object" rationally chosen by the deliberate will[16] that would allow for the judgment of moral good or evil.[17]

How would we analyze Helga's situation from this vantage point? We saw that for Thomas a lie is the willed use of false speech with the intention to deceive. As such, a lie is contrary to reason in that it destroys the rational ordering of communication and runs counter to the virtues of justice and truthfulness. *Pace* Pruss and for the sake of argument, let us admit that Helga used false speech *(falsiloquium)* to the Gestapo. Such false speech, for Thomas, would not in and of itself constitute a lie. It is simply an event of a material-physical kind in the order of the *genus naturae.* Let us say further that Helga, by her own admission, willingly chose this false speech with the intention of deceiving the Gestapo. From her perspective as the acting person, it could be concluded that the *genus moris* of Helga's action was, in fact, a lie according to Aquinas's definition. But it could be countered that she lied in order to save the lives of the Jews hiding in her house. Does Helga's good motive render her lie any less a lie? Not according to Aquinas. A motive, no matter how good, noble, and worthy, can never change something morally bad into something morally good. To claim otherwise would be to engage in a kind of teleological ethics that would characterize actions as good or bad on the basis of their consequences.

Now let us consider the broader ethical context in which Helga "lied" to the Gestapo. For Aquinas, a lie is evil because it is

[15] Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Vertitatis splendor* 78.

[16] Cf. ibid. Cf. *STh* 1-11, q. 18, a. 6.

[17] Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 18, a. 5, ad 3.

contrary to reason, destroying the rational ordering of human communication and is, therefore, an offense against the virtue of justice. But is there human communication present when the Gestapo asks Helga if she is hiding Jews in her house? Certainly there is, but only in the limited sense that human beings (Helga and the Gestapo) are speaking to each other. Is this human communication as Aquinas understood it? I think not, especially if we recall that for him truthful human communication fosters the mutual trust needed to live together in society. What passed as "human communication" in Nazi Germany can hardly be seen as fostering mutual trust. In fact, I would argue that the Gestapo's interrogation of Helga itself constitutes an act of genocide if, on the basis of her "truthful" response to them, they were to capture the Jews and kill them. In light of the broader context in which Helga "lied" to the Gestapo, we can conclude that what she said did not violate the virtue of truthfulness and was, therefore, not a lie.

UL CONCLUSION

My conclusion does not imply that lying is permissible. Not even the best of motives can justify having recourse to an intrinsically evil act. In Helga's case, I am not talking about her motives; rather, I am referring to the ethical context in which a particular human communication has occurred. The ethical context in which she wilHngiy deceived the Gestapo is part of the morally objective dimension of her action, objectified by the practical reason. This context serves to delimit what can be considered as intrinsically eviL In this instance, admittedly a rare one, Helga's false statement is permissible because the speech act between Helga and the Gestapo has lost its meaning being a demand of justice.[18] The ethical permissibility of Helga's false statement does not mean that there are exceptions to the commandment against lying. Rather, there are situations in which

[18] CL Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason,* 480.

the objective meaning of an action can change and no longer fall under the commandment [19]

[19] Cf. **ibid., 502.**

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JEAN PORTER ON NATURAL LAW: THOMISTIC NOTES [1]

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JEAN PORTER'S RECENT BOOK *Natural and Divine Law* aims at making theologians aware of medieval scholastic theological discussions of natural law. The sources she consults include h theologians and canonists, extending over a period including the twelfth and much of the thirteenth century. She sees such discussions as a possible fruitful source for contemporary Christian ethics.

As a former student of Etienne Gilson's, I rejoice to see this interest in medieval thought, and in its theological dimension. *AB* a disciple of St. Thomas, I am sure that acquaintance with the background against which he formulated his views of natural law can help one appreciate the magnitude of his accomplishment. A reader, one would hope, might benefit from such a book by coming to see how what were often confused and confusing presentations in earlier writers eventually become coherent in the works of Thomas. Many years ago, Fr. Thomas Deman used the history of moral discussions by theologians to present Thomas as the founder of moral theology, establishing its order and its place within the unity of *sacra doctrina.* [2]

However, Porter's own intentions do not run in that direction. She is interested, rather, in what a knowledge of the nitty-gritty

[1] Jean Porter, *Natural and Divine Law: Reclaiming the Tradition for Christian Ethics,* foreword by Nicholas Wolterstorff (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdsmann, 1999). I will cite it simply by page number in my own text.

[2] Thomas Deman, O.P., *Aux origines de la theologie morale* (Montreal: Inst. d'etudes medievales, 1951).

of medieval theological discussion can do to dispel the sort of "neat package" image of natural law that can result from the way it is presented by some modern philosophers, and even in some Church documents. Jacques Maritain used to insist on how much "rationalist recasting" and "the advent of a geometrising reason" had by the eighteenth century ruined the conception of natural law.[3]

An attempt to reestablish an awareness of the difficulty and variety of natural law discussion is well worth while. My own conviction, arising from my exploration of medieval natural law theory, including the texts of Thomas with their very thoughtful distinctions between levels of natural law precepts (and the possibilities or impossibilities of dispensation, whether by God alone or by human judges), is simply that natural law is not enough. One recalls the first article of the first question of the *Summa Theologiae*. We need a divine revelation, not only as regards knowledge of those truths that transcend human reason, but even as regards knowledge of those truths necessary for salvation which are within the range of our reason. The truths about God at which reason can arrive are known only by a few, after a long time, and with a mixture of error.[4] And this need, Thomas eventually makes dear, also concerns truths about how humans should live their lives. Natural law needs the support of divine authority, at least in the present weakened condition of the human being in this world.[5]

[3] Jacques Maritain, *Man and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 80-84.

[4] *STh* I, q. 1, a. 1.

[5] Cf. *STh* X-ll, q. 91, a. 4 (1212a45-b2), the second reason Thomas gives for the need of a divine law: "because owing to the uncertainty of human judgment, especially concerning contingent and particular things, it happens that there are diverse judgments of diverse people concerning human acts, from which (judgments) diverse and contrary laws result. Therefore, in order that man be able without any doubt to know what is to be done and what is to be avoided, it was necessary that in his own acts he be directed by divinely given law, concerning which it is dear that it cannot On the effects of sin, original and actual, as including the dulling of reason especially regarding matters of action, cf. I-II, q. 85, aa. 1 and 3; also I-II, q. 99, a. 2, ad 2. (In references to the *Summa Theologiae*, parenthetical page and line numbers refer to the Ottawa edition [1941]).

Thus, I was pleased to see "divine law" in the title of Porter's book. In fact, a main interest of Porter is to make us aware of the theological context in which the medievals theorized about natural law. Again, this kind of interest puts one in mind of Etienne Gilson's autobiographical *Le philosophe et la theologie,* in which he recounted how, in order to establish the existence of authentic philosophizing during the medieval period, when he was faced with the "axiom" that there was no philosophizing between the Greeks and Descartes, he had to rediscover what theology was in the Middle Ages. How could it constitute such a friendly biosphere for sound philosophy? [6] With natural law also, there is no reason to think that theology, particularly medieval theology, was not an exceptionally good context for development of knowledge of it.

Porter's insistence on the medieval theological setting for natural law discussion, however, tends to move in a rather particularizing direction, to what constitutes an historicizing of the concept of natural law. She tells us:

> My aim throughout has been to present these medieval authors as conversation partners from whom we can learn, even as we transform their ideas in the process of appropriating them for our own moral reflections. (20-21)

Can one "transform" an idea? One can place an idea in a larger framework, etc., but the idea is generally the expression of a *form,* such that to change it by adding or subtracting a note is to eliminate it. In this artide, I propose to evaluate Porter's presentation of the scholastic concept of natural law by highlighting a few of her themes. My point of view is that of a student of St. Thomas and of someone having, I hope, concerns appropriate for present-day Christian moral philosophers.

I. NATURAL PRECEPTS

One of Porter's aims is to stress the distance between principles and conclusions in natural law. From this she argues for an

[6] Etienne Gilson, *Le philosophe et la theologie* (Paris: Librairie Artheme Fayard, 1960), 97-119: "La rheologie retrouvee."

indeterminateness as regards specific moral precepts.[7] She criticizes (117 n. 72) Germain Grisez's reading of *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 2, according to which Thomas is presenting a multiplicity of precepts that are self-evident to all. Porter does not understand Thomas to be speaking in that article of many self-evident precepts at any very specific level. She holds that the precepts he has in mind do not have the predicate included in the notion of the subject (as the article itself explained the nature of the self-evident proposition):

> He does not say that these human goods are self-evident, but rather that they are naturally known, because they are not propositions which could be *per se nota*, that is to say known through the very meaning of the terms. (117 n. 73)

This seems to me to reject the construction of the text. Thomas, having presented the first principle, that the good is to be done *(faciendum)* and pursued, and the bad to be avoided *(vitandum)*, immediately envisages the development of the multiplicity of precepts, very much in the terms of the first principle:

> And upon this are founded all the other precepts of the natural law,[8] in such fashion that all those things to be done or avoided [facienda vel vitanda] pertain to the precepts of natural law which practical reason naturally apprehends as being human goods.

The question is whether in saying this Thomas is envisaging reasoning processes, or simply more particular apprehensions of goods. For example, is "ignorance is to be avoided" a conclusion of a syllogism such as "the humanly bad is to be avoided, and ignorance is an instance of the humanly bad"? Or is "ignorance is to be avoided" rather the fruit of an experience in which ignorance is encountered as what is meant by "the humanly bad"

[7] As Thomas Aquinas himself says, the more particular the precept, the more it can admit of falsity: *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 4.

[8] It cannot be argued that since he later (e.g., *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 4; and HI, q. 100, a. 3) speaks of precepts that are only conclusions, the very universality of the statement here implies that Thomas is not speaking of *per se nota* precepts; for the purposes of the article, he himself, in the first sentence of the response in I-II, q. 94, a. 2, simply presents "the precepts of natural law" as *per se nota* principles, just as he did in HI, q. 91, a. 3.

and so is immediately seen as "that which is to be avoided" (with no middle term)? It seems to me that it is the latter sort of derivation that is meant by Thomas. Just as the apprehension of the sequence of intelligibles "being," "true," "good" does not require a reasoning process,[9] so neither is there a reasoning process required in the application of "goodness" to the particular objects that are naturally apprehended as human goods. I suggest that Thomas deliberately uses the term *"apprehendit"* here to indicate the directness of the knowledge, just as he speaks of *"apprehendit"* in such texts as *STh* I, q. 85, a. 5 and *STh* I, q. 58, a. 4, when he wishes to indicate the primary experience prior to any compositions or divisions. The precept merely expresses the concrete application of the first principle. Thus, I believe that those are correct who see *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 2 as presenting many precepts that are *per se nota* to all.

It is true that Thomas here does not give an exact list of precepts, preferring to assign fields in accordance with the three levels of natural inclination he notes.[10] And already, by the time we get to the particular applications which are the Ten Commandments, we are said (in the *Prima Secundae* context, at any rate) to be in the domain of conclusions, not *per se nota* principles. It should be noted, however, that St. Thomas changed his view of the presence of the *per se notum* as regards the precepts of natural law. Thus, while in the *Prima Secundae* the Ten Commandments are presented as immediate conclusions from the first principles, by the time he writes the *Secunda Secundae* Thomas has decided that they are most manifest principles of natural law: thus, they are surely being considered as *per se nota.*[11]

[9] Cf. *STh* I, q. 16, a. 4, ad 2.

[10] Note that the first sort of natural inclination indicated, that which belongs to *all substances as such,* includes in its field not only *individual* self-conservation but also *specific* self-conservation and loving God more than oneself. It belongs to all creatures as such that they naturally love their own individual selves, but love more their specific selves, and love God more than their own selves *(STh* I, q. 60, a. 5, ad 3). I say this because the first sort of inclination in I-II, q. 94, a. 2 is often read as if it pertained only to the individual as to its individual being.

[11] *STh* II-II, q. 122, a. 1 (2034a3-6): "the precepts of the Decalogue are the first principles [other reading: precepts] of the law, and to which natural reason immediately assents as to most manifest principles."

II. NATURAL LAW AND NATURE

A) Natural Social Hierarchy

In her discussion of the idea of nature among those she is speaking of, and the sources of that idea, Porter speaks of Platonic natural justice and its implications for an idea of social hierarchy. Her citation (73) of William of Conches shows us the importance of the divine origin of nature for the entire approach: nature is an expression of divine wisdom. However, she tells us that the doctrine of social hierarchy, while important for some groups from the twelfth century to the nineteenth':"century encyclical *Rerum novarum,* was not central or primary for "the scholastic concept of natural law that we are examining." Thus, she refers to Thomas:

> Yet the more distinctive Platonic idea of a natural social hierarchy, and of society as a body, play at most a secondary role in their reflections on the natural law. It is worth noting that Aquinas, who does make use of a Platonic idea of natural justice in his commentary on The Divine Names of pseudo-Dionysius (De *Divinis Nominibus* X, 1, 857), nonetheless repudiates the view that social inequalities reflect a natural hierarchy among human beings, comparable to the angelic hierarchy *(Summa theologiae* I 109.2 *ad* 3). (Ibid.)

Porter is concerned with human natural social hierarchy. The reference to the *Summa* is therefore somewhat deceptive. The passage cited is a short statement in a discussion of the condition of the fallen angels, the demons. Thomas presents them, as he does all angels, as each specifically different from the other, and as ordered according to superiority and inferiority of natures. Following on that, he presents them as having an order of *"praelatio,"* that is, the action of the inferior is subject to the action of the superior. The third objection interestingly proposes two possible bases for such social hierarchy *(praelatio).* The first is nature, which the objector rejects on the grounds that subjection or servitude does not have its origin in nature, but is the result of sin. Thomas's answer is that the demons are not equal as to nature: hence, in them there is natural social hierarchy *(naturalis*

praelatio). He immediately adds that one does not find this in human beings, because they are by nature equal *(qui natura sunt pares).*[12] We may understand from this that human social hierarchy is not natural in the way that angelic hierarchy is.

However, this is not the best text upon which to base one's judgment of Thomas's doctrine of the human situation. The best texts are *STh* I, q. 96, aa. 3 and 4. The first article details the different sorts of inequality that were suitably to be present in the state of innocence (supposing, i.e., no original sin). The second expressly presents the governing of one human being by another in that state of innocence, and quotes with approval St. Augustine calling this "the natural order. "[13] In short, inequality as to specific nature is not the only grounds for natural social hierarchy.[14] Indeed, it is hard to see any difference between the sort of thing Thomas is teaching in the text of *In De div. nom.* to which Porter refers and what one finds in *STh* I, q. 21, a. 1, on divine justice (the order of the universe appearing in both natural and voluntary things).[15]

It is true that there is not the same sort of natural hierarchy in angels and in human beings, but that does not eliminate natural social hierarchy from human beings. In this connection we might mention here something Porter says in the next chapter, where her interest is in the theological character of the scholastic concept of natural law. She speaks (142) of the scholastics' "selective" appropriation of the traditions they had at their disposal.[16] In particular she mentions the repudiation of Aristotle's

[12] *STh* I, q. 109, a. 2, ad 3.

[13] One might think that the order described in *STh* I, q. 96, a. 3 made the superior intelligence and virtue of some *strictly* a matter of personal effort, so that the resulting social hierarchy described in I, q. 96, a. 4 would not be natural. However, the doctrine of I, q. 96, a. 3 as to the corporeal inequality of human beings implies a further reason for intellectual inequality: for the explicit doctrine on this, cf. I, q. 85, a. 7. There should be no doubt that the social hierarchy described in I, q. 96, a. 4 is well described as "the natural order."

[14] Cf. also *STh* I, q. 113, a. 2, ad 3.

[15] At 297 n. 35 (in her chapter on social ethics), discussing order and status within the Church, Porter refers us to Thomas, *N Sent.*, d. 4, q. 2, a. 1, claiming that he uses natural human equality to make the point that Church status is contingent. I could not find the passage in this text, which bears on the effects of baptism. Because of space limitations, I have forgone detailed notes on that chapter.

