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RESISTANCE TO THE DEMANDS OF LOVE: AQUINAS ON THE VICE OF *ACEDIA*

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THE LIST OF the seven capital vices[1] includes sloth, envy, avarice, vainglory, gluttony, lust, and anger. While many of the seven vices are more complex than they appear at first glance, one stands out as more obscure and out of place than all the others, at least for a contemporary audience: the vice of sloth.

Our puzzlement over sloth is heightened by sloth's inclusion on the traditional lists of the seven capital vices and the seven deadly sins from the fourth century onward.[2] For hundreds of years, these seven vices were distinguished as moral and spiritual failings of serious and perennial importance.[3] By contrast, recent studies, as well as the popular imagination, typically associate sloth with, or even define it as, laziness.[4] But is laziness in fact a *moral* failing?

[1] Often conflated and confused with the seven deadly sins; see note 3.

[2] See especially Morton Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins: An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967), 56-57.

[3] A capital vice is one that grows up from pride as its root and then in turn becomes a source *(caput)* from which many others spring *(STh* I-II q. 84, a. 3). Capital vices can also easily become deadly (or mortal)-that is, sins that cause spiritual death *via* the loss of charity (see, for example, *STh* II-II q. 35, a. 3; I-II q. 88, aa. 1-2). Aquinas characterizes the traditional list of seven as capital vices and argues that each can become mortal under certain conditions.

[4] See, for example, the following description by Evelyn Waugh in *The Seven Deadly Sins* (essays in the *Sunday Times* reprinted by The Akadine Press, 2002): "The word 'Sloth' ... is a mildly facetious variant of 'indolence,' and indolence, surely, so far from being a deadly sin, is one of the most amiable of weaknesses" (57). Josef Pieper also comments on *acedia's* association with laziness in *Faith, Hope, Love* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1986), 118. The ordinary conception of acedia also frequently includes apathy and boredom.

In this article, I will explore Thomas Aquinas's conception of the vice of sloth and his reasons for including it on the list of seven. For this reason, from here on I will refer to the vice by its Latin name, *acedia,* rather than the modern English term, "sloth." Aquinas's account deserves special attention because it stands at a key point in the history of *acedia,* a point at which previous strands of the Christian virtue tradition converge and after which the heuristic force of the traditional schema of virtues and vices is considerably dissipated. His account thus provides an interesting interpretive link between ancient Christian and modern conceptions of this vice.

In part I, I will briefly trace the history of *acedia* in order to uncover the various sources of its association with laziness. In part II, I will analyze Aquinas's two-part definition of *acedia,* noting especially its opposition to the virtue of charity *(caritas).* His characterization of *acedia* as the kind of sorrow opposed to the joy of charity diverges from the tradition (both before and after him) in subtle but interesting ways, and yields an important clue as to why he thought *acedia* constituted a serious and important moral deficiency, warranting its inclusion on the list of seven capital vices.

In part III, I will inquire more specifically into what might cause *acedia's* sorrow. Here I engage an interpretive puzzle about Aquinas's own description of *acedia,* which turns out to be a necessary further step in clarifying his understanding of this vice: Is physical weariness the cause of *acedia's* sorrow, as some passages seem to suggest? Or does *acedia* have deeper, spiritual roots? Solving this puzzle helps us understand why Aquinas insists that *acedia* is a spiritual vice and, therefore, much more than laziness. If Aquinas is right that *acedia* is aversion not to physical effort as such, but rather to what it sees as the burdens of a relationship of love, then this feature of the vice, born of its link to charity, confirms its important role in the moral life.

I. THE LINK TO LAZINESS: A SHORT HISTORY OF *ACEDIA*

Contemporary audiences are not unique in thinking of *acedia* as aversion to physical effort or as associated with states of torpor and inertia. The following cursory survey of the history of *acedia* will reveal both important consonances and dissonances between Aquinas's conception of the vice and the tradition of thought in which he played an important part.

The history of *acedia* may be divided into five main stages.[5] Its beginnings lie at least as early as the fourth century A.D., when the Desert Fathers of Egypt wrestled with this vice and Evagrius of Pontus first compiled a list of eight major vices, *acedia* chief among them. For the desert cenobites, *acedia* named the temptation to escape one's commitment to the solitary religious life, due to both physical weariness (a result of their extreme asceticism) and weariness with the spiritual life itself. Oppressed with the tedium of life and depressed at the thought of his spiritual calling, a monk would look out of his desert cell in the heat of the day and want nothing more than to escape and enjoy an afternoon of entertainment in the city.[6]

From this solitary mode of the religious life with its stringent asceticism, the concept of *acedia* was transplanted into Western monasticism by John Cassian, disciple of Evagrius. Here one's calling to the religious life took a communal form. In this second stage, the vice was understood less as a longing to escape solitary communion with God than as a temptation to shirk one's calling to participate in a religious community and *its* spiritual life.[7] Again, the one afflicted by this vice was aggrieved and oppressed by his commitment to the religious life with its identity and calling-hence Gregory the Great's label for it as a particular kind of *tristitia* (sorrow). But in its monastic form, escaping now

[5] Here I gratefully acknowledge S. Wenzel's excellent historical work in *The Sin of Sloth: Acedia in Medieval Thought and literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967). The stages outlined here are my own.

[6] See especially ibid., 10, 18.

[7] As we will note in part II, this conception of *acedia,* unlike Aquinas's, seems to affect both precepts of charity, that is, one's love of God *and* neighbor.

involved shunning a relationship to God *and* to others who shared that relationship. The inertia and tedium caused by sorrow sapped one's motivation to do one's part in that community; thus *acedia's* link with laziness, understood as the neglect of one's duties (whether spiritual exercises or manual labor), emerges further.

In the thirteenth century, Aquinas further reworked Cassianic *acedia* and Gregorian *tristitia* in his *Summa Theologiae,* both narrowing and broadening the concept. On the one hand, his opposition of *acedia* to charity more narrowly and precisely located the vice's threat to one's spiritual life. On the other hand, restricting its target to the virtue of charity broadened its application to any human being in any state of life, for Aquinas understood all human beings, simply in virtue of their nature as human beings, as made to live in relationship with God. For all those who accept this relationship and receive the gift of charity, Aquinas counted *acedia* a possibility. *Acedia* thus ceased to be a vice that threatened only those who chose the religious life in the strict sense.

In the fourth stage, the Reformation further broadened the concept of *acedia.* First, it turned away from the tradition-based lists of virtues and vices in favor of what it saw as the more strictly scriptural commandments.[8] Moreover, the Reformers rejected the sacrament of penance, for the sake of which much of the previous analysis of *acedia* and its behavioral symptoms had been done.[9] Thus, the seven great vices gradually lost their status as central heuristic devices in theology and spiritual formation. In addition, the Reformers expanded the notion of one's spiritual vocation to include all forms of work and labor. So shirking one's spiritual or religious duties-the monastic sense of *acedia-now* included shirking *all* of one's duties in life, for example, to one's guild, one's family, one's church, and so on. Since all work can be an expression of one's religious calling, *acedia* came to mean neglect

[8] *"Acedia"* is only explicitly mentioned in the Septuagint once, at Psalm 118:28 (119:28 in modern translations); the Vulgate gives its close synonym *"taedium"* instead, usually glossed by commentators as *"taedium cordis."* See Wenzel, *Sin of Sloth,* 34.

[9] See Bloomfield, *Seven Deadly Sins,* 91-93, 99.

of one's work in general, while its opposite, diligence, came to be regarded as a virtue.

Because Aquinas's account defined *acedia* as opposing charity, a theological virtue whose object is our friendship with God (our participation in the divine nature), *acedia* was in his view a peculiarly *theological* vice.[10] This explains how *acedia* could be reduced to "mere" laziness in the fifth and final stage of its history-a stage characterized by humanizing and secularizing tendencies of thought that followed the medieval period and were already underway during the time of the Reformation. If one gives up a sense of the person as a being fulfilled only in relationship to God, then *acedia*-the vice that sorrows over and resists our divine identity and destiny-no longer seems to have any application. Evacuated of spiritual content, little is left of *acedia* save aversion to effort in general; *acedia* is merely laziness and its status as a capital and spiritual vice becomes puzzling.[11] On the contrary, Aquinas's conception of this vice entails understanding (at some level) and taking seriously that one is refusing the commitment and calling that a relationship to God entails, m order for it to count as a genuine case of *acedia.*

[10] Wenzel also makes this point *(Sin of Sloth,* 66).

[11] Despite the loss of the "great seven" as a schema by which to measure moral (mal)formation, modem cultures have raised "industriousness" to the level of an important virtue, and the "sloth" opposed to it thus can assume great importance as a moral defect (see, for example, Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love,* 118-22). It is also worth noting that my version of the history does nothing to track Kierkegaardian and Pascalian descriptions of moral and spiritual states that resonate closely with *acedia* (for example, despair, restlessness, and the relentless pursuit of distractions *via* the aesthetic life or *via* empty diversion-seeking), much less the new humanistic version of *acedia* evident in Nietzschean nihilism (the hatred of man, ironically characteristic of Christians, described in part I of the *Genealogy of Morals,* for example) or in Sartre's descriptions of "bad faith." There are two important and interesting questions here (neither of which I will be able to address in the current essay): First, are these genuine cases of *acedia?* And second, would Aquinas (given his definition of *acedia* as opposed to charity) be able to recognize them as such? It would be one thing if Christians could diagnose *acedia* in others who had the vice but were unable, from their own perspective, to recognize and articulate the problem. It would be quite another to claim that one could self-diagnose from within a secular perspective. I think Aquinas would be able to countenance a "natural" form of *acedia,* understood as resistance of the will to its own inclination (born of natural necessity) to the perfection of human nature (albeit not in its perfect, supernatural form). Thus I am inclined to count these latter cases as instances of *acedia,* although in a sense analogous to its perfect form.

Our brief history of *acedia*[12] goes some distance toward explaining the tendency to conflate sloth with mere laziness. In the next section, I turn to Aquinas's conception of *acedia.* By opposing *acedia* directly to charity, Aquinas provides an important clue about the nature and importance of the vice. The resulting conception of *acedia* transcends, but does not jettison, its historical link to laziness.

II. *ACEDIA'S* OPPOSITION TO CHARITY

In the *Secunda Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae,* formation in virtue is the central and primary characterization of the good life for human beings. Aquinas conceives of moral formation teleologically, in terms both of Aristotelian flourishing and ultimately, of Christian sanctification.[13] Thus, the virtues in their most perfect form are certain internal dispositions and principles of action infused by God (specifically, by the work of the Holy Spirit) that enable us to reach our *telos,* becoming like Christ, the exemplar of human perfection and one who lives in perfect communion with God. At its core, then, the moral life involves personal transformation.

Vices, according to Aquinas, are the personal habits that thwart this transformation; virtues are the traits by which we take on the character of Christ. The apostle Paul describes this change in Colossians 3:5-14:

> Your life is now hidden with Christ in God. . . . Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature .... You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourself of all such things ... since

[12] *As* is indicated by its brevity, my account is not intended to be comprehensive. Notable omissions include the story of how Cassianic *acedia* and Gregorian *tristitia* were merged into a single vice and how Evagrius's list of eight reduced to seven, a more biblically symbolic number. See Bloomfield, *Seven Deadly Sins,* 72.

[13] I have argued in more detail for these claims in "Power Made Perfect in Weakness: Aquinas's Transformation of the Virtue of Courage," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology,* forthcoming.

you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in the image of its Creator.[14]

This teleological picture of the moral life as a project of personal transformation stands behind Aquinas's characterization of *acedia. Acedia* counts as a vice because it threatens (from within) the process of human perfection and its *telos,* a relationship with God that Aquinas will call charity.

Aquinas defines the vice of *acedia* as "sorrow over . . . an internal and divine good [in us]."[15] The definition breaks down into two main parts. I will examine first what Aquinas means by "an internal and divine good" and, second, what he means by his puzzling description of it as a kind of "sorrow" *(tristitia).*

The "internal and divine good" refers to that human participation in the divine nature which is nothing other than the virtue of charity.[16] *Acedia* is the capital vice directly opposed to the virtue of charity.[17] Thus, we should give a brief sketch of what

[14] See also Ephesians 4:22-24, upon which Aquinas comments: "Hence he [Paul] makes two points here since vices must first be eradicated before virtues can be cultivated: First, he instructs them to put aside their former condition, their old way of living. Secondly, how they must take on a new way of life [characteristic] of Jesus. Three considerations follow. First, what does 'the old man' mean? Some hold that the old man is exterior and the new man interior. But it must be said that the old man is both interior and exterior; he is a person who is enslaved by a senility in his soul, due to sin, and in his body whose members provide the tools for sin. Thus a man enslaved to sin in soul and body is an old man.... And so a man subjected to sin is termed an old man because he is on the way to corruption." Aquinas also references the Colossians 3 passage in this section of the commentary, with the following remark, "In Colossians 3: 9 the Apostle indicates how to leave the old man behind: 'stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds.' The substance of human nature is not to be rejected or despoiled, but only wicked actions and conduct" *(Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians,* trans. Matthew Lamb [Albany: Magi Books, Inc., 1966], c. 4, lect. 7).

[15] *Quaestiones Disputatae de Malo,* q. 11, a. 2; see also *Summa Theologiae* 11-11 q. 35, a. 2.

[16] *STh* 11-11 q. 23, a. 2, ad 1; and 11-11 q. 35, aa. 2 and 3.

[17] Even more so than envy (the vice mentioned immediately after *acedia,* in *STh* 11-11, q. *36).Acedia* sorrows over the divine good (the first precept of charity: "love God"), while envy sorrows over a neighbor's good (the second precept of charity: "love your neighbor"). Further, envy sorrows over a neighbor's good as excelling my own (so its object is neither something my own, nor something shared by me). It does not sorrow (at least directly) over the spiritual good of friendship itself, as sloth does, much less friendship with God. For a defense of the priority of loving God, see, for example, *STh* 11-11, q. 23, a. 5, ad 1: "God is the

Aquinas means by "charity." It is the centerpiece of his account of the virtues, which are in turn at the center of his account of the moral life in the *Summa Theologiae.* Charity is the "root and mother of all other virtues"; its position parallels pride's with respect to the capital vices. In addition, charity is a theological virtue, which means that it has God as its direct object.[18]

Aquinas characterizes charity primarily as a relationship with God. He describes it as "union with God," "sharing in the fellowship of eternal happiness," "friendship with God," and the "spiritual life whereby God dwells in us."[19] From the beginning, human beings are made in the *imago dei,* and in the end we are perfected only by participating in God's divine nature. Here is the classic definition of charity:

> Charity is the friendship of human beings for God, grounded in the fellowship of everlasting happiness. Now this fellowship is in respect, not of natural, but of gratuitous gifts, for, according to Romans 6:23, "the grace of God is life everlasting": wherefore charity itself surpasses our natural faculties. Therefore charity can be in us neither naturally nor through the acquisition of the natural powers, but by the infusion of the Holy Spirit, Who is the love of the Father and the Son, and the participation of Whom is created charity.[20]

For Aquinas, charity is a deep bond of friendship that makes us all we are meant to be. We might think, as a kind of analogy originally suggested by the apostle Paul, of the way a man and woman become "one flesh" in marriage. Marriage is more than a civil contract; it is a transformation of identity, the kind that comes only through the gift of oneself to another person. Thus, it involves the dying away of an old individual self and the birth of a new unity. In a mysterious way, this new bond of unity enables both members in the relationship to grow and be

principal object of charity, while our neighbor is loved out of charity for God's sake."

[13] *STh* II-II, q. 23ff.

[19] *STh* 11-11, q. 23, a. 1; II-II, q. 23, a. 2, ad 2, 3, 5; and II-II, q. 35, a. 2; for descriptions of participated charity, seeSTh II-II, q. 24, a. 5, ad3; and II-II, q. 28, a. 2. The passion of love is treated at *STh* 1-11, qq. 26-28; in q. 28 especially, Aquinas describes love (quoting I John 4) as effecting union, friendship, and mutual indwelling between lovers.

[20] *STh* II-II, q. 24, a. 2.

transformed in ways that perfect their character.[21] Similarly, charity is a relationship of union with God, a participation in the divine nature that completes and perfects us. In Pauline terms, we "put on the new self, which is Christ," thereby becoming fully what we are meant to be.[22]

Aquinas also emphasizes that this relationship of participation in God himself is received only by way of a gift23-a gift of the Spirit that requires a gift of ourselves in return in order to count as genuine *friendship,* for friendship requires mutuality.[24] Finally, charity is linked to our ultimate destiny, what Aquinas describes as our *telos.* Our fulfillment as human beings comes with living in God's presence, being in union with him. In the consummation of this friendship, our will finds perfect joy and rest.[25] For now, Aquinas writes, the "grace [of charity] is nothing else than a beginning of glory in us."[26] The marriage analogy again illustrates its "now and not yet" character: spouses are married on the day they take their vows, but being married is an identity and activity

[21] As Frederick Buechner says, "[A] marriage made in Heaven is one where a man and a woman become more richly themselves together than ... either of them could ever have managed to become alone" *(Whistling in the Dark: A Doubters Dictionary* [San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993], 87). See also Aristotle's conception of the effects of virtuous friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (9.12.1172a10-15).

[22] Charity involves an ontological change: It is "a habitual form superadded to the [human] natural power [i.e., the will or rational appetite, whose natural object is the perfect or complete good]" (STh I-TI, q. 23, a. 2; see also *STh* I-TI, qq. 1-5). As such, charity orients us to our supernatural end or *telos.* But the *habitus* of charity, as with all the virtues involving the will, is also an internal principle of human moral action and so functions as the source of moral change as well.

[23] "Now, since charity surpasses the proportion of human nature, it depends, not on any natural ability or power, but on the sole grace of the Holy Spirit, Who infuses charity. Wherefore the degree of charity depends neither on the condition of nature nor on the capacity of natural virtue, but only on the will of the Holy Spirit, who divides his gifts according to his will" (STb I-TI, q. 24, a. 3).

[24] Note that charity is only an infused virtue and has no habitually acquired form. Once we receive the virtue of charity, however, we can choose to exercise it in actions which thereby increase or strengthen it. See *STh* II-II, q. 23, aa. 4-7,

[25] As Aquinas writes in *STh* I-II, q. 3, a. 4: "Delight comes to the will from the end [namely, God] being present," for "when human beings attain their ultimate end, they remain at peace, their desires being at rest." "Joy" he names as "the consummation of happiness."

[26] *STh* TI-II, q. 24, a. 3, ad 2.

that takes a lifetime of commitment, transformation, and living-in-relationship. So, too, does our friendship with God.

This "internal and divine good in us" is the target of *acedia's sorrow,* which brings us to the second half of the definition. By "sorrow" Aquinas means something more technical than its usual connotation of sadness.[27] The Latin word *acedia* is a transliteration of the Greek ciKT)OE:ta-literally,"a lack of care."[28] Etymologically, at least, *acedia* is a lack of appetite, unresponsiveness, aversion, and, at its limit, even distaste.[29]

For Aquinas, joy and sorrow are the spiritual analogues of physical pleasure and pain; they name our appetitive reaction to the inner apprehension (by imagination or intellect) of a present good or evil, respectively. Aquinas usually uses "sorrow" rather than "pain" when the evil object in question is a spiritual one.[30] *Acedia's* sorrow is thus an appetitive aversion to a spiritual and interior good because that good is perceived by the agent as evil in some way (in *what* way we will consider later). In the disputed questions *De Malo,* Aquinas clarifies this: Sorrow about "some

[27] See, for example, his treaonent of sorrow in the treatise on the passions, *STh* I-II, qq. 35-39.

[28] Alternate Latin spellings-most commonly, *accidia-trade* on the mistaken etymological link of *accidia/acedia* to *acidus* (acid, bitter). Hence the medievals' psychological description of *acedia* as "bitterness." See Wenzel, *Sin of Sloth,* 54.

[29] In framing *acedia* as a special *species* of sorrow, Aquinas is integrating strands of the tradition from Cassian to John Damascene and Gregory the Great (the latter, for example, lists *tristitia* in place of *acedia* in the list of seven found in his *Moralia on Job* XXXI, XLV, 87). See also note 37, below.

[30] We can make this clearer by contrasting *acedia* with courage. In its strict sense, courage stands firm primarily against physical threats to the body-most notably, physical pain and death-to which we (embodied rational animals) have a natural aversion *(STh* II-II, qq. 123-124). For example, in the paradigm act of courage, a martyr sacrifices a bodily good (his or her own bodily life) for the sake of a spiritual good (the truth of the faith). See also *De Malo,* q. 11, a. 1. In general, one can also distinguish three levels of one's "aversion to a present evil" in Aquinas's moral psychology: first, pain as aversion to bodily injury or evil; second, sadness as the passion averse to evil on the level of the sensitive appetite; and finally, sorrow (in the technical sense), which is aversion (disgust, contempt) at the level of intellectual appetite (simple willing). Aquinas uses *dolor* (pain) and *tristitia* (sadness) almost interchangeably for levels one and two, but reserves the technical sense of *tristitia* to refer to level three, on account of a difference in the objects of the respective appetites (sensible objects vs. spiritual objects). See *STh* I-II, q. 35, aa. 1 and 2.

distressing or laborious work" (a martyr's bodily suffering, for example) is not *acedia* because in those cases the sorrow is not about an interior good but rather an exterior evil.[31] Sorrow can manifest itself as a passion (located in the sensitive appetite) or an aversion of the will (the intellectual appetite). In the latter case, it looks more like disgust or contempt than the emotion of sadness typically associated with the term. Aquinas will be concerned primarily with the movement of the intellectual appetite in his definition of *acedia.*

Aquinas's moral psychology links joy, the appetitive state directly opposed to sorrow, to rest in the appetite.[32] Like its analogue, pleasure, joy is a kind of delight in a good that is present and possessed.[33] *Acedia's* sorrow is therefore a restless resistance to a good (perceived as evil in some respect) that is recognized to be our own.[34] This means that we do not have an aversion to God himself in *acedia,* but rather to ourselves-as-sharing-in-God' s-nature, united to him in the bond of friendship. Aquinas says, "*acedia* is not sadness about the presence of God himself, but sadness about some [internal] good pertaining to him which is divine *by participation,*"[35] implying that *acedia* afflicts only those who already have charity.

Aquinas also names joy as the first of three inward effects (acts or "fruits") of charity.[36] *Acedia,* as "a *species* of sorrow," is the vice directly opposing *this* joy. Rather than being lifted up by joy

[31] *De Malo,* q. 11, a. 1, ad 4.

[32] *STh* I-II, q. 3, a. 4; I-II, q. 31, a. 3.

[33] *STh* I-II, q. 31, a. 2.

[34] *De Malo,* q. 11, a. 2. *STh* I-II, q. 35, a. 8: "For the proper object of sorrow is *one's own evil.*"

[35] *De Malo,* q. 11, a. 3, ad 3 {emphasis added).

[36] The other two inward effects are as follows: We have *peace (pax, concordia)* when our will is united to God's will by the bond of friendship, so that we share in common the objects of our love, a theme Aquinas takes from Augustine. And we have *misericordia* toward others whom God loves, evidenced by our grief when obstacles stand in the way of their well-being. Joy is defined in *STh* II-II, q. 28, a. 1 as delight "in the presence of one you love"-in this case, God. The effects include fruits of the Holy Spirit, as well as acts {both joy and peace) and virtues *(misericordia) STh* 11-11, q. 28, a. 4, corp. and ad 3; 11-11, q. 29, a. 4, corp. and ad 1; and 11-11, q. 30, a. 3.

at one's union with God, the person afflicted with *acedia* is oppressed or weighed down; as one's own, the divine good is seen as an unwelcome burden.[37] What makes *acedia* sinful or vicious, for Aquinas, is that it consists in an intrinsic disorder of our desires: It is inappropriate aversion, for it regards our participation in the greatest good and only source of lasting joy with apathy or distaste.[38] *Acedia* perceives this divine good in us as evil-as oppressive or repulsive. To God's offer of the "renewal of [our] whole nature at the center of [our] being," *acedia* turns away from "be[coming] what God wants [us] to be."[39] To mark the contrast, *acedia* is traditionally opposed to the beatitude "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness," where one wholeheartedly yearns to be renewed, that is, to become righteous like Christ.[40]

[37] The sense of *acedia* as experiencing oneself, or an aspect of oneself, as a burden is a theme I first noticed in the words of a twelfth century monk: "Oftentimes, when you are alone in your cell, a certain inertia, a dullness of the mind and disgust of the heart seize you. You feel an enormous loathing in yourself. You are a burden to yourself, and that internal joy you used so happily to experience has left you .... The spiritual vigor in you has withered, your inner calm lies dead" {quoted in Wenzel, *Sin of Sloth,* 33). It may seem contradictory or just plain confused to describe *acedia* both as apathy {lack of feeling, with a corresponding inactivity) and disgust (feeling repulsed, with a corresponding act of refusal). The best explanation is that when the one with *acedia* "turns away from" the divine good, this can either be an act of neglect or an act of deliberate rejection. Apathy seems a better description of the former; disgust, or distaste, the latter.

[38] There are actually two potential problems in this vice *(Sih* II-II, q. 35, a. 1): (1) disorder-one's *affectus* has the wrong object, namely, sorrow over a good-and (2) immoderation-one's *affectus* has the right object, but lacks due measure and falls into excess. This latter problem includes sorrow over genuine evils, for example, grief over a loved one's death that is so great that it immobilizes or paralyzes us from further action. Another example of the same problem would be an occasion in which seeing a grave injustice done causes such great sorrow that it makes us despair of ever making a difference {"Why even try?") so we neglect *misericordia* and its outer manifestation, acts of benevolence. I do not address the second form directly here, nor does Aquinas do more than mention it in the *Summa Theologiae* and *De Malo.*

[39] Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love,* 120.

[40] Wenzel, *Sin of Sloth,* 57. It might seem puzzling that in order to have a vice opposing charity one must first have charity. How can one have two "opposite" qualities at once? The virtue of charity itself is infused by the Holy Spirit, but acting on it is, on Aquinas's account, up to us. It is entirely possible to have a virtue and fail to act on it, or even to act in ways that are not fully consonant with it. {If *acedia* turns mortal, of course, it will be incompatible with charity.) So it is possible to have charity without its "effects"-which include everything from

Now there are times when one might be weighed down by suffering or grief or even physical weariness, and lack inner joy. Or despite a commitment to regular prayer and fasting, one might hit spells of dryness or a lack of devotion. This is not *acedia. Acedia,* as a sin and vice, moves beyond emotion and feeling to what Aquinas calls "reason's consent" to our lack of joy.[41]

As a metaphor for *acedia,* the Christian tradition frequently pointed to the people of Israel, freed from bondage in Egypt and faced with the prospect of making their home in the Promised Land. After the spies' report, however, the Israelites decided that the project of conquering the Canaanite nations looked much less appealing than it did before. God punished them with forty years of wandering in the desert wilderness-a punishment as much their choice as God's penalty. To the offer of a homeland and promised rest, a chance to embrace their identity and destiny as God's own people, the Israelites responded by turning away. As the psalmist recounts, "They despised the pleasant land" (Ps 106:24a). The aridity of the desert landscape, the restless, aimless wandering, and the refusal of their own fulfillment and God's blessing in their promised homeland all have their analogues in the vice of *acedia.*

Another commonly used scriptural portrait of *acedia* is that of Lot's wife: When faced with the opportunity to be saved from destruction, she leaves the doomed city of Sodom but cannot bring herself to turn completely away from her old life (in particular, its sense of home and identity} with all its familiarity. (Familiar miseries, with which one has learned to live, often seem

emotions and actions to other virtues: joy is an act of will (with, one presumes, the concomitant emotional effect), peace is an act of will, and *misericordia* is a virtue. Further, joy is compatible with godly sorrow, because in that case, joy and sorrow have different objects (*STh* II-II, q. 28, a. 2).

[41] While Wenzel is right to characterize it as an "affective disorder," it is also more than that. Virtues and vices involve both a cognitive and an affective moment; the emotions and decisions embody a judgment or view of the world that is also part of what it is to have the virtue. This is especially true of virtues and vices that are located in the will (or rational appetite). Aquinas identifies sloth as involving the consent of the will on several occasions, although he admits that it can be prompted by movements of the sensitive appetite.

preferable to the demands of a new way of life.)[42] In either case, the overwhelming urge is to stay with the comfortable and the known rather than risk change, even if it promises improvement. *Acedia's* resentment, listlessness, sullenness, and apathy stem from perceiving oneself as "stuck" in a position (the new) that one does not wholeheartedly endorse but that one also cannot fully deny or escape.[43]

Thus, the trouble with *acedia* is that when we have it, we refuse to be all that we are meant to be. This refusal-even when we think it constitutes an escape from an unappealing future-is itself a form of misery. In refusing our *telos,* we resist our deepest desires for fulfillment. This is why Gregory describes *acedia* as "a kind of sorrow." In outlining the sins to which *acedia* typically gives rise, Aquinas likewise explains how they are all attempts either to escape sorrow or to live with inescapable sorrow.[44] The oppressiveness of *acedia* comes from our own self-stifling choice.[45]

[42] Augustine's famous prayer, "Lord, make me chaste ... but not yet," also fits this pattern.

[43] The examples are from Wenzel; the interpretation of them is my own.