[16] I do not mean to contest all selectivity on their part.

doctrine of human inequality. For this repudiation by Thomas Aquinas she refers us (181 n. 34) to STh II-II, q. 47, a. 12. This is a difficult issue. In fact, in the article, Thomas is distinguishing levels of prudence, and explaining the difference between that of ruler and that of subject. He explicitly allows that an underling precisely as an underling has no share in government. On the other hand, any human being, as rational, participates in something of rule, as having rational judgment, and to that extent it pertains to such a person to have prudence. He refers us to Aristotle himself on this, where Aristotle speaks of the governed having prudence like a manual laborer's possession of art. In the replies to the objections in the article, one sees Thomas's way of handling the doctrine of natural servitude presented in the *Politics.* The servant is said not to have the deliberative faculty, taking the servant precisely as servant (ad 2). This is exactly the same thing Thomas presents as Aristotle's meaning in his commentary on the *Politics.*[17] He certainly does not present himself as making a "selection." And again, if one looks at the *Summa contra Gentiles,* we find Thomas referring with approval to Aristotle on natural servitude. He even finds that Aristotle and the Book of Proverbs agree on that.[18]

B) Human Morality and the Natural World

Speaking of "Medieval Naturalism and Its Implications for Today," Porter (99) contrasts a kind of "sacralization" of morals in the modern world with a more naturalistic view of morals. In speaking of "sacralization," she has in mind something associated with Immanuel Kant:

[17] I *Polit.,* c. 10 (Spiazzi, ed., no. 159).

[18] *ScG* III, c. 81 (Pera, ed., 2569; para. 5). Cf. Gilson, *Elements of Christian Philosophy* (Garden City, N.Y., 1960), 275. It is interesting to contrast egalitarian presentations of Thomas with that found in Gilson's book, ch. 12: "Man and Society." Porter, on pp. 273 and 279, rightly notes the element of freedom Thomas defends as regards things which pertain to the nature of the body *(ST'h* II-II, q. 104, a. 5). However, it is not clear to me why she there (273) also refers to *ST'h* I, q. 96, a. 4, since that text rather speaks of natural social hierarchy.

Westem societies have been deeply shaped by Kant's powerful argument that the experience of moral obligation represents a discontinuity with the phenomenal world of nature and ordinary human experience, with its implication that morality is our only point of access to transcendence. (99}

She also has in mind

what Mary Douglas describes as "that still-continuing process of whittling away the revealed elements of Christian doctrine, and the elevating in its place of ethical principles as the central core of true religion." (Ibid.}

Porter argues that the medieval scholastic continuity of nature and reason is more compatible with those who appreciate the evolutionary origin of humanity, including its morality. We read:

we do not seem to be able to avoid a sense of humiliation at finding ourselves so much like the other animals, precisely with respect to that aspect of our humanity, our moral sense, which once seemed so god-like.

From the Christian standpoint, this is surely salutary. Anything that challenges our pride and reminds us of our limitations as creatures deserves at least a hearing among Christian theologians. Yet, with only a few exceptions, theologians have not yet attempted to come to terms with the work of evolutionary psychologists and those philosophers influenced by them. (99-100}

Doubtless she is right in criticizing the described modern tendency. An outlook more like that of the medievals would also encourage more theological interest in ecology and the future of nature. Moreover, it is right to stress the *spirituality* of the lower realms of nature. Aristotle (so very different from Descartes in this respect) stressed that no part of an animal is purely material or purely immaterial.[19] And this is the more medieval outlook, judging by the genuinely medieval case of Thomas Aquinas. However, I am concerned with the way Porter presents the "continuity" between the human moral animal and the lower orders of nature. Our moral sense not only "seems" God-like. It is God-like.

Typical of Thomas's thinking is the prologue to the *Prima Secundae*, that is, the presentation of the whole of morals precisely in the light of the human being as the image of God, and

[19] Aristotle, *Parts of Animals* 1.3.643a25.

this in function of man's ability to determine his own actions.[20] While there is obvious and profound continuity between the animal world and the human world, there is, for Thomas, an infinite difference.[21] This is evident in *ScG* III, cc. 111-13, which introduce the treatises on law and grace. The argument is that providence, while it is concerned with all creatures, has a special character as regards the rational creatures. Furthermore, basing himself on the condition of the intellectual nature, Thomas in c. 112 teaches that the rational creatures are cared for for their own sake, while the nonrational creatures are cared for for the sake of the rational.

Humility is a virtue, but it has to do with a comparison between our status as humans and the status of the *divine* nature.[22] In a moral context, Thomas certainly does not see us as all that similar to the nonrational animal. The position of the human being is such that the human soul is the goal of an matter,[23] but the human soul requires special creation by God for each individual, beyond ordinary natural generation.[24]

Porter says:

> the scholastics show us that it is possible to interpret a naturalistic account of morality in a theologically satisfactory way. To put it another way, the scholastic concept of the natural law implies a theological loss, at least from one standpoint, but it also brings a compensating theological gain. The loss is that, for the scholastics, morality is desacralized; it is seen as a natural phenomenon, as an expression of the human person's continuity with the rest of the natural world, and not as in itself a medium for transcendence. In compensation, however, the scholastics offer a theological interpretation of this morality,

[20] I. T. Eschmann, O.P., in lecturing on Thomas's moral doctrine, liked to cite this prologue precisely in contrast with the claim of Nietzsche that Christian morality was an ethics of slaves and the weak.

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

[22] *STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 1, ad 4 and *5;* in ad 1, Thomas distinguishes good and bad humility, the bad being found in the man who, failing to understand his own honor, sees himself as like the brute beasts, and indeed becomes like them; cf. also Il-II, q. 161, a. 2, ad 3; II-II, q. 161, a. 3: "Humility properly concerns the reverence by which man is subject to God."

[23] *ScG* Ill, c. 22 (Pera, ed., 2030 [c]): more precisely, the human soul is the goal or ultimate purpose of that matter which is *the subject of generation* (Thomas held that there was a different kind of matter in the celestial bodies, subject only to change of position: *ScG* 2.16 [Pera, ed., 940]; *STh* I, q. 66, a. 2).

[24] *STh* I, q. 90, aa. 2-4; I, q. 118, aa. 2 and 3.

precisely because they interpret the natural world itself theologically. Just as the visible, natural world is an expression of God's wisdom and goodness for them, so human morality, considered as a part of that natural world, is also an expression of divine wisdom and goodness. (100)

Is human morality "part of the natural world"? In order to answer this, we need to be clear about the meaning of the word "nature." Thomas, speaking of God's justice, says, "the order of the universe, which is apparent both in natural and in voluntary things, demonstrates the justice of God."[25] Here he distinguishes between the natural order and the order found in the domain of the voluntary, which could well be called the "moral" order. It is true, on the other hand, that the very doctrine of natural law means that the moral order has its roots in "nature"; but the question is, what is meant by "nature"?

Thomas frequently considers "nature" as meaning "the essence of a thing." And it is common to all nature, so understood, that it have an inclination. The continuity of nature includes the non-living, the subhuman living, the human, and the angelic: it is a union with an analogical unity. In nature at each level, the natural inclination is found in a mode in keeping with that level. Thus an angel is said to have a "natural love" because its natural inclination is found in keeping with the mode of will.[26]

This is not "nature" in the sense that Aristotle defines "nature" in the *Physics*.[27] The natural world of Aristotle's *Physics* is part of the "natural" world of the metaphysician, but other parts of that world transcend nature in the *Physics* sense. The beings of the world of Aristotle's *Physics* do what they do in imitation of, and so love of, the divine.[28] However, one enters the moral order inasmuch as one has a higher sort of nature, one that has an infinity as compared to the lower sort, one that transcends the lower sort of nature.

Now, evolution, as relevant to this discussion, is a development of the higher from the lower. At best, one finds in the other

[25] *STh* I, q. 21, a. 1 (149a3-5).

[26] *STh* I, q. 60, a. 1.

[27] Aristotle, *Physics* 2.1.192b8-32.

[28] Cf. Aristotle, *De anima* 2.4.415a27-b7.

animals something akin to morality, a "participation" in prudence. [29] Morality, properly so called, comes on the scene with the advent of the crucial difference, rationality. Thus, inasmuch as we look, in the evolutionary perspective, towards "the natural world" as what is less than the human, morality is not "part of the natural world." Morality transcends the natural world.

It is true, nevertheless, that human morality, as distinguished from angelic or divine, involves the problems proper to the intelligent being that finds its home in the material world. A moral agent that has to mature, that needs to form habits for good living, is certainly in a "continuity" with the animal world. There is no question of making the human being a mind that merely uses a body. One of the most controverted of moral issues, the doctrine of those sexual sins *(luxuria)* called "sins against nature," focuses precisely on the substantial unity of the rational animal. That is why opponents of the doctrine so often distinguish sharply between the merely "biological" level of the human being, on the one hand, and our rationality, on the other.

Porter rightly states that the natural world is the expression of divine wisdom. However, her claims that for the medieval scholastics morality is "desacralized" and that it "is not in itself a medium of transcendence" are not warranted. If "morality" is taken to mean a purely natural sort of life, it does not include the sort of transcendence that is supernatural beatitude; but that is not the only acceptable meaning of "transcendence." The entire ethics of Thomas Aquinas rests on the doctrine that nature is a cause that acts for an end, and that applies to "nature" in the metaphysical sense. This is a feature of the vision of being that carries the mind to the existence of a governing, authoritative cause, a source of *law*. Indeed, considering that "morality" here means the natural law, one immediately thinks of the doctrine of Augustine in *De libero arbitrio* as to the implications of our having access to immutable moral truths: this is a way to the existence of God. The very possession of moral wisdom on our part is a way to God: the

[29] Cf. I *Metaphys.*, lect. 1 (no. 11), and *STh* HI, q. 13, a. 2 ad 3.

truth such as "all men wish to be happy" is a pathway to God.[30] The scholastics surely did not get rid of that line of thinking.[31]

Porter continues:

> This does not imply for them that the moral life in itself offers a way to salvation; on the contrary, they insist that it does not. Nor would they deny that the actual beliefs and practices of men and women are often inadequate or corrupt. Nonetheless, because they affirm the inherent, immanent goodness of the natural world, they can affirm the value of human morality, with all its limitations and imperfections, because they see it as an expression of the goodness of the created order. (100)

What is said here must pertain to the natural dimension of human morality. If "the moral life in itself" does not offer a way to salvation, one may be forgiven for wondering what is meant by "the moral life." For Thomas Aquinas, "the moral consideration" is an expression that describes everything in the *Secunda Pars*.[32] Indeed, the natural moral virtues are not virtues in the unqualified sense of the word "virtue." Only the infused moral virtues are perfect, and are to be called, without qualification, "virtues."[33]

It is true that the acquired virtues and the acts that flow therefrom have a natural goodness that is an authentic moral goodness. But already, at this level, there is a transcendence of the merely subrational. Even on the natural level, the good that is sought by authentic natural virtue transcends infinitely the sort of imitation of the divine that is found in the being and life of subrational creatures.[34] In this connection, one should keep in mind Thomas's doctrine in the *De Malo* concerning the punishment for original sin that is the lot of the unbaptized infant. In a state of pure nature, this would be the natural end of man, a contemplation of the divine on the part of the separated soul. Thus, even in terms of purely natural morality, according to

[30] Cf. Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* bk. 2, section 10 and following.

[31] Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 93, a. 2, on whether the eternal law is known to all. It is, at least as regards the common principles of natural law.

[32] Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 6, prol., and especially 11-11, pro)., wherein the theological virtues are clearly part of *"materia moralis."*

[33] *STh* 1-11, q. 65, a. 2 (1049a38-39).

[34] Cf. again *STh* 1-11, q. 2, a. 6 (723b30-724a3).

Thomas at any rate, the moral agent is always in a social relation with God, a relation that transcends the mode of participation in the divine that pertains to subrational nature. [35]

Ht NATURAL LAW AND SCRIPTURE

In urging upon theologians a reexamination of medieval natural law theory, Porter has in mind the theological and canon law context in which that theory was developed. She sees awareness of this context as a remedy for excessive certitude concerning specific precepts in morals.

Much depends on how one conceives of the symbiosis of natural knowledge and supernatural faith in revelation. For Christian theologians, the view of the scholastic concept of natural law as "theological" should pose no problem. As Gilson said, "everything in the ST of Thomas Aquinas is theology." [36] This is true, even though much of it is fully philosophical. [37] Philosophy can have its own existence within the Christian mind thinking *sacra doctrina.* [38] A presentation of the purely philosophical dimension of this theological doctrine of natural law is both possible and useful, even if, from a theological point of view, it would be "truncated," as Porter contends (123).

Several of her arguments on this point are problematic. First, she says that

> most [scholastics] affirm that the natural law is in some sense the common possession of the human race, but again, this does not imply for them that it should be understood in non-theological terms. (Ibid,)

[35] Concerning the sort of condition constituting the penalty incurred by the infant who dies unbaptized, see *De Malo,* q. *5,* a. 3; that this would be the same as the ultimate happiness of a human soul in the state of pure nature, see *De Malo,* q. *5,* a. 1, ad 15; that it does not involve separation from God, inasmuch as he is the author of nature, see *De Malo,* q. *5,* a. 3, ad4.

[36] Cf. Gilson, *Le philosophe et la theologie,* 93-94.

[37] I say "fully" as regards the fundamental mode of knowing, not as though it were the business of the theologian to explore philosophical matters with the same approach as befits the philosopher; cf., e.g., *STh* I, q. 75, pro!.

[38] Cf. *STh* II-II, q. 2, a. 10, corp. and ad 2; Il-U, q. 2, a. 4; also I, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2; and I, q. 1, a. 3, ad 2.

However, if one maintains that the law is universally knowable (and one can hardly "possess" a law without knowing it), there is some interest in finding the tenets held by those who have no apparent access to revelation. And that would be an interest in an understanding of the law in nontheological terms. Thus, when Thomas Aquinas poses the question: "does it pertain to natural law that one offer sacrifice to a God?", he argues as follows:

> natural reason declares to the human being that he is subject to something higher, because of the shortcomings that he experiences in himself, as regards which he needs to be helped and directed by something higher. And whatever that is, it is what all call "a God". But just as in (the realm of) natural things, the lower are naturally subject to the higher, so also natural reason instructs man in function of natural inclination that he show, in a way which befits his own (human) nature, subjection and honour to that which is above man.[39]

Throughout the article (cf. especially the *sed contra)*, Thomas Aquinas is asserting what all human beings actually do.[40] While obviously it is the professor of sacra doctrina speaking, such an interest is precisely what one might call "understanding natural law in non-theological terms."

Second, in a section entitled "Natural Law and Scripture in Scholastic Thought," Porter says that the natural law "can adequately be understood only through Scripture," though she qualifies this by adding "at least as seen from the perspective of canon law" (130). She offers a very effective presentation of Gratian, rightly underlining the theological appropriateness of first presenting the natural law as something found in the Law and the Gospel. The Christian finds instruction in how to live primarily from these sources.

Porter calls the passage she quotes from Gratian "the scriptural definition with which he begins" and contrasts it with "Isidore's definition") (131). Yet Gratian'sremark-"The natural law is that which is contained in the law and the Gospel, by which each person is commanded to do to others what he would wish to be done to himself, and forbidden to render to others that which he

[39] *STh* H-H, q. 85, a. 1 (1861b48-1862a6).

[40] The here is, of course, to be taken as "for the most part": cf., e.g., *ScG* III, c, 38 (Pera, ed., 2161).

would not have done to himself" (quoted by Porter, p. 129, her translation)-is hardly rightly called a "definition" of natural law. It tells us where to find that law, and gives us a fundamental example there found. Porter's quotation from Isidore is much more truly definitional. Indeed, Porter herself goes on to quote Gratian as saying that "not everything in the Law and the Gospel belongs to the natural law." Thus, the opening remark hardly aimed at "definition" in *his* mind. That does not take away from the rightness of beginning with the fact that the natural law is found in Scripture, particularly for someone writing from a Christian perspective. To speak of" definition," however, suggests that natural law is altogether indissociable from the theological context.

Third, in stressing the theological character of the scholastic concept of natural law, Porter says, "any attempt to abstract a 'purely rational' account from that concept will result in a fragmentary and unpersuasive account of the natural law" (141). It should be noted that Porter gives us hope for natural law's having some substance of its own when, having stressed the use of Scripture to determine what pertains to the natural law, she asks whether this means that the scholastic concept of natural law is "empty" (137). She denies this by speaking of the need to interpret Scripture, and to say what in it pertains to natural law, so that one does not have to obey the whole law of Moses. This dearly suggests that there is a concept which can be distinguished from the scriptural concept, if not separated from it in the scholastic context.

Nevertheless, at pp. 140-141, in stressing the theological character of the scholastic concept of natural law, she says, "any attempt to abstract a 'purely rational' account from that concept will result in a fragmentary and unpersuasive account of the natural law" (141). This seems to me an unsuitable stance, since the scholastic concept of natural law itself suggests that the primary precepts of natural law which it finds in Scripture are "known to aH."[41] It pertains to the idea of natural law (the

[41] Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 90, a. 4, ad 1: the promulgation of natural law consists in this, that God inserted it in the minds of men so as to be naturally known; HI, q. 93, a. 2, on whether the eternal law is known to all, argues that every rational creature knows the truth, at least as

scriptural idea, that is), that natural law can be known "by those who do not have the law," that is, as the Gloss says: by those who do not have the written law (i.e., Scripture).[42] Accordingly one is not faithful to the scriptural concept if one holds that a purely rational account is impossible. It may very well have problems as to its "persuasiveness," since, as the scholastic account has it, sin has weakened our practical knowledge and our natural inclinations.

regards the common principles of the natural law (1219a46-48). Of course, the constant question is: which are common principles and which are conclusions? As *we see* in I-II, q. 94, a. 6, on whether the natural law can *be* eliminated from the human heart, Thomas says:

> But as for certain secondary precepts, natural law can *be* eliminated from the hearts of men, either because of bad persuasions, in the way in which even in speculative matters errors arise regarding necessary conclusions; or *else* because of depraved customs and corrupt habits, as, for example, among *some* people highway robberies *were* not judged to *be* sins; or even *vices* against nature (were not so judged), as the Apostle also says in *RDmans* 1.24.

Obviously, highway robbery and sins against nature are being viewed here as pertaining to "secondary precepts." If a "purely rational" account would *be* "fragmentary," this would seem to apply even to a theological account (showing the need for the magisterium of the Church in moral matters).

[42] Cf., e.g., I-II, q. 91, a. 2, sc. Of course, the matter is delicate. Notice the treatment of *thegentes* in Thomas's *In Ad Romanos,* c. 2, lect. 3 (on Rom 2:14: "they *naturally* do what pertains to the law":

> [Paul] commends in them the observance of the law, when he says: "They naturally do what pertains to the law", that is, what the law commands, viz. as regards the moral precepts, which are prescribed by natural reason, just as concerning Job it was said that he was just.••.
>
> But that [Paul] says: "naturally" raises a question, for he seems to give support to the Pelagians, who said that man through his natural wherewithal could observe all the precepts of the law. Hence, one must explain: (1) "naturally", i.e. through nature reformed by grace. For he is speaking of the gentiles converted to the Faith, who through the grace of Christ began to observe the moral [precepts] of the law. Or one can say: (2) "naturally", i.e. through the natural law showing them what is to be done; in accordance with Psalm 4: "The many say: who shows us goods? Signed etc."; which is the natural light of reason in which there is the image of God; and nevertheless it is not excluded that grace is necessary to move the affections; just as also through the law there is knowledge of sin, and yet grace is further required to move the affections.

IV. HUMAN NATURE AND "ALTERNATIVE ETHICS"

A) The Possibility of an Alternative Ethics

Porter's conception of the support Scripture has provided for natural law, in the scholastic concept of natural law perspective, leads her to say that *human nature itself is not an adequate source of morality*. She argues that "morality is under-determined by human nature" so that "there is no one moral system that can plausibly be presented as *the* morality that best accords with human nature" (141).

This seems to me problematic. "Presented ... " to whom? Any moral point runs into trouble from somebody. The notion of a "moral system" as a unified item distinguishable from other "moral systems" may vary inasmuch as one aims to be more or less specific with one's laws. If we take the golden rule and its negative counterpart, these might seem too minimal to constitute a "system"; but if we take the Ten Commandments, while we may encounter opposition to them as a "moral system," we might decide that such opposition is unreasonable.[43]

And "under-determined by human nature": is there some natural lack? Obviously, the field of reason must remain underdetermined. That pertains to the very nature of reason as a source of action. That is why we have virtues and the need to develop them.[44] Yet nature offers the true and ineluctable basis, and the moral system proposed by Thomas in the *Summa Theologiae* might be said to accord best with human nature.[45]

More tellingly, Porter carries her conception of human nature as inadequate to furnish *"the* morality" to the point of sketching

[43] Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 100, a. 1: "it is necessary that all moral precepts pertain to the law of nature, but in diverse degrees; for some there are which *immediately by itself the natural reason of any human being whatsoever* judges are *to* be done or not to be done: such as 'Honour thy father and mother,' and 'thou shalt not kill,' 'thou shalt not steal.'"

[44] Cf. *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 3, that not all the acts of the virtues, as to their own proper species, pertain to natural law.

[45] Jacques Maritain, *Le paysan de la Garonne* (Paris: Desclt'!ede Brouwer, 1966), 189, speaks of the doctrine, theological and philosophical, of Thomas as "essentially grounded in truth" (that man have attained to such a doctrine he says is improbable, but he adds that the improbable sometimes occurs).

an alternative to the Christian conception of natural morality presented in the scholastic concept of natural law. She tells us that humans are *"naturally inclined"* to seek gratification "even at others' expense" (142-43). Taken literally (i.e., I am having my way paid by others and against their will), that would mean that we have a natural inclination to injustice. She says that these tendencies may be expressed in ways that are "destructive and repugnant" but she continues:

> they can also take forms that are striking, attractive, even praiseworthy, and it is possible to envision a moral system that gives them priority over inclinations towards care and reciprocity. Such a morality would be an *authentic* natural morality, and yet it would look very different from the scholastic concept of the natural law. (143, emphasis added)

Here we have something close to the core of our differences. Porter has told us:

> there is *nothing obvious* about the claim that our basic tendencies to care, reciprocity, and non-maleficence should be given moral priority over other standing tendencies, or that our capacities for rationality and responsible freedom are morally the most significant aspects of our nature. (142, emphasis added)

Her point here is that the scholastics selected among natural tendencies, and that the principles of selection were "largely scriptural." That the scholastics were attentive to Scripture before all else is true. That the priorities they found there should be taken as providing the authentic natural priorities seems to me the authentic Christian stance. It is certainly the Thomistic stance. The idea of there being more than one "authentic natural morality" hardly finds a place in a return to the "scholastic concept of natural law." In fact, Porter's alternative natural "morality" or ethic, seeking gratification at others' expense, takes up the stance of Thrasymachus in *Republic* 1:[46] the primacy of the

[46] Or, better, the higher-class presentation of Thrasymachus's position by Glaucon, *Republic* 2.358b-359b.

private self" It is not morality, but simple immoralityo[47] It is not "human nature" that leaves morality "under-determined"; it is the nature *as wounded* that makes errors about what constitutes authentic morality likelyo

Pursuing the possibility of an authentic natural morality other than the natural morality the scholastics found in Scripture, Porter introduces a consideration of the views of Friedrich Nietzsche. She begins with the remark, "Recently, a number of philosophers have called attention to the Christian antecedents, and therefore *the historical contingency*, of even our most pervasive moral assumptions" (143, emphasis added). *As* I read this sentence, the expression "have called attention to" suggests that these philosophers have really seen how things are, and are merely pointing them out Furthermore, I take it that the "therefore" is taken as part of the truth they have seen. In other words, I read Porter as herself agreeing that our most pervasive moral assumptions are historically contingent.

Even if our most pervasive moral assumptions have Christian antecedents, it does not follow that these assumptions are historically contingent. Suppose that human beings were having trouble with "1+1=2" and God sent a prophet to declare this truth. It would :remain a necessary truth, though the confirmation be historically contingent. So also, that a human being should love

[47] In *STh* I-Il, q. 109, a. 3, asking whether the human being can love God above all on the basis of sheer natural wherewithal (i.e., without grace), Thomas argues that to love God above all is *connatural* to man and to every creature. And he continues:

> Hence, man in the state of integral nature related the love of his own self to the love of God as to an end, and similarly the love of all other things. And thus he loved God more than himself and above all. But in the state of corrupted nature man fell short of this as regards the appetite of the rational will, which because of the *corruption* of the nature *follows the private good,* unless it is healed by the grace of God. And so it is to be said that man in the state of integral nature did not need the gift of grace added to natural goods in order to love God naturally above all; though he needed the assistance of God moving him to this. But in the state of corrupted nature man needs also for this the assistance of grace healing the nature. (1354b39-1355a5, emphasis added)

This does not, nevertheless, mean that Thomas thought it the case that man was originally created in a state of nature without grace: cf. *STh* I, q. 95, a. 1.

God, the author of being, above all, even above his own self, is not an historically contingent truth, even though it has been affirmed in the realm of historical contingency. [48]

Even the word "assumption" is poorly chosen, since it suggests that a position is merely assumed rather than seen or proved. The scholastic position (at least in Thomas Aquinas) is that our "most pervasive moral" principles are *per se nota,* most manifest, that is, seen in their truth. [49] They are not merely assumptions or postulates. The choice of the word "pervasive" is likewise questionable, at least when characterizing what are called "assumptions." It can suggest an invasion, perhaps an alien influence, of the moral zone by the assumption. Rather, a moral principle, such as "be reasonable," certainly affects, indeed quickens, every nook and cranny of the moral order, because reason is the proper source of order for everything in human life.

B) Nietzschean vs. Christian Ethics

Porter quotes John Casey on the subject of Nietzsche's "noble ethic," which is expressed as concentrating on action rather than motive. Her contention is that while this "ethic" seems to us morally repugnant, it corresponds to "natural inclinations":

> The difference between Nietzsche's moral vision and Christian morality is not that the one is natural and the other is not. Both visions are grounded in natural human inclinations, but each one gives priority to a different set of inclinations and subordinates and directs the others in accordance with those it privileges. For this reason, Nietzsche presents us with an alternative construal of what is normative in human nature, in the light of which the distinctiveness of the scholastic account can more readily be appreciated. (144-145)

This seems to me again to be at the heart of the problem. Obviously, the inclinations she is calling "natural" have been in

[48] Thus, St. Thomas three times in the *Summa Theologiae* presents the doctrine of the naturalness of our loving God more than our own selves: I, q. 60, a. 5; I-II, q. 109, a. 3; II-II, q. 26, a. 3.

[49] Cf. Jacques Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (New York: Scribners, 1952), 9: "If I. .. am a Thomist, it is in the last analysis because I have understood that the intellect sees , ..". This is true, not only of the speculative intellect, but also of the practical intellect.

evidence from pre-Christian times, and have been assessed by pre-Christian philosophers as unnatural. Indeed, we remember Plato's attempt to understand how the degeneration of society is possible, in terms of the nuptial number and the myth of the metals.[50] Christianity teaches that our natural indinations have been weakened, and we even have from St. Paul the doctrine of a "law of sin which dwells in my members."[51]

Porter seems to argue that we must take the Nietzschean ethic seriously in a way the scholastics would not have done. I see her praise of the Nietzschean ideal as thoroughly wrong. Obviously, the passions, including anger and hate, are beautiful and naturally good, and are virtuous inasmuch as they are in accordance with the rule of reason. But the romantic exaltation of "spiritedness, aggression, fierceness," heedless of the requirements of reason, is hardly admirable. *"Seems* morally repugnant"? Nay, 'tis!

At p. 146, she contends that the natural law "stands in need of defense," because of the need to distinguish the tendencies we find within ourselves. This is true. Thus, Thomas argues that it is natural to love oneself;[52] he argues that it is natural to love God by a friendly love even more than oneself;[53] he argues that it is natural to offer sacrifice;[54] he argues that it is natural to seek redress for wrongs done to oneself.[55] In the *Summa contra Gentiles* he argues that it is natural to reason to a knowledge of a God, if only in a somewhat confused way, and that not so to reason argues a moral failing in the person.[56]

[50] Cf. *Republic* 8 (545d-547c): Plato rightly saw the pervel'Sity of preferring mere honour to wisdom.

[51] Rom 7:23 (RSV); cf. *STh* I-II, q. 91, a. 6, on the "law of arousability *ffomitis],"* the irrational inclination of sensuality, which God permits in us as a punishment for original sin. Thomas explains: "inasmuch as by the divine justice the human being is deprived of [his] original good order and of the vigour of reason *[originali iustitia et vigore rationis],* the impetus itself of sensuality which draws him has the note of law inasmuch as it is pW1itiveand attaching *to* the human being deprived of his proper dignity by divine law" (1215a1-7).

[52] *STh* I, q. 60, a. 3. Cf. also IHI, q. 25, a. 7 on whether sinners love themselves.

[53] *STh* I, q. 60, a. 5.

[54] *STh* Il-H, q. 85, a. 1.

[55] *STh* IHI, q. 108, a. 2: "For there is a special inclination of nature to repel harmful things: hence, to the animals is given the irascible power distinct from the concupiscible."

[56] *ScG* m, c. 38 (Pera, ed., 2161 and 2165).

Porter asks to what degree the scholastics themselves are aware of the distinctivenesss of their concept of the natural law. Beginning her answer, she says:

> Certainly they are aware that their scripturally governed approach to natural law reflection is not the only possible approach, and in that sense they see themselves as working within a particular framework of thought that is not shared by all rational persons. (145)

We might simply be speaking of the difference between those who possess a revelation and those who must depend on reason without revelation. The scholastics saw themselves as in a very different position from some other "rational persons" such as Plato, Aristotle, etc. Thomas Aquinas speaks of the anguish of such brilliant geniuses as Aristotle, Alexander, and Averroes, concerning the doctrine of the possibility of human happiness. [57]

However, the contrast with Nietzsche was supposed to pertain to the most fundamental moral principles, not merely to "specific rules." Thus Porter continues:

> I do not believe (the scholastics) ever considered the possibility of a challenge to their *fundamental moral convictions* as radical as that which Nietzsche poses. For this reason, the scholastic concept of natural law, understood as implying specific moral commitments as well as an interpretation of morality, will be problematic for us in ways that it was not problematic for the scholastics themselves. The problem of moral relativism has been raised in sharper forms for us, not only by philosophers such as Nietzsche and his heirs, but also by experiences of moral disagreement in an increasingly pluralist and international world. At this point, it is impossible to deny the reality of genuine, serious disagreement among different traditions even with respect to fundamental moral commitments. (146, emphasis added)

One's judgment as to whether the scholastics had to face a challenge such as that of Nietzsche depends on how one understands and judges the phenomenon that is Nietzsche. The scholastics knew of the positions in ancient philosophy mentioned above. In Scripture itself they had portraits of the mind of the advocate of power, for example in Wisdom 2: 1-22: "let our might be our law of right, for what is weak proves itself to be useless"

[57] Ibid. (Pera, ed,, 2261-a).

(Wis 2:11). *As* for the scholastics' analysis of this state of mind, we have, for example, Thomas's treatment of the sin of pride. It is in the "irascible appetite," taken in the large sense, which includes the intellective appetite or will. It is a principle of spiritual blindness.[58]

It is certainly true that the scholastics did not have to contend with the social phenomenon that is atheist humanism and its aftermath. And there are many other aspects of modern or postmodern society which make for difficulty for the moralist. Nevertheless, disagreement has always been part of the moral scene, and one of the reasons for the existence of divine law, beyond the natural law, is the uncertainty of human judgment, especially in contingent particulars, whence come contrary laws.[59]

If the sense of Porter's argument were: "there is more radical disagreement now that in medieval times, and more disagreement on specific moral problems as well. Therefore, we stand in need of divine law to maintain the true natural law," I would agree entirely. However, I find her presentation of the Nietzschean man as "thrilling" and the doctrine as "a natural morality" (144) quite unacceptable. That there are "whole genres of popular fiction" making fortunes on its appeal is of course true. She says: "We do admire the man ... who goes his own way, lives by his own rules, and demands respect, even fear, for his independence and power." What is meant by "living by one's own rules"? Taken in the strict sense, it is the essential *"non serviam"* position. Only a very superficial or abstract view of human life, or a very wicked view, can find a thrill in such a picture. The part of us that gets such a thrill is not what makes us suitable judges in moral matters.[60]

[58] *STh* 11-11,q. 162, a. 3, corp. and ad 1, and the entire question.

[59] *STh* 1-11,q. 91, a. 4. Notice that in 1-11,q. 91, a. 5, ad 3 it is said that natural law directs man according to some common precepts, which both the spiritually imperfect and the perfect are expected to observe; that is why there is only *one* natural law for all humans (whereas there is in divine law the distinction between the Old Law for the earlier imperfect condition of the people, and the New Law for the more perfect condition of the people).

[60] Cf.STh1-11,q. 2, a. 1, ad 1: "Judgment concerning human goods ought not to be taken from the foolish but from the wise; just as judgment concerning flavours [ought to be taken] from those who have a well-tempered sense of taste."

Concerning Nietzsche and atheist humanism, one might reread Henri de Lubac.[61] Speaking of the death of God doctrine, he says:

> Whatever be the case as to [its] antecedents, the meaning which Nietzsche attaches to the expression "the death of God" is new. It is not in his mouth a simple statement of fact. Nor is it a lamentation or a sarcasm. It voices an option. "Now", says Nietzsche, "it is our taste which decides against Christianity. It is not arguments."[62] It is an act, an act as clear-cut, as brutal as is that of a murderer. "The death of God is not only for him a terrible fact. It is willed by him."[63] If God is dead, he in fact adds: "it is we who have killed him." "We are the assassins of God."[64]

Further along, de Lubac presents Nietzsche seeing himself as the first to look down on Christian morals.[65]

Everyone acknowledges a "greatness" of Nietzsche, but what does it mean? I would suggest that it is the greatness of the poet, where poetry is a persuasive rather than a demonstrative mode of discourse. It is a seductive influence in the realm of thought.[66] In that sense, Nietzsche does indeed represent a new dimension of

[61] Henri de Lubac, *Le drame de l'humanisme athee* (Paris: Editions Spes, 1945).