[44] It might be helpful for us in understanding *acedia* to contrast it with despair, a vice opposed to the theological virtue of hope and an offspring vice of *acedia.* Aquinas, following Paul, Augustine, and Gregory the Great, includes three theological virtues in his account of our moral and spiritual lives. The three theological virtues are faith, hope, and charity. Both hope and charity are located in the will, the appetite that desires our own fulfillment and flourishing. Hope is the virtue that counts on God's gracious assistance in attaining a relationship of union with him. Charity is the virtue that delights in (and constitutes) the present reality of that relationship. Both *acedia* and despair are a kind of sorrow or aversion to what is perceived as a present evil. Despair is the kind of sorrow opposed to hope. It is what we feel when we cannot bring ourselves to believe that God's mercy extends to us. While we accept the general possibility of salvation for human beings, we count ourselves as beyond the pale, beyond redemption, beyond the reaches of God's willingness to help. *Acedia,* on the other hand, is opposed to the joy of charity; it feels dejection rather than delight toward our participation in the divine nature and our relationship to God. So while both are a form of sorrow, their stances toward God are different. For despair, participation in the divine nature through grace is perceived as appealing, but impossible; for *acedia,* the prospect is possible, but unappealing.

[45] In Gabriele Taylor's essay on sloth ("Deadly Vices?" in Roger Crisp, *How Should One Live?* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996], 172), she argues that the slothful are neither able to live with themselves nor to enjoy living with themselves because it is precisely their selves and the demands internal to them that are the main obstacle to their happiness. Likewise, Pieper identifies sloth with Kierkegaard's despair of weakness, in which one chooses

This definition of *acedia-sorrowing* over our friendship with God (and the transformation of our nature by grace effected by it) as something evil-gives Aquinas grounds for maintaining its status as a capital vice, that is, a vice that is the source of many others. It concerns one of the most basic movements of the appetite (sorrow being aversion to a present evil), and it concerns a very desirable good-a key characteristic of the capital vices[46]-namely, a good that is directly connected with our ultimate end and toward which the will is inclined by necessity of its nature.[47] *Acedia* thus involves inner tension, grappling as it does with both a strong push toward and a strong pull away from our ultimate end, friendship with God.[48]

Acedia's opposition to charity, the greatest of all Christian virtues, makes it an extremely serious vice, but how and why the one with *acedia* resists charity is still mysterious. Thus, in the third and final section, I propose to examine the cause of *acedia.* Aquinas's answer to this question resonates with the common understanding of *acedia* as an aversion to effort, but also distinguishes it from mere laziness. Identifying the cause of *acedia's* sorrow over the internal and divine good of charity helps us fully grasp why he counts it among the spiritual vices.

not to be oneself, for to choose oneself is to be constituted by a relationship to the infinite, the ground of the selfs existence *(Sickness unto Death,* trans. Alastair Hannay [London: Penguin, 1989], especially 50-51). For Pieper's description, see *Faith, Hope, Love,* 120. See also Aquinas on our endorsement of the gift given (i.e., the new graced self): "It is a sign of humility if we do not think too much of ourselves through observing our own faults; but if we despise the good we have received from God, this, far from being a proof of humility, shows us to be ungrateful: and from such contempt results sloth, because we sorrow for things we assess as evil and worthless" *(SI'h* IT-II, q. 35, a. 1, ad 3).

[46] *De Malo,* q. 8; *SI'h* I-IT, q. 84, a. 4; *inter alia.*

[47] *SI'h* I-II, q. 5, a. 8; I-II, q. 8, a. 1; and I, q. 82, a. 1. Given the will's inclination to the perfect good as a matter of natural necessity, is a "natural" analogue of *acedia* possible? See note 11, above.

[48] We have already noted that *acedia* is a peculiarly theological vice since its object is our relationship with God (our participation in his nature), called charity. Now charity relates us to both God and our neighbor; however, the way Aquinas describes *acedia,* it appears that this vice grieves over the source relationship (friendship with God), not the concomitant one (love of neighbor). See also note 17, above.

III. AN INTERPRETIVE PUZZLE: THE CAUSE OF SORROW

difficulty of understanding Aquinas's conception of *acedia* is figuring out what might cause us to sorrow over our participation in the divine nature. What could possibly occasion sorrow over friendship with God? How could we feel *aversion* toward the relationship that constitutes our own perfection, especially aversion Aquinas describes as "dislike, horror, and detestation of the Divine good"?[49]

In what follows, I will consider two explanations of the cause of sorrow over the divine good in us. Each explanation has some basis in Aquinas's texts. Each also pays heed to the strands of the tradition that associate *acedia* with an aversion to effort (the common meaning of "sloth"). I will argue, however, that the second is a better interpretation of Aquinas, and conclude that the effort to which *acedia* objects is not merely bodily toil or difficulty, as its characterization as "laziness" would indicate, but rather the commitment required by being and living in a relationship of love. With this explanation in hand, we can fully grasp why Aquinas insists that *acedia* is a spiritual vice and understand better how, on his conception of the problem, one might become vulnerable to it.

The first and perhaps most straightforward explanation of *acedia's* sorrow affirms the common conception of this vice as laziness or sloth. We perceive friendship with God as involving too much physical work, too much bodily effort. Going to Mass, doing good works, engaging in spiritual exercises-all of these take too much time and effort. Weariness is often used in descriptions of *acedia* in both *De Malo* and the *Summa Theologiae:*

> *Acedia* is a kind of sorrow, whereby one becomes sluggish in spiritual *actus* because they weary the body. (*STh* I q. 63, a. 2, ad 2, on spiritual creatures)

> *[Acedia]* according to Damascene, is *an oppressive sorrow,* which so oppresses the soul of a person that he or she wants to do nothing .... Hence sloth implies a

[49] *STh* II-II, q. 35, a. 3.

certain weariness of work, as appears from [Augustine's] gloss on Ps 106:18, "Their soul abhorred all manner of meat," and from the definition of some who say that sloth is *a sluggishness of the mind which neglects to begin good. (STh* !I-II, q. 35, a. 1, on *acedia)*

[Acedia is] sadness about one's spiritual good, on account of the attendant bodily labor. *(STh* I-II, q. 84, a. 4, on sin and vice)

[T]he reason a person shuns spiritual goods is a kind of weariness, while dislike of toil and love of bodily repose seem to be due to the same cause, viz. weariness. *(STh* 11-11, q. 35, a. 2, obj. 3, on *acedia)*

Historically, as we have seen, Evagrius already conceived of the vice in such a manner-especially given the Desert Fathers' stringent ascetic practices-and the Cassianic monastic tradition followed suit.[50] Moreover, Augustine seems to think of it in this way, given his descriptions of the vice in the passages Aquinas quotes in the *Summa Theologiae* and *De Malo.* We can easily imagine cases of human love-caring for an aging parent or a newborn infant, for example-where the sheer physical effort and weariness associated with the task might cause us to shrink back from the relationship.

Nonetheless the conception of *acedia* as a vice that shuns labor of the body *(corpora/em laborem)*[51] as such is one that Aquinas considers but rejects. Bodily toil and difficulty are not the causes of *acedia's* sorrow. Neither is anything like diligence in good works named a virtue. More tellingly, he repeatedly describes the weariness mentioned in the above quotations as the effect of *acedia,* rather than the source of its sorrowfulness. Sluggishness about the commandments, the paralysis induced by despair, the

[50] Evagrius famously called *acedia* the noonday demon, who struck just when the sun was beating down at its hottest and the temptation to sleep was at its maximum. Sticking to one's prayers and religious study required the effort of fighting against one's bodily needs, especially given the physically demanding practices of the Desert Fathers. In the later monastic tradition, *acedia* was the name of the desire to sleep in rather than rise for early morning prayers, or to shirk one's manual labor in favor of relaxation or wasted time chit-chatting or gossiping. There are plenty of examples of this conception to be found in, for example, Thomas a Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ,* trans. R. Knox and M. Oakley (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1960), chaps. 10, 19, 20 *inter alia.*

[51] 5(Yh I-II, q. 84, a. 4.

failure to act caused by pusillanimity in the face of the counsels of perfection-all of these are characterized as the offspring vices of *acedia,* behaviors that follow upon being afflicted by the vice. Responding to the traditional understanding of *acedia* as neglect of good works, Aquinas writes: "Sluggishness about things [that ought to be] done is not sadness itself but the effect of sadness."[52]

While Aquinas will argue that *acedia* is more than laziness, he acknowledges that it can have inactivity as its effect: *"Acedia,* by weighing on the mind, hinders us from doing things that cause sorrow,"[53] and "excessive sorrow ... paralyzes the soul and hinders it from shunning evil,"[54] to the point that "sometimes even the external movement of the body is paralyzed [by sorrow]."[55] This is an effect of sorrow in general, however, and thus it does not mark *acedia* off in particular. Further, sorrow's direct effect is principally internal (i.e., on the soul). More importantly, identifying neglect and inactivity as the fruit of *acedia's* oppression does not explain why *acedia* is oppressed at the thought of the divine good in us in the first place.

In fact, even as a result or concomitant effect of sorrow, laziness or inactivity is not a sure mark of the vice. Aquinas divides the daughters of *acedia* into two types: vices caused by having to live with inescapable sorrow, and vices that exemplify our efforts to escape from sorrow when we can. (He describes the effects of *acedia* as "flight" several times in four short articles in *De Malo,* echoing his description in the *Summa Theologiae* of the appetite's natural reaction to sorrow in general.) Despair is an example of the former type of vice; and the "wandering of the mind after illicit things"[56] is an example of the latter. Thus, *acedia* can show itself as a curious mixture of depression or inertia on the one hand, and flight or escapism on the other.[57]

[52] *De Malo,* q. 11, a. 4, ad 3.

[53] *STh* II-II, q. 35, a. 4.

[54] *STh* I-II, q. 39, a. 3, ad 1.

[55] *STh* I-II, q. 37, a. 2.

[56] *STh* II-II, q. 35, a. 4.

[57] Hence the literary portrait of this vice in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited,* where one character even bears the name Sebastian *Flyte.*

Its tendency to flight prompted Aquinas and others to oppose *acedia* to the commandment to hallow the Sabbath day, which is a "moral precept commanding that the mind *rest* in God, to which the mind's sorrow over the divine good is contrary. "[58] "Rest" may be taken here to refer both to stopping "activity" in order to engage in contemplation of God (the antidote to *acedia's* escapism)[59] and to the joyful peace that characterizes that state of communion: recall that for Aquinas, "rest" and "joy" describe the will's possession of the good desired. When we turn away from fullness and rest, we naturally seek to distract ourselves from facing the resulting emptiness. But even incessant and successful diversions fail to give us real delight; they are, in the well-known words of Ecclesiates, a "mere chasing after the wind." Likewise, this vice can easily assume the mask of diligent activity. As Pascal also notes, a frantically paced life may be as morally and spiritually suspect as a life of idleness.[60] Hence, restlessness, as well as laziness, can be a hallmark of *acedia.*

Acedia, however, names the sorrow itself, which weighs on the soul. In Aquinas's words,

> Sorrow is not a distinct vice, insofar as one shirks a distasteful and burdensome work, or sorrows on account of any other cause whatever, but only insofar as one is sorrowful *on account of the Divine good,* which sorrow belongs essentially to *acedia.*[61]

So the sorrow causes the sluggishness (or the restlessness); however, the question remains, what causes the sorrow? What is it about our participation in God that would make us perceive it as an evil in some way?

[58] *STh* II-II, q. 35, a. 3, ad 2; see also *De Malo,* q. 11, a. 3, ad 2 (emphasis added).

[59] See *STh* II-II, q. 35, a. 1, ad 4.

[60] *Pensees,* trans. A. J. Krailsheimer (New York: Penguin, 1966), nos. 139, 143, 146, 164, 171. Although Pascal is concerned primarily with frivolous diversions, it is ironic that a life consumed with the busyness of doing ostensible works of charity may itself also be a form of resistance to the demands of charity.

[61] *STh* II-II, q. 35, a. 4, ad 2. Aquinas describes it as a "constricting" or "weighing down" of the heart, which has the effect (as with sorrow in general) of impeding the movement of the soul as well as the body.

Here begins the second explanation of what might cause *acedia's* sorrow. Rather than being caused by an aversion to the physical effort associated with charity, it may be understood more fundamentally as resistance to the transformation of the self implicated in friendship with God. Responding to the question of whether *acedia* is a special sin, Aquinas says:

> Therefore in answer to this question we must affirm that to sorrow over this special good which is an internal and divine good makes *acedia* a special sin, just as to love this good makes charity a special virtue. Now this divine good is saddening to us *on account of the opposition of the spirit to the flesh* because as the Apostle says in Galatians 5:17, "The flesh lusts against the spirit"; and therefore when love of the flesh is dominant in human beings we loathe spiritual good *as if something contrary to ourselves,* just as someone with embittered taste finds wholesome food distasteful and is grieved whenever he has to take such food. Therefore such distress and distaste and disgust *[taedio]* about a spiritual and divine good is *acedia,* which is a special sin.[62]

This is one of only two brief passages in which Aquinas positively characterizes the source of *acedia's* sorrow. That source is the opposition of "the flesh" to "the spirit." But isn't the first explanation of the cause of sorrow merely confirmed by this passage-namely, that the "fleshly" toil involved in spiritual love for God is so onerous that we are averse to the life of the "spirit" on account of it? The present conundrum about why *acedia* is sorrowful (because of bodily effort or some other cause, most notably, a spiritual one) finds its parallel in a controversy over whether *acedia* should count as a carnal or a spiritual vice, positions for which there are again conflicting passages in the *Summa Theologiae.* Both problems hinge on how we should characterize the *object* of *acedia,* so the answer to this question will allow us to adjudicate both disputes at once.

In question 63 of the *Prima Pars,* Aquinas apparently categorizes *acedia,* along with avarice and anger, as a carnal sin rather than as a spiritual sin, like pride and envy. The context is a discussion on the nature of spiritual creatures-in particular, the

[62] *De Malo,* q. 11, a. 2 (emphasis added).

angels. Article 2 asks whether or not demons (fallen angels) are susceptible to only spiritual and not carnal vices because they are spiritual rather than embodied creatures. We rightly anticipate an affirmative answer to the question. The main authoritative source in this text is Augustine's *City of God,* where Augustine denies that the demons can be fornicators or drunkards-that is, susceptible to carnal vices like lust and gluttony. The question thus narrows to whether the demons have only the vice of pride, or whether there are other vices on the traditional list of seven that they also have. Pride and envy seem to qualify as obviously spiritual vices because their objects are a kind of excellence or superiority in another.[63] Pride is aggrieved at the superiority and excelling goodness of God, envy at the superiority or excelling goodness of a neighbor. On the other hand, lust and gluttony count as carnal vices because they have bodily pleasures as their objects.[64]

We can imagine several reasons why *acedia* might count as a carnal vice. Like lust, it might have bodily pleasure as its object. That is, *acedia* might be the vice of inordinately seeking physical rest and comfort ("bodily repose")- "inordinately" meaning that the comfort is sought over and against a spiritual good or is engaged in immoderately (too much). This parallels the case of lust: it can be an inordinate desire either by means of a disorder in its object or in the degree of desire for a licit object.

Acedia might also count as carnal because it involves a passion of the sensitive appetite, namely, sadness. Only creatures with sensitive capacities, which are essentially linked to the body, are capable of a passion in the strictest sense. *Acedia* would thus be like anger, a vice of excessive or misdirected passion. However, this argument is weakened by a distinction Aquinas makes between sorrow and pain (*STh* I-II, q. 35, a. 2 [the treatise on the passions]) and his location of *acedia's* aversion in the intellectual appetite in *De Malo* (q. 11, a. 1). In the latter passage, Aquinas notes that sorrow and the sin of *acedia* can occur in the

[63] *SI'h* 11-11, q. 162 and q. 36, respectively.
SI'h II-II, q. 153 and q. 148.

intellective appetite as well as the sensitive appetite, so that the excessive or misdirected passions of the sensitive appetite need not be involved at all in cases of *acedia.* There, he also explicitly distances himself from Augustine, who claims that charity's good appears evil "inasmuch as it is contrary to carnal desires."[65]

Despite apparently conceding that *acedia* is a carnal sin in the *Prima Pars,* in the *Secunda Secundae* Aquinas explicitly names *acedia* among the spiritual vices:

> [I]t *cannot* be said that *acedia* is a special vice insofar as it shuns spiritual good as toilsome or troublesome to the body, or as a hindrance to the body's pleasures, for this would *not* sever *acedia* from the carnal vices, whereby a person seeks bodily comfort and pleasure.[66]

Here *acedia* is marked out over and against the carnal vices on account of its object, which is a spiritual good. This is the definitive way that Aquinas characterizes virtues (i.e., by their objects) and likewise, the vices. This is also the section of the *Summa Theologiae* that deals with *acedia* directly, and not, as in the passage in the *Prima Pars,* only in passing (in answer to questions about other topics). In the two passages where Aquinas directly addresses the nature of the vice *(De Malo,* q. 11; *STh* II-II, q. 35, a. 2) Aquinas numbers *acedia* among the spiritual vices, following the authority of Gregory in the *Moralia.*

Moreover, Aquinas directly counters the characterization of *acedia* as averse to bodily effort or oppressed by physical weariness in several passages. In the principal article from the *Summa Theologiae* (II-II, q. 35, a. 2), for example, the objector reasons that if *acedia* were aversion to some kind of bodily toil or effort involved in pursuit of a spiritual good, then it would be mere laziness. But that would leave its opposition to charity puzzling. If "the reason why a person shuns spiritual goods is a kind of weariness . . . dislike of toil and love of bodily repose," then "*acedia* would be nothing but laziness, which seems untrue, for

[65] As in the *STh* II-II, q. 35, a. 1 passage quoted earlier, Aquinas is quoting a gloss on Psalm 106: 18 ("His soul abhorred all manner of meat") from Augustine's *Expositions on the Psalms.*

[66] *STh* II-II, q. 35, a. 2 (emphasis added).

idleness is opposed to carefulness, whereas *acedia* is opposed to joy." Aquinas's reply, as we have just seen, affirms that what distinguishes *acedia* as such cannot be its opposition to bodily labor or effort on the grounds that this would make *acedia* a carnal vice, which it is not. The parallel passage from *De Malo* echoes the same objection and reply:

> [I]t was argued that *acedia* is sadness about a spiritual good for a special reason, namely, inasmuch as it impedes bodily rest or relaxation. But counter to this: to seek bodily rest or relaxation pertains to carnal vices.... If then the only reason that *acedia* is a special sin is that it impedes bodily rest or relaxation, it would follow that *acedia* is a carnal sin, whereas Gregory lists *acedia* among the spiritual sins, as is evident in Book XXXI of the *Moralia*. (*De Malo*, q. 11, a. 2, obj. 3)

Finally, in his commentary on I Corinthians, Aquinas also maintains that *acedia* is a spiritual vice on account of its object: "Certain sins are not satisfied *[consummantur]* in carnal pleasure, but only in spiritual pleasure [or the avoidance of spiritual sorrow-the same object is at the root of both], as it is said of the spiritual vices, for instance as with pride, avarice, and *acedia*."[67] Throughout these passages, Aquinas insists that the pursuit of physical comfort or rest at the expense of a spiritual good is not what defines *acedia*.[68] The object of *acedia* is not "friendship-with-God-as-impediment-to-bodily-rest-and-comfort."

How then should we understand *acedia's* status as a spiritual vice? Returning to our key passage, what does it mean when Aquinas tells us that "this divine good is saddening to us on account of the opposition of the spirit to the flesh" so that "when the love of the flesh is dominant in us we loathe spiritual good *as if something contrary to ourselves"?*[69]

[67] *In I Cor.*, c. 6. Note that avarice also counts as a spiritual vice here, in opposition to its implicit characterization in *STh* I, q. 63, a. 2.

[68] Even when Aquinas does allow that a spiritual good could be "saddening" because it "impedes a bodily good" or "when carnal affection prevails over reason," his concession is a reply to mistaken interpretations of *acedia*, which confuse it with "worldly sorrow" or "sadness over temporal evils"-another reference of Paul's (see *De Malo*, q. 11, a. 3, ad 1).

[69] *De Malo*, q. 11, a. 2 (emphasis added).

The best way to resolve the problem is to think of *acedia* as sorrow at the thought of being in relationship with God because of what I will call "the burdens of commitment." In fact, a symptom of *acedia* is that one perceives being in a relationship and maintaining it as burdens to be borne. Love and friendship are felt as making demands on us, and *acedia* resists them as such. This interpretation pays due attention to the dominance of passages where *acedia* is characterized as a spiritual sin on account of its spiritual object, but it also maintains some link to bodily effort, which is prevalent in both Aquinas's tradition and more recent conceptions of the vice.

The source of sadness in *acedia* is the opposition of "the flesh" and "the spirit." Aquinas is quoting the Apostle Paul in Galatians 5: 17 here. He is not adopting a Platonic or Manichean dualism that denigrates the material aspect of the person, blaming the body as the source of sinful hindrances while identifying the true self with a person's inner, spiritual aspect (the soul). The problem of sin is not a result of embodiment, even if sin is also manifest there. Thus, winning the war against "the flesh"-if we restrict its meaning to bodily desires, in this case, for ease and comfort-will not make sin or vice go away. Rather, our whole person-intellect, will, sense appetite, and external behavior-needs to be reoriented away from selfishness and alienation toward love of God and neighbor. To interpret Aquinas's use of "flesh" and "spirit" as indicating an opposition in *acedia* between bodily desire and spiritual good runs contrary to his insistence in several central passages that *acedia* should not be defined in terms of its aversion to bodily effort (or desire).

Instead, the most plausible interpretation is to read "flesh" and "spirit" in terms of another pair of Pauline terms, which *are* in opposition-the "old self" and the "new self," sinful and redeemed human nature. As we saw in the beginning of part II, Paul frequently uses these terms to describe the moral transformation of the whole self by the Holy Spirit.[70] Attachment to the old self,

[70] For example, see Colossians 3 and Ephesians 4 (quoted at the beginning of part II of this article), and Aquinas's commentaries on them (quoted in note 14, above).

in its alienation from God, is aversion to (becoming) the new self, which is defined by its relationship with God. The old self-"the flesh" *(sarx,* not *soma)-is* not the body or bodily desires, but the sinful nature of the whole person. Sin turns our whole being away from relationship to God, toward self-centeredness and alienation from others. By contrast, the new self, created by charity, orders the whole person toward relationship with God (and neighbor); love opens us up to an identity that is constituted by and consummated in communion with God. (Recall that Aquinas constantly describes the love of charity, as with love in general, as union, friendship, sharing or participating in the nature of another-all relational terms.)

Here is Aquinas's commentary on the "old self" mentioned in Ephesians 4:

> First, what does "the old man" mean? Some hold that the old man is exterior and the new man interior. But it must be said that the old man is both interior and exterior; he is a person who is enslaved by a senility in his soul, due to sin, and in his body whose members provide the tools for sin. Thus a man enslaved to sin *in soul and body* is an old man.... And so a man subjected to sin is termed an old man because he is on the way to corruption. [71]

This fundamental opposition of "selves" at the heart of the moral life explains why Aquinas describes *acedia* in the key passage above as loathing spiritual good "as if something *contrary to ourselves."*

How does the old self/new self interpretation help us understand what goes wrong in *acedia?Acedia*sorrows over being in a relationship of love to another. The claims of the other, the transformation of the self required, the commitment to maintain the relationship even when this requires sacrificing one's own desires-these are what *acedia* objects to, not merely the bodily effort they may or may not involve. (As we noted earlier, the person with *acedia* may pour significant bodily effort and emotional energy into the difficult task of constant distraction from and denial of her condition, so the aversion cannot be to

[71] *In Eph.,* c. 4, lect. 7 (emphasis added).

corpora/em laborem per se.) Put simply, *acedia* prefers stagnation and alienation to what it sees as the burdens of commitment.

Acedia as aversion to our relationship to God turns away from the claims of a relational identity. Love for another at this level requires vulnerability, challenge, and change; it also involves responsibility and even suffering. In Paul's words to the Colossians, something must die in order for the new self to be born, and it might be an old self to which we are very attached.[72] A deep friendship changes my identity; the deeper the friendship, the deeper the transformation. It is this claim of the other on who I am that *acedia* resists. As Josef Pieper observes, "*Acedia* . . . will not accept supernatural goods because they are, by their very nature, linked to a claim on the one who receives them."[73] *Acedia* resists the self-renewal involved in sanctification. It wants to claim the relationship with God that justifies the self without accepting any further demands to become holy, to be created anew.

Marriage and human friendships make good analogies here. For all its joys, any intense friendship or relationship like marriage has aspects that can seem burdensome. There is not only an investment of time, but an investment of self that is required for the relationship to exist and, further, to flourish. Even more difficult than the physical accommodations are the accommodations of identity: from the perspective of individual "freedom," to be in this relationship will change me and cost me; it will require me to restructure my priorities; it may compromise my plans; it will add obligations; it will demand sacrifice; it will alter the pattern of my thoughts and desires and transform my vision of the world. Stagnating and staying the same is easier and safer, even if ultimately it makes us more unhappy, than risking openness to love's transforming power and its claims on us.

[72] In one of her autobiographical novels, Anne Lamott recounts the words of an old woman at her church who said that "the secret is that God loves us *exactly* the way we are *and* that he loves us too much to let us stay like this" (*Operating Instructions* [New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1993], 96; emphasis in original). Those with *acedia* object to not being able to stay the way they are.

[73] Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love,* 119.

Take, for example, a typical situation between a husband and wife. We will assume that, in general, theirs is a relationship of great and enduring friendship. But when they argue at dinnertime and head off to opposite corners of the house for the rest of the evening, it is much easier to maintain that miserable distance and alienation from each other than it is to do the work of apology, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Learning to live together and love each other well after a rift requires them to give up their anger, their score-keeping, their resistance to change, their desire to have their own way, their insistence on seeing the world only from each of their own perspectives. Saying "I'm sorry" takes effort, but it is not simply the physical work of walking across the house and saying the words that each resists.

Do they want the relationship? Yes, they're in it and they're in deep. But do they want to do what it takes to be in relationship? Do they want to honor its claims on them? Do they want to learn genuine unselfishness in the ordinary daily task of living together? Maybe tomorrow. For now at least, each spouse wants the night off to wallow in his or her own selfish loneliness. Love takes effort. Those with *acedia* want the easy life, for they find detachment from the old selfish nature too painful and burdensome, and so they neglect those acts of love that will maintain and deepen the relationship.[74]

Josef Pieper suggests that one afflicted by *acedia* may refuse his own perfection much as someone suffering from a psychological illness refuses do to the therapeutic work necessary for his own healing. This may be because the comfort of familiar miseries is preferable to unknown future possibilities (as we saw illustrated by Lot's wife), but it may also be because the process of healing and the resulting condition of health will bring responsibilities that the individual would prefer to avoid. Pieper comments, "The psychiatrist frequently observes that, while a neurotic individual

[74] Granted, it may be the case that one's tiredness after a long day at work makes one more prone to the initial argument or more reluctant to attempt reconciliation, but in that way, *acedia* is no more carnal than any other sin contingently occasioned by a movement of the sensitive appetite.

may have a superficial will to be restored to health, in actuality he fears more than anything the demands that are made ... on one who is well."[75]

In addition to the effort required here and now, any serious, long-term, committed relationship-our friendship with God included-requires constant daily care to sustain it. Our relationship to God is "eternal, but daily, too."[76] One with *acedia* is opposed to a life that embraces daily responsibility and the constancy of commitment; the very thought of that kind of relationship makes one weary.

Perhaps this is why various theologians in the thirteenth century and before opposed *acedia* to the petition in the Lord's Prayer for daily bread, which they associated with the Eucharist.[77] Although eating the bread itself is a physical act, by refusing or neglecting it one also rejects the union with Christ implicit in the Eucharist; one resists the incorporation of Christ that occurs when his body (the bread) is made part of our own bodies. (It also shuns participation in the body of Christ that is the church.) It is no accident that *acedia* neglects the very place where the most intimate communion with and participation in God occurs. Further, its opposition to this petition reveals its distaste for the ongoing ("daily") efforts required to maintain our friendship with God over the long haul.

This second interpretation of the cause of sorrow, therefore, has the advantage of explaining how *acedia* can count as a spiritual vice (i.e., one with a spiritual object), and one specially opposed to charity (i.e., friendship/participation in God's nature), while maintaining some link with effort (including perhaps the bodily effort of the first interpretation[78]) as the source of sorrow and resistance. It also privileges Aquinas's definitions of this vice

[75] Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love,* 119.

[76] See Kathleen Norris, *Quotidian Mysteries* (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 51-53.

[77] Wenzel, *Sin of Sloth,* 56.

[78] If the first explanation tends to over-physicalize *acedia,* I want to be careful not to over-spiritualize it, for Aquinas thinks that human beings, in virtue of being a unity of body and soul, experience sin and vice in their whole person (in bodily desires, the will, and the intellect), even if the virtues and vices are primarily located in the soul (*STh* I-II, q. 55, a. 4).

in those passages devoted to *acedia* as the central subject of inquiry.[79]

Why then does Aquinas say that the demons, who can have only spiritual vices, cannot have *acedia?*

Aquinas maintains *(STh* I, q. 63, a. 2) that *acedia* "is a kind of sadness, whereby one becomes sluggish in spiritual exercises because they weary the body" (a direct paraphrase of Augustine's own definition of the vice, quoted in *De Malo,* q. 11, a. 1). This limited Augustinian definition names one possible form of *acedia,* which is why Aquinas accepts it here. Nevertheless, it is by no means *acedia's* only or even primary form. On the Augustinian definition, *acedia* is linked to embodiment, just as avarice is linked to temporal goods *(STh* I, q. 63, a. 2, ad 2). But if this makes a vice "carnal"-something Aquinas never actually says in this passage-then it must be in an extended sense of the term. For when Aquinas discusses avarice in the *Secunda Secundae,* he seats the love of money in the intellectual appetite (the will) just as we saw him do with sorrow in the case of *acedia.*[80] I read Aquinas as implicitly including in the list of vices the demons cannot have (in *STh* I, q. 63, a. 2) any vice possibly involving some bodily connection or expression, in order to honor the authority of Augustine in the *sed contra,* who claims that the demons have only pride and envy. The main issue in the article is the root of the demons' sin, which is why Aquinas spends the bulk of the article explaining how pride is the first sin of the demons, and concludes that "Under envy and pride, as found in the demons, are comprised all other sins derived from them" (ibid., ad 3).