[62] Here, de Lubac inserts a note to the effect that the statement is taken from *Le gai savoir*. He adds that Bauemler is thus wrong when he writes: "To understand exactly the attitude of Nietzsche regarding Christianity, one must never lose sight of the fact that the decisive phrase 'God is dead' has the meaning of a witnessing to historical fact" *(Nietzsche, le philosophe et le politique* [1931]). De Lubac replies: it does much more than state a fact.

[63] A note here tells us that the speaker is Jean Wahl.

[64] De Lubac, *Le drame*, 49 (translation mine). St. Thomas *[STh* II-II, q. 162, a. 6], speaking of pride [superbia] as the gravest of sins, locates its gravity on the side of aversion from the immutable good:

> because in other sins a man is turned away from God either because of ignorance or because of weakness, or because of the desire for some other good; but *superbia* has aversion from God precisely on the grounds that it does not want to be subject to God and to his rule. Hence, Boethius says that all sins move away from God, but *superbia* alone stands opposed to God *[se Deo opponit].* For which reason also, it is specially said in *James* 4.6: "God opposes the proud". And so, to be turned away from God and his precepts, which is in the role of a consequence in other sins, pertains essentially *£per se]* to *superbia*, whose act is contempt for God. (2227b20-33)

[65] De Lubac, *Le drame*, 122.

[66] Cf. ibid., 63, concerning *thoughts* as the great actions according to Nietzsche (and the "advent of nihilism").

human crisis. I am put in mind of G. K. Chesterton's criticism of Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*. Chesterton was concerned about his society's ability to conjure but not a corresponding enthusiasm, or even for conjuring the good. He says:

if there is anyone who does not comprehend the defect in our world which I am criticizing,[67] I should recommend him, for instance, to read a story by Mr. Henry James, called "The Turn of the Screw." It is one of the most powerful things ever written, and it is one of the things about which I doubt most whether it ought ever to have been written at all. It describes two innocent children gradually growing at once omniscient and half-witted under the influence of the foul ghosts of a groom and a governess. As I say, I doubt whether Mr. Henry James ought to have published it (no, it is not indecent, do not buy it; it is a spiritual matter), but I think the question so doubtful that I will give that truly great man a chance. I will approve the thing as well as admire it if he will write another tale just as powerful about two children and Santa Claus. If he will not, or cannot, then the conclusion is dear; we can deal strongly with gloomy mystery, but not with happy mystery; we are not rationalists, but diabolists.[68]

V. SEXUAL ETHICS

Coming to one of her chapters concerning more particular moral issues, Porter says:

Even those who are most sympathetic to medieval moral thought consider the scholastic sexual ethic an aberration to be explained away.[69] (188)

And again:

[the scholastics'] sexual ethic is strikingly different from that of the majority in the industrialized West. (189)

She says that eventually she will argue that

[67] The text I have reads "civilising", but I think it is a scribal error.

[68] Gilbert K. Chesterton, *Tremendous Trifles* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1909), 134-35, in an newspaper article entitled, "The Red Angel."

[69] Porter's idea of who are "most sympathetic to medieval moral thought" is not mine. I notice that many names do not figure in the bibliography. Etienne Gilson is not there, nor Benedict Ashley, nor Servais Pinckaers, nor Romanus Cessario, nor Janet Smith, nor Russell Hittinger, nor Mark Johnson. Jacques Maritain is mentioned briefly in connection with the link between natural law and natural right.

it is possible to develop a critical reappropriation of the natural law that preserves the central scholastic insights into the human and theological significance of sexuality while still allowing for subsequent developments in our understanding of what counts as natural and appropriate in sexual relations. (190)

A) The Good of Marriage

In a first section, on sexuality in the scholastic concept of natural law, Porter mentions Peter Lombard's reaffirmation of Augustine's view that sexual intercourse is evil except within marriage, together with his assertion that marriage is justified by a threefold good: the faithfulness of the spouses, children, and the sacramental bond between the spouses (IV *Sent.*, do 26, q. 2). She speaks of Thomas as teaching that sexual pleasure serves a purpose, as offering an inducement to procreation. [70] (I might add that it would be better to add references to the *Supplementum* of the *ST* where existent, since it is generally more accessible than the later distinctions of IV *Sent.* 4.)

At po 196, she tells us:

For the scholastics, there is only one unambiguously good purpose for sexual intercourse within marriage: procreation. In addition, most of the scholastics

[70] I have not seen Porter refer to the text where he says that sexual pleasure would be more intense in the state of original justice. Cf. *Sfh* I, q. 98, a. 2, ad 3. She does refer to, but does not quote, II-II, q. 153, a. 2, ad 2, where Thomas says:

> the moderateness *[medium]* of virtue is not seen as regards the quantity, but as regards what is fitting for right reason. And so the abl.llldance of delight which is there in the sexual act ordered according to reason is not at odds with the moderateness of virtue. And furthermore how much the external sense is delighted, something that depends on the disposition of the body, does not pertain to virtue; rather, how much the interior appetite is affected by such delights [pertains to virtue] ...

This, of course, is why the judging of what is "moderate" varies from person to person as regards the virtues of temperance and fortitude. I-II, q. 60, a. 2; II-II, q. 58, a. 10.

I have trouble with Porter's references to John Noonan, *Contraception* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965). I have consulted the edition she lists, that of 1965, and also the enlarged edition of 1986; what she presents as his p. 243 (in her p. 237 n. 14), I find in Noonan at his p. 198. In her note 15, she sends us to Noonan at pp. 353-54, but I find the material in Noonan at pp. 293-94. Most serious of all, Noonan's relevant reference to Thomas in the *Sentences* is to IV *Sent.*, d. 31, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1 (Noonan, *Contraception,* 294), not, as she reports it, to JV *Sent.,* d. 41, q. 2, a. 1, ad 3.

consider it morally justifiable for either spouse to initiate sexual relations in order to satiate the sex drive, if his or her purpose in doing so is to forestall temptation to sexual sin.

The expression "morally justifiable" seems minimalist if one takes the case of St Thomas, who says that so to act is meritorious (and so, obviously, *unambiguously* good):

> The conjugal act is sometimes meritorious, and without either mortal or venial sin, Le. when it is ordered towards the good of procreating and educating a child for the worship of God: for thus it is an act of religion; or when it is done for the sake of rendering what is owing (to each other): for so taken, it is an act of justice. For every act of a virtue is meritorious if it is (done) with charity. [71]

Really to do justice to the situation, one would have to bring in the doctrine that the concupiscence we experience has a dimension of punishment, stemming from original sin, inasmuch as it is recalcitrant to reason. Then, marriage understood as a *remedy* for this condition is seen as entirely and unambiguously a good. Thus, as Thomas says:

> that unseemliness of concupiscence which always accompanies the matrimonial act is not the (sort of) unseemliness which pertains to moral fault, but rather to penalty coming from the first sin, such that the lower powers and bodily members do not obey reason. [72]

In line with that, Thomas teaches that, as regards the instituting of marriage, there were several steps:

> It is to be said that nature inclines to matrimony, intending some good, which (good) indeed is varied in accordance with the diverse states of men. And so it is necessary that that good be diversely instituted in the diverse states of men. And therefore matrimony, according as it is ordered towards the procreation of

[71] *In I Ad Corinthios,* c. 7, lect. 1 (concerning Paul at 1 Cor 7:6); cf. IV *Sent.,* d. 26, q. 1, a. 4 (in *STh Suppl.:* q. 41, a. 4), where the same doctrine is presented. It is to be noted that the doctrine is that each spo11Se can have the intention of helping the other: th1JS, there is no sin whatsoever; on John Noonan's misinterpretation of St. Thomas in this regard, so that one spouse would always sin venially at least, cf. John C. Ford, S. J., and Germain Grisez, "Contraception and the Infallibility of the Ordinary Magisterium," *Theological Studies* 39 (1978): 296-97.

[72] IV *Sent.,* d. 26, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3 (in *STh Suppl.* q. 41, a. 3, ad 3).

the child, which was necessary even when sin did not exist, was instituted before sin. But according as it provides a remedy against the wound of sin, it was instituted after sin, in the time of the law of nature. But according to the determination of persons, it had its institution in the law of Moses.[73] But according as it represents the mystery of the union of Christ and the Church, it had its institution in the New Law, and in function of that it is a sacrament of the New Law.[74]

Clearly, the good of matrimony can hardly be envisaged without an appreciation of the concrete situation of the moral agent, which includes the results of original sin.[75] Before original sin, reproduction was the only good of matrimony (at least, the only good to which Thomas alludes in the above passage), but after original sin, its goodness as a remedy is unambiguous.[76]

B) Sexual Sins

I notice Porter's rejection, for "us," of Thomas's view that, after homicide, sexual sins are worst. We read:

[73] The editors of the Ottawa edition of the *Summa Theologiae* refer here to Leviticus 18:6 (and following), which give rules for the people of Israel, as regards whom they cannot marry.

[74] IV *Sent.*, d. 26, q. 2, a. 2 (in *STh Suppl.* q. 42, a. 2).

[75] On the "perpetual corruption" (in this life) of sensuality, at the level of "kindling," cf. *STh* I-II, q. 74, a. 3, ad 2; venial sin is part of the inevitability of our present life (though not necessarily in any particular sexual act).

[76] It should be stressed that the remedy is conceived in the context of *mutual* benefit. Each partner is supposed to be doing something for the other. Thus, Thomas tells us:

> if anyone by the act of matrimony intends the avoidance of fornication on the part of the partner, there is no sin, because this is a rendering of what is owed, which pertains to the [marital] good of "faith". But if the person intends to avoid fornication for himself *[in se]*, in such a situation there is some overdoing *[superfluitas]*. And in function of that, there is venial sin. Nor was marriage instituted for that, save as regards the indulgence which regards venial sins. (IV *Sent.*, d. 31, q. 2, a. 3, ad 2 [in *STh Suppl.* q. 49, a. 5, ad 2])

The word "indulgence" just used obviously is a reference to St. Paul, 1 Cor 7:6. I might add that it is important in discussing these matters to say something about the nature and degree of seriousness of "venial sin." This concept is not widely understood. The word "sin" as so used is almost equivocal, as compared with its use to speak of mortal sin. Moreover, it is not intelligible here without the doctrine of the state of original justice. See Lawrence Dewan, O.P., "St. Thomas, Lying, and Venial Sin," *The Thomist* 61 (1997): 279-99.

The scholastic attitude is well expressed by Aquinas' remark ... that sexual sins comprise the worst form of wrong-doing, next to murder *(Summacontragentiles* III 122). For most contemporary men and women, such a view is incomprehensible. We tend to presuppose that there are important differences between those kinds of actions that harm other people, and sexual transgressions. (222)

This passage does not adequately communicate the sense of Thomas's judgment. The very text Porter mentions, *ScG* III, c. 122, begins by making the claim, on the part of adversaries, that simple fornication harms no one, and so is not a sin at all:

They say: take [the case of] some woman who is free from any husband, who is under the power of no one, whether a father or anyone else. If someone has sexual relations with her, with her willing [cooperation], he does no injury to her: because he pleases her, and she has power over her own body. He does no injury to anyone else: because she is held to be under the power of no one else. Therefore, there seems to be no sin.[77]

Thomas argues, on the basis of teleology, that every emission of seed that takes place in such a way that generation cannot result or suitably result is against the good of the human being. Thus, if this is purposely done, it is a sin. He notes first the case of sins against nature (such as contraception). He goes on to take the case of an emission of seed that takes place in such fashion that generation can indeed follow, but suitable education is impeded. Speaking of the fact that any inordinate emission of seed is not a light offense, but rather a most serious one, he says:

the inordinate emission of seed opposes *[repugnat]thegoodofthenature,*which is the preservation of the species. Hence, after the sin of homicide, by which an already actual existent human nature is destroyed, this kind of sin is seen to hold the second place, by which the generation of human nature is interfered with *[impeditur]*.[78]

Thus, obviously, the whole judgment is based on the justice involved in the common good of humanity and the particular

[77] *ScG* III, c. 122 (Pera, ed., 2947).
[78] Ibid. (Pera, ed., 2955).

good of individuals who may be born in unsuitable circumstances for wholesome human life.

Since the current view to which Porter refers is largely based on a contraceptive approach to sexuality, one should be clear that Thomas, in the text referred to, first of all argues on the basis of the teleology of our bodily parts and of their proper operations. He argues in exactly the same way as when he considers all lying as a sin.[79] He mentions here in ScG III, c. 122 the case of walking on one's hands or doing something with one's feet that would naturally be done by the hands, both of which he would assuredly consider venial sins. It is the gravity of the problem of generation in human life that leads to the judgment that misuse in this domain is criminal. Most important, here, is *STh* II-II, q. 154, aa. 11-12, on sin against nature as the most serious sort of sin of lust. In a. 12, we see the sort of argument Porter mentions as "the way we think now," that is, that contraceptive intercourse *harms no one,* as the very first thirteenth- century objection:

> A sin is more serious just to the extent that it is against charity. But adultery, defilement, and rape, which tend to harm the neighbor, seem more against charity towards one's neighbor, than sins against nature, through which *no one harmsanother.* Therefore, the sin against nature is not the most [sinful] among the sins of lust.[80]

The main reply here by Thomas is of the greatest importance.[81] Thomas says:

> It is to be said that in any domain the corruption of the principle on which all else depends is what is worst.
>
> Now, the principles of reason are those things which are in function of nature; for reason, those things being presupposed which are determined by

[79] Cf. *STh* II-II, q. 110, a. 3.

[80] *STh* II-II, q. 154, a. 12, obj. 1.

[81] Patrick Lee, in "Is Thomas's Natural Law Theory Naturalist?", *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 71 (1997): 586-87, actually thought it was some sort of exception, saying: "Thomas .•. was not always consistent in the application of his basic principles." It is hard to imagine a more carefully crafted and well-considered presentation. On this general issue of "naturalism," see Lawrence Dewan, O.P., "St. Thomas, Our Natural Lights, and the Moral Order," *Maritain Studies/Etudes maritainiennes* (Ottawa) 2 (1986): 59-92 (reprinted in *Angelicum* 67 [1990]: 285-307).

nature, disposes the others in the way that agrees (with nature). And this is apparent both in speculative and in practical (matters). And thus, just as in speculative matters error concerning those things knowledge of which is naturally implanted in man is most serious and most unseemly, so also in matters of action to act against what is determined in function of nature is most serious and unseemly.

Therefore, since in sins which are against nature a man transgresses that which is determined in function of nature regarding sexual activity, hence it is that in such matter this sin is most serious.[82]

The harm that is being done by such sins is to the very possibility of right judgment concei:ning our lives.

The reply to the first objection is likewise of the greatest importance, and most sobering:

It is to be said that just as the order of right reason is from man, so also the order of nature is from God himself. And therefore in sins against nature, in which the very order of nature is violated, injustice (iniuria) is done to God himself, the one who orders nature. Hence, Augustine says, in *Confessions* 3 (cap. 8; PL 32.689): "Those disgraceful acts which are against nature are to be everywhere and at all times detested and punished; such as were those of the men of Sodom: which should all peoples commit, they should all stand guilty of the same crime, by the divine law, which did not so make men that they should use one another in that way. In fact, the social relation itself *(ipsa societas)* which we ought to have with God is violated when that same nature of which He is Author is polluted by perversity of sexual passion."[83]

Thomas regards human well-being as indissociable from the relation to God: thus, the first commandment of the decalogue, laying the foundation for human goodness, must bear on the ultimate end of the human will, which is God.[84]

C) .*Humanae Vitae"*

Introducing the topic of contraception, Porter says that the papal encyclical *Humanae vitae* (1968; hereafter HV) rejects the use of contraception "based on an appeal to the structure of the sexual act and its inherent orientation towards procreation, as this·

[82] *SI'h* II-II, q. 154, a. 12 (2185b12-30).
[83] *SI'h* 11-11, q. 154, a. 12, ad 1.
[84] *SI'h* 11-11, q. 122, a. 2.

is revealed by rational analysis prior to theological interpretation" (197).[85] She contrasts this with the scholastics who

> do not typically argue this way. Rather, they focus on the proper purposes of sexuality and marriage as these are revealed through theological reflection, and then they judge particular kinds of acts to be unnatural because they are not in accordance with those overall purposes. They do sometimes speak in terms that suggest that unnatural sexual practices violate the purposes of the sexual organs, but it is important to realize that this way of speaking itself presupposes a particular understanding of the purpose of sexuality. (Ibid.)

She says that Aquinas makes this dear in *ScG* III, c. 122, and quotes that part of it which distinguishes between sexual sins against nature and walking on one's hands.

Aquinas says, as we saw, that such activity does little harm, whereas misuse of sex is bad for the common good of the human race. Now, is this "a particular understanding of the purpose of sexuality"? Thomas is quite dear that there is a purpose for the hands and another for the feet, and that they are not being used for those purposes in the instances mentioned. So also there is a purpose for sex. The contrast lies not in the discerning of purpose-the purpose of all three is dear. Rather, it lies in the seriousness of the matter for the universal good of the human being. The issue is what dangerous consequences pertain to the misuse of sex. In the case of lying, the sort of lie that is a venial sin is a misuse of speech as such. But the matter is not serious, as it is in the case of sex. *All* sexual disorder is grave, and the disorder which contravenes the very nature of the being is gravest in the genus, because overruling the very basis of using reason in ethics.[86]

Rereading *HV,* I am impressed with the extent to which it is a theological and pastoral document, putting us in the context of the magisterial teaching of the Church, as the interpreter of natural and divine law.

Porter tells us that "even the most sympathetic critics of *HV* have found its focus on particular acts of sexual intercourse to be

[85] Porter refers us to para. 16. This is an error (for para. 12), as can be seen on pp. 224-225 where she quotes what in all the editions I have seen is numbered u12" and calls it "16."

[86] *STh* II-II, q. 154, a. 12.

unpersuasive and even offensive" (225). Again, we might question the listing of who is "most sympathetic" to the doctrine. Does *HV* "break marriage down into a series of disconnected sexual acts"?[87] I would say it definitely does not do so. Nevertheless, it takes seriously any sexual act, and offers good reasons for so doing. Indeed, if we go back to St. Thomas, we see that such an approach to an act pertains to the rational foundation of morals.

Porter allows that there is some wisdom in the line of thinking developed by the scholastics, and that *HV* reflects "similar theological convictions." However, she sees these convictions, as expressed in *HV,* "obscured by the encyclical's concern to present its arguments in terms of a universally accessible moral rationality" (ibid.). Now, one might judge that the encyclical, which of course was meant to appeal to "the faithful and *to all men of goodwill,"* as it says in the beginning, shows considerable optimism as to the actual success it can achieve; though it does say:

> It can be foreseen that this teaching will perhaps not be easily received by all: Too numerous are those voices-amplified by the modern means of propaganda-which are contrary to the voice of the Church. To tell the truth, the Church is not surprised to be made, like her divine Founder, a "sign of contradiction", yet she does not because of this cease to proclaim with humble firmness the entire moral law, both natural and evangelical.[88]

HV does not present what it says as "universally accessible" in the sense that what is *per se* known to all is clearly known as such. The encyclical has very much the pastoral purpose of interpreting the natural law for those who have serious need of help in such interpretation.

D) Homosexual Activity

Later in the same chapter Porter raises the issue of homosexual activity. After noting that the scholastics were against it, she looks

[87] Porter tells us that she is quoting Oliver O'Donovan, but she seems to share the view.

[88] *Humanae vitae* 18; I am quoting here the English version available on the *New Advent* website.

at the modem situation, and "far-reaching changes in general attitudes towards sexuality itself." She eventually comes to this:

> the difficulty with some forms of contemporary gay culture, seen from a theological standpoint, is not that they represent an evil or unnatural way of life. Rather, they are problematic because they represent an alternative construal of human nature that has its own value and integrity but that is nonetheless in tension with fundamental Christian commitments.
>
> The tension does not stem from the fact that homosexual activity is non-procreative. Rather, it reflects a more basic tension between the values of erotic experience and procreation, when these are considered as key values for a socially embodied sexual ethic. (233)

Porter acknowledges that this is the same sort of observation she made in discussing the Nietzschean approach to life: "authentic" but hardly Christian.

All this seems very far from the medieval conception of natural law. It is not merely that the medievals said something else. It is that nature has been so limited as a source of morality than one seems no longer to have to do with the same idea.

CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion, I would say that we need an interest in natural law, and in the kind of defense which metaphysical reflection can provide. Even truths that are known by virtue of themselves to all require defense, as Aristotle indicated in undertaking the defense of the first principle of demonstration. Without a vision of ontological hierarchy there is very little to hope for from ethics. Questions about the distinction between intellect and will, between reason and sense knowledge, and the respective nobilities of these items, must be constantly revisited. Porter's remarks about the selection of this tendency over that, in contrasting the Nietzschean and the Christian positions, strike me as lacking just such a vision.

BOOK REVIEWS

Natural Law and Practical Reason: A Thomist View of Moral Autonomy. By MARTIN RHONHEIMER. New York: Fordham University Press, 2000. Pp. xxii + 620. $45.00 (doth), $19.95 (paper). ISBN 0-8232-1978-X (cloth), 0-8232-1979-8 (paper).

This is a fine translation, by Dr. Gerald Malsbary, of a book published in 1987 under the title *Naturals Grundlage der Moral. Die personale Struktur des Naturgesetzes bei Thomas von Aquin: Eine Auseinandersetzung mit autonomer und teleologischer Ethik.* As the German subtitle indicates, it is a polemical work, with two main foes: the currents in moral theology dubbed "autonomous morality" (e.g., Auer, Bockle) and "teleological ethics" (Schuller, McCormick, etc.). These currents are denounced as historically inaccurate interpretations of Thomas Aquinas and philosophically unsound accounts of moral normativity.

Autonomous morality, adopting a purely spiritual conception of moral agency, involves a dualistic view of man. It reduces freedom to self-reflexivity, and the natural moral law to a formalism. Its notion of reason as "creative" of norms is not at all St Thomas's view of reason's role in the moral order. Rhonheimer grants, or even insists, that reason does in a sense enjoy autonomy. But on the whole, he judges, it would be better to speak of "participated theonomy." (His sorting out of meanings of "autonomy" is very helpful [195-206].) Reason has an active share in the work of ordering things according to the eternal law of divine providence.

He also discerns a kind of dualism infecting teleological ethics. For all the charges of physicalism brought by its proponents against more traditional, "neo-thomistic" Catholic morality, it is they who turn out to have a physicalist account of the object of the moral act. In the final analysis they substitute mere calculation and technique for truly moral reasoning, which always moves within the horizon of the dignity of the human person.

In these polemics Rhonheimer is very effective. Perhaps they are now somewhat dated. However, his way of understanding "nature as a basis of morals" also involves him in another controversy. For in fact he agrees that neo-thomistic moral thought is often physicalist. He works hard to free Thomas's own ethics from it. This side of the book seems less dated. With regret, I must say that I also find it much less effective.

The physicalism that Rhonheimer finds in authors such as Cathrein, Manser, Pieper, and many others (all German, as it happens) consists in treating natural law as a "law of nature," identical with the natural order or even the very natures of things. Properly, he urges, natural law should be considered a "law of practical reason." It is not "read off" from the "naturally given," nor is it formed in light of "metaphysical essences," even man's. It is "constituted" through practical reason's own preceptive activity.

In this matter Rhonheimer has much in common with Grisez and Finnis, whose influence he avows (44 n. 7, 556). He is impressed by Hume's and Moore's charges of fallacy in any derivation of "ought" or "good" from mere speculative facts of nature (5-7, 43 n. 4). He is also persuaded that since we know a nature by its acts, knowledge of human nature cannot be presupposed to the primary acts or precepts of practical reason; rather it presupposes them (17-22, 30-31). What seems most distinctive of his view is the role he assigns to man's natural inclinations. He finds these essential in the genesis of the moral order, if not its proper "basis."

It is hard to say exactly what sort of entities he takes these inclinations to be. They cannot be acts of will, since practical reason presupposes them (28, 75-78). Yet their objects do not seem confined to those of sense-appetite or purely physical tendency. In any case, they are said to constitute a "structure of striving" in which reason is "embedded" (27). This is the precondition for reason's having a practical operation at all, and so issuing any moral dictates (78, 284). Just how they influence reason, however, is not explained. The term 'experience' is used often. At one point judgment by connaturality is mentioned (53 n. 55).

Rhonheimer assures us that although reason would not be practical without the natural inclinations, it is not their slave. It raises their objects to its own rank, by the very fact of apprehending them as good. For this apprehension is in the form of precepts, those of natural law; and through these, the order of action in pursuit of the goods is first erected (76). This is the moral order. Its proper source is thus practical reason itself (59-64, 319). Yet it makes sense only in conjunction with the inclinations. They are not moral themselves, but the moral law must be proportioned to them. In that way they do contribute to its constitution. It is a law for man, not for "any possible rational being."

It is a clever account. Is it Thomas's? Rhonheimer says, "I follow the explicit statement of St. Thomas in holding that the *inclinationnaturalis* has a standard-giving function in relation to the *rationaturalis"* (565). His reference is to *STh* I-II, q. 91, a. 3, ad 2. He appeals to this passage repeatedly. It is his best one. It reads, "human reason as such is not a measure of things, but principles naturally instilled in it are certain general rules and measures of all that is to be done by man, of which natural reason is a rule and measure, even though it is not a measure of what is by nature." That "explicit statement" is nowhere to be found. To make the passage say what he wants, Rhonheimer must in fact gloss "principles" and "what is by nature" with "inclinations" (74). And the gloss is untenable. The body of the article shows that "principles" refers to the precepts of natural law; and his claim (305 n. 74) that "things" *(rerum)* here covers

inclinations is, if anything, contradicted by the other text he cites (*STh* 1-11, q. 64, a. 3), where "things" is said in direct opposition to "appetite" (*appetitus*).

Without the natural inclinations, however, Rhonheimer has no way of accounting for practical reason's natural understanding of human goods, the objects of the precepts of natural law. If he is certain of anything, it is that these cannot enter the natural law by being grasped as goods of man's abstract "nature" or "essence." From the start he is categorical: in the texts of Thomas "one searches in vain for a statement that nature is the measure of what is good" (8).

It is a disconcerting claim. Here is a statement taken from a very prominent text on good and evil in human acts: "for each thing, that is good which suits it according to its form; and evil, that which departs from the order of its form" (*STh* 1-11, q. 18, a. 5). This is simply a reminder of the fundamental account of "the good in general" in *STh* I, q. 5. There goodness is presented as an immediate function of the perfection of a being. A perfect being is one "lacking nothing, according to its mode of perfection." What sets its mode? Its form, through which it "is what it is" (*STh* I, q. 5, a. 5). The idea also stands out in the general treatments of evil (*STh* I, q. 49, a. 1) and vice (*STh* 1-11, q. 71, a. 2).

But can the "naturally given" really be a source for the precepts of natural law? Thomas's answer seems perfectly clear. "Human acts can be regulated according to the rule of human reason, which is gleaned [*sumiturJ* from the created things that man naturally knows" (*STh* 1-11, q. 74, a. 7). Readers may judge for themselves how Rhonheimer handles this passage (17).

If Thomas is explicit about anything, it is that practical reason naturally does, and should, imitate the general order found in nature. See, for example, *In Politicorum, proem.; STh* I, q. 60, a. 5; 11-11, q. 31, a. 3; 11-11, q. 50, a. 4; 11-11, q. 130, a. 1. We even find him teaching that a natural *inclination* in man derives from physical things (*STh* 1-11, q. 87, a. 1). Rhonheimer insists that "things" are not moral rules and that the moral order is not found in them (17). "The natural law is not the 'imitative' reflex of a 'natural order,' but rather a practically cognitive, cooperative completion of the ordering of the eternal law" (535; see 235). Yet it is for the very sake of conforming our works to God's mind or to the order of divine wisdom, that is, of cooperating in the ordering of the eternal law, that Thomas deems the imitation of nature necessary. Obviously he does not mean a slavish sort of imitation, sheer mimicry. The moral order is not a copy of the natural. They are analogous. They have common, sapiential principles. And the natural order must come first, both in reality and in knowledge. For one of the common principles is nature itself. (A few pertinent texts: *STh* I, q. 60, *passim;* 11-11, q. 64, a. 1; 11-11, q. 154, a. 12.)

But then there is Rhonheimer's notion of nature. "In the realm of pure nature, there is no 'ought,' as Kant correctly recognized: there are only neces8ary regularities" (196). By "ought" Rhonheimer means, quite generally, the "claim of the good" (198). So in other words, pure nature is not under the sway of the good. Fortunately he does not say that Thomas "recognized" this too. But neither does he explain why such a deep disagreement with Thomas's thought

is not a grave problem for his own. (On *debitum* in nature, see *STh* I, q. 21, a. 1, esp. ad 3; I-Il, q. 21, a. 1. On the necessaries, see *STh* I-II, q. 93, a. 4, esp. obj. 4 / ad 4.)

I am not arguing that for Thomas the good is "derived" from the natural, as though contained in its very concept or *ratio.* The *ratio* of good does add something, namely, desirability. But for us the simpler *ratio* comes first. The concept of good--that is, final cause-presupposes the concepts of efficient and formal cause *(STh* I, q. *5,* a. 4). Indeed "every existence and good is considered through some form" *(STh* I-II, q. 85, a. 4). Like existence, every good is proportioned to some nature, while also transcending it. "Suited to nature" is contained in the concept of the good. Thomas sees it as so dose to the surface of what the good is, so formal in the *ratio boni,* that he judges it impossible to will what does not seem somehow to suit one's nature *(STh* I-II, q. 6, a. 4, ad 3; cf. I-II, q. 19, a. 10).

Of course the "perfect" good, the good that "leaves nothing to be desired" and constitutes the will's primary object, is that which is proportioned to intellectual nature *(STh* I, q. 26, a. 1). But does our grasp of ourselves as intellectual presuppose our grasp of the good? Quite the contrary. "First intellect grasps what is *[ens]* itself; then it grasps itself understanding what is; then it grasps itself being attracted to what is. Hence first comes the *ratio entis,* second the *ratio veri,* third the *ratio boni" (STh* I, q. 16, a. 4, ad 2; cf. *STh* I, q. 87, a. 4, ad 3). So a knowledge of our nature is indeed presupposed to any work of practical reason.

Not even the expression *'ratio boni,'* however, means the same for Rhonheimer as for Thomas. "The 'nature of the good' *(ratio bom)* is therefore nothing other than what we experience as 'good' -the *appetibile,* the actuality of the practical object that is experienced in willing as willing's own object" (72). Thomas teaches that intellect bears upon the abstract *ratio boni* and *not* just the concrete *bonum appetibile* upon which the will bears. This is why intellect is an intrinsically nobler power *(STh* I, q. 82, a. 3). The *ratio boni* is what gives intellect an act that is formal, constitutive, for any act of will *(STh* I-II, q. 9, a. 1).

It also sets intellect off from sense in an important way. The senses do not incite desire of a good until pleasure in it is experienced. But although intelligible goods are by nature even more pleasant, intellect requires no such experience before moving desire. Its grasp of the universal good is enough (III *De Anima,* lect. 12, §771; cf. *STh* I-II, q. 4, a. 2, ad 2). By knowing the *ratio boni,* intellectual beings "are most perfectly inclined to the good" *(STh* I, q. 59, a. 1; cf. XII *Metaphys.,* lect. 7, §2522). Intellect as it were unleashes the good's full power to attract. This means, I believe, that in order to be practical, reason needs no other inclination than what its own understanding of the human good elicits.

But for Rhonheimer, does practical reason really even "understand"? "The object of the practical reason ... is the 'good' itself that is in question; the practical reason does not produce a statement but rather a *prosecutio,* and this takes the form of either an intention or an *electio,* from which an action immediately follows" (59). This is the description of a will, not an intellect (see

also 31-32, 58-64). Wanting to secure some autonomy for practical reason, he makes it consist entirely in what distinguishes it from speculative reason. As a result he degrades it.

The book is stimulating, and its ultimate goal quite positive. Had his immediate object not been so polemical, perhaps Rhonheimer would have been less apt to read his own ideas into St Thomas. Their presentation would then have been clearer and, philosophically, even more engaging.

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The Shaping of Rationality: Toward Interdisciplinarity in Theology and Science. By J. WENTZEL VAN HUYSSTEEN. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999. Pp. xii + 303. $35.00 (cloth). ISBN 0-8028-3868-5.