[79] The four passages cited in favor of the first explanation (physical weariness or effort as the cause of *acedia),* except the passage about the demons, are either definitions quoted by authorities Uohn Damascene, Augustine, etc.) or words put in the mouth of an objector, and two of the four are remarks about *acedia* in texts outside Aquinas's main treatments of the vice (in *STh* I and I-m. I deal directly with the passage in the *Prima Pars* because it appears to be the place where Aquinas himself comes closest to endorsing the "weariness" view.

[80] Avarice involves desiring money for the sake of gaining temporal possessions or goods, and can be counted as a carnal vice in that sense, but the love of money also includes a desire for security and self-sufficiency and self-provision (no need to rely on Providence for the future), as is indicated by Aquinas's characterization of money as a partly spiritual, partly material object in the treatise on justice *(STh* II-II, q. 118).

According to the second interpretation, which I am advocating, *acedia* does not trade primarily on an opposition of bodily toil to spiritual gain. Rather it objects to the effort involved in the investment and transformation of the self over time. If the demons cannot have *acedia,* then, perhaps it is not because they lack bodies, but because their nature is such that it is determined by a single act of will rather than by the lifelong process of moral transformation characteristic of the human condition.[81] Unlike human beings, purely spiritual creatures do not have to commit to an ongoing process of moral transformation and the effort involved in that slow, daily, self-mortifying change.[82]

My conclusion, then, is that the above passage from the *Prima Pars* is not decisive in understanding *acedia* (nor avarice either, for that matter). *Acedia's* resistance to our participation in the divine nature, to our friendship with God, is resistance to the burdens of commitment-understood as the sacrifice of the "old self," the transformation of identity-involved in that relationship. Our aversion, distaste, and grief are best understood as caused by the demands of accepting the spiritual good of divine friendship and the personal transformation that love requires, and not the sacrifice of bodily comfort or pleasure *per se,* although this may of course be involved.

Here *acedia* reveals its roots in pride. Pride, for Aquinas, is the refusal to acknowledge God's superior excellence. Those with pride shun a relationship with God because it means relinquishing first place for the self; such people prefer alienation so that they can maintain the illusion of self-sufficiency. Those afflicted with *acedia* also prefer alienation so that the old self can remain their first priority. Friendship requires them to share and give

[81] Alternatively, we could simply deny that the demons have *acedia* themselves, and-following Aquinas's designation of the demons as extrinsic principles of human acts-say that human beings have *acedia* because of the demons' corrupting influence, a role in which they manifest pride (i.e., usurping God's role as the extrinsic principle of [rightly ordered] human acts through law and grace, but not the other vices strictly speaking). This follows Aquinas's own comments in *STh* I, q. 63, a. 2, ad 3.

[82] At least they don't seem to have the "over-and-over again-ness" of the self-investment that seems (affectively, emotionally, mentally, and perhaps also bodily) wearisome.

themselves; this investment is onerous and burdensome if they are too attached to their old selves. So the prideful resist a relationship with God altogether because they loathe any form of dependence and submission, whereas those with *acedia* accept the relationship initially, but then resist the demands of love for mutual self-giving and self-transformation. In that sense, *acedia is* sloth, for it wants the easy way out-the benefits of the relationship without the burdens.

Ironically, by their restless resistance to what they see as the burdens of commitment, those afflicted by the vice of *acedia* become a burden to themselves. Perhaps, then, it is especially to them that Christ addresses himself in Matthew's gospel, when he says, "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt 11:28-30).

CONCLUSION

Aquinas's conception of *acedia* explains why it merits a place among the seven capital vices. On his account, *acedia* strikes at the heart of who we are called to be by turning us against our own happiness and ultimate end. It does so because it perceives the demands of friendship with God as a burdensome self-sacrifice, and it clings to the old self while resisting the demands of love. In the words of Isaac Watts, "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my self, my life, my all."[83] *Acedia* thus involves aversion to more than just bodily effort, although that may certainly be involved; properly speaking, it shirks the long, painful process of dying away to one's whole sinful nature, which encompasses body and soul, action and will. In that sense, Aquinas's characterization of *acedia* explains why it should count as one of the most serious of the vices, undermining, as it does, our fundamental motivation to

[83] Isaac Watts, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," *Psalter Hymnal* (Grand Rapids: CRC Publications, 1988), 384.

engage in the process of forming our character after the pattern of Christ.

Without *acedia's* link to charity, however, the historical turns that reduced this vice to simple laziness and made diligence its logical counterpoint are perfectly understandable. It is a virtue of Aquinas's account that he incorporates the link to laziness in his characterization of *acedia,* since the element of bodily weariness and physical effort is present in conceptions of the vice from its beginnings with Evagrius and on into the present day. Only because his conception of this vice makes resistance to the demands of charity central, however, can he also pay due to the strands of the Christian tradition that make *acedia* a spiritual and a capital vice. Hence his account stands as a helpful explanation of why *acedia* was taken to be such a serious vice for many centuries, and why contemporary accounts tend to fail to see its importance.[84]

[84] Thanks to the members of my Aquinas reading group at Notre Dame, my colleagues in the philosophy department at Calvin College, and Brian Shanley for their comments on previous drafts of this paper. I am grateful to audiences at Baylor University, Creighton University, the University of Notre Dame, St. Mary's College, and Hope College for their comments on early versions of the paper. I am also grateful to Abram Van Engen for his research assistance.

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THE SEMIOSIS OF ANGELS

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I. STATING THE QUESTION

Semiosis is the action of signs whereby, through the unification of three elements under a single relation, that one of the three which stands in the foreground as representing brings about the effect distinctive of signs, namely, *renvoi,* which is for one thing so to stand for another that that other is made manifest to or for yet another still. The sign-vehicle, the foreground representative element or *representamen,* achieves this effect actually when the semiosis is completed, that is to say, when the semiosis achieves its "proper significate outcome" of including in the very single relation of sign-vehicle to object signified an interpretant here and now. The effect can, however, be achieved virtually when the semiosis but determines the specific possibility of bringing about a proper interpretant in future circumstances.

The interpretant, famously, "need not be mental"; that is to say, the *interpretant* need not be an *interpreter.* But in zoosemiosis and anthroposemiosis interpreters, that is to say, cognitive organisms acting as such, are normally involved. Indeed, in the case of anthroposemiosis, we find verified an intellectual component which precisely raises semiosis above the level of perceived objects as sensibly perceived. The perceived objects common to humans and other animals thus become intellectually perceived as well, but only by the human animals. It is this further dimension added to sense perception that constitutes the possibility of realizing the

fact that what signs strictly consist in are triadic relations which, as relations, can never be perceived, though they can be understood. At the foundation of this "intellectual semiosis" stands language, in its contrast to linguistic communication, as Thomas Sebeok best pointed out near the end of the last century.[1] But this intellectual semiosis proves in its turn to have a prelinguistic foundation precisely in the perceptual semiosis common to all animal organisms, which involves sensations and the interactions of brute secondness whence human understanding derives the materials from which it forms even its species-specifically distinctive representation of objects as involving more than their relation to us within experience and perception. Language may be biologically undetermined, but the zoosemiosis upon which it depends for the very materials it forms in its own way and fashions intellectually[2] is most definitely not biologically undetermined. Indeed, it is unthinkable apart from the world of bodies.

The question arises, could an intellectual semiosis be possible that did not arise out of and have constantly at its disposal a perceptual base of cognitive materials with which to work? Since discourse, commonly speaking, is precisely this interaction between sense and understanding, we are asking whether there even can be an intellectual semiosis which is not discursive. Or, to put it perhaps more plainly, can semiosis extend even beyond the world of matter and motion, to achieve its effect and proper work also in a realm of pure spirits bodiless from the start? Can we

[1] See Thomas A. Sebeok, "The Evolution of Communication and the Origin of Language," lecture of June 3 in the June 1-3 ISISSS '84 Colloquium on "Phylogeny and Ontogeny of Communication Systems." Published under the title "Communication, Language, and Speech. Evolutionary Considerations", in Thomas Sebeok, *I Think I Am a Verb: More Contributions to the Doctrine of Signs* (New York: Plenum Press, 1986), 10-16. See further idem, "Language: How Primary a Modeling System?", in *Semiotics 1987,* ed. John Deely (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1988), 15-27; "Toward a Natural History of Language," *Semiotica 65* (1987): 343-58; and *Global Semiotics* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2001).

[2] Cf. Thomas A. Sebeok, "Zoosemiotics: At the Intersection of Nature and Culture," in *The Tell-Tale Sign,* ed. T. A. Sebeok (Llsse, The Netherlands: Peter de Ridder Press, 1975), *85-95.* See also idem, "Semiosis in Nature and Culture," in *The Sign & Its Masters,* Sources in Semiotics 8 (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1989), 3-26; and "'Talking' with Animals: Zoosemiotics Explained," *Animals* 111, no. 6(December1978): 20-23, 38.

even conceive of a cognitive being that has *no body,* and yet is capable of intellectual understanding perforce in the absence of sensations and perceptions alike? Would such an intellectual activity be semiosic? Can semiosis be verified, if only in thought, respecting the possible existence of angels?

Fortunately for us, the author of the first systematic treatise to demonstrate the unity of semiotic inquiry, John Poinsot,[3] was also the author of one of the most extended and authoritative of the traditional theological treatises on the subject of angels.[4] In what

[3] John Poinsot (=Joannes a Sancto Thoma), *Tractatus de Signis,* subtitled *The Semiotic of John Poinsot,* extracted from the *Artis Logicae Prima et Secunda Pars* of 1631-32 using the text of the emended second impression (1932) of the 1930 Reiser edition (Turin: Marietti), and arranged in bilingual format by John Deely in consultation with Ralph A. Powell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); also available as a text database, stand-alone on floppy disk or combined with an Aquinas database, as an Intelex Electronic Edition (Charlottesville, Va.: Intelex Corp., 1992). Hereafter "Poinsot 1632."

The electronic edition is enhanced by the inclusion of further texts, especially from Poinsot's writings on relation, flagged by the Greek r followed by an Arabic number (1, 2, etc.).

[4] Throughout this work, "Poinsot 1643" will refer to the "Tractatus de Angelis" *in]oannis a Sancto Thoma Cursus Theologicus Tomus N,* Solesmes ed. (Paris: Dciclee, 1946), 441-835; originally published at Lyon in 1643.

This treatise by Poinsot is one of the most extended treatments of the subject of angels that comes down to us from the Latin Age, comprising 248 pages in folio, compared to the 95 folio pages on the subject in Aquinas himself. The earlier, yet longer, 632-folio-page treatment in Suarez, is fully known to and taken into account by Poinsot (see, e.g., d. 39, a. 3, n. 5sqq.).

This *Treatise on Angels* is set within the larger project of Poinsot's *Cursus Theologicus,* wherein it occurs as the 39•h through 45•h "disputations" thereof. The treatise addresses specifically the matter of questions 50-64 and 106-7 of the *Prima Pars Summae Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas with a "Summa litterae" (or summary statement), and with Poinsot's own expanded discussions of the parts he deems more in need of exposition ("Disputations"), as follows:

1 *(=disputation 39, after summary of questions 50-51):* On the Existence and Constitution of Angels

Article 1. What faith teaches concerning the existence and nature of angels

A. 2. Whether the form of an angel has any composition with matter

A. 3. Whether angels can differ only numerically

A. 4. Whether angels are naturally incorruptible

2 *(= d. 40, after summary of qq. 52-53):* On the Location and Movement of Angels

A. 1. What rationale is there in an angel for being in a place

A. 2. Clearing up difficulties in the view just proposed

A. 3. Whether one angel can be in several places, or several angels in one place

A. 4. Whether an angel in movement has to pass through intermediate places

A. 5. Whether the movement of an angel in space can occur instantaneously

follows, we will consider the understanding of semiosis among pure spirits or angels that is to be garnered from the writings of John Poinsot. We will follow his philosophical thought on this matter, passing through the world of bodies where the first signs of "spirituality" arise in the cognitive activity of animals, and then more completely in the intellectual cognition species-specifically human. It will then be both in contrast to and in continuity with human intellection that we will be able to give specificity to the type of existence required to establish a genus of purely spiritual intellect and intellectual activity, which, as we will see, is what the word "angel" properly signifies.[5]

3 *(= d. 41, after summary of qq. 54-55):* On the Intellect and Cognitive Determinations of Angels

- A. 1. What Thomas Aquinas has shown concerning the intellective capacity and actual intellection or understanding of an angel
- A. 2. Whether an angel needs a further specification ["species intelligibilis superaddita"] to reach self-awareness
- A. 3. Whether with respect to objects other than itself an angel has infused or acquired specifications
- A. 4. Whether and how higher angels understand on the basis of more universal specifications

4 *(= d. 42, after summary of qq. 46-48):* On the Object and Manner of Angelic Cognition

- A. 1. Whether an angel has comprehensive awareness of things lower than itself and of angels higher than itself
- A. 2. How an angel knows future and past things
- A. 3. Why an angel does not naturally know thoughts of the heart
- A. 4. Whether an angel can understand anything by discoursing, or by composing and dividing

5 *(= d. 43, after summary of qq. 49-53):* On the Merit and Sin of Angels

- A. 1. Whether there can be an intellectual creature incapable of sin
- A. 2. Whether an angel could have sinned in its first instant of being
- A. 3. What kind of sin would an angel have committed and respecting what object

6 *(= d. 44, after summary of q. 54):* On the Final State of Angels and the Damnation of Demons

- A. 1. How many instants would an angel require in order to reach its full determination
- A. 2. What would be the cause of obstinacy in demons
- A. 3. How a spirit could be tortured by fire

7 *(= d. 45, after summary of qq. 106-7):* On the Conversation and Illumination of Angels

- A. 1. How angels spiritually converse among themselves
- A. 2. What is illumination for an angel, and for which angels can it occur

[5] Poinsot 1643: d. 39, a. 1, 447 'U: "nomen 'Angelus' per se solum non designat nobis substantias illas spirituales, nisi cum etiam nomine spiritus designantur." Ibid.: d. 39, a. 2, 457 'V2: "Unde sequitur Angelos esse formas simplices, id est, non habentes aliam entitatem quam

II. WHAT IS AN ANGEL?

The world of matter, considered less in itself than as it has been thought and believed to be in the realm of human opinions, has a history strange indeed. Even by the time of Homer, we find records of belief in beings superior to human beings that are yet still bodily creatures, albeit of some material more ethereal than that of our bodies. Such were the gods, or "immortals," in the original version of Porphyry's Tree, which terminated with "Rational Animal"-not divided only into individual humans, but rather specifically divided into mortals (humans} and immortals (the gods).

By Aristotle's time we find something else again. Aristotle's Unmoved Mover or "Self-Thinking Thought" has no body, no materiality, no potentiality. But more interesting, for our purpose, we find the idea of the Separated Intelligences, bodiless spirits postulated as movers of the celestial spheres, pure immaterial substances, yet finite in nature. The celestial spheres were postulated to be (on the strength of the want of contrary evidence) susceptible only to change of place. Some ancient thinkers, indeed, dispensed with Aristotle's Separated Intelligences by postulating that the heavenly bodies were living bodies moved by their intrinsic principle of life, their souls, just as living beings in the sphere below the moon are moved by their souls in carrying out the activities of life. But it is Aristotle's idea of beings purely intellectual by nature and without bodies that moves us closer to our goal of understanding the idea of an angel; for the word "angel" in its biblical derivation is a synonym for "spirit" understood as an intellectual individual or "substance" which has in its nature nothing of matter as the principle whereby quantity (the having of parts outside of parts resulting in occupation of space) locates a body or--even less-whereby a body is rendered mortal, susceptible of that terminal "substantial change" wherein an individual ceases to be.

formae in qua subsistunt, quasi formae completae et non facientes compositionem cum aliqua alia comparte quae dicitur materia."

The picture is a little complicated at this point by an hypothesis of Aristotle that, over many centuries, hardened into a veritable dogma of philosophy, to wit, the hypothesis that the material universe admits of two kinds of matter: *terrestrial,* which undergoes substantial as well as quantitative, qualitative, and local change; and *celestial,* which undergoes only change of place, local motion-and only perfectly circular local motion at that. As Benedict Ashley has pointed out,[6] this was an attempt to accommodate imagined facts that risked compromising Aristotle's basic theory of material substance, for even when the Greeks and Latins imagined that the heavenly bodies were incorruptible, it was understood that the Aristotelian idea of "matter" was, as a pure potentiality in the order of substance, able to compose with a substantial form by receiving, through the specification such a form provided, an actual individual existence.[7] Thus, the discovery consequent upon Galileo's work that the entire material universe is of a uniform nature in its matter, consisting exclusively of temporal individuals which come into existence, maintain themselves, and eventually go out of existence wholly in and through process is actually more consonant with Aristotle's original doctrine of material substance as having an essence comprised of two principles: "prime matter," according to which the individual in nature (i.e., the material substance) is capable of having its body turn into some other kind of body or bodies entirely (and hence is constantly threatened by nonbeing);[8] and "substantial form," according to which the individual at any given moment of its existence continues to be actually of this rather

[6] Benedict Ashley, O.P., "Change and Process," in *The Problem of Evolution,* ed. John N. Deely and Raymond J. Nogar (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Publishing Co., 1973), 265-94.

[7] Poinsot 1643: d. 39, a. 2, 4611112: "licet una materia possit differe ab alia per ordinem ad formam extrinsecam quam respicit, et penes modwn diverswn recipiendi, tamen semper in se debet supponi quod sit pura potentia in genere substantiali, eo quod potest componere cum forma substantiali recipiendo ab ipsa primwn esse simpliciter."

[8] Poinsot1643: d. 39, a. 4, 480119: "quia in Angelo non estpotentia ad aliquam formam, per quam tollatur suwn esse quod habet a Deo per creationem; ergo neque habet naturam aliquam inclinantem ad non esse.-Patet consequentia: quia nulla inclinatio et potentia potest esse primo et per se ad non esse, quia esset inclinatio ad nihil, et consequenter esset nulla inclinatio; sed omnis inclinatio vel potentia ad non esse est secundario, quatenus est ad aliquam formam ex qua non-esse alterius sequitur."

than some other kind (even though potentially, as just noted, always of some other kind rather than this actual one here and now).[9]

So we are able to say that material substances as such involve bodies which occupy space. The question is: are there spiritual substances? That is to say, are there substances that have *no* material component as part of their intrinsic constitution?

A) "Spiritual Matter"?

A view ancient even in Christian times, after the "immortal gods" of Greco-Roman antiquity had faded from actual belief and become mythical remnants of pre-Christian opinion,[10] held that only God, the Unmoved Mover of Pure Actuality, *Ipsum Esse Subsistens,* could properly be described as without material composition. Thus, as late as Aquinas,[11] the belief was common enough that angels were not pure spirits but only *more* spiritual than human beings, because, though not composed of *corporeal* matter and substantial form, they were yet composed of a putative *spiritual matter.* So, in concert with several early Fathers of the Church, held the great Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, contemporary of Aquinas and (like Aquinas) a Doctor of the Church.

But Aquinas and his followers, even though equivocating on the question of whether indeed terrestrial and celestial matter differed specifically, pointed out with deadly logic that the idea of "spiritual matter" is a *flatus vocis,* an empty nominalism, no more intelligible, though less obviously unintelligible, than a "square circle." To belong to the spiritual order, an order by definition transcendent to the material order, the matter in question has to possess a perfection exceeding the perfections of corporeal nature.

[9] Ponsot 1643: d. 39, a. 3, 469 '119: "Aristoteles per materiam non intelligit haecceitatem, sed materiam illam quae est pars compositi et reddit naturam materialem et corpoream."

[10] E.g., John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa,* c. 3, p. 865, in J.P. Migne, ed., *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca* 94 (Paris, 1857-1866).

[11] For the full historical context, see James Collins, "The Thomistic Polemic against Universal Matter," chapter 2 of his dissertation, *The Thomistic Philosophy of the Angels* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1947), 42-74.

But perfection follows upon actuality in beings, not upon potentiality. Therefore, spiritual matter, to be spiritual, necessarily would possess an actuality greater than even material forms, that is, the actuality of substances subject to "corruption" (the technical Latin term taken over from Aristotle's Greek for "ceasing to be"). But in that case, the spiritual matter could not enter into the very make-up of an angel insofar as the angel is a substance, that is, an actual individual; for existence comes to an individual only via its form, that is, only insofar as it is a substance of some kind, whereas the putative spiritual matter *already* would have to have a substantial actuality of its own as spiritual in order to belong to an order superior to the material order. [12]

The material order can be conceived as a hierarchy, to be sure, beginning with substances (individuals) different in kind among themselves but having in common the fact of not being alive. "Being alive," in Aristotle's framework, is one of those relatively few instances in nature of an "either/or," like pregnancy in a female. For us as students of nature, it is often hard to tell whether or not we are confronted with a living individual, or whether a given living individual continues here and now to be living, or had died ("corrupted," in Aristotle's technical sense). But considered ontologically on the part of the intrinsic constitution of the part of nature we are observing, our difficulties are apart from the fact that the substantial form giving actuality to the individual we are observing either is or is not a "soul."

The term "soul" here should not mislead us. The study of the soul, for Aristotle and for the mainstream thinkers of the Latin Age, was what we have come to call "biology." If any given individual either is or is not alive (regardless of how far from "generation"-Aristotle's technical term for the moment a substance begins to be, similar to the modern term "conception"-or how close to "corruption"), and if the actuality that makes an indivi-

[12] Poinsot 1643: d. 39, a. 2, 4611112, summarized the *contradictio in adiectis* as follows: "materia spiritualis, licet esset in potentia ad formas spirituales, tamen in se deberet habere actualitatem superantem omnem actualitatem corpoream, et consequenter in genere substantiae deberet habere aliquem actum; et sic non posset componere cum forma substantiali, accipiendo ab ipsa primum esse simpliciter in genere substantiae."

dual be the kind of individual it is we call "substantial form," then we need a term to distinguish when the substantial form in question belongs to an individual that is not alive and when it belongs rather to a living thing. Aristotle's term for substantial form in the latter case is simply "soul." So "soul" names, in this vocabulary, the principle whereby a body exists as an actually living body, nothing more nor less. When an inorganic substance undergoes transformation into some other kind of subtance, the original substantial form recedes into the potentiality of matter even as a new substantial form or forms are educed or drawn out of that same potentiality by the circumstances and conditions of the matter subjected to change. Whether this new substantial form will be organic or inorganic, that is, a soul or not, depends exactly on the same thing: the circumstances and conditions so modifying the material body in question that it is no longer capable of sustaining the actuality of its original substantial form.

B) Spirituality in Matter

Here an interesting ambiguity arises, for a "reception of form by matter" is one thing, a "reception of form by form" quite another, as we will see. On the one hand, "spiritual" is opposed to "material" as an either/or, such that a substance is either a material substance or a spiritual substance, in which latter case it will have no composition of form with matter but only of form with existence. On the other hand, certain substances, undoubtedly material at the level of substantial existence, exhibit at the level of activity an operation that borders on or partakes of the spiritual level. What makes the composition of matter and form at the level of substance a material composition is nothing less than the fact that the form "educed from" or "received within" matter comes to be in a restrictive or subjective manner, such that the individual in question comes to be, dependently upon its environment (to be sure) but nonetheless as existing within that environment as a thing in its own right, a *subject of existence* distinct from, even if related to, the other subjectivities that surround it. But if the

substance so constituted subjectively is not only a living substance but also a cognitive organism, then it crosses another either/or divide in its capabilities: it is capable not only of being acted upon by its surroundings but (also) of partially becoming *aware of* those surroundings, that is, of objectifying them, in and through the interactions. Such a substance Aristotle calls a "sensible substance" or an *animal.*

The distinguishing feature of an animal is that it has a soul that, even though educed from the potentiality of matter (as also are plant forms), is further capable of receiving in its own actuality the very actuality specified from outside itself by an agent acting upon it. This peculiar receptivity the Latins called "the reception of form by form," where the receiving form is the cognitive power subjective to the individual becoming aware, while the received form is called a "species," that is to say, a *specification* or *specifying form* causing the subject acted upon to enter into a relation not simply of "action and passion" (cause and effect), like one rock striking another, but into a relation of subject and object, that is, of one knowing to another than itself known. [13] This initial florescence of spirituality in the material world is, in Aristotle's terms, an accidental rather than a substantial spirituality. It pertains to and occurs only in the activities of organisms over and above their substantial constitution, which remains determinately material. What is "spiritual," then, in the case of these cognitive organisms, is no part of their essential being whence they derive existence, [14] but something consequent rather upon the level of "second act," the level of the *operations* whereby substantial existence maintains itself as determinately of

[13] Poinsot1643: d. 39, a. 2, 459 '118: "modus materiae primae in communi sumptae est esse receptivam formarum stricto et coarctato modo, scilicet faciendo illas sibi proprias, et componendo aliquod tertium entitativum ex eis, sive substantiale sive accidentale. Modus vero spiritualitatis, prout talis, est excedere istum modum sic strictum, et posse recipere formas intentionaliter, id est, cum tanta arnplitudine ut fiat [reading, in agreement with the Solesmes corrigendum at the bottom of b459, 'fiat' for 'faciat'] alia a se, et uniat sibi res, etiam quae secum non componunt sed extra se sunt, objective et intelligibiliter: quia spiritualitas fundat intelligibilitatem. Ergo modus spiritualitatis pugnat cum modo materiae primae."

[14] Poinsot1643: d. 39, a. 2, 463 '1121: "quod non est seipso intelligibile .•• non est seipso et in substantia spirituale".

a certain kind of being. This is the case of an animal in contrast with the case of a plant (whose operations are wholly subjective and transitive, transforming things outside itself not into objects immanently cognized but into its substantial self as nourishment or offspring); and in contrast *a fortiori* with the case of an inorganic substance interacting subjectively with its surroundings (as Yves Simon so nicely showed for the Scholastic context). [15]

Human beings are a species or type of animal. As such they too are capable of the spiritual activity of partially objectifying their surroundings. But this objectification moves to a different level, so to speak. With the other animals, the horizon of objectification is limited to what their senses are able to respond to. With the human animal, objectification begins with the senses, but then goes on to distinguish *what is objectified* from what exists or *might exist* apart from the objectification, and makes that the horizon of objectification. Since what exists or might exist is not limited to what can be directly sensed, the horizon of cognition becomes now in principle unlimited. The human animal, aware initially of objects like any other animal, comes to see in those objects *beings* that transcend sensation, [16] and develops a communication system based in principle on this larger horizon of being rather than simply on the horizon of objects. The cognitive power or ability to visualize the difference between objects and beings the Greeks called vou<;, the Latins "intellect." The communication system consequent upon it they called discourse or rational discourse, which continues to this day to be the heart of species-specifically linguistic communication.

Linguistic communication, and, more fundamentally, intellection, depends in general on sensory modalities, but it does not depend specifically on any one sensory modality. Linguistic

[15] Yves R Simon, "To Be and To Know," *Chicago Review* 15, no. 4 (Spring, 1961), 83-100; and "An Essay on the Classification of Action and the Understanding of Act" (posthumous), ed. J. N. Deely, *Revue de fUniversite t!Ottawa,* 41, no. 4 (October-December 1971): 518-41.

[16] Quia "sensitiva cognitio non est tota causa intellectualis cognitionis," Aquinas writes, "ideo non est mirum si intellectualis cognitio ultra sensitivam se extendit" *(Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate,* q. 10, a. 6, ad 3).

communication must be sensed to be understood, but it does not matter whether its sensory vehicle, its "embodiment," be, for example, visual, auditory, or tactile. This indifference suggested to Aristotle and actually proved, as far as Aquinas was concerned,[17] that the human intellect differs from the cognitive powers of sensation (external sense) and perception (internal sense) upon which it depends in this: that whereas all powers of sensory cognition are themselves composite of matter and form, dependent for their existence and exercise upon some bodily organ or part specifically adapted for the purpose (as the eye for seeing, the ear for hearing, the tongue for tasting, etc.), the intellect itself is not so composite, but springs from the form alone, the soul in which all the powers of the organism are rooted. ·Thus, just as the sensory soul gives rise to powers of sensation and perception, the int.ellectual soul gives rise in addition to the power of intellectual awareness, understanding; but this power, unlike those of sensation and perception, depends only indirectly, not directly, upon bodily organs. The embodied powers of sense, Aquinas will say, provide the intellect with its object, but in its proper activity the intellect does not act through a bodily organ.

Only in this way, Aquinas thought, could the horizon of being be an unlimited horizon: that is, if the cognitive power which thinks being is not intrinsically limited by matter, by direct dependence upon a bodily organ.[18] The role of matter is to subjectivize and individualize, as we have seen,[19] whereas the role of cognition is to objectify, to make the individual cognizing aware of what is other than itself. In the case of sensation and perception, the organism's awareness is expanded to include something of the physical surroundings. In the case of intellection, with the grasp of being the human organism's awareness is expanded to include

[17] See Aquinas, *In Aristotelis Libras de Anima Commentarium,* esp. book 3.

[18] "Intus existens prohibet extraneum et obstruet illud" was the terse formula in which Aquinas summarized for his followers the reason why the intellect as such has no organ, and why every cognitive power that does have organic embodiment has an intrinsically limited range.

[19] See citation in note 13, above.

the very otherness of what is not itself, to include the realization that things exist whether or not they are objectified-even whether or not they are material, when the question of God or angels arises.