The proper relating of faith and reason is perhaps the most knotted of all theological problems. The difficulty resides not solely within the mystery of faith itself, but in how one understands the contours and capacities of human rationality. While theologians can claim some special expertise with the former, the same cannot be said about the latter. It falls within the province of philosophy to discern the character of reason, and theology must be attuned to its insights. Unfortunately, contemporary philosophy has proved an unreliable handmaid in this respect, failing to provide a stable definition for theologians to take up. Indeed, debates concerning the power of reason define our modern/postmodern age. At one end of the spectrum reclines natural science, at ease with reason's power one day to attain a "theory of everything." At the other end are the humanities, either plagued by self-doubt or happily resigned to reason's impotency in the domains of meaning and value. It is no wonder, therefore, that so few theologians dare a new resolution to the problem of faith and reason, most being content to rely upon traditional formulae. The danger of this strategy is that a faith not properly related to a convincing conception of reason is a faith that soon fails to convince.

Among the great values of Wentzel van Huyssteen's latest work is its forthright recognition that theology cannot formulate its own idea of reason independent of philosophy or any other type of rational inquiry. Of special interest for him is the rationality operative in the natural sciences. An active participant in the dialogue of science and religion, Huyssteen is convinced that theologians must face squarely the fact that while natural science is seen by the majority of educated adults as the pinnacle of rationality, religious faith is

increasingly seen as a mode of sentiment, private at best and ruled by sheer irrationality at worst. Any approach to the relationship of faith and reason that leaves theology without the capacity for or an urgent interest in relating faith to the claims of science is, according to Huyssteen, the theological equivalent of whistling past the graveyard.

At the same time, Huyssteen's approach to conceptions of reason outside the walls of theology is far from subservient; rather, it represents a lively and critical engagement with contemporary philosophical debates. This attitude is reflected in the judgment that contemporary philosophy of reason has reached a stalemate between two exhausted options: foundationalism and nonfoundationalism. Huyssteen defines foundationalism as "the powerful thesis that our beliefs can indeed be warranted or justified by appealing to some item of knowledge that is self-evident or beyond doubt" (62). The idea is closely connected to the Enlightenment's dream of an experimental science that would provide a universal and certain path to the truth. Nonfoundationalism, on the other hand, belongs to the postmodern and repudiates the notion of a privileged path to knowledge. It asserts that when human beings experience anything-themselves, the world, the divine-that experience is determined by the cultural, religious, historical, and political domains in which they live. Absent a neutral standpoint or a universal method for discerning certain truth, epistemology, like experience itself, is contextual, shaped by what counts as good reasons for a particular group of persons living at a particular time and place and living within a particular tradition. In other words, we-whoever "we" are-label beliefs "justified" solely on the basis of their coherence with other beliefs "we" view as "justified." Instead of asserting a single idea of reason, nonfoundationalism acknowledges a radical diversity of rationalities, each constituting an autonomous whole.

Surveying how these two categories have been applied in Christian theology, Huyssteen lays claim to an arresting discovery: theological nonfoundationalism inevitably slips into crypto-foundationalism! For its part, foundationalism in theology is rather straightforward. Theology explores beliefs that are authenticated as true by virtue of what they are: teachings revealed by God in Scripture or taught by the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. No other justification is required or appropriate. The charges Huyssteen levels against this view are also fairly predictable. The appeal to self-authenticating beliefs is pure fideism and isolates theology from all other forms of rational inquiry. Things get more complicated when Huyssteen examines theological nonfoundationalism, giving special attention to the work of Ronald Thiemann, Nancey Murphy, and John Milbank. Each is convinced that theology speaks a language given to it by faith and must remain responsible to the experiences, convictions, rites, and rhetoric of the Christian church. Accordingly, they view the various modern attempts to conform the language and claims of Christianity to a universal standard of rationality as not only a misguided submission to a discredited epistemology (i.e., foundationalism) but also a rank betrayal of the vocation of the theologian to speak with the community of faith. The price for

modernity's approval is neither worth paying nor required when the contextual nature of all reason is understood.

Huyssteen shows great empathy for the concerns that guide the nonfoundationalists. Like them he regards foundationalism as mistaken and like them he clearly sees that theology must remain embedded in the faith life of the church and committed to its traditional assertions about God. His objection is that while these theologians make a great show of rejecting foundationalism, they, to differing degrees, fall right into it and its attendant dangers. If the cornerstone of foundationalism is self-evident truth, nonfoundationalists claim nothing less for Christian doctrine when they treat it as an unproblematic starting point secured solely by the language and practices of the Christian church. A corresponding refusal to bring the claims of faith into epistemological conversation with all forms of inquiry reveals the same fideistic impulse Huyssteen finds in foundationalism.

It is at this point in the argument that Huyssteen introduces a third option, which he labels "postfoundationalism." Its formulation is reliant upon a loosely associated group of contemporary philosophers, each of whom, after his or her own manner, rejects the choice between foundationalism and non-foundationalism. I shall consider three of them. From Calvin Schrag, especially his *Resources of Rationality* (1992), Huyssteen adopts the notion that between modernity and postmodernity there exists a "logical space" for the continuation of epistemology tutored in the hermeneutical insights of postmodernism. Rejecting the relativism inherent in much postmodern thought, Schrag speaks of the "resources of rationality," a common endowment of human beings and a reality as complex and varied as human experience itself. The shared possession of these resources allows reason to be both highly contextual, even personal, and yet capable of "transversing" the manifold domains of human rationality.

Huyssteen is also indebted to the work of Nicolas Rescher, most specifically his *A System of Pragmatic Idealism I* (1992). Rescher argues that the ability of *homo sapiens* to evaluate the reasons for and against a belief or action and arrive at "optimal understanding" is grounded in humanity's evolutionary history. As an instrument of survival, reason hues very closely to environment and what counts as a good reason will vary from person to person and from context to context. At the same time, Rescher's commitment to a biological basis for rationality means that embracing diversity in epistemology does not result in relativism. Although what I decide is true will always be conditioned by my particular realm of experience and tradition, the innate human desire to attain the best possible understanding means all evidence and reasoning is in principle relevant. Epistemology, although local in its practice, is universalist in its ideal reach. Finally, Rescher's own evaluation of what reasoning can attain influences Huyssteen's postfoundationalism. Rescher argues that the fashioning of better reasons for what we believe should be spoken of not in terms of "getting closer to the truth" but rather as developing a better "estimate" of the truth (158). The dream of attaining certain truths for all times must yield to a humble fallibilism

in which what we accept as "true" is viewed as nothing grander than our best possible estimation given present capacities, perspectives, and circumstances.

The final of Huyssteen's conversation partners to be treated in this review is Susan Haack. Her *Evidence and Inquiry* (1995) argues for an epistemological position that incorporates foundationalism's insight that experience must play a determinative role in responsibly formed beliefs and the insight of coherentism (i.e., nonfoundationalism) that all beliefs, even those most directly experiential, require support from other beliefs. Haack terms her position "foundherentism," and claims that it avoids the foundationalist mistake of seeing justification as a uni-directional path from experience to belief, and the coherentist mistake of neglecting the necessity of testing even the tightest web of belief by experience. In foundherentism, justification is an ongoing process in which both experience and the interlocking of belief play a role. Not surprisingly, Huyssteen finds much in Haack's proposal to his liking. Yet, Huyssteen strongly objects to Haack's limiting of experience to that which is usable by natural science. Not only does this exclude religious experience, but "seems to effectively disqualify many of the causes that prompt and sustain our beliefs from counting as rational evidence"(227). Thus, while Haack intends to leave foundationalism behind, her decision to privilege *a priori* some experiences over others signals a certain nostalgia for the tidiness of the old system.

Against all attempts to exclude theology from its rightful claim to the resources of rationality, Huyssteen's poses his conception of postfoundationalism. From the most rigorously scientific discipline to the decisions of ordinary life one finds evidence of human rationality at work, solving intellectual and practical problems, seeking optimal understanding, through a combination of experience and the coherent relating of beliefs. In each case, rationality is *shaped* by the specific context of its operation. The theological shaping of rationality occurs within the domain of faith, a domain characterized by a dynamic back-and-forth movement of religious experience and an accounting of reality as ultimately religious. To the extent that it seeks to arrive at the best fit of experience and understanding, theology is a rational enterprise-no less so than the hardest of sciences. Huyssteen uses the metaphor of "shaping" both to recognize the legitimacy of theology's specific rational strategies, and to account for its ability to traverse the varied horizon of human reason in the quest for truth. In other words, rationality employed in theology is shaped by its specific domain, but so is every other type of rationality. Each shape exists within a larger whole and each is called to and capable of dialogue with every other.

The contours of what is intended by postfoundationalism should now be clear. It gets beyond foundationalism by recognizing a legitimate diversity of contexts and domains in which rationality is shaped. It avoids the relativism of nonfoundationalism by establishing an underlying commonality within that diversity. Postfoundational theology, therefore, can remain true to faith while also fully engaging in interdisciplinary dialogue. Huyssteen summarizes the accomplishment in terms of the possibilities for a renewed dialogue between theology and science: "This move toward a postfoundationalist notion of

rationality in theology and science will therefore be held together by a twofold concern: *first*, recognizing that we always come to our cross-disciplinary conversations with strong beliefs, commitments, and even prejudices; and *second*, identifying the shared resources of human rationality in different modes of reflection, which allows us to reach beyond the walls of our epistemic communities in cross-contextual, cross-cultural, and cross-disciplinary conversation"(9).

Huyssteen's proposal for a contemporary relating of faith and reason deserves a wide hearing, especially among the growing company of theologians tempted to neglect the traditional imperative to relate faith to a reason recognized by those without faith. Enticed by a combination of the theologically impossible demands of the Enlightenment and its seeming collapse at the hands of postmodernity, these theologians have retreated into a protective enclave of the church as the only means to ensure Christianity's traditional fidelity in the God revealed in Jesus of Nazareth. Yet, despite the legitimacy of the goal, Huyssteen is surely correct to remind those who dance on the grave of the Enlightenment that funeral arrangements for reason are premature. The real issue is whether post-Enlightenment reason is understood as one inclusive of theological reflection on faith or not. The great value of Huyssteen's postfoundationalism is that it allows theology to remain tied to the community of faith without being trapped within. Theology is not only free but required to bring its commitments into a truth-seeking dialogue with those with different commitments.

That said, there is great room for philosophical disagreement, and one hopes Huyssteen's postfoundationalism will draw fire from philosophical friends and foes alike. Since I write as a Christian theologian, it is no surprise that my own concerns come from the side of Christian faith and its ability to shape the reason with which it is related. This line of inquiry must remain speculative because Huyssteen's book is relentlessly methodological and avoids all discussion of the contents of the faith that shapes theological rationality. Given the nature of his task, this is understandable. Yet, I submit, the very nature of the proposal beckons the reader to go beyond the boundaries of the work. The claim that Christian faith, or any other religious faith for that matter, shapes the reasoning theology employs begs the question of what difference the specifics of faith make. For example, in what ways does the historical character of God's revelation in Christ shape Christian theology? Or the structure and divine charisms of the Church?

These questions are important for Huyssteen to address if his notion of postfoundational rationality is not to be simply imposed on Christian faith from without and thus be yet another example of the pernicious side of foundationalism. While theology cannot invent a conception of reason apart from the discipline of philosophical reflection, neither must theology be a purely passive partner, accepting what is provided uncritically. Faith and reason are related not only from the side of reason but from the side of faith as well. As things stand, Huyssteen is innocent of the charge of forcing an alien conception of rationality upon theology. But this is not because he has shown that

postfoundationalism is compatible with the deepest instincts of Christian faith. To take a single example, Huyssteen insists that postfoundationalism implies a fallibilism which tempers all claims to truth. Yet, it is by no means obvious that falliblilism is compatible with a serious act of Christian faith and the authority inherent in church teaching. Perhaps it is, but showing this would entail a thorough analysis of the biblical, theological, and experiential resources of Christian tradition. Indeed, demonstrating the appropriateness of Huyssteen's proposal for relating Christian faith and reason requires a systematic exposition of Christian doctrine in a postfoundationalist key. Hit happens, it will be worth the wait, but wait we must.

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Recovering Nature: Essays in Natural Philosophy, Ethics, and Metaphysics in Honor of Ralph Mcinerny. Edited by JOHN P. O'CALLAGHAN and THOMAS S. HIBBS. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999. Pp. 271. $35.00 (cloth). ISBN 0-268-01666-6.

Ralph Mcinerny has for four decades been a leader in Thomistic philosophy and Catholic culture in English-speaking lands. Consider but a partial list of his scholarly contribution: the authoritative works on analogy *(The Logic of Analogy; Studies in Analogy; Aquinas and Analogy),* studies in ethics *(Ethica Thomistica; Aquinas on Human Action),* works on the role of the Catholic philosopher and on faith and reason *(Thomism in an Age of Renewal; The Question of Christian Ethics),* aesthetics and poetry *(Rhyme and Reason),* the Gifford Lectures, 1999-2000 *(Characters in Search of Their Author),* translations and expositions for undergraduates or non-specialists (A *First Glance at St. Thomas Aquinas; Thomas Aquinas' Selected Writings; St. Thomas Aquinas; Aquinas Against the Averroists),* editorial and exegetical work on Maritain-not to mention journalistic writing for educated Catholics *(Crisis;* Fellowship of Catholic Scholars) and mystery novels. The volume under consideration here contains fourteen articles by Thomists or by sympathetic critics of Thomism. This excellent collection, with the helpful introduction from the editors, brings out well some of the themes in Mclnerny's very productive scholarly life.

Four of the articles are grouped under the heading, "Natural Philosophy," a field of philosophy to which Mcinerny did not make extensive scholarly contribution. He rightly understands, however, that ethics and metaphysics are impossible without natural philosophy and he has always insisted that Thomism be grounded in the study of nature. William A. Wallace ("Quantification in

Sixteenth-Century Natural Philosophy") adds evidence to support his already well-established thesis: that the new mathematical physics of the seventeenth century does not represent a decisive break with the Aristotelian and Thomistic traditions in natural philosophy. Wallace shows that sixteenth-century scholars such as Domingo de Soto, Christopher Clavius, Giovan Battista Benedetti, and Andreas Eudaemon-Joannes did much to further the understanding of space, motion, force, and light in quantitative terms. Their work was rooted in traditional natural philosophy and was propaedeutic to Galileo, who was himself in some crucial ways a faithful student of Aristotelian scientific methodology. Jude Dougherty ("The Failure of Positivismand the Enduring Legacyof Comte") gives a forceful recommendation for realism in scientific knowledge. He does this by rebutting the Comtean and positivistic rejection of causality and of substance. John Haldane ("The Philosophies of Mind and Nature") and Thomas de Koninck ("Persons and Things") each give a defense of the hylomorphic account of human nature. Haldane argues that contemporary (analytic) accounts in the philosophy of mind result either in reductionism or in epiphenomenalism. In either case, philosophers reach an impasse, for they wish to assert that psychic states are causal, and yet they cannot admit the reality of such states. De Koninck, likewise, shows (contra Michael Tooley) that human life is a natural continuum from conception until death. Both Haldane and de Koninck stress the need of correctly understanding the formal causality of the soul and Aristotle's two senses in which a soul is actual.

As Mclnerny has given so much attention in his work to ethics, it is fitting that the largest section in this book include six essays under the heading "Ethics." In fact, a seventh (Laura Garcia's) also deals with ethics. Alasdair Macintyre and David Solomon bring out the same point, but in complementary ways. Macintyre ("John Case: An Example of Aristotelianism's Self-Subversion?") argues that the Elizabethan philosopher John Case fatally misrepresented Aristotelian ethics in that he regarded the virtues as reducible to knowledge. Solomon ("Keeping Virtue in Its Place: A Critique of Subordinating Strategies") argues against those, such as Frankena, who think that the virtues are essentially "blind" unless there is some principle (such as utility or duty) to which the virtues are subordinate. Both Macintyre and Solomon make the point that Aristotelian virtue is both an acquired disposition (and therefore only acquired through practice and not by mere teaching) and a way of apprehending what is morally true. Closely related to this topic is Daniel Mclnerny's essay ("Deliberation about Final Ends: Thomistic Considerations"). Mclnerny shows that, even though we do not deliberate about final ends, our grasp of such ends is rational and not relativistic. Both Aristotle and Thomas have a doctrine of synderesis (whether or not the same term is used in the same way by both thinkers). In the doctrine of virtue common to both, the moral agent has a natural habit whereby he recognizes, without argument, that certain things are naturally good and therefore desirable. Janet Smith ("Moral Terminology and Proportionalism") takes on proportionalism, the essence of which is that no human act can be designated as intrinsically good or evil apart from the particular or concrete circumstances of the act.