In the case of sensation and perception, the body itself in its sense organs is adapted and proportioned to those other bodies or parts of the material environment that act upon the organism so as to create the cognitive stimuli that determine sensations and are organized into the perception of what to seek, what to avoid, and what safely to ignore. Hence, as Aquinas puts it, "things are of themselves sensible." In the case of intellection, it is the human mind itself that is required, in its species-specifically human cognitive activity, to elevate what was heretofore only sense-perceived to the level of an *intelligible* object. So, while things are of themselves perceptible, they must be *rendered* intelligible by the activity of the mind itself in that dimension or aspect of its activity which depends only indirectly on bodily organs and their products ("the human intellect depends upon sense to provide its object, but not its exercise respecting that object").[20] This process of rendering perceived things intelligible was one of the classical meanings of the term "abstraction," wherein the world of bodies, in itself material, is rendered immaterial as cognized, objectified, or known, first accidentally and relative to the cognizing organism in sense perception, then in itself as understood to involve being, that is, what is in principle independent of our awareness, beliefs, or desires.

The material, subjective existence of things in the universe, in itself, is both the starting point for and an impediment to species-specifically human intellectual awareness. To reach the awareness proper to and distinctive of the human mind or intellect ("language" in the semiotic root sense),[21] the subjectivizing principle in bodily substances which we call matter must be transcended or overcome. This is precisely the business of "abstraction": of itself, intellectual awareness abstracts from the body to reach what is

[20] *See* Aquinas, *De Verit.,* q. 10 a. 6; *STh* I, q. 75, a. 3; and I, q. 84, a. 6.

[21] Cf. Poinsot 1643: d. 45, a. 2, 8201127, citing Aquinas, *STh* I, q. 107, a. 1, ad 2: "lingua Angelorum metaphorice dicitur ipsa virtus Angeli, qua concepnun suum manifestat."

"true of all or many," the 'universal' or nature considered in itself which individuals share (if it is a question of corporeal natures), or even the natures of things that have no intrinsic involvement in bodiliness (if it is a question of God or, as we shall shortly see, angels). *As* Poinsot summarizes:[22] "intellectuality of itself abstracts from body, nor does it depend upon but rather is impeded by the body."

C) Spirituality in Existence

Here the argument becomes remarkable. The intellectual soul, as a soul, is the substantial form of a body. *As* intellectual, it exhibits an activity that does not directly depend upon a bodily organ. But *agere sequitur esse,* "action follows upon being": the intellect as a power is rooted in the s.oul as the substantial form of the body, even though the intellect itself has no organ in which *it itself* is directly embodied. Therefore, when all organs fail, the intellect does not go back into the potency of matter, as do the powers of sense perception and, indeed, the sensible soul itself as a substantial form. What can act without a bodily organ can exist without a bodily organ: and so the human soul, which is the principle whence the intellectual power emanates, exists, and acts, must itself be capable of surviving the failure of all bodily organs. When the body of an animal with an intellectual soul dies, the soul lives on and continues in act as an intellect, continues to be as an intellectual form, preserving in itself at least the intellectual dimension of all that it experienced while complete as the form of a body. In this way the human soul, intellectual but incomplete (a part and not a whole) after the circumstances of life deprive it of its body, continues able to be aware of, dwell upon, perhaps even learn from the past--even though, now separated from the body, it has no means of deriving new experiences and phantasms from which to add to its objective world of things experienced and known.

[22] Poinsot1643: d. 39, a. 2,' 36: "intellectualitas de se abstrahit a corpore, nee petatillud, sed potius impediatur per corpus."

All other souls, plant and animal, are drawn from and recede back into the potentiality we call matter. *Forma dat esse:* nothing can exist simply, but must exist as this or that, in this or that way. Yet the form is not the existence, but the *specification* of the existence as an existence of this or that kind. Moreover, if we look at existence in the perspective of the relationship of effect and cause, something remarkable appears. All other effects are produced by agents acting upon something else. But not existence. Existence is presupposed. A material structure can be acted upon, its dispositions changed, a new form educed, with the result that it will exist as something substantially different from what existed before the change in the dispositions. But to change the dispositions of a body presupposes that the body exists; and the changed dispositions that lead to the existence of a new substance likewise presuppose existence. Whence then does existence, precisely as such, come? What is the cause, not of the dispositions or change of dispositions in the material things that exist, but of the existence itself of the material things?

D) The Source of Existence

Here we come to the unique emphasis that distinguished the philosophical thought of Aquinas from that of Aristotle, his principal mentor, and that will become, we will see, the key to accounting for the semiosis of angels: the consideration of existence itself in the perspective of the relationship of effect and cause, leading Aquinas to enunciate his unique doctrine of creation as the one activity that presupposes nothing in its exercise. "Concerning existence, however," his last great Latin disciple summarized,[23] "we say that it does not result from the proper principles of a nature, but is given by God and received in a nature." The doctrine of creation unique to Aquinas was the doctrine that, contrary to the common understanding of the Book of Genesis as supposedly revealing that time had a beginning, in

[23] Poinsot1643: d. 39, a. 3, 4741136: "De exsistentia vero dicimus quod illa non resultat ex propriis principiis naturae, sed a Deo datur, et recipitur in natura."

fact the beginning of time is strictly irrelevant to the idea of creation, which concerns centrally and solely the dependence in being, *dependentia in esse,* of all beings that involve potentiality upon an Actuality with *no* potentiality, Aristotle's Unmoved Mover. This, as Aquinas put it in closing his commentary on the *Physics,* "all men understand to be God," the 'being' which, since existence is the actuality which gives reality to any substantial form along with all other actualities proper to that form, Aquinas preferred to call *lpsum Esse Subsistens,* Actual Existence Itself Subsisting. Wherever there is actual existence, there is the creative activity of God, the unique 'causality' termed "creation," which is like efficient causality in that it makes something be this or that way, but which is unlike efficient causality in that it makes be whatever it makes be not out of something else, especially not out of a pre-existent matter or potentiality of any kind, but "out of nothing." *Ex nihilo nihil fit,* nothing comes from nothing in the material universe but from the potentialities contained in that universe. But the universe itself, witli. all the potentialities in it, comes precisely from nothing by the creative action of God, *creatio ex nihilo,* which action alone sustains the material universe and everything in it. In this universe "nothing comes from nothing," but every event has a cause that presupposes existence, something to act upon, be it agent, material, form, or outcome.

E) The Intellectual Soul

We recall that the intellectual soul is still a soul, that is to say, the form of a body.[24] It is not just a substantial form correlate with matter as the potentiality for yet other substantial forms, but the substantial form correlate with a *living* body or, rather, the substantial form that makes a human body to be a living body (insofar as *forma dat esse).* It does not come from the potentiality of matter, as presumably do all other souls; yet neither does it come to be apart from matter, even though at bodily death it will

[24] Poinsot1643: d. 42, a. 1, 474 ,29: "Et qui comprehenderet potentiam materiae, etiam deberet cognoscere animam rationalem ad quam est in potentia, licet ilia per creationem sibi infundatur ab extra."

continue to be apart from the matter in correlation with which it begins to be.

As we have seen, the intellectual soul as such cannot be *educed* from the potentiality of matter, because it exhibits an actuality in intellection that does not reduce to the bodily organs by which life is corporeally maintained. The human soul must be immediately created by God. But, we have also seen, this means no more than that its existence depends directly only on God, which is true of all existence. As a soul, as the form of a living body, it will not receive existence until and unless the body of which it will be the form is brought about in the material universe by the standard play of efficient causes upon material by which any body is brought into being.[25] But once called into being by those material circumstances, this form, the intellectual soul, in contrast to every other substantial form of a body, inorganic or organic (such as vegetative and sensitive souls), will outlive the material circumstances of its creation. *Forma dat esse:* when the *esse* is more than the *esse* simply proportioned to that of a living body, the *forma* through which that *esse* comes will continue to hold and exercise its *esse* when the body to which it gave life can no longer sustain that life.

It is not a question of a twofold act, one drawn from the potency of matter and a second attached to that first actuality as the captain of the ship. A soul abstractly is the form of *a* living body. But concretely, a soul is the form of *this* living body, this one and no other. No soul, therefore, pre-exists or could pre-exist the body of which it is the form. The soul comes into existence as the form of *this* body, and, if it be an intellectual soul, when that

[25] Deus "infundit et creat animam rationalem quando materia est disposita," Poinsot notes (1643: d. 41, a. 3, 596 '157), yet this happens "juxta naturalem capacitatem" materiae "et exigentiam ejus," albeit extrinsically. For, as he had explained earlier (ibid.: d. 41, a. 3, 583 U4, emphasis added): "Itaque potest esse aliquid debitum alicui naturae, et tamen non oriri ex principiis propriis, sed ab extra; fietque illi violentia, si negetur talis forma vel concursus: si quidem etiam respectu passivi principii potest violentia dari, ut diximus in Physica (quaest. 9, a. 4, 191-4). Et anima rationalis debetur corpori organizato et disposito, *ita ut esset miraculum illi non infundi;* et tamen non oritur ex propriis principiis, sed ab extra venit." Whence (ibid.: d. 41, a. 3, 600 Ul): "etiam anima creatur a solo Deo et infunditur corpori, nee tamen supernaturalis est ejus creatio."

body is destroyed or "corrupted" it *continues* to exist not simply in its own right independent of that body but incompletely as a *part* of what was once a whole, namely, the living organism of which it was the principle of life, and continues to be incompletely after having lost its body to yet other actualities which its corporeal potentiality contained as defining its mortality.[26] It was an intellectual animal, but still an animal, that is to say, a living body aware of something of its surroundings and capable of learning from that awareness, growing cognitively up to the moment of death, "corruption," at which moment it lost not existence, like all other animals, but only the capacity further to learn. Dependent on the body for experience, dependent upon experience for developing ideas, the animal in question, the human animal, was not so much intellectual, capable of insight into being, as *rational,* dependent upon a sequence of experiences with other bodies to see what such insight contained, what the content of an initial insight implied.

F) Spiritual Substances Complete in Themselves

A truly and perfectly *intellectual* being, in fact, could not even be an animal. Which brings us at last to the angels:

> Spirituality properly speaking [that is, in the substantial order of first act, whence *esse* comes, and not merely in the operational order of second act, whence *esse* is sustained] is rightly demonstrated on the basis of intellectuality. But that angelic beings are pure spirits in no way informing or forms of bodies is proved by this: the fact that angels are perfect intellectual substances, and not imperfect as we are. Whence, since intellectuality of itself abstracts from body, and does not seek but is rather impeded by bodiliness, if there are bodily intellectual

[26] Poinsot 1643: d. 39, a. 3, 475 1139: "ordo forrnae ad materiam non est relatio praedicamentalis, sed transcendentalis, pertinetque ad ipsum genus substantiae incompletae; et licet substantia dicatur ad se, tamen substantia incompleta et partialis non est pure ad se, complete et determinative, sicut substantia completa, sed dicit ordinem ad aliam partem et ad totum, etiamsi substantialis pars sit. Unde anima, quae est substantia incompleta, ipsa sua natura substantiali non est omnino ad se, sed ad alterum cui coaptatur et coordinatur, *non ut relatio praedicamentalis, set ut pars:* et ideo potest individuari per ordinem ad corpus, cujus est forma substantialis; et consequenter multiplicata materia multiplicabitur etiam anima, in quantum forrna illius est: quod totum non currit in Angelo."

creatures bespeaking imperfection in the intellectual order, there must needs be yet other creatures perfect in that order of understanding, which means creatures lacking bodies and every intrinsic connection with bodies.[27]

Angels are pure forms unmixed with further substantial potentiality, immediately receptive of existence and so superior to bodies of every kind; they are forms subsistent in themselves, with no intrinsic involvement with matter whatever, though able to act upon the material universe; they are not "separated souls," as the forms of dead humans are thought to be, but distinct, complete, separated substances.[28] Comparable to the dimensive quantity or "size" of bodies, there will be in angels only virtual quantity, that is to say, the "size" or "extent" of their power to operate (not in but) on bodies.[29]

III. How MANY ANGELS CAN DANCE ON THE HEAD OF A PIN?

This is the form of the question generally familiar to Americans, at least since the time of John Dewey (1859-1952). My

[27] Poinsot 1643: d. 39, a. 1, 456 1136: "In Angelis vero magis est nobis notum quod intelligant, eo quod effectus eorum apud nos ex locutione et aliis intelligentiae actibus magis innotescunt, et ex intellectualitate recte probatur spiritualitas. Quod vero ita sint puri spiritus quod nullum corpus informent, ex eo probatur: quia sunt substantiae intellectuales perfectae, et non sicut nos. Unde cum intellectualitas de se abstrahit a corpore, nee petat illud, sed potius impediatur per corpus, necesse est quod si dantur creaturae intellectuales cum unione ad corpus, quod imperfectionem in eo genere dicit, dabiles sint aliquae creaturae in illo genere intelligendi perfectae, atque adeo omni corpore et corporeo affectu carentes."

[28] Poinsot1643: d. 39, a. 1, 4511115. Cf. Ron Rhodes, "Were Angels Once People?," in *Angels Among Us* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House Publishers, 1994), 74.

[29] Poinsot 1643: d. 40, a. 1, 494-5 1133: "formalis ratio, qua Angelus exsistit in loco, debet esse talis, quod non contineatur nee mensuretur corpore locante sed quod contineat corpus, et fundet *ubi* non circumscriptivum, nee subjectum legibus loci et extensionis, sed superius loco: sicut anima nostra est in corpore ut superior et continens illud: sic enim a fortiori debet Angelus esse in corpore seu in loco, superiore modo quam anima, scilicet non ut informans, sed ut motor •... Corpus autem, cui Angelus conjungitur tamquam loco, substantia est. Non ergo potest substantia Angeli illi uniri, nisi accidentaliter comparetur ad tale corpus. Non potest autem fundari in aliquo accidente ipsius Angeli, per se et formaliter commensurabili corpori, quia hoc esset quantitas. •.• Debet ergo esse accidens virtualiter commensurans Angelum corpori. Nee est alia virtus sic commensurans, quam virtus operativa vel receptio passiva ab alio operante." Cf. Aquinas, *Quodl.* 1, in Parma ed.: q. 3, a. 4; in Busa ed.: q. 3, a. 1.

learned British friend Christopher Martin tells me convincingly that this form of the question is misstated, for the head of a pin already occupies space. The correct form of the question concerns the *point* of a pin, inasmuch as a point as such, ideally, is precisely distinguished by having no parts whatever outside of parts, that is to say, no quantification at all. "You might as well ask how many angels can dance in a football field as on the *head* of a pin," Martin insists.

The question remains, how do angels relate to what we call positions in space, since they have in their own substance no subjection whatever to quantification, having no body? Angels, being superior to bodies, can *act* on bodies, but they can *have* no body of their own. As a consequence, the contact of angels with bodies is possible through their activity, "virtue" or "power," only, not through their substance.[30] An angel is a finite being, not an infinite one, precisely because its power is limited to acting on and in creation, that is to say, to acting under the general dependency in existence of all finite being upon the creative activity of God. Not being the form of a body, the angel is not in some one place according to its form; yet, not being ubiquitous, being finite, it is where it acts upon bodies.[31]

A) Virtual and Dimensive Quantity

It is in this context that St. Thomas and his followers introduce the distinction so dear to Peter Redpath, of which he has made such remarkable extensions, namely, the distinction between the *dimensive* or *dimensional quantity* of bodies, whereby they have parts outside of parts and occupy space essentially according to what they are, and *virtual quantity,* or the extent of power and

[30] Cf. the brief discussion by Billy Graham, "Do Angels Sing?," in *Angels: God's Secret Messengers* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1995), 68-71.

[31] Poinsot 1643: d. 40, a. 1, 490 ,16: "D. Thomae ... ponit hanc differentiam inter animam et Angelum, quod Angelus 'unitur corpori solum ut motor, et ideo unitur ei per potentiam vel virtutem; anima autem intellectivam ... per suam essentiam.'"

control over bodies that a pure spirit can exercise through its actions.[32]

Since, then, the presence to the world of bodies is something accidental to an angel and variable, "where" something is has a radically different meaning when applied to any bodily substance, including the human being, and when applied to a pure spirit. "Where a body is," in the categories of Aristotle, the Latins called *ubi circumscriptivum,* "circumscriptive location," the surroundings that locate a body and upon which the body depends in its existence. The human being, for example, depends on more or less fourteen pounds per square inch of pressure upon its body from without in order to continue in existence. Increase that pressure too much and the body will be crushed; decrease it too much and the body will explode. That is the nature of "circumscriptive *ubi." Ubi angelicum* is a wholly different matter. The angel relates to place not by depending upon surrounding bodies but by dominating bodies through its activity influencing whatever body or bodies it chooses to act upon within the limits of its finitude.[33]

B) The "Location" and "Movement" of Angels in Space

An angel may "pass" from spatial location A to distant spatial location B without "passing through" any of the intervening locations, or the angel may choose to "mark its passage" by exercising its power in some manner over the intervening locations, in which case it will *appear* to move locally, as it were, as a wind sweeping over the land. A body, by contrast, cannot pass from A to B except by traversing the space in between.[34]

[32] Ibid.: "D. Thomas agnoscit quod ipsa substantia Angeli sit quantitas virtualis: quia quantitatem virtualem semper ponit in Angelis ratione virtus operativae: quia id quod in corporibus est quantitas dimensiva, in Angelis dicit esse virtutem operativam."

[33] "In angelo," Poinsot remarks (1643: d. 40, a. 4, 522 117), "non est modus quo dicatur subesse loco, sed quo subjicit sibi locum; redditur tamen ilium tangens virtuali suo contactu, eique conjunctus."

[34] Poinsot 1643: d. 40, a. 4, 522 118: "Quare motus corporis et spiritus non possunt univoce convenire in acquirendo tenninum localem, nee in habendo contactum erga corpus. Quia motus corporis acquirit *ubi* circumscriptivum, quod est commensuratum loco et ab illo dependens, et distantiam seu extensionem in illo habens; *ubi* autem angelicum non potest

Angels, then, are "someplace" in the physical universe of bodies only when and to the extent that they take possession of some one place rather than another. This "taking possession" is familiar in the idea of "demons" particularly, or "evil spirits" taking over the control of some human being: "an angel and a soul can occupy the same body," Poinsot tells us,[35] citing Thomas Aquinas,[36] "because 'the two are not compared under the same relation of causality, since the soul occupies the body as its form while the demon occupies it quite otherwise'"-as an intruder overpowering the rightful occupant, as it were.

C) The Answer to the Immediate Question

This brings us back to our question: How many angels can dance on the head of a pin, or, indeed, the point of a pin, or, for that matter, in a football field? The answer is all of them or none of them, depending on whether they choose to exercise their power over bodies in respect of the given area, large or small, and with the *caveat* that a choice to occupy one and the same spatial location at one and the same time by each individual member of the angelic community has no probability of occurring. But, were they so to choose, all can be "present" there only insofar as they exercise their power each to achieve some different effect[37]-for example, each one performing a wholly different dance; or different parts of the same dance, as in a ballet ("duo Angeli pluresve partialiter et inadaequate ad eumdem effectum con-

habere talem commensurationem. Et cum distantia non possit intelligi nisi ratione extensionis (si quidem major vel minor distantia mensuratur per extensionem), consequenter dicendum est quod Angelus, qui omnis extensionis expers est, non potest moveri localiter ad hoc ut acquirat aliquam distantiam seu exsistentiam vel praesentiam ad locum secundum extensionem loci."

[35] Poinsot 1643: d. 40, a. 3, 516 1140: "Angelus et anima possunt esse in eodem corpore, quia 'non comparantur secundum eamdem habitudinem causae: quia anima exsistit ut forma, non autem daemon.'"

[36] Aquinas, *STb* I, q. 52, a. 3, ad 3.

[37] Poinsot 1643: d. 40, a. 3, 518 1147: "de facto et ordinarie, Angeli non sunt in eodem loco formali; possunt tamen absolute loquendo esse quasi praetematuraliter et per accidens, ut si duo Angeli pluresve partialiter et inadaequate ad eumdem effectum concurrant, vel unus sit in eodem loco per passionem et alius per operationem."

currant") or even a waltz with one leading, the other following ("unus sit in eodem loco per passionem et alius per operationem"). Otherwise, respecting an identical respect, the more powerful angel will exclude the "presence" of the less powerful ("non [pos]sunt in eodem loco formali ... absolute [et per se] loquendo").[38]

However, all this is moot compared with the question of why angels would choose anything at all. In other words, the question of where and how angels might choose to perfect themselves by operations depends upon how angels see the world. For cognitive beings choose to act only according as they see things, that is to say, dependently upon their awareness.

N. THE AWARENESS OF ANGELS

We are considering the being of a creature whose whole essential activity consists in awareness and the intellectual inclinations or desires consequent thereon, but that is nonetheless a creature, that is to say, a finite being, and therefore one whose awareness, however perfect intellectually,[39] is nonetheless a finite awareness, and requires specification from without in order to be aware of one thing rather than another. As intellectual, the angel, like the human mind, is able to consider being in the whole of its extent, actual and possible. But as being finite in intellect, this universal capacity needs to be specified to be aware actually, "here and now," as it were, of this object or range of objects rather than of that object or that other region in the range of objects possible to consider. The human being forms its actual awareness of clouds in the sky, or a breeze swaying the trees, or the night sky

[38] Poinsot 1643: d. 40, a. 3, 516 1140: "in eodem loco materiali non repugnat, absolute loquendo, plures Angelos vel plures spiritus esse, si operentur diverso modo vel diversus effectus: non autem respectu unius et ejusdem effectus, in ratione continentis talem locum." See further ibid.: d. 40, a. 3, 5171145.

[39] Poinsot 1643: d. 41, a. 1, 554 U2: *"est advertendum* quod intelligere ex duplici principio limitatur: scilicet ex objecto a quo habet specificationem,et ex subjecto a quo habet individuationem; et, si est subsistens [quod pertinet Deo solo] caret utraque."

sparkled with stars, in response to just such specifications from without.

With angels, there is a problem to be considered from the outset. Lacking a body of any kind and in any way, they also lack organs whereby they might receive from outside themselves any kind of specifying stimulus in response to which their mind or intellect might form a concept relating them cognitively to the surroundings external to their proper subjectivity. Whence then is to come the stimulus for the angelic intellect to look beyond its own activity in the consideration of beings which are other than itself, which it itself is not?

A) The Stimulus for Cognitive Response in Angels

The answer to this question, according to Thomas Aquinas and those who follow his thought on the matter, is that the pure awareness of angels, being spiritual, is attuned to an environment that is likewise purely spiritual, and the stimuli "from without" that prod the angelic consciousness to form and to be able to form concepts that will serve as sign-vehicles *(representamens,* as we have become accustomed to say after Peirce) manifesting objects other than themselves are nothing else than the "climate changes" of the spiritual order in which the angel dwells, namely, the changes in existence all throughout the universe that come about always and only from the of the whole of finite being, in which changes the creative activity of God consists.

We are aware only of bodies living and dying, particular material substances beginning, developing, and ceasing to be. The reason for this is that bodies are all that we can directly and immediately know. Pure spirits are aware directly and immediately of their surroundings, just as we are. But, unmediated by senses, what this angelic awareness directly takes rise from is the creative activity which is manifested directly whenever and wherever and however existence occurs. For the climate in and of which purely intellectual or utterly bodiless spirits-angels, in a word-are perforce directly immersed and aware is the receiving of

existence, the actuality presupposed in every other actuality, as from the purely spiritual source of the universe of finite spiritual and material beings indifferently. This creative influx is, as it were, the very air they breathe, the one aspect of being that comes from God alone and manifests the divine activity wherever and for whatever duration ("whenever") it is found: "Concerning existence, we note that it results not from the subjective principles of any [finite] nature," material or spiritual, "but is imparted by God and received in a nature."[40] (The expression "received in" requires to be quite carefully and singularly understood, inasmuch as, prior to existence, there is no nature in which existence *can be* received. So the "reception" in this case signifies rather *the manner or specificationaccordingto which* the creative power of God is being exercised respecting things[41] and manifested respecting intelligibility, that is, as making it possible for purely spiritual intelligences actually to attend to the surrounding universe of spiritual and material substances or "things" interacting also among themselves in various ways.)

This divine activity, of course, is internal or "immanent" to each angel insofar as it is a substance, a "subjectivity" or thing among the rest of things; but it is external or transitive to each angel insofar as the angel is an intellect capable of being aware of the whole of being, not of itself only but of all beings insofar as they are intelligible. And all beings are intelligible, ultimately and supremely, precisely as they issue forth from the creative activity of God whence and whereby they derive their existence both as real and as acting and interacting in the universe of things. It is in

[40] Poinsot 1643: d. 39, a. 3, 474 U6, cited in note 23 above.

[41] Poinsot1643: d. 41, a. 2, 574 '1125: "Quia sicut existentia specificatur et determinatur ab essentia, non per hoc quod essentia superveniat existentiae, eique ut causa formalis de novo uniatur, ipsa existentia materialiter suscipiente essentiam et specificationem ejus: sed per hbc quod existentia ista, quae resultat ex productione talis essentiae, adaequatur illi, et sic modificatur in ipsa receptione a specificativo hujus essentiae, participatque et ebibit exsistentia ab ipsa essentia determinatam illam speciem." Poinsot has in mind Aquinas' distinction (*STh* I, q. 75, a. 5, ad 1) between the "actus primus" quod est "infinitum, virtualiter in se omnia praehabens" et "participatur a rebus, non sicut pars, sed secundum diffusionem processionis ipsius" (which is the source of the angelic "species impressae"), on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the "actus vero recepti, qui procedunt a primo actu infinito et sunt quaedam participationes eius" sed ut *pars* entis creati, sci!., ipsum esse proprium ei.

just this way that the imparting and sustaining of existence-in which "creation" (the creative activity of God) consists-impacts upon and enables the intelligence of angels to become aware from within of the universe without as a whole, including angels themselves as parts:

> the specifications providing the ground for the awareness of angels derive from the divine ideas according to which God is creating as outward expressions thereof, representing the creative rationales more or less universal in God's causing of existence, and in accordance with which the things themselves derive their existence following the modality of causes more or less universal.[42]

It is important to remember that we are talking of finite, albeit purely spiritual or bodiless, beings: they can only be living things capable of purely intellectual awareness and the desires and actions consequent thereon. They are not and cannot be omniscient. They cannot pay attention to everything possible for them to know at once, nor is it possible for them to know everything at once. The former is the case because they must themselves respond to the stimuli of changing existences everywhere around them, in which activity they are subject to some freedom both of choice and even of distraction. Thus, just as we may be in a room with music in the background while being so absorbed in thought or conversation as not to notice it, or just as we may ignore the fact that it is raining in India, so can it happen with angels.[43] The latter is the case because things do not exist everywhere all at once but only successively, one after another, and dependently upon

[42] Poinsot1643: d, 41, a. 3, 596 U6: "secundum quod illae species derivantur ab ideis divinis quasi quaedam earum expressiones, repraesentando rationes magis vel minus universalesin causando, et secundum quod res derivantur a Deo juxta modum causarum magis vel minus universalium, sic dicuntur illae species magis vel minus universales." Cf. ibid.: d. 41, a. 3, 590 U6; 645 *'l29.*

[43] Angels are perfect in their existence and nature as intellectual substances, Poinsot notes (1643: d. 41, a. 3, 5891133), "perfecta, inquam, in actu primo etin ratione scientiae. Nam in actu secundo non est necesse quod ab initio consideret in actu secundo omnia: quia in creaturis non est imperfectio actu non considerare aliqua, sed est imperfectio carere scientia seu facultate considerandi: hoc enim est ignorare."

On the distinction between a simple defect and "ignorance" as a privative defect, see Jacques Maritain, *The Sin of the Angel,* trans. William L. Rossner, S.J. (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1959), 61-64, text and notes 18, 19, and 20.

causal series some aspects of which are necessary and other aspects contingent, so that, even seeing all things in their causes and as receiving whatever they have of existence from God, the future holds even for angels surprises beyond what they can see and conjecture. The past too can hold blind spots for angels. For if a thing comes into existence while a particular angel attends elsewhere, and then passes away without leaving signs traceable to its proper singularity, the angel in question-unless enlightened by another who was paying attention at the time-will have no way whatever of coming to know what it missed.[44]

B) How Concepts Work Differently for Angels

Because the actual ideas (the "concepts") of angels are formed in response to the determinations impressed upon the angels from within by the activity of God communicating existence to finite singulars and sustaining that existence in and through their interactions, the angelic manner of knowing contrasts sharply with intellectual knowledge in human beings. In our intellectual knowledge, the universal is at one extreme, the singular at another. The universal gives rise to abstract knowledge. The singular, if present to, active upon, and proportioned to our senses, gives rise to intuitive knowledge in the immediately cognized coincidence or partial identity of object and thing-that is to say, to the awareness of a physical thing as physically existing independently of awareness, here and now existing also in awareness as object thereof. Or again, our knowledge is said to be universal when we have managed to arrive at an understanding of what is necessary to a particular nature, as when we know that wherever there are molecules of water there are combinations of two hydrogen atoms with one atom of oxygen.

In neither of these senses of "universal" can the knowledge of angels be called universal; nor can the knowledge of angels be

.. Poinsot 1643: d. 42, a. 2, 651 '48: "Quod si nee fuit prius eognita ut in memoria remaneret, nee effectum sui reliquit, omnino nullum principium manet in Angelo unde tale individuum eognoscat."

opposed or contrasted to their awareness of singulars.[45] Whatever an angel is aware of it is aware of on the basis of the divine activity of creation, whether it be the continuance of things in existence or the divine concurrence in their operations and interactions through which that existence is maintained, diminished, increased, or lost.[46] Consequently, in utter contrast to any sense in which human knowledge can be said to be either "universal" or "of the universal," angelic knowledge is called "universal" because it forms itself directly from the specifying stimuli of the universal activity of God's imparting of existence ("creation"} and because angelic awareness reaches directly to the singular existent, intuitively whenever it considers an existing singular, and abstractively when it considers a past or a future singular. In this last case (the contemplation of a future contingent}, moreover, the "universal knowledge" of the angel is liable to error as "virtual falsity."[47]

"Virtual falsity" as yet excluding actual falsity is a particularly interesting notion. When an angel "here and now" conjectures the future on the basis of what it presently knows of existing things and their interaction, it makes a guess- "performs an abduction," as we say in semiotics. If the guess will turn out to be right, it can be said to be "virtually true"; but if the future will turn out otherwise than the angel now conjectures, the guess is "virtually false." But when the future on which the guess bears becomes present, the angel attending thereto will know of everything that exists that it does exist, and so in that present moment it no longer has room for conjecture and it is unable to think that its former conjecture might still be correct. Hence actual falsity is precluded from angelic awareness inasmuch as, at any given moment, though an angel can be deceived about what *will be* in

[45] See Poinsot 1643: d. 41, 6091130; 612 1138; etc.

[46] The effects of "divine governance," Poinsot notes, following in particular Aquinas *STh* I, q. 104, "vel sunt ipsa continuatio et conservatio rerwn in esse, vel concursus auxilii ad operandum," in either case consisting in "omnimoda dependentia creaturae a Deo in existendo" (p. 141 of.his "lsagoge ad D. Thomae Theologiam. Explicatio connexionis et ordinis totius summae theologicae D. Thomae per omnes ejus materias," in *Joannis a Sancto Thoma Cursus Theologicus Tomus N,* Solesmes ed. [Paris: Desclee, 1946), 143-219).

[47] See Poinsot 1643: d. 42, a. 4, 6771136, but also *passim.*

some particulars, it cannot be deceived about what *here and now actually,* as opposed to virtually, exercises existence in the universe of finite being.

This is perhaps the deepest contrast between anthroposemiosis and the putative semiosis of angels. We conceive "the universal" not only often erroneously, but always in a static way, such that, even when circumstances make the universal in question determinately false, the state of our knowledge as discursive (in contrast to the comprehensive awareness of angelic knowledge, as we will see shortly)[48] leaves it possible for us to remain ignorant of the relevant facts and consider the entertained universal as true. The "universal" knowledge of an angel can entertain no such illusion because it has nothing of the static about it; it is more like watching a landscape under rapidly shifting conditions of light and weather:

> The concepts angels form in their awareness of things can be called "universals" only by reason of the medium on the basis of which they represent the things themselves right down to their unique differences. And this medium is the more universal according as it the more perfectly and intimately represents the things that are grasped within it: just as a cause is more universal the more forcefully it brings about its effect, and the more intimately and profoundly it achieves that effect: *and so the universality of angelic knowledge is a universality of activity,* which applies to many rationales of existence.[49]

More than an activity, the "universal knowledge" of an angel is a constant unfolding into clear and distinct awareness of what exists which, as has been said, contains constant surprises for the angel comprehending what unfolds, for the actual awareness of the angel forms itself from determinations "which receive the force of representing the individuals existing successively, just as they are

[48] Section *N.E,* "Comprehensive Knowledge," below.

[49] Poinsot 1643: d. 41, a. 4, 609 1130, emphasis added in the translation: "Solum ergo dicuntur species Angelorum universales ratione medii per quod repraesentant res ipsas usque ad proprias differentias illarum. Et hoc medium quanto est universalius, tanto perfectius et intimius repraesentat res quae sub illo comprehenduntur: sicut causa quanto est universalior, tanto vehementius influit in effectum, et intimius ac profundius ilium attingit, eo quod talis causa est activior et perfectior: et sic universalitas ejus est universalitas activitatis, quae ad plures rationes se extendit."

caused in the universe from the creative ideations of God, not otherwise and not before."[50]

Note that it is not abstractly that the creative activity of God impacts upon and specifies the concept-formation, or actual awareness, of the angel. It is not *concepts* that are "infused" into the angel's consciousness, full-blown.[51] The climate in which the angelic mind is bombarded with infused specifications or stimuli arising from the universal maintenance of existence by God is not a Platonic realm of pure Ideas, even Divine Ideas, abstractly and eternally exemplifying universal natures. Quite to the contrary, what is at issue is the dynamic activity whereby the universe is maintained in existence insofar as it dynamically and in finite ways exemplifies the infinity of divine perfection as finitely imitable in various, varying, specific ways:

> specifications in response to which the angel attends to the universe around it are similitudes derivative from the divine ideas [through the creative activity according to which things receive existence], and represent things in the angelic intellect in the way in which those things are derived from God as one following upon the other in a temporal order.[52]

It is not any static exemplar in the divine mind or "individual essence" in some created substance itself that provides the representative rationale in response to which the angel forms its awareness of the universe. It is rather the rationale of the emergence and development in time of creatures ("ut descendens

so Poinsot 1643: d. 42, a. 2, 647 U2: "acceperunt vim repraesentandi ista individua successive, sicut ab ideis causantur in universo, et non aliter, nee ante."

[51] Nor is it ideas, which differ from concepts only in that they are concepts used to guide practical activity: see, in Poinsot, *Natura/isPhilosophiaePrimaPars* (Reiser ed., vol. II [Turin: Marietti, 1933], 1-529), q. 11, "De Causa Materiali, Formali et Exemplari," a. 3, "Ad quod genus causae reducatur idea seu exemplar," 240b7-247b16. See discussion below in note 92.

[52] Poinsot1643: d. 41, a. 3, 590 '36: "iliac species repraesentant singularia eo modo quo sunt, et dependenter ab eorum terminatione; ita quod, quando sunt intra causas, repraesentant intra causas, quando extra, ut existentia in se: non vero in se determinate quamdiu sunt futura. In hoc enim non est inconveniens, quod dependeant species angelicae a productionis singularium, ut a termino suae repraesentationis: quia similitudines sunt derivatae ab ideis divinis, et eo modo repraesentant res in intellectu Angeli, quo derivantur a Deo per successionem temporis."

a Dea," as Poinsot puts it)[53] that stimulates the angels to form their concepts representing the many creatures perfectly and distinctly. The unity of the conceptual representation is taken not from the creatures conceptually known but from the constancy and manner of the creative activity of God which brings these creatures about and in response to which as to a stimulus the angel forms its awareness.[54]

C) *Universal Knowledge of Singulars: The Key to the Knowledge Distinctive of Angels*

When it is said that intellectual knowledge of universals contrasts with sense knowledge of particulars, then, the expression "knowledge of universals" is almost equivocal as between human beings and angels, embodied spirits and spirits with no internal dependency upon bodies in their cognitive activity:[55]

Angelic conceptions are not universal [in the way that human intellectual ideas are) from the fact that they represent directly and essentially some nature in a universal state or some generic grade ... but from the fact that the conceptions rep:esent several things . . . insofar as they come from God . . . according to diverse relative conditions.[56]

It is the *production of singulars* in and through the divine creative activity that is the actual term of "universal" angelic awareness, the equivalent for a human being of standing in the presence here

[53] Poinsot1643: d. 41, a. 4, 612 U9: "non praecise secundurn se, sed utdescendens a Deo ... sic potest esse ratio repraesentandi plura perfecte et distincte."

[54] Ibid.: "non oportet unitatem hujus repraesentationis surnere ex aliqua unitate rerum repraesentatarum in se, sed ex unitate et modo exemplaris a quo derivantur: sicut sigillaturn surnit unitatem a sigillo, licet res valde diversarum figurarum exprimat."

[55] Ibid.: US: "species angelicae non sunt universales ex eo quod aliquam naturam in universali seu gradurn aliquem genericurn directe et per se repraesentet ... sed ex eo quod repraesentant plures res sub aliquo universali medio, it est, quatenus descendunt a Deo et ab ideis divinis secundurn diversas habitudines."

[56] Poinsot expresses here exactly the view of Aquinas, *De Verit.,* q. 8, a. 10 ad 3: "una forma intellectus angelici est ratio propria pluriurn secundurn diversas ejus habitudines ad diversas res, ex quibus ejus habitudines ad diversas res, ex quibus habitudinibus consurgit pluralitasidearum," concerning which textPoinsotadvises (1643: d.41,a.4, 612 U7): "Nota hoc bene." See full text in note 76 below.

and now of a person while shaking hands and exchanging greetings, but with none of the limitations of distance and circumstance that intuitive awareness dependent upon sense (i.e., human intuitive awareness) entails and including the awareness of causality at work in every aspect of the being standing before one insofar as that being exercises a unique existence. The "universality" in question is a concrete, not an abstract, universality:

The climate from which angelic concept-formation receives its specifying determinations is one representative of things according as they are derived from divine ideas, whence perforce the specifications in question represent whatever individuals they do represent successively, and not simultaneously: because it is successively that individuals exemplify the creative action of God in the physical universe. So it is that the concepts angels form in actually achieving awareness in response to these determinations represent the things of the universe, not by taking anything from the very things themselves,[57] but rather by taking determination according to the way in which the things themselves depend upon the divine exemplars; whence from the efficacy of their representation and from the efficacy of their participation in the divine or creative ideas, angelic conceptions perforce are assimilated to the individuals when they come to be and participate existence from the divine ideas, and not in any other way. Nor is this representation or application to the knowing of the individual determinately drawn from the individual things themselves, except insofar as they are the final terms (the terminus) of such representation. [58]

Poinsot sums all this up in a terse formula: "id habent in re:. praesentando, quod ideae in causando,"[59] a formula which he expands over the next several pages of his treatise and recapitulates

[57] That is, not by any process of "abstraction" such as discursive reason (or even the perceptual intelligence of brute animals)-any awareness dependent upon bodily organs, directly or indirectly-requires.

[58] Poinsot 1643: d. 42, a. 2, 645 1128: "Sed quia ipsa individua successive fiunt ab ideis divinis in hoc universo, hoc ipso quod infunditur Angelo species repraesentativa rerum secundum quod derivantur ab ideis divinis, oportet quod aliqua individua successive repraesentet, et non simul: quia sic derivantur ab ideis divinis in hoc universo. Ergo si species Angelorum repraesentant res, non desumendo aliquid ab ipsis, sed prout descendunt ab ideis divinis, necesse est quod ex vi suae repraesentationis, et ex vi quam participant ab ipsis ideis, habeant assimilari individuis quando fiunt et participant esse ab ideis, et non aliter. Neque ista repraesentatio seu applicatio ad cognoscendum individuum determinate sumenda est ex ipsis rebus, nisi in quantum sunt termini talis repraesentationis." Cf. ibid.: d. 41, a. 4, 612 1137.

[59] Poinsot. 1643: d. 42, a. 2, 645 '1129.

in saying that "the specifying determinations on the basis of which angels form concepts possess in representing the very content which the divine ideas impart in the causing of actual existence."[60] This is the key to the knowledge distinctive of angels.

D) The Semiotic Triangle

We see in all this clearly verified the triadic structure of signs which is the foundation of semiosis, no less in the "sphere below the moon" than in the empyrean home of the angels: the "infused" determinations from the creative activity of God, whereby the angel is enabled to form an actual awareness of whatever it chooses to pay attention to in the universe, serve as the basis for angels to fashion sign-vehicles (concepts) which represent to them the universe of things other than (and also including) themselves. So we have the famous triad: first, the representamen or sign-vehicle, to wit, the concept itself; second, the object signified, which in this case (as in our immeasurably more limited partial identification case of sense perception) is an object identical with a physically existing thing; and third, the one-namely, the pure spirit or angel-to or for which the existing here and now thing is represented in the manifestation making of that thing also an object. The nature of this triad may be expressed in a formula-the semiotic formula, let us call it-which, as Poinsot points out,[61] admits of no exception in the order of finite being: any two things related to a common third are in that same way related to one another.

[60] Poinsot 1643: d. 42, a. 2, 647 '1132: "id habent species Angelorum in repraesentando, quod ideae divinae in causando. . . . Et consequenter ex vi talis infusionis habet ilia representatio intentionalis in Angelo determinare et explicare repraesentationem illam ad hoc vel illud individuum quod de novo fit, quia sic producitur ab ideis divinis; et species illae sunt quaedam sigilla et repraesentationes idearum, prout in hoc universo producunt." See also ibid.: d. 42, a. 2, 645 '1127.

[61] Poinsot 1643: d. 41, a. 1, 559 '1151: "Quaecumque enim sunt eadem uni tertio, sunt eadem inter se, eo modo quo in illo tertio unum sunt: quod axioma in creatis nullam patitur instantiam."

E) ComprehensiveKnowledge

As with us, the awareness of a given object for an angel can pass from abstract to intuitive or back, but on entirely different grounds. With us, an object need only pass out of the range of sensation to become "abstract," whether or not it continues to exist. Not so with the angels. Near or far, as long as a thing exists, an angel adverting to it and so making it an object of awareness will apprehend it intuitively, unless for reasons of its own it chooses to use less than the full comprehension of the impressed specification at the basis of this particular consciousness. Otherwise, whatever exists in nature, when an angel attends to it, that angel knows intuitively, that is, knows the physical thing in its very physical reality objectified, and comprehensively as well.

The term "comprehensively" here does not mean that, for each and every angel, there is nothing left to know or be known about the object. The term means rather that the angel in knowing, when attending fully to the particular stimulus or *species impressa*[62] in proportion with which it forms its *speciesexpressae* or concepts,[63] knows to the full capacity of *its* specifically individual apprehensive power the substantial being and necessary properties and causes involved therein. But this same angel knows only conjecturally the contingencies that bear on the future of the being in question. And, if the object of the apprehension is a being

[62] Poinsot 1643: d. 42, a. 4, 673 'll24: "potest intellecus [angelicus] uti inadequate aliqua specie, solum ut dividat cognitiones seu conceptus circa diversa objecta .•• applicando modo speciem uni cognitioni seu objecto tantum, et postmodum alteri, non tamen unum deducendo ex altero et in vi ipsius deductionis cognoscendo," as the human intellect is further able to objectifiy inadequately its environmental stimuli (and so fall into actual rather than merely virtual falsity). But also "posse Angelum uti una specie ad diversas cognitiones habendas" (ibid., d. 41, a. 4, 616 'VSO), so that different angels' can even form different conceptions respecting the same objective stimulus, "quia potest uti specie ilia in hanc vel illam partem." See ibid.: d. 41, a. 2, 'll43.

[63] Poinsot 1643: d. 41, a. 4, 607 'll25: "non minus repraesentativi sunt conceptus [seu species expressae], quam species [impressas] ... quia species impressae proportionantur conceptibus, quia ex illis formantur conceptus tamquam ex principio repraesentativo." Moreover (ibid.: d. 45, a. 2, 835 1125), "species in inferioribus Angelis sunt minus perfectae quam in superioribus, ideoque non tot veritates demonstrant, vel non cum tanta determinatione et distindione sicut species superiorum."

itself capable of immanent activity, the angel does not know at all those immanent acts ("secrets of the heart")[64] save insofar as they outwardly manifest themselves in some bodily state or behavior of the cognized organism. In other words, at any given moment, unlike *our* intellectual knowledge, which always contains an element of confusion or potential for greater clarity overall in the here and now (and is said in this sense to be "discursive"), the purely intellectual awareness of the angel, which is all the angel has, it also has wholly actually respecting the here and now-not in the sense that there is nothing in the here and now being of which the angel is unaware,[65] but in the sense that there is nothing further in the here and now which is potential respecting the individual angel's here and now awareness. A given angel always knows, if not all that there is to know, at least all that *it* can *by itself* know under the actual circumstances here and now. It is in this sense that the angel is said to know "comprehensively" rather than "discursively";[66] but, since the *next* moment in time *may,* and the whole of future time certainly *will,* unfold differently than the individual angel is led to conjecture from what it does know here and now, the angel, turning its attention here or there, is constantly liable to surprises further revealing the limited or finite nature of its intellectual power, for all its "comprehensiveness" at any given moment. Yet the angel cannot from this experience learn, for example, a habit of humility, because the

[64] "Angelus," Poinsot notes (1643: d. 41, a. 4, 6161150), "qui videt in alio species quas habet, non videt cogitationem et usum earum." Whence these secrets are formally treated and defined ind. 42, a. 3, which opens as follows (655 'lll): "Cogitationes cordis et secreta cordis idem sunt: et dicuntur talia quaecumque ex libero voluntatis usu proveniunt intra potentias interiores, quae libertatem participant, et nullo effectu exteriori extra illas produntur et exeunt. ... dicuntur secreta cordis, quamdiu in effectu vel signo aliquo extemo seu extra illas potentias posito non manifestantur." See further ibid.: d.42, a. 3, 6641!s 38-39.

[65] For example, an angel of greater intellectual power and reach can, through conversation with its inferiors, instruct them, as we will see.

[66] Poinsot 1643: d. 42, a. 4, 673 1123, emphasis added: "in habendo unamquamque operationem et perfectionem ex ilia provenientem, scilicet attingentiam veritatis, petit non procedere de potentia ad actum et de imperfecto ad perfectum, quod est procedere per motum: sed illam operationem perfecte habere, quia comprehensive, et statim attingere totam perfectionem *quam f>Otest* per quamlibet operationem."

angelic nature has no place for the taking of habits.[67] So too in its comprehensiveness from the first moment is the awareness that contingent causes found only conjectural as opposed to certain knowledge: part of the comprehension is that it does *not* know everything and cannot infallibly predict the future on the basis of the certainties it does have.

F) Learning by Successive Discourse

Since the angelic knowledge always takes its rise from the stimulus of the divine creative activity which gives existence to natural beings, and since it is in time that this creative activity gives rise to the succession of individuals and events in nature from which the angel attending to the unfolding constantly learns new things comprehensively, the successive character of this comprehension gives a successive sense in which the angel can be said to learn. If the notion of discursive knowledge is extended to include the capacity to learn new things without any transition from potentiality to actuality respecting the known at any given moment, angels may be said to have a *successive discourse,* that is, a discourse in which the previous awareness is not at all the cause of the later awareness (as when we see a new consequence of something we already knew) but merely its predecessor, which did not actually have all that is contained in the new awareness simply because contingent causes in nature that are *now* actual were not *then* actual. In other words, the angel has nothing to learn *by inference* in reflecting on its present knowledge, yet it can and will learn *by contrast* in the successive awareness it maintains of existence and holds in intellectual memory. Whatever it will learn will come, not from a present awareness that is potential respecting a

[67] Poinsot 1643: d. 42, a. 4, 461 U2: "superfluit ibi habitus, quia potentia ex se est sufficienter in actu ad penetrandum omnes illas veritates" quorum capax sit hie et nunc. Yet it might be the case that, given what we now know to be the evolutionary rather than the cyclical nature of our physical universe, in light of what will shortly be said about learning from within 'successive discourse', there is place for angels to develop *noninferential* interpretive habits, but at a wholly different pace and with a different function than is the case for the inferential habits of rational animals.

future awareness, but always and only and wholly from the future state of the objects themselves, known intuitively by the angels (i.e., known as actually existing at the time they are considered by the angel).[68] "And so it is," Poinsot notes wryly, "that God moves [i.e., instructs the understanding--or, rather, comprehension-of][69] a spiritual creature by means of time."[70] Motion, the passage from potency to act, is essential to discourse, both in the successive discourse of angels and in the illative discourse of humans; but the motion in question is *internal* to the discourse by which we come to see new things in the realizing of consequences, while it is only *external* to the "discourse" by which new things enter angelic apprehension through the causal unfolding of the universe in its contingent as well as its necessary causes.

We have also seen that the angels, in forming concepts, form sign-vehicles or *representamens* that achieve the distinctive effect of semiosis, in the end, exactly in the manner that human concepts (in contradistinction, now, to percepts) do, although without the dependency upon zoosemiosis and the actions of sensible bodies upon organs of sense: to wit, by relating the angels to the universe of things other than themselves objectified through

[68] Poinsot 1643: d. 42, a. 4, 673 '23: "non est necesse quod Angelus habeat in actu secundo omne quod est in ipso in actu primo; ideoque convenit ei habere discursum successivum, hoc est diversa successive intelligere, et successive diversas operationes habere. . . . Unde cum possit operari circa diversa objecta, oportet quod etiam possit habere diversas operationes, et non omnes simul . . . quia penes objecta specificantur et limitantur" conceptiones angelicae.

[69] See note 66 above. Discourse is to understanding, we might say, as motion is to bodies! Cf. Poinsot 1643: d. 42, a. 4, 670 'l113; and 674 'l126.

[70] Res existentes a speciebus impressibus objectivae "repraesentantur autem secundum ordinem quo descendunt a Deo; descendunt vero ab ipso per tempus successivum, non per aevum [i.e., by time such as measures transient physical operations, not such as measures the liµmanent operations of angelic awareness]; et sic Deus movet creaturam spiritualem per tempus." (Poinsot 1643: d. 42, a. 2, 649 '1139) Whence (ibid.) "etiam res illae quae coexistunt aliquo instanti angelico, quando correspondet diversis partibus temporis, v.g., si correspondent uni horae vel uni diei, non possunt cognosci ab Angelo in vi illius instantis sic extensi, quamdiu non producuntur in ipso tempore, sed adhuc correspondent parti termporis futuri." The situation of the angelic semiosis in this particular may be said to have an anthroposemiotic counterpart, as it were (ibid.: d. 42, a. 2, 653 'l156: emphasis added): "Sicut enim nos ex collatione plurium specierum unam formamus, ita Angelus in una simplici specie habet virtualiter et implicite plura, *quae successive explicantur."*

the concepts which represent those things as cognized by the angels forming the concepts. This concept formation on the part of angels is what constitutes them as actually aware, and this awareness takes its excitation or stimulus from the purely spiritual activity of God, impressed on the angelic intellects from within concomitantly with their own creation, in creating the universe of interacting things by imparting to the events and things of the universe, not all at once but successively, an actual existence beyond nothingness and outside of the efficient causes of coming to be in the case of individuals, "substances."

G) The Distinctiveness of Angelic Semiosis

If we consider now what is distinctive of this angelic semiosis, in contrast with the semiosis of animals, linguistic or not linguistic, we find that it concerns mainly the situation of intuitive awareness, that is to say, the awareness wherein the very object signified is identified with a thing physically existing here and now. In the semiosis of animals, intuitive awareness is limited by the range of the senses. Not only are past or future imagined objects known abstractively, but even objects that have a here and now physical existence are known to us intuitively only when they are present and active upon our bodily senses. If we look at a picture of someone who is alive but in some distant place, we are intuitively aware of the picture, but the person in the picture we are aware of only abstractively.[71]

Not so with the angels.[72] Concepts formed on the basis of the objective stimulus of the divine creative activity cannot be de-

[71] Poinsot 1643: d. 42, a. 1, 626119: "Sicut qui videt imaginem imperatoris, in illa attingit imperatorem: sed imaginem praesentem intuitive, et imperatorem abstractive, quia absens est." Poinsot expounds the matter of "intuitive awareness" in the two longest questions of his 1632 *Treatise on Signs,* Book III, qq. 1 and 2.

[72] Poinsot 1633: *Phil. nat.* 1. p., q. 1, a. 3, 32a34-b1: "Quod vero dicitur intellectus [humanus] intuitive videre obiectum, dicimus, quod id habet dependenter a sensu et in quantum continuatur cum illo. Clausis autem sensibus, quantumcumque res sint praesentes, intellectus non potest intuitive cognoscere, quia non possunt illae species [impressae] de tali praesentia certificare nisi mediantibus sensibus. Si tamen Deus infunderet aliquod lumen superius et species exemplatas a Deo, sicut infunditur, angelis, posset illis intuitive videre independenter a sensu."

ceived as to what actually exists and what does not, for everything that an angel considers that actually exists physically is represented and known so to exist. Only things considered by an angel wholly alert to its stimulus that either no longer exist or that do not yet exist are known abstractively, and, in the latter case, are known mainly conjecturally as well (and so under threat of "virtual falsity").

How do we explain the necessarily intuitive character of angel awareness respecting the universe of physically existing things? My guess would be that the explanation lies in the ability of a purely intellectual consciousness directly to apprehend categorial relations among physical objects. Categorial relations[73] are all and only those relations that exist in the world of nature without any dependence upon the cognitive activity of organisms. They differ from mind-dependent relations in they necessarily involve the actual existence of two (at least) related things: A can be similar to B, categorially speaking, if and only if both A and B exist. The shape, let us say, on the basis of which the two are "similar"-or whatever other "accident" (whatever subjective characteristic, let us say) on the basis of which the two are related-can and does exist in each of the two independently of the other. But the characteristic in question as *foundation or basis of a relation* cannot exist equally independently (which, of course, is the proof that every relation as such exists not independently of but irreducibly respecting its subjective basis or "ground"). [74]

[73] See John Deely, *Four Ages of Understanding: The First Postmodern History of Philosophy from Ancient Times to the Turn of the 21" Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 72-78 and 228-29; Poinsot 1632: *Tractatus de Signis,* second preamble, article 2.

[74] I prescind, in the present context, from the special difficulties concerning the notion of "ground" within semiosis proper, which I have discussed at length elsewhere: see in particular the Index entry GROUND in Deely, *Four Ages of Understanding,* 901-3. Here it is sense [A] that is operative, as is clear from Poinsot 1643: d. 41, a. 1, 558 '1147: "species imperfectae, sicut modi, oportet quod entitative quantum ad realitatem identificentur cum aliqua entitate reali determinatae speciei: quia cum modus non sit realitas, non distinguitur a re cuius est modus realiter et entitative, et ita manet indistinctus realiter et entitative; et consequenter identificatur cum ipsa re cujus est modus. Unde non inhaeret illi, sicut reliqua accidentia, sed seipso illi conjungitur: quod est entitative identificari. Aliquas sequeretur processus in infinitum: quia, cum ipsa inhaerentia quidam modus sit, si inhaeret per aliam inhaerentiam, ista rursus inhaerebit per aliam, et sic in infinitum. Nee potest separatim existere a subjecto, sicut accidentia quae inhaerent, licet subjectum possit manere sine modo per corruptionem

In our semiosis, categorial relations and mind-dependent relations are functionally equivalent precisely because we cognize things on the basis of models[75] representing "how things actually are." In most cases, it is only by experimentally reducing these models--our conceptions-to sensibly verifiable alternatives that we are able to determine whether or how far there is a "correspondence" to an actual physical state of affairs blithely indifferent to what or whether we think about it, whether or how we try to "model" it for the purposes of our own understanding.

In the comprehensive awareness of angels, there would be neither need nor place for experimenting with cognitive models. The objective stimuli upon which angelic conceptions are formed, being not abstract representations of nature but rather, as we have seen, dynamic representations of natures realized in individuals when and as they receive actual existence through the creative activity of God (including its utilization of secondary causes in bringing about the material dispositions calling for this or that individual existence), would give rise to an immediate awareness of the arising of whatever categorial relations obtain here and now among interacting individuals of the physical universe:

So from the creative ideas according to which things exist, derive in the angelic mind objective stimuli representative of stones, or of herbs as possessing medicinal qualities, or as they pertain to the climate of this rather than that region; and likewise derive stimuli representative objectively of birds as belonging to a given region, or useful to a particular end, or even according as they are useful to humans: or stimuli representative of some embellishment of

ipsius modi, seu alicujus ad illud requisiti.-Similiter species relativae identificari possunt cum fundamento, quod est determinatae speciei et entitatis in se: quia non distinguitur a fundamento tamquam realitas, sed tamquam modus. Nam si realitas sit, nullo modo identificabitur cum illo sed accidentaliter illi adveniet, sicut plures species accidentales adveniunt subjecto habenti suam speciem entitativam determinatam ab illis distinctam." See the fuller treatment in Poinsot 1632: :no of the electronic edition(= *Ars Logica,* q. 17, a. 4), 590b35-595b23, esp. 593allff.

[75] Cf. Poinsot 1643: d. 41, a. 4, 611 U4, emphasis added: "uno verbo, a divina mente tamquam ab artifice profluunt et res in propria natura et materia, sicut domus ab artifice in lapidibus et lignis: et profluunt imagines repraesentivae talium rerum, sicut ab artifice fit in papyro vel cera aut aere incisio et copia domus faciendae, quam typum seu *mode/um* vocamus; et haec non desumit suam unitatem ex re ipsa fabricata ut in se, sed ex unitate et modo quo est in mente artificis."

an elemental state of earth or air respecting a higher and more universal end: or even as things upon earth depend upon events occurring in the heavens, and finally according to various other diverse modalities and outcomes which can affect the manner in which things derive existence from God.[76]

Thus the angel, conjecturing upon the future, in many respects can only guess. But which among the guesses proves true and which false the angel will learn only when the cognitive relations attaching to its various representations become categorial within intuitive cognition,[77] while those cognitive relations sustaining others of its conjectures remain abstractive and, moreover, now determinately and necessarily so. The angel cannot be deceived about what does actually exist here and now, at least not when attending to it, although it can conjecture vainly about what will actually exist at a later "here and now."

The reverse, of course, happens when the object present within the angel's intuitive awareness physically ceases to be: the angel attending to the event immediately becomes aware that the sign relation whereby its concept makes present in awareness an existing thing ceases to include a categorial component within the representation and passes with the thing to an abstract, mind-dependent or purely objective status. The sign-relation, real to now, becomes instantly unreal, both in itself physically and objectively in the angelic awareness:

[76] Poinsot 1643: d. 41, a. 4, 612 1137, emphasis added: "Sic ab ideis divinis possunt in mentem Angeli derivari similitudines lapidum vel herbarum, ut conducunt ad medicinalem virtutem, vel ut pertinent ad climata hujus regionis potius quam illius, et similiter similitudines avium quatenus tali regioni deserviunt, aut tali utilitati aut fini, vel etiam secundum quod deserviunt homini: vel secundum quod pertinent ad ornatum integri elementi, v.g., aeris vel terrae, ubi est altior et universalior finis: vel etiam secundum quod fiunt a causis universalibus caelorum, ac denique secundum alias diversas habitudines et fines, qui variare possunt modum quo ista derivantur a Deo. Quod unico verbo dixit S. Thomas (quaest. ilia 8 *de Verit.* a. 10 ad 3), quod 'una fonna intellectus angelici est ratio propria plurium secundum diversas ejus habitudines ad diversas res, ex quibus habitudinibus consurgit pluritas idearum'. *Nota hoc bene."*

n Poinsot 1643: d. 42, a. 2, 640 '1115: "similitudo speciei, quae est in Angelo, non est completa et tenninata antequam objectum existat. ... Complementum autem similitudinis dependet ab altero extremo, ad quod similutudo tenninatur."