Proportionalists (such as Richard McCormick, Joseph Fuchs, and Charles Curran) hold this view, Smith contends, because they do not attend carefully to the distinction between the merely accidental circumstances, which do not affect the moral species of the act, and specifying circumstances, which do affect the moral species of the act. Michael Novak ("The Gospels, Natural Law, and the American Founding") argues, against a prevailing secularist interpretation, that Jacques Maritain correctly understood that the founding of the United States was based upon principles that included theism. Stanley Hauerwas ("Mcinerny Did it; Or, Should a Pacifist Read Murder Mysteries?") makes a serious point in a lighthearted way. The moral universe presupposed by the genre of murder mystery novels is one in which the bringing to light of a crime is in itself a kind of redemption, for the recognition of guilt and the value of human life is essential to the atonement of the criminal. And, by the way, the answer to the question posed in the title of this article is yes.

In the third section we find four articles under the heading of "Metaphysics," three of which concern narural theology (and epistemology). This section appropriately brings out the problem of faith and reason, so central to Mdnemy's work. Laura Garcia ("Religious Pluralism and Natural Theology") argues that if we are to give an account of faith in which God's grace is not arbitrary, we must find some way to explain how it is that we can be responsible for our beliefs. We can be responsible, to some degree, if we can have some way of evaluating those beliefs *outside* of the beliefs themselves. Hence (against Planti.nga and Hick) natural theology does have a place. Alvin Plantinga ("Reid, Hume, and God"), no doubt blissfully ignorant of the criticisms in the preceding article, explains a point at issue between Thomas Reid and David Hume. Reid makes the point against Hume that, once we caU the reliability of our cognitive faculties into doubt, such doubting must necessarily include the power of reason itself. Reid takes this point as a *reductio ad absurdum* of Hume's position. Plantinga, however, comes to Hume's defense in a limited way. He thinks that there simply is no way in which we can escape from a corrosive skeptical doubting of all human cognitive powers, unless we take a theistic stance. No merely naturalistic argument (a merely philosophical account of human cognition or some evolutionary story) will be able to prove that our cognitive faculties are reliable. Reid is not successful in refuting Hume on Hume's terms, but he is successful in taking a stand on something outside of Hume's position and untouched by the skepticism. Alfred Freddoso ("Two Roles for Catholic Philosophers") makes the point that most contemporary philosophical work is done in an ambience in which there is a false separation between philosophy and theology. Since the understanding of the ultimate cause of the universe is in a way the goal of metaphysics and ethics, on the one hand, and of theology, on the other, believers should take nourishment for their philosophical work from their faith. Freddoso urges Catholic philosophers both to transmit Catholic wisdom generally (from philosophical and theological sources alike) and to enter into philosophical discussion with non-Christian philosophers. Finally, David Burrell ("From Analogy of 'Being' to the Analogy of Being") uses Ralph Mdnerny's

work on analogy to make a point about the way to understand created being. The real relation of creatures to God, such that creatures are the real effects of God's creative causality, is one thing; the relation of analogous terms, such that the controlling meaning is *not* the cause of the other terms, is quite another thing. When we see this point, we can see that the analogous use of terms, when applied to God and to creatures, does not indicate that there is some common reality that stands over the relation of creatures to creator like a Platonic form. Rather, as Robert Sokolowski has shown, "the distinction" between God and creatures is decisive. They are not two parts of one whole, or two kinds of one genus, or two of anything in one class. The idea of "participation," Burrell holds, best captures the relation of creatures to creator.

Such, in a quick tour, are the contents of this fine volume. *As* I have indicated above, there is something of a dispute between two of the contributors, Laura Garcia and Alvin Plantinga. Or, rather, Garcia has brought some criticisms against Plantinga, and Plantinga has expressed a position to which Garcia is in fact objecting. The point at issue is a complicated one, and I have to say that I am uneasy about both sides of the debate as it is found in this volume. Let me start with Plantinga, who gives the following analysis of human cognition.

If I do not know how, by whom, or for what purpose my cognitive faculties have been made, then I cannot know whether they are reliable, even whether they are *probably* reliable. We can see that this is so if we realize what our reaction would be if we went to another planet and discovered an instrument that looked like a thermometer. I have seen thermometers on earth, and I know the sort of thing that they are. The instrument I have discovered on another planet points to a number, 72, and I feel comfortable in the air, as though the temperature were 72 degrees. At first, I might say that the instrument on the other planet *is* a thermometer, but then comes the *defeater*. I realize that, although this thing looks like a thermometer, I really have no idea how, by whom, and for what purpose this instrument (if it *is* an instrument) has been made. I, therefore, should be an agnostic about the supposed instrument: I should realize that I really do not have enough evidence to establish what the thing is.

This science-fiction episode is intended to provide us with an analogy for human cognitive powers. I find that I have sensation, memory, intellect, reason, and so forth. These powers produce, or seem to produce, certain experiences, and these experiences correlate with other experiences I have, and they seem to correlate with the experiences of other people (at least, what appear to me to be other people). I am tempted to believe that these experiences are reliable, that is, that I am epistemica.lly justified in having these experiences. But, as I did with the alleged thermometer on another planet, I reflect that I do not know how, by whom, or for what purpose my cognitive powers were made. I might, for example, accept an evolutionary account of how I came to be and how my cognitive powers were formed. In accepting such an account, however, I can explain the origin of my cognitive powers, but I have no guarantee, thereby, that the powers are reliable. This reflection is, again, a defeater.

To the theist, however, the above is not bad news. The theist can say that I have no ultimate justification for the reliability of my normal beliefs and for my philosophical beliefs; no more have I justification for my religious beliek All beliefs then, provided that they are consistently maintained, are on a par. If there is no justification for any belief, then there is no evidence against, either. I am free, then, to regard religious beliefs as "properly basic," for to me, at least, they may be just as fundamental as any other sort of beliet

Garcia objects to this position, principally because the having of religious beliefs seems to be arbitrary. Some people have perfect pitch, and some people have experiences of God. The sort of experiences we have seems like a matter of chance, or, to the believer, a matter of God's grace. He gives the grace to believe to some, but not to others. For this reason, Garcia argues that there is something in human cognition that is naturally reliable, or not, and that this can be assessed outside of the faith. The way to understand this, she says, is to understand a theory of virtue in the proper way. Virtues are always moral and cognitive together. By developing habits of acting in the right way, we also, necessarily, develop habits of recognizing what ought to be done. And intellectual habits, especially the habit of wisdom, necessarily imply the habits of good acting. As we are responsible for our habits, we are responsible for the epistemic condition that our habits put us into. This responsibility that we have can be exercised in developing a natural theology by means of Newman's "illative sense." As we see many experiences coalescing around our beliefs, we gain more reliable justification for those beliefs.

The problem, however, is that both Plantinga's position and Garcia's are cut off from the real. Plantinga imagines what it might be like to examine our cognitive powers as though we were examining an instrument found on another planet. Such an analogy, however, is deeply misleading. I do not encounter my cognitive powers as though they were *objects* like a thermometer. I only know my cognitive powers *reflectively.* What I know first are real objects-natural, material objects. I come to know my knowing powers by reflecting on how it is that I have come into cognitive contact with the real. The starting point of my reflections is always the real objects I know, and not some experience of my knowing, of my ideas, or of myself as a knower.

Garcia, too, does not think that the real is our philosophical starting point. According to her, the goal of morality is not *action,* and the goal of our cognitive powers is not *knowledge.* Rather, the goal in either case is to develop the virtues themselves "the theory I am proposing treats virtues as intrinsically valuable and their development and exercise as the primary goal of human activity. Certainly a loving person will seek to benefit others and a wise person will seek to have true beliefs, but one must take as one's *goal* what is accessible to one's wiH, and whether one's actions *in fact* benefit others or whether one's properly motivated assents turn out to match reality is not accessible in this way" (182). This position, say I, is already too much on Plantinga's turf. There is no way off of that turf, unless we realize that the goal of knowledge is the real and the goal of

the moral life is action. Virtues, intellectual or moral, are but *means* to these goals.

Ralph Mcinerny deserves honor, if anyone does, says Alvin Plantinga. True. And someone does deserve honor. The action which is the conclusion of this practical syllogism is happily realized in this book.

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Say It Is Pentecost:A Guide throughBalthasar'sLogic. By AIDANNICHOLS, O.P. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001. Pp. 227. $43.95 (cloth), $23.95 (paper). ISBN 0-8132-1077-1 (cloth), 0-8132-1078-X (paper).

Preceded by *The Word Has Been Abroad* and *No BloodlessMyth*, this book completes Aidan Nichols's three-part commentary on Hans Urs von Balthasar's 15-volume trilogy (16 if one includes the brief concluding *Epilog)*,which many rank among the most significant theological achievements of the Church's recent history. The significance of the trilogy-and, for some, its difficulty-stems in part from the novelty of its approach to classical theological issues. According to Balthasar, theology has been immeasurably harmed by the tendency to isolate parts of the Catholic whole and treat them in false abstraction from their organic relation to the rest. Such an approach distorts the meaning of the part, fractures the whole, and thus weakens the Church's resources in facing her most pressing concerns. Seeking a more concrete and comprehensive starting point, Balthasar thus ordered his theology around the three (positive) transcendentals-beauty (the "forgotten transcendental"), goodness, and truth. These are, so to speak, as metaphysical as they are theological, and they therefore analogously disclose both the deepest meaning of God in his relation to the world and the deepest meaning of the world in its relation to God. To oversimplify: Balthasar's seven-volume "aesthetics" elaborate the form *(Gestalt)* of God's appearing to the world through analogies to worldly forms; his five-volume "dramatics" (perhaps Balthasar's most innovative contribution) unfold the subsequent encounter between God and man, Jesus and the individual, through an analogy with theater and the notion of the "world stage"; finally, his three-volume "logic"-which is the object ofNichols's present commentary--contemplates the truth of God and the world as it comes to light in this encounter.

Balthasar's approach is remarkably fruitful in its capacity to integrate various apparently competing traditional perspectives in theology, and also to open up new directions in philosophy and approaches to world literature. What makes

his work fruitful, however, also makes it challenging to read. Because Balthasar develops his thought primarily through in-depth engagements with other thinkers, both well-known and relatively obscure, in a discussion that spans the whole of European cultural history and moves freely among the disciplines of theology, philosophy, and literature, it is quite easy to get lost. It is to such readers, or would-be readers, of Balthasar that Nichols extends his hand. His primary intention in writing these commentaries was to provide dergy and laypeople with a sort of *"haute-vulgarisation,"* which aims to "make the contours of the wood visible despite the profusion of trees" in the "great forest" of the trilogy (211-12). In a spirit of sympathy rather than controversy (which is not to say that Nichols does not on occasion offer a critical word), his guides offer a synthetic exposition and relatively brief and simple commentary on each of the major steps in the unfolding of the trilogy. This most recent guidebook is especially timely insofar as the first volume of the *Theologic* has only just appeared in English, while the second and third volumes, as well as the *Epilog,* are still in the process of being translated (volume 2 is in its last stages). *Say It Is Pentecost* thus represents for non-German readers not only an overview, but a preview, of the last part of the trilogy.

According to Nichols, "The overall aim of Balthasar's theological logic" is to address "the question of what is meant by 'truth' in the context of the 'event' of God's revelation through the Incarnation of the Logos and the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit" (1-2) (the final view from the perspective of the Holy Spirit, incidentally, appears to be the reason for the title of Nichols's book). For Balthasar, the response to such a question cannot bypass a philosophical mediation without degenerating into theological positivism. Accordingly, in the first volume of the logic, *The Truth of the World,* he offers an account of truth that is both phenomenological and metaphysical; as Nichols remarks, one might cal.I it "Thomas fructified by Goethe and Schelling" (211). In seven succinct chapters, Nichols outlines this account. Truth is an encounter, both natural and free, transcendent and historical, between a subject and an object. As mediated through images and language, the disclosure of being in this encounter does not eliminate, but rather intensifies, its mystery. Faithful attentiveness to this mystery in turn leads unavoidably to a reflection on the relation between finite and infinite truth. One of the purposes of Balthasar's first volume, in relation to the subsequent volumes, is thus to construct a determinate notion of truth that at the same time vigilantly refuses to dose itself a priori to what lies beyond it. This paradoxical connection between openness and determinacy is crucial in avoiding both a "sacrifice of reason" in matters of faith and the rationalistic foreclosure of thought to the revelation of genuine theological data. (In this respect, one regrets a lack of nuance in some of Nichols's later observations: when in volume 2, for example, Balthasar takes pains to preserve the paradox of Eph 3:19, by describing a knowledge that remains genuine knowledge *[wirkliche Erkenntnis]* even as it is transcended, Nichols's gloss speaks rather glibly of "a logic which eliminates itself in love" [68].)

While the first volume presented the "truth of the world," volume 2, *Die Wahrheit Gottes,* considers the "truth of God" such as it is revealed in the one who claims "I am the truth." The central question here, according to Balthasar, is how the eternal *logos* of God can express itself in the finitude of a creature. Nichols points out dearly that the anticipations that may have been afforded us through a philosophical meditation on "worldly" truth have served only to open us more attentively to the surprise of revelation. He sketches out the major stages of the argument of the book: first, "ana-logically" *ascending,* Balthasar considers the "traces" of the Trinity in the world on the way to a consideration of the Trinity in itself as it is revealed Christologically. This leads to a discussion of the possibility of the incarnation (chap. 12) and the place of the *logos* in God (chap. 13). Then, "cata-logically" *descending,* Balthasar discusses the world from the perspective of the Trinitarian God, addressing the issues of how the doctrine of the Trinity illuminates creation and how the world finds fulfillment in Christ. Nichols gives a succinct presentation of these in chapters 14 and 15. Finally, Balthasar unfolds the implications of the Word's taking on Flesh, which as Nichols remarks enables him "to comment on a variety of theological and philosophical positions" (103), namely, the meaning of flesh and embodiment, myth, symbol, language, analogy, contradiction, sin, and so on (chaps. 16 and 17).

Part 3 of *Say It Is Pentecost* follows the development of Balthasar's pneumatology in volume 3 of the theologic, *The Spirit of Truth.* As Nichols points out, much of the language Balthasar uses in this volume rings Hegelian-most obviously in the important use he makes of the notion of "objective" and "subjective" Spirit. However, Nichols is quick to clarify that Balthasar's use of this language is "calculatedly ironic" (161), insofar as the meaning he gives it arises from within a broad sounding of the patristic, medieval, and modern tradition rather than from the perspective of abstract philosophical speculation. One of the most penetrating aspects of Nichols's book is no doubt his account of Balthasar's thoroughgoingly Trinitarian understanding of the Spirit. For Balthasar, the Spirit is both the union of the Father and the Son and simultaneously the (personal) fruit of their love. Keeping in mind this twofold aspect of the one divine Person of the Spirit allows us to avoid two tendencies to dualism. First, there is a tendency to separate the work of the Spirit from that of the Son, so that the Spirit becomes the source of new, personal revelations rather than the "exegete" of the truth of the Trinitarian God revealed in Christ. As Nichols puts it, "it is impossible to isolate the work of the Son from that of the Spirit. The two act together if distinctly as, in Irenaeus's metaphor, the Father's two hands" (147). Second, there is a (related) tendency to pit the subjective "freedom" of the Spirit against the objectivity of the institutional aspects of the Church, that is, liturgy, hierarchy, sacraments, and so forth. For Balthasar, the distinction of these aspects cannot be made into a separation, insofar as they are rooted in the twofold aspect of the one Spirit, who is both the "subjective" love between Father and Son and "objective" fruit of that love (171).

Finally, the fourth part of Nichols's guide gives a concise exposition of the concluding *Epilog,* followed by a "Postword" of his own. Balthasar's short book

is not itself an overview of the trilogy, but primarily a retrospective consideration of methodology: a discussion of interreligious dialogue, a discussion of the philosophical mediation of metaphysics and the transcendentals, and a final presentation of the three themes "that were closest to Balthasar's heart, most fed his Christian imagination" (207): "Christology and Trinity," "The Word becomes flesh," and "Fruitfulness." Disappointingly, Nichols does not offer his own theological judgment in the "postword," but rather leaves it to the "theological community of the *Catholica,* under the guidance of the magisterium," to evaluate what is new in Balthasar's work (212).

Say It Is Pentecost is a valuable guide in reading Balthasar's trilogy for several reasons; not least is Nichols's pleasant style and his ability to communicate profound truths in an accessible and even humorous manner. In his account of Balthasar's thought on wide-ranging topics, Nichols not only remains attentive to its sources, but also brings his own vast store of theological knowledge to bear in elucidating both the novelty and the rootedness in tradition of some of Balthasar's positions. (This is much less the case in his discussion of the philosophical first volume, which is far more straightforward exposition. Nichols's interests-and presumably those of the audience he intends-are dearly more theological than philosophical.) Given that .Balthasar is often indiscriminately linked to Rahner in certain circles, the repeated distinctions Nichols draws between the two theologians are especially helpfuL In addition, the book generously quotes significant and lengthy passages directly from Balthasar, and renders them in lucid and accurate English. What stands out most among the many themes addressed in Nichols's book is his careful and illuminating presentation of the relationship between Christology and Pneumatology in Balthasar's thinking.