> The objective determination on which the angel's awareness of the case is based derives from the issuing forth of the newly existent thing, which issuance is assimilated to the representation; therefore, from the force of that representation alone, the representation is applied and determined to the produced thing while it exists or is produced and assimilated to the representation. When the thing ceases to exist, accordingly, it is no longer assimilated to that representation, nor does the representation remain determinately applied as similar to a physical reality: because it is solely determined respecting that thing according as the thing itself receives existence or descends from God, and the representation is similarly determined not indeed to the thing as past, because as past it is already not receiving existence from God nor pertinent as an actual part of the universe ... and so remains as but a memory [recognized as such].[78]

In the semiosis of a human awareness, it is not so. Our intuitive awareness is tied to our senses. For example, if a friend whom we are on our way to visit suddenly dies, we normally have no awareness whatever of the fact that the real relation between us has ceased. The objective relation within the semiosis, real or unreal, remains functionally equivalent until and unless we learn of the death: we arrive at the appointed place of rendezvous, and are disappointed or angered at our friend's failure to appear. We wonder if he forgot or if something happened, and hope (in vain, on the supposed situation) to hear from him an explanation that will satisfy our feeling of annoyance or disappointment or fear. But the hope is vain, for the relation, formerly categorial as well as objective, without any change in awareness on our part, has become *purely* objective. The abstractive awareness of our friend is no longer temporarily circumstantial, but permanently abstractive; yet we, in contrast to an angel in the same circumstance,

[78] Poinsot 1643: d. 42, a. 2, 650 '1146: "ipsa determinatio speciei ... fit ex appositione et productione rei de novo productae, quae assimilatur illi speciei; ergo ex vi illius solum applicatur et determinatur species ad rem productam, dum est vel producitur et assimilatur ipsi speciei. Transeunte ergo re, non amplius assimilatur ipsi speciei, nee species manet determinate et applicate similis ipsi rei: quia solum determinatur erga illam prout res ipsa producitur seu descendit a Deo et similis redditur speciei, non vero ad ipsam ut praeteritam, quia jam non derivatur a Deo nee pertinet ad universum. Unde, ut repraesentetur tamquam praeterita, debet suffici species alia determinatione, quatenus scilicet cognita est, et sic manet memoria de ilia: quia memoria est repraesentatio de re ut aliquando cognita." The point is treated yet more expansively in the following 1147.

have no immediate awareness of the change m the relational status. So, Poinsot points out:

> When St. Thomas says that nonexisting things have not a nature through which they are assimilated to the objective stimuli for angelic conceptions, he is not speaking only of that relative similitude which is founded upon the co-existence of the foundation and terminus of the relation, but rather of the completive and determinative assimilation of the foundational representations to those individuals insofar as it provenates from the change of the individual existents according to which the representations in question are one time assimilated to those individuals as actual, another time not.... So that assimilation whereby things are assimilated to specificative representations in the mind of an angel is an assimilation obtaining not only on the side of the things [i.e., categorially], but one penetrating into the representations themselves through the new determination or application provenating from the creative divine ideas; whence, given the objects and the creative the intentional assimilation applied to these individuals here and now results. [9]

In the physical universe, the change that produces or destroys the categorial relations may be the substantial change whereby a given individual begins or ceases to be. But in the order of the representations upon which angelic conceptions are based in foiming an actual comprehensive awareness of the individual in question there is no more than a modal explicitation (or suppression!) of an aspect of the actually possessed stimulus for the objectification. [80]

[79] Poinsot1643: d. 42, a. 3, 655 'V60: "cum D. Thomas <licitres non existentes non habere naturam per quam assimilentur speciebus angelicis, non loqui de sola similitudine relativa, quae fundatur in convenientia extremorum: sed de assimilatione completiva et determinativa specierum ad ista individua, quatenus ex transmutatione singularium provenit quod istae species aliquando assimilentur ipsis, aliquando non, ut <licit idem S. Thomas (quaest. 16 *de Malo* [1272], a. 7 ad 9). Igitur assimilatio ilia, qua res assimilantur speciebus in mente Angeli, est assimilatio non solum ex parte rerum se tenens, sed in speciebus ipsis resultans, per novam determinationem seu applicationem ex ideis divinis proveniens: qua, positis objectis et productis, resultat intentionalis assimilatio applicata istis individuis hie et nunc." Poinsot will return to this point, perhaps even more forcefully, in the later d. 45, a. 1, 825 '!145: "existimo non solum resultare per modum relationis ex ipsa objecti positione, sed ab ipsis ideis divinis derivari ex vi prioris infusionis specierum."

[80] Poinsot 1643: d. 42, a. 3, 655 '!160: "in ipsis rebus fit substantialis mutatio dum producuntur in esse vel desinunt, in speciebus autem non, sed solum modalis aliqua applicatio seu explicatio repraesentationis praehabitae." See also the concluding '1162; and in the previous article 2 of this same distinction 42, p. 644 '!126: "et hoc non per aliquam variationem speciei

V. *IL PARLAREANGELIC0:* [81] HOW ANGELS CONVERSE

That "no man is an island" is a saying Poinsot would have us apply also to angels: "No creature suffices unto itself, not even an angel."[82] His master, Thomas Aquinas, held the opinion that even in the Garden of Eden the multiplication of individuals would have made government necessary to order individual affairs for a common good. Yet order among cognitive individuals cannot arise sufficiently without there being communication among the individuals concerned. Among human beings, the communication necessary at the cognitive levels takes place through speech: people talk to one another. Poinsot, still following Aquinas, would have us believe that so too must it be among angels: "because angels are intellectual beings, they must needs be intellectually governed and form a political republic; but without conversation there cannot be communication and governance in any community." [83] Yet how is there to be conversation between or among beings that have no body? Such beings are in no way adapted to receive a stimulus from outside their own minds save directly from God in the spiritual activity of his successive creation in time, as we have seen. This activity embraces the whole physical universe in its termination and determines representatively the awareness of angels from within to be able to form concepts, "formal signs," which, as vehicles of semiosis, serve-exactly as do human concepts (and animal percepts, for that matter)-to relate the angels to what they themselves are not,

quasi formalem et in sua formali repraesentatione, sed per aliquam mutationem modalem: quatenus ipsa repraesentatio, ex vi suae repraesentationis derivatae ab ideis, applicatur ad repraesentandum hoc vel illud individuum in particulari, juxta quod ab ipsis ideis descendit et producitur. Quae variatio et applicatio non fit ab ipso objecto ad extra posito effective, sed ab ideis divinis ex vi prioris infusionis et derivationis specierum: ab objecto autem solum terminative, et ut a quodam requisito, seu potius consecuto ex ipsa derivatione ab ideis, ut species sic determinate et applicate pro isto vel illo individuo."

[81] The allusion is to Michel de Certeau, *Il ParlareAngelico: Figure per una poetica della lingua (SecoliXVI e XVII),* cura di Carlo Ossola (Florence: Leo S. Olcshki Editore, 1989).

[82] Poinsot 1643: d. 45, a. 1, 813 "nemo enim sibi solus sufficit, etiam Angelus."

[83] Poinsot 1643: d. 45, a. 1, 813 "quia Angeli, cum sint intellectuales, modo etiam intellectuali debent gubemari, et politicam rempublicam formare; sine locutione autem non potest esse communicatio et gubematio in aliqua communitate."

namely, the things of the physical universe, as including the angels.

To see how, through semiosis, the concepts of angels are no different from the concepts of animals in representing objects other than themselves to the ones forming the concepts, simply by bringing the three terms (concepts, objects signified, knowers) into the single relation of *renvoi,* is one thing. To see how one angel can manifest to another the very concepts that it has so formed, however, is quite another matter. Each concept is a wholly immanent action or response to some aspect of the divine stimulus of creation. Each concept of each angel as a quality formed in and by the intellect of the angel is as proprietary to each angel forming it as is the intellect itself of that same angel. If conversation is nothing other than the manifestation of what one is thinking to another, it is far from clear, from all that has been said, how is this to occur between angels.

A) Conversation without Sounds or Marks or Gestures

Among human beings, deliberate sounds serve to impact directly on another's senses, and from these sounds the listener is led to form his own concept of what, if anything, the sounds signify. Because we can come to understand both the sounds spoken, on the one hand, and the objects those sounds are intended to signify, on the other hand, we can get to a position where it is possible to agree or disagree with the speaker. How can such a process occur between two angels, where no sounds are available? Evidently, the angels, to converse, must directly manifest their very concepts, where we directly manifest only sounds![84] How?

In one way the absence of intervening sounds makes the problem more mysterious; but in a way this absence also makes

[84] Poinsot 1643: d. 45, a. 1, 823 1137: "verba ipsa seu voces nos vere loquimur, et illas evidenter manifestamus, non res per voces significatas, neque conceptus. Angelus autem caret vocibus, et loco earum manifestat conceptus evidenter; res autem cogitatas manifestat prout in conceptibus sunt. Et .•. conceptus, licet sunt signa naturalia .•. evidenter manifestant objecta, sed juxta modum concipientis."

the problem simpler. The key to the matter of communication, in both cases, is the difference between manifesting the object conceived and manifesting the thought itself of the object.[85] It is no less true of human conversation than of angelic conversation that the object conceived, when the communication succeeds (which is far from always), provides the common measure between speaker and listener.

Consider that each human speaker has his own concepts as defining elements of his subjectivity. Yet by a complex of conventions humans manage to coordinate and commingle conceptions of the mind with willful stipulations and conventions whereby the objects manifested to each of them through their respective concepts are brought into the tangle of conventions sufficiently completely to overlap the objects manifested to the listener, so that he or she can say, sometimes truly: "I see what you mean." That is to say, even in the case-on one glance simpler, but on another glance actually more complex-of human conversation, it is directly objects and only indirectly (in and through the objects cognized) the conceptions bound up with those objects that are communicated.

The sounds of speech, for example, are first of all objects apprehended by the sense of hearing. Only as understood, that is to say, as apprehended intellectually, do these same sounds as objects manifest insensible conventions that direct our attention not just to any objects but to this or these rather than that and those. The sounds, when understood, do not represent and direct our attention to the object(s) in any manner whatsoever, but in a very particular way-namely, as conceived.

The sounds of speech are elevated to the status of words, originally, by acts of stipulation. These stipulations, as such, come originally from the will rather than from the intellect of speakers. In the case of words, the stipulations involved rapidly sediment into habits; but here, again, the case of conversation of angels is simplified, for purely intellectual creatures have no need for

[85] Ibid.: "aliud esse loqui de manifestatione cogitationis, aliud de manifestatione rei cognitae."

habits of inference, precisely because their manner of apprehending, as we have seen, is comprehensive rather than discursive (in an illative sense).

B) Conceptions Revealed through Objects

The function of the concept is the same in the case of human and angelic conversation: "parlare." The concept exists simply as a sign-vehicle manifesting to the speaker an object signified. The speaker's problem, so to speak, is to make his or her way of signifying the object part and parcel with the object as apprehended by the one with whom attempt is being made to converse. For human speakers, the conventions objectified in the uttered sounds do the trick (when the trick gets done!). For angelic speakers, then, the only problem is to get another angel to see an object conceptually signified the way they do-that is to say, so to stimulate the other angel that, in response to the stimulus, it will form a conception of the object in just the way that the speaker conceptualizes that very object.

The will of the speaker introduces into the concept of the speaker an order, both to the object spoken about and also to the one to or with whom conversation is being attempted. And just as the human stipulation, through habit, enters into the conception of the object as conveyed by sounds, so in the place of habit the angelic stipulation enters into the stimulus incorporated into its conception so as to present that stimulus in a new way respecting the one with whom conversation is intended. So, quotes Poinsot from Aquinas: "to speak, for an angel, is nothing other than to order its own concept to the end of deliberately manifesting its conceived object to another angel."[86] The privacy

[86] Poinsot1643: d. 45, a. 1, 819 'V23, citing Aquinas, *SI'h* I, q. 107, a. 2: "Angelum loqui angelo nihil est aliud quam conceptum suum ordinare, ad hoc ut ei innotescat, per proprium voluntatem." If the angel is superior in its knowledge, then conversation can take a more formal mode in which the superior angel "illumines" the inferior, as Poinsot puts it (1643: d. 45, a. 2, 830117): "illuminatio enim quaedam locutio est, et solum addit, supra locutionem communem, quad fiat cum quodam magisterio et per modum docentis ab eo qui illuminat, seu veritatem minus cognitam explicat." Whence in matters naturally known only a

of the conceptions of the one can be overcome m favor of communication with the other:

The conceptions of one angel are not made manifest through the bare existence and physical production of the concept in the first angel's mind, because through this immanent action alone the conceptions do not pertain essentially to the parts of the physical universe as existing beyond the angel's own mind nor have a connection therewith, but only through this, that the conceptions are deliberately ordered to the other and thereby made pertinent to that other. [87]

Once this "order to a hearer" (as it were) has been introduced and made part of the very object conceived, the problem solves itself:

Whensoever some object comes to be, an angel is ... said to be stimulated by that object solely by virtue of the fact that the object in question exists as proportioned and appropriate to be understood by that angel, as being an object pertinent to the angel and contained within the domain of its knowability .... and the very fact of its newly coming into existence is what renders the object apt and proportioned to being cognized by the angel: and by this very fact the angel is excited by the object newly existent. [88]

That is to say, the newly existent reality-a concept in one angel's thought ordered by that same angel's will to another angel's awareness or understanding-excites the angelic mind not itself directly, but by an objective determination or 'specification' contained in the creative divine ideas conveying the determination enabling the intended angel (if that angel attends to the new

angel can "illumine"; though in matters of 'thoughts of the heart' learned in conversation by an inferior angel, the communication of that secret to yet another higher angel could surely be said to be also an "illuminatio" materially speaking.

[87] Poinsot 1643: d. 45, a. 1, 825-26 'V46: "species autem cogitationum et actuum liberorum" unius Angeli "non manifestantur [altero Angelo] per solam existentiam et productionem physicam sui in corde [Angeli tentandi loqui]: quia per hoc solum non pertinent per se ad partes universi nee connexionem habent cum illis, sed solum per hoc quad ad alterum ordinantur et fiunt de pertinentibus ad eum."

[88] Poinsot 1643: d. 45, a. 1, 820 'V26, emphasis added: "quandocumque fit aliquod objectum de nova, non dicitur excitari Angelum a tali objecto per immissionem alicujus speciei, sed per hoc solum quad objectum, sic positum in rerum natura, manet proportionatum et habile ut intelligatur ab Angelo, utpote ad se pertinens et intra sphaeram suae cognoscibilitatis contentum. Et comparatio ilia facta a D. Thoma, de signo sensibili movente, non est quantum ad modum movendi et excitandi . . . sed quantum ad effectum ipsum excitandi: quia *utrobique excitatio ab objecto proposito."* See further ibid.: d. 45, a. 1, 825 'V45.

determination, which it may not} also to form its own concept revealing "what the first angel was thinking." So Poinsot cites the summary view Aquinas gives:

> in every angel there is something naturally known by another angel; at the moment, therefore, when that which is naturally known is proposed as a sign of that which is unknown, the concealed becomes manifest: and a manifestation of this sort is called conversation. [89]

As in human speech, one angel can thus lie to another, of course, by creating a "fallax significatio": for even though concepts are natural signs while spoken words are conventional, concepts as signs are yet fallible and can be used deliberately to mislead when they are manipulated to manifest objects according to the mode of one conceiving the object in question for the purpose of misleading another in conversation. [90] But the privacy of the angelic communication far exceeds the privacy of human conversations. Anyone close enough may overhear a secret conversation between human persons; or anyone finding a private note may read it. But in these angelic exchanges, none but the sender or the receiver of the conversation can reveal its content objectively to another. All and only the intended recipients of angelic conversations can be privy thereto.

VI. CONCLUSION

It is a remarkable picture, yet one still palpably demonstrating that, if there be finite creatures alive without bodies and cognizant of themselves and of the universe surrounding, it is yet by an

[89] Poinsot 1643: d. 45, a. 1, 820 '1125: "Et denique (I ad Cor. III, lect. 1) exponens illud Apostoli, *Si linguis hominum loquar, et Angelorum,* inquit quod 'in quolibet Angelo est aliquid quod naturaliter ab altero Angelo cognoscitur; dum ergo id quod est naturaliter notum proponitur ut signum ejus quod est ignotum, manifestatur occultum: et talis manifestatio dicitur locutio, ad similitudinem hominum qui occulta cordium manifestant aliis per voces sensibiles, aut per quodcumque aliud corporale exterius apparens.'"

[90] Poinsot1643: d. 45, a. 1, 827 U4: "Et quia conceptus sunt signa, naturalia quidem, sed fallibilia aut fallentia (quia non semper adaequate se habent ad objecta, ut in re), ideo, ut diximus supra [ibid.: d. 45, a. 1, 823 res per illos conceptus non semper evidenter attinguntur ab audiente, sed per fidem obscuram et fallibilem,,,. even within the 'comprehensive awareness' natural to the angel.

action of signs, by semiosis, that they both cognize what surrounds them and communicate what they make of it. For becoming aware is the beginning, not the whole of communication; beyond the cognitive adaptation of concept formation there is the exaptation of intellectual awareness in linguistic communication, "ii parlare angelica," as we have seen. This amply verifies Poinsot's insight that, from the inner life of the Trinity to the depths of nature, communication, wherever it occurs and to whatever extent, depends upon the unique feature of relation whereby it alone has a being indifferent to its subjective source *as* relation,[91] which is the same as the feature whereby relation as such is, if only sometimes *intersubjective,* yet always *suprasubjective* and ontological in principle. Wherever the communication in question involves finite modalities, there, either actually or virtually, it involves the action of signs, semiosis, that unique activity whereby the future influences both the present and the bearing of the past upon the present.

Of course, in this essay there is much in the theological tradition of speculation upon the angels that has been omitted, most notably the division of fallen angels ("devils" or "demons") from those angels ordered to God as the highest good of the universe.[92]

[91] "Manet indistinctus realiter et entitative," as we saw above (from Poinsot 1643: d. 41, a. 1, 558 '!147), in note 74.

[92] See Poinsot 1643: d. 43, "De Merito etPeccatoAngelorum," in 3 articles; 691-810. See also the remarkable little study by Jacques Maritain, *The Sin of the Angel,* in which, astonishingly, Maritain promulgates the erroneous view that the *species* by which the angel consciously thinks its objects of awareness is, as Maritain puts it (ibid., 22 n. 17), "not abstract but infused." This common theological way of speaking of the concepts of angels as "infused" and "innate" -e.g., William B. Murphy, C. Donlan, John S. Reidy, and Francis L. B. Cunningham, *God and His Creation,* College Texts in Theology 1 (Dubuque, Iowa: The Priory Press, 1958), 366-67; Mortimer J. Adler, *The Angels and Us* (New York: MacMillan, 1982), 135, easily Adler's worst book; Collins, *The Thomistic Philosophy of the Angels,* esp. 177-80-is truly confused, because it assimilates the *species intelligibilis* (the *species impressa)* to the *species intellecta* (the *species expressa),* conflating and confusing the two notions. The *species impressa* is not an idea or concept, it is the stimulus specifying the cognitive power (in this case the angelic mind or intellect) to form an idea or concept deter-mined to an awareness of this rather than that. The actual formation of the concept, which is a *species expressa,* then, is a vital act in which the intellect is active, just as in receiving the determination of *species impressae* that same intellect is passive. When it is said by Aquinas or Poinsot that the *species* of angels are "infused," the *species* being talked about is the *species impressa* determining the intellect in first act, not the operation itself of the intellect forming in second act an idea, concept, or *species expressa.* Nor is it quite enough to say that "the *impressae* are not acquired from things, therefore they are innate." The situation is not that simple ("acquired or innate;

And, as regards the relation of angels to place,[93] there is not only the fact that, as finite beings, can they not be everywhere at

not acquired; therefore innate"). The *impressae,* in fact, do come from outside the subjectivity of the angel, but they come from the creative activity of God which gives existence to finite things as participating externally in this or that way the infinite being of God, an activity which is more intimate to *all* things than their own being, as St. Thomas put it (see Deely, *Four Ages of Understanding,* 284-90, esp. 286-7). So the source of the *impressae* as "inseparable accidents" of angelic existence is not from the things created by God, but from the exemplary aspects of the divine being according to which the created things receive existence (the "divine ideas") as communicated to the angel interiorly (hence "in-fused") through the same creative action by which God imparts the existence proper to the angel in its subjective duration (or "aevum"). The *species impressae,* then, are not *from* the things created but *toward* the things created, enabling the angelic intellect to attend to those things as objects of awareness. Note well, then (Poinsot 1643: d. 41, a. 3, 5851120,emphases added): "redditur disparitas inter potentiam cognoscitivam secundum se, sine speciebus, et po-tentiam factivam seu operativam effectuum: quod potentia cognoscitiva sine speciebus non continet objecta neque dicit ordinem ad ilia, nisi ut pura potentia in genere cognoscibili, non ut in actu et determinate ac distincte ea continens: actuatur enim et determinatur potentia per objectum. . . Si vero sumatur potentia cognoscitiva ut repleta et actuata [in first act] speciebus *[impressiS],* sic cognoscit perfecte objecta *per* ipsas species [by forming on the basis of their determination *species erpressae* which relate the intellect in second act, i.e., consciously, to its objects]: sicut etiam intellectus per ipsas ideas [i.e., *species erpressae]* quas format, et per artem qua dirigit, cognoscit ideata et arte facta: sed haec [i.e., the *erpressae* formed by the intellect itself] supponunt species *[impressae]* sine quibus neque intellectus format ideas, neque ars dirigit arte facta" (using, now, the intellect's *own* ideas formed *by the intellect itself* as exemplars, not the divine ideas which are the exemplars for both the creation of things on the one side and the impression of *species* on the angelic intellect in and through the divine creative activity).

The *only* idea in second act of an angel that one *might* want with some accuracy to call "innate" is the one involved in its self-conscious awareness, because here and here alone is the *species impressa* identical with the angel's substantial being as a spiritual substance: but that is the only case, and this is not the place to explore its details. See Poinsot 1643: d. 41, a. 2, 567ff., esp. 5711117. Yet even in this singular case, Poinsot points out (ibid.: d. 41, a. 2, 576 UO), "Angelus per suam substantiam non potest esse species expressa .•. quia non est per suam substantiam intellecta, seu terminus intellectionis, in quo consistit species expressa: eo quod esse terminum intellectionis supponit ipsum intelligere, cujus est terminus at a quo redditur intellecta. .•. Bene tamen impressa: quia haec non se habet ut terminus alicujus operationis, sed ut principium."

[93] Poinsot 1643: d. 39, a. 1, 448 114: "Angelos esse substantias mobiles, idque motu velocissimo, et aliquando esse in caelo, aliquando in terra; et posse se ostendere hominibus in aliquo corpore assumpto, et ab eis occultari. Omnia haec ex variis locis Scripturae deducuntur." Generally speaking, an angel is where it acts: *ubi agit, ibi est;* whence (Poinsot 1643: d. 40, a. 1, 4901116) the "ratio, qua angelus est in corpore, non est substantia, sed virtus qua movet corpus"; whence too (ibid.: d. 40, a. 3, 516 t40) "in eodem loco materiali ... plures Angelos vel plures spiritus esse, si operentur modo vel diversos effectus, in ratione contintentis talem locum," and "Angelus et anima possunt esse in eodem corpore, quia [Aquinas, *STh* l, q. 52, a. 3] 'non comparentur secundum eamdem habitudinem causae.'"

once,[94] as we discussed in section III above. There is the even greater difficulty of understanding how a life-form can sustain its proper existence without any drawing of substantial-not just cognitive and 'affective' --sustenance from environmental interaction; as in the world of bodies the physical individual is actually unthinkable apart from its environmental niche.[95]

Perhaps even more notably, we have not addressed the crucial question of whether indeed such pure spirits, good or evil, actually exist as real presences in the physical universe apart from the semioses of the human mind. It will not do simply to observe cleverly that there is at least as much evidence of angels' existence as there is of the sun's rotation about the earth.[96] Instead, we have restricted our considerations here to what appear among the essentials that would hold true for all angels,[97] regardless of their individual differences (and bearing well in mind the fact that, for angels, being pure forms without matter, individual differences and specific differences at the level of substance amount to the same thing).[98] Every individual angel would, perforce, for want of a body to make it otherwise, be a species unto itself.

Do these creatures exist? Writing ten years or less after the reaffirmation in the trial of Galileo of the condemnation of the

[94] Poinsot 1643: 483, Summa Litterae Q. Lil (of the *SI'h* I): "cum sit virtus finita, non potest nisi ad aliquid finiturn et determinaturn applicari."

[95] Cf. Jesper Hoffmeyer, *Signs of Meaning in the Universe* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1996), trans. Barbara J. Haverland (original title: *En Snegl Pd Vejen: Betydningens naturhistorie* [Copenhagen: Rosinante, 1993]).

[96] Poinsot1643: d. 39, a. 1, 447111, opening lines: "Muha circa nomina Angelorurn, et ea quae de ipsis antiqui philosophi dixerunt, omittenda nobis sunt; et solum ex Scriptura supponendum substantias immateriales, quas gentiles et philosophi vel deos, vel genios, vel daemonas, vel intelligentias, vel aliis similibus nominibus appellabunt, in Scriptura vocari Angelos et spiritus: sicut dicitur (Psal. cm, 4): *Qui facit Angelos suos spiritus."* Cf. Deely, *Four Ages of Understanding,* 494 n. 11.

[97] "Quia omnes Angeli ejusdem generis sunt:" Poinsot 1643: d. 42, a. 1: 628 1121. See continuation of text in following note.

[98] Ibid.: "licet, intra hoc genus, quaedam species magis distent ab aliis, quam aliae." Poinsot 1643: d. 39, a. 3, 466 'V6: "ponens D. Thomas differentiam enter animas rationales et Angelos inquit quod, 'licet anima intellectiva non habeat materiam ex qua sit, sicut nee Angelus, tamen est forma materiae alicujus: quod Angelo non convenit; et ideo secund\Jm divisionem materiae sunt multae animae unius speciei, multi autem Angeli unius speciei omnino non possunt." See also ibid.: d. 39, a. 3, 471 'V26, etc.

view that the earth moves around the sun as heretical[99]—in the wake of which Poinsot had suppressed his own astronomical treatises[100]—and with the full context of knowledge he possessed from his functions in once editing the Index Librorum Prohibitorum[101] and serving in the capacity of Qualificator for the Supreme Council of the Spanish Inquisition and for the Inquisition at Coimbra, Portugal,[102] Poinsot carefully notes that there are "serious authors," including Aquinas, Suarez, and Melchior Cano (in his work on foundational theology), who refuse to condemn as certainly contrary to faith "the view of those who say that there is no bodiless spirit save God alone," however temerarious such a position may be in theological tradition as a whole.[103] It may be,

[99] Emphasis added: "We say, pronounce, sentence, and declare that you, the said Galileo, by reason of the matters adduced in the trial, and by you confessed as above, have rendered yourself in the judgment of this Holy Office vehemently suspected of *heresy, to wit,* of having believed and held *the doctrine that the Sun is the center of the world and does not move from east to west and that the Earth moves and is not the center of the world,* which doctrine is false and contrary to the sacred and divine Scriptures ... consequently you have incurred all the censures and penalties imposed and promulgated in the sacred canons and other constitutions, general and particular, against such delinquents."—From the "final sentence" delivered against Galileo on the Wednesday morning of 22 June 1633; trans. from the text in Favaro Ed., *Le opere di Galileo Galilei* in 20 vols., edizione nazionale sotto gli auspicii di Sua Maesta il re d'Italia (Florence: Giunti Barbera, 1890-1909; ristampa 1929-1939), vol XIX, 402-6. Annibali Fantoli, *Galileo: For Copernicanism and for the Church,* trans. George V. Coyne (2d ed., rev. and corr.; Rome: Vatican Observatory Publications, 1996), 449, valiantly if not altogether convincingly, strains to filter the light this sentence casts.

[100] See the discussion of "The Structure of the *Cursus Philosophicus"* of Poinsot on pp. 399-404, esp. 402-4, and 439 n. 55, of John Deely, "Editorial AfterWord" and critical apparatus to *Tractatus de Signis: The Semiotic of John Poinsot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 391-514; electronic version hypertext-linked (Charlottesville, Va.: Intelex Corp.).

[101] Deely, "Editorial AfterWord," 437 n. 50.

[102] Ibid., 437, based on "Editorum Solesmensium Praefatio" to Joannes a Sancto Thoma (Poinsot 1637) *Cursus Theologici Tomus Primus* (Paris: Desclee, 1931), i-cviij, in particular p. ix par. 20 and notes 2-4, with further references.

[103] Poinsot 1643: d. 39, a. 1, esp. 450 1114: "non est omnino certum rem hanc esse definitam ab Ecclesia: quia directe intentio concilii solum est definire Deum esse universalem rerum omnium creatorem in initio temporis. Quam universitatem creaturarum comprehendit concilium sub creatura corporali, spirituali, et ex his composita. Quomodo vero creatura illa, quae spiritualis dicitur, spiritualis sit: an per omnimodam separationem a corpore, an cum aliqua corporis inclusione, non videbitur pertinere ad intentionem concilii, sed obiter tangi. Et sic existimant graves auctores rem hanc nondum esse definitam ab Ecclesia, ut Cano (lib. v de Locis, c. 5, q. 4, in fine), Sixtus Senensis (lib. v Biblioth., annotatione 8), Carranza

conjectured Cajetan and others of no mean standing, that the "spirits and demons" spoken of throughout religious literature may yet be all of them really bodily, though "not grossly material bodies such as we normally think of, but subtle bodies material in a way that our senses are unable to detect."[104]

Thinking in the traditional perspective of speculative metaphysics, Maritain once remarked that anyone who fails to consider seriously the possible existence of angels will forever be deficient as a metaphysician.[105] *Mutatis mutandis,* in the postmodern perspective of semiotics transcending the traditional divide between speculative and practical fields of inquiry,[106] we are surely now in a position to assert similarly that one who gives no thought to the possibility of a semiosis among angels will never fully grasp the action of signs, its extent and fundamental nature for the workings of finite intelligence.

(annot. ad septimam Synodum, actione 5), Suarez (lib. I de Angelis, c. 6), Vazquez (disp. 178, c. 2); et D. Thomas (II *Contra Gent.* c. 91, in fine), licet pro errore damnet eos qui dicunt spiritum non esse, non tamen vocat errorem, positionem eorum qui dicebant nullum spiritum sine corpore dari, praeter Deum. Res tamen ad minus temerarium est, vel etiam, ut diximus, erronea."

[104] "Cajetanus," in his 1519 commentary on chapter 2 of Paul's letter to the Ephesians (Thomas de vio Cajetan, *In Epistolas Pauli* [Paris, 1532]), Poinsot reports (1643: d. 39, a. 1, 449 118), "dicit consonare verae philosophiae quod daemones sint spiritus aerei, non hujus aeris elementalis, sed quasi subtile corpus nostris sensibus ignotum"; although Cajetan glosses other passages (such as chapter 1 of the letter to the Hebrews) differently.

[105] Cf. Jacques Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite, or The Degrees of Knowledge,* trans. from the 4th French ed. under the supervision of Gerald B. Phelan (New York: Scribner's, 1959), 220-21: "It is impossible to say that the possible existence of pure spirits implies any contradiction. For the notions of spirit, knowledge, love, far from implying existence in matter, of themselves imply immateriality. That pure spirits do exist in fact," he goes on to argue, we have "some well-founded indications of the natural order," indications which turn out to be dialectical, not probative, be it noted. "But even if this existence be taken as simply possible, metaphysics is not dispensed from considering its discoverable laws. He who has not meditated on the angels will never be a perfect metaphysician," and the theological tract on the angels inspired by the extravagant and detailed pseudo-descriptions of the infamous Pseudo-Dionysius, at least as it is found in the *Summa* of Aquinas, "virtually contains a purely metaphysical treatise concerning the ontological structure of immaterial subsistents, and the natural life of a spirit detached from the constraints of our empirical world." Such "knowledge as we can thus acquire of pure created spirits," Maritain concludes, belongs determinately to "intellection by analogy" and to what we know from direct experience of the structure of finite being in its contrast to the infinite being of God wherein *esse* is the *essentia.*

[106] See "Semiotica Utramque Comprehendit," in John Deely, *The Impact on Philosophy of Semiotics* (South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2003), 59-66.

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ERIC VOEGELIN ON CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY

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WELL BEFORE the publication of *The Ecumenic Age,* volume 4 of *Order and History,* in 1974, Eric Voegelin was correctly understood by academics interested in his work to be developing a philosophy of politics that was driven by a deeply spiritual force. Although it was generally recognized that this force was not necessarily a religious one in the narrow or denominational sense of the term,-it was a force that, it was felt, was ultimately capable of focusing a powerful light on the uniqueness of Christ and the Christian religion. A great many scholars, both in Europe and in North America, awaited the appearance of volume 4 of *Order and History,* confident that, in this volume, Voegelin would finally bring to bear on Christianity his considerable knowledge and powerful intellect, and produce a vision of the Christian religion that would parallel, if not rival, his arresting interpretations of the Hebrew and Greek civilizations, and, in particular, his nothing less than spectacular insight into Plato, in the earlier volumes.

However, such was not to be, at least not in the sense expected, and disappointment set in almost immediately once scholars had an opportunity to study *The Ecumenic Age*. In this volume, Voegelin not only altered radically the design and methodology of his multivolume enterprise, but he altered it in such a manner as to give rise to serious doubts about whether he would now be able to make sense of Christ and Christianity. As a consequence, many argued that he failed to deal with Christianity in a fashion consistent with the expectations he set in motion at

the start of his project. In fact, he so misrepresented Christ and Christianity that one otherwise sympathetic commentator found it possible to say that, uncharacteristically, on this one and only occasion, Voegelin betrayed his scholarship inasmuch as he "approached a great spiritual reality, *viz.,* Christianity, from a standpoint extraneous to it."[1] Truly, this was a devastating criticism of Voegelin, and, in particular, of his methodology, if it could be demonstrated to be correct, for it signified that Voegelin had abandoned his existential and phenomenological approach-an approach that served him well when studying the Greek experience-in favor of drawing on standards extraneous to Christianity and the Christian experience when studying Christianity.

The questions we will attempt to answer in the course of studying Voegelin's understanding of Christ and Christianity are: Is this critical assessment of Voegelin's thought warranted? Does his enterprise, in some sense, founder on the shoal that is Christianity? Do the various critical appraisals of his writings on this point themselves stand the test of time?

All of these questions can be answered in the affirmative. However, some of Voegelin's critics, in their evaluation of his work, could have given us a more perspicuous insight into the thinking of this great master, and thus allowed for an undoubtedly critical but at the same time fundamentally more accurate reading of the implications of Voegelin's writings as these relate to Christ and to Christianity. In fact, this sort of reading would seem to be almost indispensable if one means to explore the ultimate incompatibility of Voegelin's thought with Christianity.

I

One of the first scholars to criticize Voegelin's understanding of Christ and Christianity was Thomas J. J. Altizer.[2] In a trans-

[1] Gerhart Niemeyer, "Eric Voegelin's Philosophy and the Drama of Mankind," *Modem Age* 20, no. 1 {Winter 1976): 35.

[2] Thomas}. J. Altizer, "A New History and a New but Ancient God? A Review-Essay," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 43, no. 4 (1975): 757-72; reprinted in Ellis Sandoz, ed., *Eric Voegelin's Thought: A Critical Appraisal* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1982), 179-88. Frederick D. Wilhelmsen was the first to launch an attack against

parently appreciative, but nonetheless critical, assessment of Voegelin's writing, Altizer finds Voegelin wanting on a number of counts. In a very cautious manner and with a highly nuanced style, Altizer makes it clear that he is of the opinion that Voegelin's reading of Christ and Christianity is seriously flawed. He writes that, according to Voegelin:

> Our greatest failure, theologically, is that we have failed to understand either the nature or the identity of revelation. Israel failed in its creation of Scripture, thereby deforming original revelatory symbols by a doctrinisation of the Word. Christianity failed by identifying the transfiguring incarnation with the historical and dogmatic Christ .... Above all, Christianity failed by establishing a dualistic distinction between *civitas terrena* and *Civitas Dei.* Thus historical Christianity has closed itself to what Voegelin calls the Paradox of Reality or the Exodus within Reality.[3]

Needless to say, Altizer believes Voegelin is wrong in regard to his understanding of the nature of revelation in the Judeo-Christian tradition. According to Voegelin, Altizer tells us, Jews hypostatized the Word (i.e., Scripture) and Christians hypostatized Christ, and, in addition, established a dualistic cosmology. In short, Voegelin would have us believe that neither Jews nor Christians make sense of revelation, and Christians cannot make sense of the person of Christ, or the character of life on earth. Then, as if to make certain his point has not been lost or sidestepped, Altizer says:

> Christianity has not failed [according to Voegelin) simply because of its Christocentrism. On the contrary, in the epiphany of Christ, the formation of humanity in history has become transparent for its meaning as the process of transformation .... Although Voegelin does not say so in so many words, it is clear that he believes that the primary failure of Christianity is its misidentification, its misreading of Christ. The Incarnate Word is not a man [for Voegelin), it is rather the eschatological movement of the Whole, of reality itself. Our consciousness, including most particularly our historical consciousness, has issued from a split between the subject and the object of consciousness. The total

Voegelin's understanding of Christ and Christianity in a review of *The &umenic Age,* entitled "The New Voegelin," published in the January 1975 issue of Triumph Magazine. Wilhelmsen's central argument is valid, but the tone of the piece is inappropriate because it is written in a style that is often intentionally offensive and immoderate.

[3] Altizer, "A New History and a New But Ancient God?" 761.

reality that was once manifest as a process of transfiguration has evaporated in the hypostatized subject and object of our historical consciousness. Then the luminosity of noetic consciousness is deformed into an "anthropology" of intramundane man and a "theology" of a transmundane God, and the theophanic event is destroyed. The death of God, then, originates in Christianity, and it originates precisely in Christian faith in the transcendent God.[4]

The point Altizer wishes to convey to us is dear: Voegelin faults Christians *ab initio* for having misrepresented Jesus and history. Almost from the beginning, Christians misidentified Jesus and claimed a uniqueness for Him, that, in Voegelin's estimation (according to Altizer), was not present in Him, in the sense in which Christians have traditionally understood it to be present. In other words, Altizer claims on the one hand that Voegelin asserts that from the start Christians distanced themselves from the true Jesus, both in hypostatizing the Ultimate (and the presence of the Ultimate in history) and in calling their hypostatization the Christ/God, and, on the other hand, that he denies the singularity of Jesus, a singularity that is, for Christians (according to Voegelin), a function of Jesus' hypostatization, and that has been the central belief of Christians throughout the ages. Altizer concludes: "The Incarnate Word is not a man [for Voegelin], it is rather the eschatological movement of the Whole, of reality itself." Hence, if Jesus is not the Incarnate Word for Voegelin, argues Altizer, then the Incarnate Word is, and can be, nothing other than the continuing revelation of the transcendent in time through a process in which consciousness differentiates itself, and that we call history. Clearly, Altizer's criticism is damning, if it can be shown to be correct. It is also a criticism that associates Voegelin with the figure whom he considered to be his arch-opponent, namely, Hegel.[5]

Although it is true that Altizer's criticism came soon after the publication of *The Ecumenic Age,* and, as a consequence, may be

[4] Ibid., 761f.

[5] Voegelin did pen a response to Altizer in the same issue of the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion.* See Eric Voegelin, "Response to Professor Altizer's 'A New History and a New But Ancient God?'," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 43 (1975): 765-72.

deemed by some to be a precipitate assessment of Voegelin's position, it was by no means the only time such things were said of Voegelin or of his stand. With a different sort of emphasis, the political philosopher and priest Gerhart Niemeyer[6] utters an almost parallel criticism. Niemeyer, who is, on the whole, even more positively disposed towards Voegelin than is Altizer, having himself translated Voegelin's work *Anamnesis* into English, as well as having written, over the years, a number of sympathetic pieces about Voegelin, writes:

Christian theology ... stems not from a sense of general wonderment about the world of things and the Boundless [as Voegelin believes], which probably would not have been very sophisticated in simple fishermen, but rather from the question which Jesus himself put: "Who do you say I am?"

Despite the fact that Niemeyer's reference is more biblical in character than is Altizer's, the points that Altizer made earlier reverberate in our ears as we read this short passage. Niemeyer immediately goes on to say:

The question, perennially with us, was answered in the first century not only by St. Paul but also by the synoptic Evangelists, St. John, and the author of the Letter to the Hebrews, of whose reports Voegelin makes no use. What is more, Voegelin's exegesis of St. Paul would not have to be changed if one removed Jesus Christ from it altogether. Voegelin allows that Paul shows that man is a creature in whom God can incarnate himself. St. Paul, however, reflects on what it means that God did incarnate himself in one particular man at one particular time. His speculations are about the consequences of this "mighty deed" of God, not about the processes of consciousness, which is why general speculations and myths about "Heaven and Earth" are assimilable to Christian dogma, but the reverse is not true.[7]

[6] Niemeyer, "Eric Voegelin's Philosophy and the Drama of Mankind." For a short memorial article on Niemeyer, on the occasion of his death, see Michael Henry, "The Heritage of Gerhart Niemeyer," *The Intercollegiate Review* 33, no. 1 (Fall 1997): 3-9.

[7] See Niemeyer, "Eric Voegelin's Philosophy and the Drama of Mankind," 35. Altizer, Niemeyer and Wilhelmsen are not the only ones to condemn Voegelin for failing to provide an understanding of Christ and Christianity consistent with the expectations set in his earlier writings. John A. Gueguen's review of Voegelin's 1975 work *From Enlightenment to Revolution* challenges Voegelin's analysis on similar grounds. See John A. Gueguen, "Voegelin's *Enlightenment to Revolution,*" *The Thomist* 42 (1978): 123-134. Gueguen questions

The criticisms by Altizer and Niemeyer make clear how we should understand the phrase: "[Voegelin] approached a great spiritual reality *[viz.,* Christianity] from a standpoint extraneous to it." This is a phrase that could have been written by either author. To be sure, these scholars did not each agree wholeheartedly with the other's assessment of Voegelin' s work.[8] But, clearly, both of them are reprimanding Voegelin for his

"whether [and] to what extent the 'experience of transcendence' and the 'divine ground' of which Voegelin writes so often are informed by the revelation of the New Testament and its subsequent exegesis in Christian tradition. Depending upon our answer to that question, we may then conclude whether Voegelin's critique of modem gnosticism (of positivism, of Marxism, etc.) can be said to be a Christian critique" (ibid., 125). The implication is clear. Voegelin may not be driven by Christian concerns in his critique of Marxism and modem positivism. He, more likely, is driven by broadly theistic concerns that have their origin in man's experiential encounter with ultimacy or the Ground in history, to use Voegelin's favorite term. In a similar fashion, David Walsh echoes and amplifies Niemeyer's concluding remarks about God's "mighty deed" in his article "Voegelin's Response to the Disorder of the Age," *Review of Politics* 46 (1984): 266-87. Walsh writes: "The emphasis [in Voegelin] on [the] increasing differentiation [of experience that takes place in Christianity] ... appears to have eclipsed the liberating experience of 'the love of God poured out for us' (Rom. 5:5). For surely the core of the Christian dispensation is the experience of grace that Voegelin only acknowledges in passing, that the transcendent God freely gives himself on behalf of man to reconci:e us to himself? After this all other considerations pale into insignificance" (ibid., 282f.). But, the love of God for man *(agapl),* and the sonship of man, is, according to Walsh, missing from Voegelin's "vision of man's relationship to God." See also Glenn Tinder's sympathetic review of Michael P. Federici, *Eric Voegelin: The Restoration of Order* in *First Things 118* (December 2002): 47-51. Tinder writes: "On the issue of Voegelin and Christianity, he [Voegelin] can be considered a Christian only with qualifications so severe as almost to nullify the characterization." For a very different conclusion, based on a reading of the same evidence, see Michael P. Morrissey's article "Voegelin and Theology," which was delivered as a paper at the 1991 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association. See also Eugene Webb, "Eric Voegelin's Theory of Revelation," *The Thomist 41* (1978): 95-122.

[8] It is not our intention here to enquire into the contrasting interpretations of Voegelin advanced by Altizer and Niemeyer, or by others. This is the theme of a different paper. We are, of course, prepared to acknowledge that if we did care to explore the writings of the5e individuals on this topic, we would undoubtedly discover that they have different readings of what Voegelin is about. Altizer would, it seems, lead us off in the direction of a Hegelian , Voegelin, whereas Niemeyer would likely not be concerned with Voegelin's genealogy, and more concerned with his thought. However, it appears to us that we would also discover that as regards one aspect of one very important issue relating to Voegelin, namely, his understanding of Christ and Christianity, Altizer and Niemeyer largely agree with one another.

failure, or more accurately, for the failure of his (revised) methodological approach, to do justice to the Person Who is Jesus, the Christ.

To be precise, they-as well as all of Voegelin' s other Christian critics-hold that Voegelin's philosophy either undermines or refuses to take seriously the long-standing belief amongst Christians that is expressed in the affirmation that Jesus is unique amongst men because He is also divine. It fails to identify the *one-time* maximal presence of the Divine in history, and to embrace the Absolute in Jesus, and, as such, it allows for only a human reading of who Jesus is. In fact, Voegelin's theory of consciousness, they argue, necessarily transposes the mystery that Christians identify with the singularity and divinity of Jesus to the unfolding historical process, and thus associates redemption, not with Jesus, the Christ, the Messiah, as Christians would have it, but with the ongoing disclosure of the transcendent through that process in which consciousness articulates, elaborates, and refines itself, and which we call history.[9] Bearing this in mind, Voegelin's critics argue that in no sense is it possible, on the basis of his theory of consciousness, for Voegelin to say that Jesus belongs to a fundamentally different order of being and reality compared to his inspired predecessors (and presumably successors), who spoke as fervently as did He about ultimacy and the Ground. Hence, Voegelin's Jesus is, according to these critics, greatly inspired and a "good man," no doubt, but still, only inspired, and not someone who is unique because He is divine. Because of this, Voegelin's exploration of Christianity is inevitably carried out from the perspective of an outsider, inasmuch as it is incapable of providing us with a reading of who Jesus is that is consistent with the Christian reading. As a consequence (as Niemeyer says), his great enterprise flounders on the shoal that is Christianity.

[9] It is little wonder, therefore, that Voegelin is identified by some of his critics as a Hegelian thinker.

II

Given the above, it would appear we are on fairly safe ground in asserting that while Voegelin's Christian critics such as Altizer and Niemeyer fault Voegelin for what they believe to be his failure to deal with the uniqueness of Jesus and of Christianity, they are, in fact, objecting to that constellation of ideas around which he builds his argument, which ultimately prevents him from focusing on and making sense of the singularity, that is, the divinity, of Jesus. We must therefore now attempt to develop a sense of the foundations on which Voegelin bases his thesis so that we can better assess his understanding of Christ and Christianity.

The key to understanding Voegelin's thought is his studied opposition to modern idealistic thinking and abstractionism in all of its forms. This is revealed in his belief that meaning in history and in our lives is dependent upon our being attuned to and focused on, not *our plans and intellectual contrivances,* which present themselves in the form of concepts, ideas, and thoughts, but primarily the *givenness* of our experiential life, and, in particular, our being open and attentive to the source of meaning, *the Ground,* as Voegelin will call It, which is always revealed to us experientially. Clearly, Voegelin is an existentialist, and the existential and mystic Voegelin is here deeply at odds with the modern belief that man authors meaning by creating great cerebral schemata (i.e., ideologies) which he then imposes upon life and upon history. Man does not author meaning, according to Voegelin. He does not assertively produce it using the powers of his creative imagination. Rather, he discovers it in and through his attentive exploration of his experiential life. He comes upon it as he seeks to make sense of his experiences. In fact, Voegelin is very much of the view that the man who constructs elaborate, closed doctrinal, dogmatic, and ideological systems, in an attempt to give meaning to life and to history, ultimately does little more than contract the rich fabric of meaning present in the givenness of things to an impoverished simulacra of itself. Truth to tell, Voegelin holds that the dogmatic and the ideological systems

created by modern men and women can only prevent the recovery of true meaning rooted in man's experiential life, for these same ideational complexes erroneously convey to their exponents the idea that *systemic thinking* is the source of true meaning in man's life and in history.[10]

Inevitably paralleling this stand is Voegelin's view that life in the modern world is characterized by man's loss of contact with his experiential self and, inevitably, with the Ground of meaning, which always addresses man experientially. Man's experiential life in modern times is too often viewed as being unworthy of intellectual investigation and articulation, so replete is it with distorting biases and emotional impairments. Man's experiential life has only emotive significance, and is, thus, in need of replacement as the source of meaning in man's life. It is not surprising that its replacement is deemed to issue out of the constructs of *human willful imaginativeness.*

Parenthetically, in this connection, consider the extent to which empiricism in epistemology, and its junior partner behaviorism in the study of the social sciences, and specifically politics, go to deny the place and importance of human experience in knowing. Human experiences that have not been worked-over by the so-called methods of the natural sciences are seen as being nothing more than biases, unworthy of our attention as social scientists. Scholars and ordinary men alike surrender themselves to imaginative thinking, in the hope that what they have been told their experiential life cannot provide will be provided them by paradigmatic and imaginative thinking-a sorry exchange to be sure.

Of course, this is hardly Voegelin's final word on the matter. The source of meaning in our lives and in history has been obscured by our failure and, perhaps, even by our refusal to be attentive to our experiential life, yet Voegelin is not one to abandon himself to the modern eclipsing ways so easily. He contends that, despite what we have to say or not say about our

[10] See Eric Voegelin, "The Eclipse of Reality," in *Phenomenology and Social Reality: Essays in Memory of Alfred Schuez.* ed. Maurice Natanson (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 185-94.

experiential life, the truth is that those among us who care to be attentive to their experiential life know themselves to be participating in the real. Furthermore, they know themselves to be engaged in the creation and utilization of language symbols to articulate and represent this experience of participation. They experientially know themselves, for example, to be residents of something that some among them might want to identify as "the in-between zone," or, using more biblical language, they may even speak of themselves as being "in the world, but not of the world." Whatever words they use to describe their situation, they use them to register their experience of how and who they are in time, and they most definitely do not, *if they mean to be true to themselves,* use words to capture an idea or concept that they desire arbitrarily to attribute to themselves (or that they, just as easily, may wish not to attribute to themselves).

Here again, there is danger, Voegelin reminds us, for the language symbols that people create in an effort to articulate their experiences ought never to be seen and understood as being anything like definitive about the complex that is the Real and about their relationship to it. All these symbols can ever be are provisional accounts-accounts that last for but a brief period of time till they are replaced by other provisional accounts-for *there can be no definitive account about what is real and meaningful.* For Voegelin, the truth is that man is forever condemned to revisit, refresh, and revise the accounts that he gives of his experiential life, as these grow stale and harden, and thus lose their capacity to point to their experiential and existential origins. As the accounts congeal, they begin to point to themselves and to the mental cerebrations with which they are associated. That is, they cease to point to their experiential origins. If we do not recognize this we run the risk of falling victim to dogmatic and ideological thought, according to Voegelin, since dogma and ideology, in differing ways, endeavor to provide man with just such a definitive account-an account that tries, in the case of dogma, to capture in words the truth about the complex that is the Real once and for all, and, in the

case of ideology, that creates a truth and a real *ex nihilo.* [11] We are not to sanction so-called definitive accounts, for they can only imprison us in a straightjacket of reifying language, and the closed world of dogmatic and ideological thinking. Hence, the importance of our repeated efforts to reclaim our experiential life and experientially based meaning if we aim not to be derailed by dogmatism and ultimately by ideology.

It is at this point in his thought that Voegelin runs into opposition from his erstwhile Christian supporters, for it becomes transparent that if, in order to avert the dangers posed by dogmatic thinking and ideology that are consequent upon man's abandonment of his experiential life as a guide, there can be no single *definitive account* of the real and the meaningful for man, then Jesus cannot be for Voegelin who He is for Christians, namely, the Christ, the Messiah. For Christians, if not for Voegelin, Jesus, the Messiah, is the fulfillment of human life and of history. The meaning of His life and of His death is the

[11] By way of an aside, it is important to note here that Voegelin does not equate dogma and dogmatic thinking with ideology and ideological thinking. His understanding of the latter was well summarized by Gerhart Niemeyer in *Between Nothingness and Paradise* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 141. Niemeyer writes: "The term "ideological" refers to the subordination of contemplative theory *[theoria]* to the *libido dominandi,* which manifests itself in the building of closed systems around dogmatically will 'positions,' in reductionism of both scope and materials of analysis, and in the determination to substitute an intellectually fabricated 'Second Reality' for the reality given to man."

Voegelin provides us with no compact definition of dogma. However, if we rely on what he has to say about dogma and dogmatic thinking in his exchange with Altizer, we might say that, for Voegelin, the term "dogma," and its truth, which is secondary to the truth of experience, refers to the protective transformation of insights engendered by experiences of the Divine into doctrinal thinking, which may, under certain conditions, acquire a life all their own, that is, independent of the engendering experience(s) of the Divine.

Note that while "dogma" and "ideology" are far from synonymous, there is a sense in which there is something like similitude when dogmatic thinking gains independence from the engendering experience of the Divine, and develops a life of its own, i.e., when it becomes self-affirming, and when ideological thinking denies the given order and sets about to replace it (through superimposition) with a second reality. And yet, one is not the other.

An exegesis of the interrelationship of these two terms as they are used by Voegelin is required, it seems to me, and I am not aware that any exists. However, I have a tendency to think that while in the Aitizer-Voegelin exchanges Voegelin interprets dogma correctly, and acknowledges the importance of *theologia mystica* within orthodox Christianity, he moves away from this view in the end, and ends up seeing Christianity as essentially dogmatic.

definitive account of the meaning of our life, our death, and our history. For Christians, in the course of history the Beyond intervened in history, and, in intervening, revealed in a definitive way the meaning of life and history for mankind. Jesus, the Christ, brings about a fundamental change in the human condition. Whereas prior to the Incarnation Voegelin's thesis regarding the provisional character of accounts of meaning holds, it no longer holds, or only partially holds, following the Incarnation. In the language of Christian mystic spirituality, it holds only for those whose lives have *not* been transfigured by Jesus, the Christ. Following the Incarnation, transfigured man lives under the first, the last, and only *new dispensation* (i.e., New Testament). This is what orthodox Christians maintain. While Christians are open to all future experiences and encounters with the Transcendent, there can be, for them, no future experience or encounter with the Transcendent, or, with the Ground, that surpasses the experience and encounter with the Ground who is Jesus, the Christ of the Incarnation.[12]

It is because Christians hold this view that Voegelin mistakenly charges them with having abandoned openness to the Transcendent, with having closed themselves off to future encounters with the Transcendent, with having accepted a dogmatic answer to the existential question, and with having forsworn their human commitment to discover meaningfulness in their experiential life.[13] In other words, Voegelin sees Christians and Christianity as being unavoidably dogmatic, and given what he thinks of dogmatism, in general, it requires no great stretch for some to say that perhaps Voegelin may not be a Christian (which, of course, does not mean that he is not a theist).

[12] It seems that Voegelin does not recognize that the Incarnation is not to be leveled or flattened to meet the exigencies of modem theories of meaning. Nor does the Incarnation found its meaning in a general theory of meaning. Rather, for Christians, the Incarnation *is* the Divine Event that founds all possible theories of meaning.

u Of course, Voegelin is wrong when he speaks this way. Christians do not abandon their openness to the Transcendent, when they affirm the divinity of Jesus; they do not accept a dogmatic answer to the existential questions "Who do men say that I am?" and "Who do you say that I am?", and, most importantly, they have not forsworn their human commitment to discover meaningfulness in experiential life.

III

Clearly, we have arrived at a major impasse. Voegelin is deeply at odds with what he sees as the orthodox Christian's tendency to dogmatize Jesus' thinking by elevating Jesus' account of what is real and what is meaningful to a level of definitiveness that is unsurpassable, since, for Voegelin, this entails the separation of Christianity's conceptualizations about reality and meaning from their experiential and human origins.[14] There is no way, it seems, of reconciling the two sides, at least not so far as the fundamentals are concerned.

It would appear that there are two major issues, and a number of ancillary ones, that cause some of Voegelin's orthodox Christian critics to oppose him. The first issue relates to his abandonment of his phenomenological approach when studying Christianity, and the second is .related to his theory of consciousness.

A) Abandonment of the Phenomenological Approach

We noted earlier that Voegelin placed great emphasis upon the importance of our being open and attentive to the givenness of our experiential life for the recovery of meaning in our lives and in history, and, in particular, to our being responsive to the experiential source of meaning, namely, the Ground. It happens that in all three Synoptic Gospels we find just the sort of passage that calls for our being open, and for our giving close attention to our experiential life. Indeed, it is a passage that is as demanding as any that Voegelin may have encountered in his explorations of the writings of Plato, and, in some ways, perhaps even more

[14] Of course, the problem here is that Voegelin avoids the question of whether revelation can be revelation and have experiential and human origins. The Christian is clear on this point. Revelation is not assimilable to reason, and its conceptualizations do not originate in man's experiential life. Revelation is the radical intervention of the Divine in history. That is why revelation is revelation and not reason, as well as why it can be and is a telling of the true and the definitive story, although it is true that the meaning of the story may not be fully known and understood on the occasion of any particularly telling of it.

demanding, since it transports us into a realm that was unknown to the Greeks of Plato's day-namely, the realm of *agape.* It is the passage that contains the well-known question that Jesus posed to the disciples, and to which Niemeyer drew attention earlier, namely, "Who do men say that I am?"[15]

The reader may consider the passage and the question Jesus posed; wonder at the complexity of feelings, sensations, sentiments, emotions, experiences to which it gives rise; and then imagine having to come to the decision that Jesus calls for-a decision that could go either way. This is not so difficult to imagine, since it is a decision that many amongst us have had to make. The reader may marvel as well at Peter's answer, for his answer is, as Niemeyer correctly points out, central to the problem at hand, not to mention deeply revealing, if approached from the appropriate direction. Finally, and most importantly, it would be well to give thought to Voegelin's brief and telling analysis of this same passage in his article "The Gospel and Culture."[16]

question gives rise to what may be seen as an extraordinary Voegelin moment, a moment unlike any in the life of Socrates or in the writings of Plato, both of whom were concerned with moments of general openness to the Transcendent. This is not a moment of general openness to the Transcendent. It is a moment of openness that is singular, wherein

[15] Matt 16:13-17: "And Jesus came into the quarters of Caesarea Philippi; and he asked his disciples, saying: Who do men say that the Son of Man is? But they said: Some John the Baptist, and others Elias, and others Jeremias or one of the prophets. Jesus saith to them: But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God. And Jesus, answering, said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven."