On the other hand, it is good to keep in mind the inevitable limitations of such a book: there is little in-depth discussion of any particular issue (a notable exception is Nichols's elucidation of Balthasar's position on the *filioque),* and rare development and adjudication of controversy, which is often the best way to come to an understanding of a thinker's position. The result is a tendency to oversimplify crucial paradoxes or level provocative depths, which is perhaps the danger Balthasar himself had in mind in his refusal to present his own "digest" of the trilogy (a point Nichols himself mentions [197]). Moreover, one would have liked to see more cross references within the trilogy itself, elucidating sections of the *Theologic,* for example, through related issues treated in *The Glory of the Lord.* Nevertheless, *Say It Is Pentecost* in fact achieves what dose studies of particular aspects cannot: a comprehensive overview, which allows readers a dear sense of the articulation of the complex whole. For this, many an educated reader looking for a pathway into this "great forest" will be grateful.

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Thomas Aquinas as Reader of the Psalms. By THOMAS F. RYAN. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001. Pp. ix+ 233. $40.00 (cloth). ISBN 0-268-02003-5.

Happy will be the day when scholars don't feel the need to encumber their studies of medieval biblical commentaries with prefatory justifications. Though a bit slow out of the gate, many students of the Middle Ages have finally begun to grant medieval scriptural exegesis something like its due as the epicenter of information about developments in medieval theology and spirituality, among other areas of knowledge. Thomas Ryan has no need for *apologiae;* his succinct and rewarding survey of Aquinas's commentary on the Psalter stands as its own best argument for the usefulness, nay necessity, for further study of this still underexplored genre.

Ryan makes a convincing argument that Aquinas's *Postilla super Psalmos* (he completed work on Psalms 1-54 only) is far more than a dim, imprecise reflection of his "serious" scholarly production, such as the *Summa Theologiae.* Rather, the biblical commentary proves an alternative but equally demanding and productive means of "doing theology" in both the broader and narrower senses of the term. Positioning the commentary squarely within the context of Aquinas's career as an educator gives Ryan the perspective he needs to appreciate the pedagogical qualities of this rich work, the (probably) final expression of the Angelic Doctor's teaching, in the Dominican *studium* of Naples in 1272-73 (2). A brief but useful reminder of the importance of orality and memory (29ff.), not only for preachers but in the medieval classroom (even well into the thirteenth century) provides a touchstone throughout the book for Ryan to recall the exhortative and evangelical as well as the "educational" aspects of the Postills. In addition, Ryan refers a few times to Aquinas's inception lectures at the University of Paris (1256), which in context read like an advertisement for this commentary on the Psalms. Clearly, what Aquinas was doing in this commentary is no sideline to his "main" interests.

At the same time, the speculative and the philosophical are admittedly off-focus in this fundamentally pastoral work. This is due in part to context: Ryan is well aware of the fact that the primary audience for the work is Dominicans destined for a life of preaching and interaction with Christians outside a university setting. Nonetheless, he rightly warns us against assuming that the Psalms commentary is therefore basic, simple, or derivative. Though doctrinal issues are not raised according to the "more familiar order" of thirteenth-century theological discourse, they *are* raised as they are suggested by the text of the Psalms, and duly dealt with in sometimes extended "questions" (2, 4, 47). Indeed, Aquinas's commentary contains "elements of systematic theology" without being systematic; Ryan shows that the Postills demand a startling degree of theological sophistication of Aquinas's hearers/readers, particularly a more than passing knowledge of his own writings in the *Summa* about grace, works, and prayer (63, 110). In fact, as Ryan demonstrates brilliantly later in the book, Aquinas explored more fully in his Psalms commentary certain areas of

spirituality, particularly prayer, that he addressed only partially in his great *Summa* (chap. 4, "Christ's Example of Prayer in *Super Psalmos").*

Ryan begins appropriately with an analysis of the structure of the commentary and the exegetical choices made by Aquinas. This is an essential move, since it whips away the false (and to modern readers, damning) appearance of being "derivative," an appearance caused by the reliance of medieval exegetes on the same roundup of usual suspects: Augustine, Jerome (for *iuxta hebreos* readings), Gregory the Great, Peter Lombard, Hugh of St. Cher, among other familiar faces. The way in which an exegete focuses his purpose and uses his sources is the key to his originality, as Ryan well knows and well demonstrates.

To start with, Aquinas uses the by-then standard "Aristotelian" prologue, outlining the four "causes" of the Psalms; his identification of the first two of these causes informs the entire commentary, providing him with his hermeneutic program. They are, first, the "material" cause, the "matter" of the Psalms: this is identified, unsurprisingly (for a medieval Christian commentary), as Christ. This is followed by the second or "formal" cause, what an older tradition called the *modus tractandi* or the form taken by the text under study: this is identified, somewhat surprisingly in light of earlier commentaries, as prayer, not as prophecy. Aquinas's shift of emphasis from the Psalms as prophecy of Christ (usual through the twelfth century, at least) to the Psalms as prayer has implications for the whole commentary. The focus, right from the start, would be on the "performative" aspect of the Psalms as prayers that "produce what they describe" (15).

Aquinas, obviously, neither denies nor ignores the prophetic nature of the Psalms. His understanding of prophecy indeed leads him to the fairly standard denotation of the "literal" sense as that which reflects the (prophetic) author's primary meaning (i.e., the prophecy), so that the Psalms "literally" refer to Christ and not to David. Aquinas, like commentators before him, sees the Psalms as "almost gospel" (compare Gilbert of Poitier's assessment of the Psalms as speaking "more clearly and openly" than the gospels). At the same time, he sets this factor in the background while highlighting the formative and pastoral elements of the Psalms, effectively reversing what could be said to be the trend in the twelfth-century Psalms commentaries. Furthermore, the link in the prologue between Christ (material cause) and prayer (formal cause) provides a crucial framework for Aquinas's reading of the Psalms as not only Christological but evangelical, in that the Psalms end up being models of Christ praying "'in heart, word and work"' (140).

Potentially tedious but in fact worth the slog is Ryan's careful analysis of Aquinas's approach to elucidating the Psalms, not merely through the research and insights of others, but through Scripture itself. This "intra-scriptural" policy reveals some surprises. In a useful table (almost hidden away in footnote 23), Ryan shows the heavy use Aquinas makes of Old Testament books to coll).plement and support his reading of the Psalms. Of the six biblical books cited most frequently, five are not only Old Testament, but what Aquinas describes as "agiographi" or sapiential books: Psalms itself, Isaiah, Job, Proverbs,

and Ecclesiasticus, of which a verse (47:9, "In every work, he confessed to the holy and most high One with a word of glory") provides the opening epigraph for the prologue and is a fair reflection of Aquinas's understanding of the purpose of the Psalms. The Psalms themselves are adduced to explain other Psalms more frequently than in any Psalms commentary of my acquaintance. Among the other sapiential books, one would expect Isaiah-except that Aquinas does not highlight the obvious messianic passages, but rather engages Isaiah on more generally Christological grounds, especially concerning the church as the body of Christ (52-53).

The only New Testament book that makes the top five is Matthew, significantly the gospel that most highlights Christ's humanity. This underscores the idea of Psalms as models of Christ as "pray-er" and thus as instructor of Christian prayer behavior. This is vastly different from the way that, for example, Nicholas of Lyra hauls in New Testament sources when they unavoidably enjoin messianic readings of Psalms which he could otherwise explain "literally" by using Old Testament sources.

The use of other Scripture to suggest and support his interpretations gives Aquinas another benefit: as each book of the Bible is imbued by its divine author with its unique purpose, allusions to each book call up for the reader a host of associations which in turn provide different lenses through which to read the Psalms. Ryan illustrates clearly how the amassing of biblical allusions is not, for Aquinas, mere confirmation of his interpretation; rather, it adds depth (such as the Christological slant and the "existential anguish" layered on to his interpretation of Psalm 50:6, which he gets by referring not merely to Romans 3:4, which cites the passage, but also to Isaiah and Job) (46). Aquinas's choice among and use of books of the Bible is neither typical nor accidental.

The emphasis on the Psalms as one of the wisdom books keeps Ryan focused (as it must have kept Aquinas's students focused) on the conclusion that the purpose of the Psalter was to teach us to be wise and to act ou"t: and share that wisdom, a concept carefully scrutinized via the *Summa Theolcgiae* in Ryan's chapter 3, "Prayer and Christ's SalvificExample in the *Summa Theologiae."* It is a bit of a long detour, but it does not lead us astray. What Aquinas does in his Psalms commentary that he does not (cannot) do in his *Summa* is constantly to referee the sometimes implicit questions that arise from a reading of the Psalms as being about "Christ praying." Aquinas's "theologically acu:te" audience in Naples would surely ask "why would Christ (as God) need to pray?" Careful and frequent distinction between the human and divine natures of Christ enable Aquinas to articulate both the efficacy and the necessity of prayer, and to do so over a range of types of prayer far broader than he can tackle in the *Summa* (110, 123).

The Psalms as "pools of instructive examples for pastoral situations" are especially suitable for a Dominican audience, who "must not only preach well but also practice well what they preach" (122). This has bearing on what Ryan calls the "social implications" of prayer for Aquinas. He notes that his argument-that Aquinas intended his commentary on the Psalms to "produce

people whose prayer plays out in good works"-might "alarm" some readers (126). Ryan mollifies these conjured readers by showing how Aquinas's concept of grace and faith (again, gleaned from the *Summa)* necessitates that a heart "inflamed by God" results in works, such as prayer and praise and preaching and teaching (129, 132-34). Several instances in the Psalms of the "heart" being made manifest by the "mouth" and (according to Aquinas) resulting in the "work" of preaching (replicating the *"cor, os, opus"* of *STh* II-II, q. 83) show how this notion is especially appropriate for the Dominican audience of the commentary. Psalm 36:30 says "the tongue of the just will convert sinners"; so too, the brothers of the Naples *studium* address not only a vital question "dear to medieval Dominicans" but also the topic of the final questions in the *Summa Theologiae,* composed at the same moment in Aquinas's life (128).

All of this goes to show why Bible commentaries were still written after the triumph of Scholastic systematic theology-indeed why they were not only written but necessary. True teaching, the full education of students, required more than systematic theology, according to Aquinas (63). The Psalms not only spoke of Christ "almost as Gospel." They also provided a "pedagogy in wisdom" (58), demanded a "communal public action" as a result of education in God's word (132), and the grace conferred on a willing heart through the hearing of that word (136). Through his commentary, Thomas Aquinas not only teaches systematic theology unsystematically (or rather, following a different system). but also "models a preachers' engagement with Scripture" (60). It is theology from the heart of the greatest theologian of the century.

There are few things in this book to complain about. The one thing I really missed is any consideration of place of this Psalms commentary in the context of the tradition of Psalms interpretation, at least in the twelfth and earlier thirteenth century. Ryan confesses at the very start that this is not part of his project, but rather that he will focus on an "intra-Thomistic" approach with special reference to the *Summa Theologiae.* This makes sense because this is what most readers think of as "Aquinas," so that the new light shed on him will illuminate the areas of Thomas's thought left dark by the *Summa* itself. It also throws into relief the brilliance and depth of the commentary itself. Still, one thirsts to know what and how Aquinas borrowed from, argued with, and added to earlier exegetes such as Richard of St. Victor or the Ordinary Gloss. Surely this book will encourage others (or Ryan himself) to take up that challenge.

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I Call You Friends, By TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE, O.P. London and New York: Continuum, 2001. Pp. 225. $24.95 (paper). ISBN 0-826-45188-8.

The author won a prize for this book, originally published in French (translated from English). Several essays were written for *New Blackfriars;* the rest of the book is composed of speeches or conferences that the author gave as the Master of the Order in varying settings. The book has interest primarily for Dominicans but also for others who are interested in the person of Timothy Radcliffe, O.P.

Radcliffe argues for a greater inclusion of women's wisdom in the "stew" (his metaphor) of the Order of Preachers and describes for outsiders something of our democratic procedures. He gives many scattered insights about the Church and the changes occurring in culture today. He has an enthusiasm for the Order of Preachers and the Church that is infectious and appealing. He knows how difficult it is to make permanent commitments and gives sage advice to the young. He also understands that leadership in the Dominican Order does not mean domination and seeking to shine before the community. Being a friar preacher and learning to become a friend are deeply interconnected.

Speeches are not exercises in the science of theology so much as they are works of rhetoric to grab people's attention. Using such artifices as humor, personal anecdotes, and metaphors, the speech-maker tries to keep people's attention from wandering and to charge people up for wondering. Here Radcliffe is a master.

The book is divided into four parts: personal interviews, and speeches on Christian commitment, the idea of mission, and what it means to live the gospel, including several articles that were written in the 1980s. While it would be unfair to Radcliffe to say that much is "from the top of the head" theology, some insights are simply that, namely, interesting statements that bore into the minds and consciences of his hearers yet remain underdeveloped theologically. For example, he says that a vocation is "less a call to do something than a call to be" (11). Of course, he means that simply getting a job done is not the whole of a person's vocation, but in order "to be," each person must necessarily shape himself by "doing" virtue. Concerning governing in the Dominican Order, he says, "our style of government tries to be as little interventionist as possible" (27), but later laments several problems that seemly have resulted from doing nothing but watching on the side-lines (169). Perhaps a little more intervention in preparing people for the missions that involve heroic virtue instead of waiting for volunteers is not being "less Dominican" or less democratic. But this may have been the unhappy consequence of trying to govern a world-wide order through extensive travel to the troubled spots in the world, rather than relying on delegate's reports.

On a more critical note, Radcliffe says that people need to debate issues more but doesn't seem to recognize that facility in debate is no guarantee of attaining truth. Some people are very quick debaters and others are slower. The fatter

sometimes arrive at the truth better than people who interested in "winning" debates. Saint Thomas's teaching on the sin of contention whereby people stubbornly hold to positions regardless of the truth of the question could have helped Radcliffe's insight here. Also, he states that for St. Thomas the weakest argument is from authority (174}. While this is true from the point of view of philosophy, it is not true from the point of view of theology; otherwise, reason becomes its own magisterium over the Bible, Tradition, or even the sacred magisterium of the bishops and the pope.

Since Radcliffe believes the Church needs to go back to the medieval spirit of the *quaestiones disputatae,* perhaps some sentences in their context need further nuancing. For example, when he says of Paul, "It is not clear why these Christian Corinthians had such an enthusiasm for sleeping with prostitutes" (220}, he is not speaking pastorally but conceptually as an exegete looking for reasons why. It might have been clearer to say, however, why prostitutes were of special concern to St. Paul (instead of concubines or adolescents or adulterous relationships}. Or take the sentences, "To be bodily is to be capable of giving yourself to someone; it is the possibility of mutual presence. To sleep with someone is to realize that possibility; it is to make a gift of oneself" (221}. Radcliffe will say in this context that outside of marriage such a "gift" is a lie. But given our contemporary culture, more distinctions should be in place-for example, one could speak of a "false gift" or "manipulative gift" that seeks self rather than the good of the other which is the case with authentic conjugal acts.

In another context, the author raises an important point: "Then there are others who have difficulties with the Church not because they hate but because they are living in a relationship that conflicts with the church's teaching, such as unmarried couples, divorced and remarried couples, practicing homosexuals, and so on. We should first recognize that at the heart of their relationship is love. Any love, as love, is good, is God's presence. The essential point of departure is their desire to love. We should recognize this and give it its value" (66). He challengesthem to a "better love." Unfortunately, the word "love" is value laden and at the same time has many different nuances. People who kill, steal, or harm others can also be said to love, but the critical question is what kind of love is involved and what are the objects of this love. Underlying all evil is a love for happiness which is a reaching out to God but in a perverse sense. God's omnipresence, I think, has little to do with it.

Further, I find the following sentences alarming and lacking in depth since there are no qualifiers: "Contraception is undoubtedly not a fundamental question for our faith, but if it is important for a couple, then it is important for all of us" (76}. "For many Dominicans, the discovery that we all have the authority to preach has been exciting and liberating. And the exclusion of the non-ordained from preaching after the gospel during the Eucharist is deeply painful for many. It is experienced as a negation of their full identity as preachers" (151).

While not the last word on Dominican spirituality and ethos, perhaps this book can be useful for getting communities together to argue, speculate, and discuss at greater length the meaning of Dominic's vision for our time. If that happens, then the former Master will have succeeded in his plan.

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