Mark 8:27-30: "And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, saying to them: Who do men say that I am? Who answered him, saying: John the Baptist; but some Elias, and others as one of the prophets. Then he saith to them: But who do you say that I am? Peter, answering, said to him: Thou art the Christ. And he strictly charged them that they should not tell any man of him."

Luke 9:18-21 is virtually identical to Mark's rendering of the passage.

[16] See Eric Voegelin, "The Gospel and Culture," in Donald G. Miller and Dikran Y. Hadidian, eds., *Jesus and Man's Hope* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1971), 90f.

the respondent is confronted with the need to make a decision about the identity of a real, living human being, and not about the meaning of his experience of the Ground. One can almost hear Peter asking himself: "Is this the One Who I think it is? or is that One yet to come?" All possibilities are on the table. All is at stake. All future opennesses to the Transcendent are in the balance, and are being assessed. Voegelin is right on this point. Peter's response, and our response, in our day, will preclude certain kinds of openness in the days to come. But they are precluded, not because of dogmatic thinking, as Voegelin would have us believe, but because of our existential opting at the crucial moment.

Jesus' question "Who do men say that I am?", supplemented by the even more disturbing and powerful question "Who do you [Peter] say that I am?", was unquestionably existentially problematical when first it was asked of the disciples and Peter, the prototype of future Christian man. It was a question that obviously could not have had an easy answer, that is, a dogmatic answer, in Jesus' or anyone's estimation. If this question had had a simple and straightforward answer-an answer that was known, or easily knowable, to everyone, or almost everyone in Jesus' entourage-we may very much doubt that Jesus would have asked it at all, since his posing it would have been tantamount to toying with the emotions and sensitivities of his interlocutors. It would have been equivalent to Jesus asking Peter and the disciples to confirm or remind Him of His elevated status. This is simply not credible. Surely, it was because Jesus Himself believed that the answer to this question was not necessarily known even to one as close to Him as was Peter that He saw no problem in asking the question. It was because there was in Jesus' mind some doubt as to how this question would be answered by Peter, and not only by Peter, but by the rest of us as well, that He asked the question. Given that the answer to this question was not manifest in any dogmatic sense, Jesus found the question important, personal, and deeply decisional, and His interloeutor, Peter, the model for future Christian man who would be faced with the same need to decide, did not find it offensive.

Jesus' question gives rise to existential wonderment that surpasses that of the Greeks because it is focussed on a Person. The ability to answer this question issues out of an existential decisional capacity, and an ability to marvel-to marvel at the character of the Divine, that it should be possible for It, indeed, that It should *want,* to incarnate Itself in this Man. Clearly, the question that Jesus posed was not a· question in search of a dogmatic answer. Jesus did not ask: "Who does dogma say that I am?" Nor did he ask: "What does dogma communicate to you about Me?" He asked: "Who do you [Peter] say that I am?" After having lived with Me for three years, after having known Me for so long, experienced and encountered Me, who do *you* say that I am? What does all of your being, who you are and have come to be while with Me, tell you about Me?

This is clearly a very different question from the one that Voegelin expects from a dogmatic Christian environment, the environment that he wants to associate with Christianity. It is a question that shuns the dogmatic answer, the answer that Jesus refuses to honor because He finds it unbefitting the seriousness of the question, the answer that does not come from the heart and from wonderment, but from one's having been told what to say. There is no clearer indication that the impersonal and dogmatic answer is inappropriate than what follows Peter's response to the question. Peter replies, "You are the Christ [i.e., the Messiah], the Son of the Living God." Then Jesus says: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matt 16:17). The implication here is that Peter's affirmation, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," is not the result of an earthly someone or, dare we say, an earthly something (i.e., dogma) having instructed him about what to say-he being immune to divine grace *(agape),* and it being beyond his ability to dispose himself to speak the truth about Jesus. Rather, Peter's affirmation is the consequence of grace and divine love *(agape}* and of his right thinking about his encounter with, and his having personal knowledge of, Jesus, Who is for him clearly *the long-awaited One.* Peter said what he

said because he felt he was speaking the truth, because this is what was called for in light of his experiential knowledge of Jesus. Grace and divine love, and an honest and unprejudiced account of his personal encounter, called forth the affirmation.

Since Peter could not have been giving a dogmatic response, why, contemporary Christians ask, should Voegelin, or anyone else, presume that it should be otherwise for them, or that it was otherwise for many of their predecessors in the faith? Why should the answer to this question apparently be knowable to Christian man throughout the ages only from dogma, and hence easier, in the sense of requiring less effort and existential struggling, for them to give than it was for Peter? Why should the question not trouble them as much as Jesus presumed it would trouble Peter, His disciples, and their contemporaries, who knew Him in His person? Jesus' question is not one that can ever be *fully* satisfied by a dogmatic answer at any point in the history of Christianity.

In Voegelin's defence, it has to be said that he believes that most present-day Christians no longer find themselves in the same frame of mind as Peter and those who were first asked the question by Jesus. In fact, it is Voegelin's belief that over time a nonerotic and routinized thinking about this matter has taken hold of the minds of Christians, making it easier for contemporary Christians to give a formulaic (i.e., dogmatic) answer to Jesus' question than it was for Peter. But the way to express this is not by making an almost blanket statement to the effect that Christianity, after its Founder's leaving the scene, becomes a casualty of dogmatism, and, in the process, loses its erotic quality. Christianity never had an erotic quality in anything like the sense in which Greek philosophy had an erotic quality, not even during Jesus' lifetime. It is not Greek philosophical eroticism that presses Peter to speak the way he speaks, and it is not its absence that causes many later Christians seemingly to speak in a formulaic manner. Peter is responding to divine love *(agape),* which is something that Voegelin's theory of consciousness does not allow him to recognize. Some later Christians are

doing the same, while perhaps others are speaking in a routinized fashion.[17]

Voegelin lacks that subtle touch for which he is rightly famous when it comes to his reading Christianity as dogmatic. It is too simple to say that Christians are being dogmatic when they claim that Jesus is God incarnate.

Evidently, for Jesus, and for many people within the Christian community throughout history, the affirmation of who Jesus is comes about not only as the result of a dogmatically held belief, as Voegelin would have it. And the Christian community is not primarily the product of dogmatism. Rather, it is the coming together of those who have responded, in a spirit of openness and in a certain way, to Jesus' question "Who do you say that I am?", such that it is possible to say that amongst Christians, the Socratic and Platonic experience of the Transcendent is replaced by an experience of the Transcendent that is dramatically focussed, deeply personal, and radically decisional, in a way that it was not for Socrates or Plato. It is *focused* not on some erotically engendered experience of Transcendence, but on the very unambiguous and particularistic presence of the Transcendent in the incarnate Man Jesus that is brought about by the gift of divine grace *(agape}*. It is *deeply personal* because it issues out of an experiential confrontation with another human being, and not with that aspect of one's own inner life that is experienced as Wholly Other. It is *radicallydecisional* in the sense that it calls for

[17] We are not saying here that some, and maybe even many Christians over the ages, have not answered Jesus' question only in a formulaic fashion. To their great shame, too many have, and will continue to do so. Fundamentalist Christians (here I am in agreement with Voegelin) are too frequently culpable of doing this, as are many other Christians. But the fact that some, and perhaps even many, have answered Jesus' question formulaicly does not mean that Christianity is necessarily dogmatic, or that in affirming the divinity of Jesus all Christians necessarily do so on dogmatic grounds. Unfortunately, this is a distinction that Voegelin cannot and does not make. He cannot make this distinction because he has peremptorily decided that there can be no grounds, except dogmatic grounds, for affirming the divinity of Jesus, the affirmation of which closes man off to the possibility that future eruptions of the Transcendent in history may be more illuminating than this Jesus eruption. Of course, all of this is based on the pre-eminence of *eros* for Voegelin. However, one must understands that man not only searches for God (eros), but God also reaches out to man in history *(agape}*.

a decision, or a conclusion, about a specific experiential encounter with God incarnate.

Voegelin spoke briefly of this famous New Testament passage in his article "The Gospel and Culture," and he could only have been more explicit on the subject of how he interprets and understands the scene if he had addressed the current issue directly instead of indirectly. He writes:

> The divine Sonship is not revealed through an information tendered by Jesus, but through a man's response to the full presence in Jesus of the same Unknown God by whose presence he is inchoatively moved in his [Peter's] own existence. The Unknown God enters the drama of Peter's recognition as the third person. [18]

In this very brief comment, two things stand out. First, for Voegelin, the Divine erupts in history as a consequence of man's (in this particular case, Peter's) experientially based response to what is presumably the *pull (helkein)* of the Unknown God in Jesus.[19] Peter, like the Greek philosophers, Voegelin tells us, feels the *pull* of the Transcendent, and it is this *pull* that causes him to respond to Jesus' question in the way that he does. Peter is not told what to say by his contemporaries or by accepted thinking on the issue, and so dogmatic thinking does not enter into it. The difficulty is with Voegelin's use of a philosophical language that denatures the religious reality being described. One does not feel comfortable equating the *pull* of the Greek philosopher with the gospel revelation of a compassionate, concerned, and communicative God. It is not the language of philosophy that is spoken by the Jews Jesus and Peter in the passage in question from the Gospels. The Gospels do not speak of Peter's response to Jesus' question as originating with the *pull* of the Unknown God. Rather, they inform us that the origin of Peter's response is to be found in divine revelation, "flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my [caring and compassionate] Father who is in heaven." A minor point, some will say, but nonetheless an

[18] Voegelin, "The Gospel and Culture," 91.

[19] Not in this short passage, but in other passages on the subject, Voegelin speaks of the *pull* of the Ground.

important one for someone whose approach was, on the whole, strongly phenomenological up to that point, and who believed that one should not introduce foreign theoretical symbols (i.e., *pull)* into the everyday parlance of, in this instance, the early Christian community. The point here is that revelation cannot be symbolized adequately by the word *"pull."* The second thing that stands out is Voegelin's surprising phrase: "The Unknown God enters the drama of Peter's recognition as the third person." This is not how Christians see it, and this is not how the matter should be phrased if one is concerned to render correctly the everyday parlance of Christians. For the orthodox Christian throughout the ages, there are not three people in this dramatic setting. There are only two, Peter and God. Here Voegelin is as explicit as he can be about the fact that despite his best efforts to speak the reality of Christianity, his commitment to Greek philosophical language will not permit him to speak the Christian understanding of Who Jesus is.[20]

What was it that prevented Voegelin from recognizing this singular moment for what it was for the followers of Jesus, namely, the affirmation of the presence of God amongst men? Why was Voegelin not able to deal straightforwardly with Jesus' question, that is, in a way that would parallel, if not rival, his arresting interpretations of the Hebrew and the Greek civilizations, and, in particular, his nothing less than spectacular insight into Plato? The published record here is a complex one, for, with ease, Voegelin appears to slide back and forth across the line that would make an "arresting interpretation of Christianity" possible and not possible. He seems, at times, to acknowledge the distinctiveness of faith and its contributions, but, more often, he collapses faith and reason into a wholeness that drowns revelation in reason, so that when all is said and done, faith (revelation) comes up short. The fact is that, in the end, he sides with reason

[20] Note that it could be argued that Voegelin, like some Christians, holds that Jesus was not divine, but human, and, as such, He was someone who, because of his moral rectitude, chose to be God's representative amongst men. But this is not Voegelin's position either, for these same Christians, at least in terms of the stated beliefs of their communities, view revelation as the consequence of divine love *(agape1,.and*Voegelin does not.

more than with faith and revelation, as these are understood by Christians. We see this in his article "The Gospel and Culture," where, after informing us of the *noetic* similarity of "Classic Philosophy" to the "Gospel movement," Voegelin writes what appears, as first sight, to be a glowing affirmation of Christian revelation.

Though the noetic core is the same in the Gospel, its spiritual dynamics has radically changed through the experience of an extraordinary divine irruption in the existence of Jesus. This irruption, through which Jesus becomes the Christ, is expressed by the author of Colossians in the words: "For in him the whole fulness of divine reality *(theotes)* dwells bodily" (2:9). In its whole fulness *(pan to pleroma),* divine reality is present only in Christ who, by virtue of this fulness, "is the image *(eikon)* of the unseen God, the firstborn of all creation (1:15). All other men have no more than their ordinary share of this fulness *(pepleromenoz)* through accepting the truth of its full presence in the Christ who, by his iconic existence, is "the head of all rule *(arche1* and authority *(exousia)"* (2:10). Something about Jesus must have impressed his contemporaries as an existence in the *metaxy* of such intensity that his bodily presence, the *somatikos* of the passage, appeared to be fully permeated by divine presence. [21]

This is a passage that brings great solace to many of Voegelin's Christian supporters, who see in these words the affirmation that it is possible, *from within the perspective of Voegelin's philosophy,* to acknowledge the divinity of Jesus, even if Voegelin himself may not have found it possible (and about this last point, there is some dispute). But is this the conclusion that one ought to draw from these words? I think not. For one thing, Voegelin is not affirming that Jesus is divine. He is saying that the author of Colossians and Jesus' contemporaries believed that Jesus is divine. As for himself, all he is prepared to say is that the gospel, not as revelation, but as a noetic document, acquaints us with "the experience of an extraordinary divine irruption in the existence of Jesus." For someone who is expected (and who, it must be remembered, also proposes) to provide us with an interpretation of Christ and Christianity that parallels his interpretation of the ancient Greeks, this interpretation of who Jesus is, according to Christians, falls wide of the mark. The best that one can

[21] Voegelin, "The Gospel and Culture," 80f.

conclude from this passage is that Voegelin is not precluding the possibility that, in the eyes of His contemporaries-and only in their eyes, for we were not around to witness this wondrous presence-Jesus was "permeated by [the] divine presence," and he is not concluding that this made Jesus unequivocally different from other men who were also permeated by the divine presence and who came before or after Jesus, because He is God Incarnate. Some Christians will say that this is sufficient. But is it? It certainly does not meet the exigencies of orthodox Christians, and it does not do something else that Voegelin held to be important, namely, describe the phenomenon, in this case, Christianity, as it was and is experienced by its adherents, and not as it can be viewed through some extrinsic ordering framework.[22]

B) Limitations of the Theory of Consciousness

This brings us to the second major issue, namely, Voegelin's theory of consciousness.

Why did Voegelin not draw our attention to the deeply human experience of the Transcendent in Jesus, and, in the process, offer us a more interesting and insightful understanding of Christianity, which is what his phenomenological approach recommended? The short answer is that this great mystic philosopher could not accommodate the specifically Christian mystic experience, because it was and is a mystic experience that speaks, not the language of *eros,* but the language of grace and divine love *(agape}.* It elevates incarnateness to the level of Godliness, and transfigures mundane history into the history of man's redemption. This divine transforming love very simply does not have a place in the architecture of Voegelin's thought.

[22] We are not unaware of the fact that early Christian thinking enjoyed a privileged relationship with Greek philosophical thought, and that it frequently articulated itself in the language of Plato. But we are also aware that early Christianity was careful to be true to itself in this dialogue with Greek philosophy, and that it developed and transformed Greek thinking to meet Christian needs and exigencies, rather than assessing Christian concerns by Greek standards, as Voegelin seem to be suggesting ought to be done.

The long answer has to do with the fact that Voegelin is perhaps more modern in his orientation than many of us care to admit. He is willing to accept that man yearns for the Unknown God, but unwilling to accept that, on His part, God searches out man in a wholly unpredictable manner, and is mysteriously able to melt the hearts of even those who are, by any conventional standard, hitherto unacquainted with any experience of the Divine. Voegelin's theory of consciousness is designed to speak the experience of the Transcendent in a modern causally motivated context, and in a convincing manner to men of reason, who like to think of themselves as too mature to believe in a capricious God, Whose overtures to man are gratuitous (i.e., unmotivated and "unmotivatable") from man's perspective. Voegelin's man is someone who can only be erotically disposed to the wholly Other. This eroticism is something that can be understood because it is based in human nature. But the gratuitous, unmotivated (by human standards) and seemingly capricious act of a loving God cannot be understood by men. Men cannot understand why or how it is that God showers his grace on saints and sinners alike,[23] or why it is that, at a completely unforeseeable moment, God becomes incarnate and resides amongst men. These capricious acts of God have either to be reinterpreted and thus converted into something less capricious that can be understood-

[23] It is interesting to observe how Voegelin and Strauss come together in their rejection of this point. For Strauss, it is only a select group of initiates who can know the salvation offered man by philosophy, and Strauss and Straussians restrict entry into this group of initiates. Voegelin is more generous in this regard. However, like Strauss and the Straussians, he does not doubt that a man is responsible for his own ultimate fate, and that if he comes close to getting things right, it is because of his own initiative. For Voegelin, *penagoge,* that is, conversion, is the consequence of human effort, and not the gift of a generous and caring God who acts despite man's limitations. By contrast, for Christianity, a man is not solely or even primarily responsible for his ultimate success concerning the most important thing, nor does he have any final say in whether or not he will be saved. Only God has a say in this, and men are not privy to His rationality ("For my thoughts are not your thoughts: nor your ways my ways, saith the Lord" [Isa 55:8]; "For as the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are my ways exalted above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts" [Isa 55:9]). And so, Christianity holds that saints and sinners alike can be saved, for who is able to challenge the decision of an infinitely just and compassionate God?

this is the point of Voegelin's speaking of "an extraordinary divine irruption in the existence of Jesus" and not of the divinity of Christ, as well as of his likening philosophy to revelation-or they have to be banished to the realm of dogmatic belief. In the end, this means that Voegelin feels most comfortable focusing on experiences of the Transcendent that have man's erotic longing as their origin, and that allow him to speak of equivalences in symbolic language, and even at the level of human breakthroughs. Socrates is compared to the Buddha, and both are compared to Jesus, Who, we are told, has only a more differentiated and more articulated understanding of the Transcendent than either of His predecessors, but Who is *not* qualitatively different from his predecessors, or his successors.[24] But, in all of this, what of the more focused and particularizing encounter with mystery and the miraculous that flows from grace and divine love *(agape),* the encounter that is *not* solely a function of our reaching *out* to the Other, but of the Other's reaching *in* to us? Voegelin's theory of consciousness cannot make sense of this type of encounter. It cannot accommodate something that for Voegelin is impossible to understand and explain in human terms, because it is a function of divine capriciousness and *grace,* namely, an incarnate encounter with the incarnate Transcendent. All of our encounters with meaningfulness and ultimacy have to be passed through the keyhole of *eros,* and what cannot be passed through this keyhole has to be characterized either as dogmatic-as we saw in connection with the Christian's assertion that Jesus is divine-or has to be ever so slightly denatured so as to be rendered compatible with *eros.* I have in mind here the way in which Voegelin shifts the meaning of revelation (in "The Gospel and Culture") so that it is not what Jews, Christians, and Muslims

[2]. It is curious how, after having said so much that is critical of irnmanentism and the immanentization of the transcendent, Voegelin himself ends up flirting with immanentist thinking. Of course, he is not a modem ideologist who constructs immanentist systems that seek the realization of man on earth. But he does find it difficult, to the point of being nigh impossible, to acknowledge that the Divine can be moved by the plight of man and intervene in history, and he finds it impossible to allow for the fact that on one occasion the capricious interventionism of a concerned God was both magisterial and spectacular. ·

mean by revelation any more-namely, the gratuitous intervention of a loving God into history (the product of *agape}-but* rather philosophy (i.e., the product of human *eros),* expressed in a manner that is stylistically different from the way Greek *eros* is expressed, but no less humanly erotic.[25]

Parenthetically, it must be said that no immanentist theory of consciousness can found Christianity, or even Judaism and Islam. Revealed religion is its own foundation. Its foundations are a mystery. They are not the consequence of human *eros.* Christianity cannot be explained in the language that Voegelin uses to explain the very worthy Socratic and Platonic experience of the Transcendent. Christianity is not the consequence of man's erotic quest for an experiential relationship with the divine *Sophon.* Christians experience Jesus as the act-ualization of divine grace. The mystery of the Incarnation, the wholly gratuitous and mysterious act of the Beyond, is Christianity's foundation, and this act does not have Its motivation in things human. It is not propelled by man. It is not reducible to eroticism of the Socratic-Platonic sort. Sadly, by trying to found Christianity on a immanentist theory of consciousness, Voegelin discounts the essence of Christianity at the very start-and, of necessity and predictably, Christianity, as it is lived by the orthodox, is seen as being essentially dogmatic. Christianity's mystical and miraculous origins cannot be addressed by Voegelin, except as dogma. Hence, it seems that Voegelin stumbled when it came to exploring the deeply agapeistic religion that is Christianity.

Presenting this in a slightly different language: Voegelin stumbled when, in his study of Christ and Christianity, he abandoned his phenomenological approach which served him well in his study of the Greek experience. He stumbled when, rather than try to make sense of Christianity from *within,* he approached it

[25] A far from trivial remark seems in order at this point. Many of Voegelin's supporters, and well as his critics, see him as having Christianized Plato and Platonic thought. Voegelin's Christian supporters see this as something positive, while his critics, of course, see it as negative. My point is that both Voegelin's Christian supporters and his critics are wrong. Voegelin does not Christianize Plato; in a certain sense, he Platonizes Christianity, and what he cannot Platonize, he has a tendency to distort or view as being dogmatic.

from *without,* and imposed upon Christianity an understanding of man's encounter with the Transcendent that was extraneous to Christianity, inasmuch as it was *erotic* and not *agapeistic,* and that, hence, could not make sense of the Christian divinely initiated encounter with the Transcendent. As a result, Voegelin found Christianity wanting, despite the fact that he knew better than to approach the study of a great social reality from *without,* for he had already stated that this was something that ought never to be done when studying a social reality, as against a physical reality.[26]

Consequent upon this abandonment of the phenomenological approach, Voegelin chose to see dogma primarily not as a *fonnal statement* of what it is that Christians experience in their encounter with the Man, Jesus, but rather almost as a formal statement about what it is that would-be Christians must *agree to, or contract into,* if they mean to become members of the Christian community. If there is to be any experience of the Transcendent for Christians, according to Voegelin-and it is not guaranteed that there will be, if we understand Voegelin's conception of dogma correctly-it seems that it will follow upon their acceptance of dogmatically held beliefs. But, of course, this is precisely the reverse of what Christians hold.

IV

There is one final point that I wish to make, which is absolutely central to our developing a correct understanding of the aetiology of Voegelin's thought, and not only with respect to Christ and Christianity. In his reply to Thomas Altizer's critical review of *The Ecumenic Age,* Voegelin writes:

> It is the guilt of Christian thinkers and Church leaders of having allowed the dogma to separate in the public consciousness of Western civilization from the experience of "the mystery" on which its truth depends. *The dogma develops as a socially and culturally necessary protection of insights experientially gained*

[26] See Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), chapter I, section 1, pp. 27-31.

against false propositions; its development is secondary to the truth of the experience. If its truth is pretended to be autonomous, its validity will come under attack in any situation of social crisis, when alienation becomes a mass phenomenon; the dogma will then be misunderstood as an "opinion" which one can believe or not, and it will be opposed by counter-opinions which dogmatize the experience of alienated existence. The development of a nominalist and fideist conception of Christianity is the cultural disaster, with its origins in the Middle Ages, that provokes the reaction of alienated existence in the dogmatic form of the ideologies, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The result is the state of deculturation with which we are all too familiar.... Once truth has degenerated to the level of true doctrine, the return from orthodoxy to "the mystery" is a process that appears to require as many centuries of effort as have gone into the destruction of intellectual and spiritual culture.[27]

The point here is that Voegelin's error (by my account) with respect to Christianity is revealing of something that is much more significant: namely, the whole of his philosophy is written as a critical response to a field of realities that issue out of the modern crisis. As he himself pointed out on a number of different occasions, political philosophy that is worthy of the name is always written in times of crisis. Aristotle's political philosophy was written in response to the crisis posed by the impending demise of the city-state, St. Augustine's in response to the crisis posed by the end of the Roman Empire, etc.[28] Voegelin's political philosophy is certainly worthy of the name, and it is written in a

[27] Voegelin, "Response to Professor Alitzer," 767 (emphasis added).

[28] In the Introduction to *The New Science of Politics,* Voegelin writes: "In an hour of crisis, when the order of a society flounders and disintegrates, the fundamental problems of political existence in history are more apt to come into view than in periods of comparative stability. Ever since, one may say, the contraction of political science to a description of existing institutions and the apology of their principles, that is, the degradation of political science to a handmaid of the powers that be, has been typical for stable situations, while its expansion to its full grandeur as the science of human existence in society and history, as well as of the principles of order in general, has been typical for the great epochs of a revolutionary and critical nature. On the largest scale of Western history three such epochs occurred. The foundations of political science through Plato and Aristotle marked the Hellenic crisis; St. Augustine's *Civitas Dei* marked the crisis of Rome and Christianity; and Hegel's philosophy of law and history marked the first major earthquake of the Westem crisis. These are only the great epochs and the great restorations; the millennial periods between them are marked by minor epochs and secondary restorations; for the modem period, in particular, one should remember the great attempt of Bodin in the crisis of the sixteenth century" (If.). See the continuation of this argument in the remainder of section 1.

modern idiom in response to problems associated with the late phase of the modern crisis, and specifically, the crisis posed by the eclipsing of the order that is given to man, caused by the rise of ideological thinking, by the emergence of Second Realities, and by the rise of the spiritual pathologies consequent upon all of this rejection, denial, and creation. As I have sought to demonstrate, this is best illustrated by drawing attention to his understanding of dogma, which he sometime describes correctly, as when he says, in the passage quoted above, "dogma develops as a socially and culturally necessary protection of insights experientially gained against false propositions," but which he most often represents *only* as a the derailing of our ability to render correctly our experiential life owing to the straightjacketing of dissociative and reifying language. It is this second understanding of the nature of dogma, and what it implies for him, that hints at what it is that drives Voegelin's thought. He views dogmatic thought as the parent of ideological thought, and, being deeply critical of the crisis of our age, he claims that Christianity has had a role to play in the emergence of modern ideological thinking. But, as I have sought to show, he is not speaking here of the Christianity that is familiar to Christians. Rather, he is speaking of a Christianity that meets his need to understand modernity.

In summation, it can be said that to the question: "Was Voegelin a Christian?" the answer that I would give is *I do not know*. And, to the question: Is the structure of Voegelin's thinking capable of making sense of Christ and Christianity? the answer that I would give is, *no, it is not,* for the reasons offered above.

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BEYOND ARISTOTLE ... AND BEYOND NEWTON: THOMAS AQUINAS ON AN INFINITE CREATION[1]

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WHAT WAS St. Thomas Aquinas's final word on the possibility of an infinite creation? According to him creation as we have it is not infinite. But could it be? Or could any part of it be? That is, if the Creator so willed, could he create an entity or multitude that would be infinite and have its infinity not successively but simultaneously?

Thomas's answer may surprise those who are not particularly well versed in the history of medieval philosophy-and some who are. Still, all are likely to be intrigued by his going beyond what would later be Isaac Newton's view of a three-dimensional world, yet adhering increasingly to the Aristotelian *Weltanschauung* of a "formful" cosmos. By the end we shall see that, late in his career,

[1] Tom Bukowski (1928-2002) was my close friend, going back to student days *ca* 1954-57 atthe Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies and University of Toronto Graduate Philosophy program. It was there that he started his studies of Thomas on the eternity of the world, when Ignatius Eschmann, O.P., held a seminar on Thomas's *opuscula,* and Tom drew the *De aetemitate mundi* as his assignment. Already at that time, his study of vocabulary and such led him to judge that that work of Thomas's was not, as had been said, a late work, but rather seemed to have much in common with the *Commentary on the Sentences* treatment of the topic. He went off to teach before finishing his doctorate, but eventually completed his studies in Strasbourg, France, where in 1972 he presented a dissertation entitled: "Le probleme de l'eternire du monde au Xlllieme siecle parisien." Subsequently he worked outside of academia, but he kept up his interest in mediaeval studies and published a series of articles close to his original interest, all of which I would recommend to readers of *The Thomist* (a list is appended at the end of the article). The present article he left unpublished at the time of his death, and thus it does not have his personal *imprimatur.* I decided, in consultation with his family, to send it to *The* Thomist.-Lawrence Dewan, O.P., Dominican College of Philosophy and Theologi, Ottawa, Canada.

Thomas does go beyond Aristotle, declaring that an actually infinite creature-that is, a created infinity that would be actual rather than merely potential-is possible in itself; but he concludes that it is impossible in view of the wisdom with which God creates. It would be best for our purposes to regard God's wisdom, however, as not confined to the scope of the divinity itself; that is, we must include consideration of God vis-a-vis creation and of his wisdom as respecting the intellect and wisdom of creatures. According to Thomas a created actual infinity would be thoroughly known and understood by God. Now, it is true that questions of God's knowledge are separate from questions of his wisdom; nevertheless, it seems hard to see how an actual infinity would counter his wisdom: from a modern standpoint, what could be the reason? But his wisdom takes into account-it respects-the intellect and wisdom of angel and man. It is at least under this aspect of consideration for finite wisdom that an actual infinity will, in the last stages of the development of Thomas's thinking on the subject, raise insuperable problems.[2] Yet, along the way Thomas works into his teaching, and holds to the end, some conclusions that may be truly remarkable coming from a medieval author.

As we pursue our subject, the phrase "actual infinity" will mean some "actually infinite, created entity," if "entity" may extend to a multitude of individuals. On the negative side, we shall exclude from our study (except for rare, incidental references) questions of: divine, that is, uncreated, infinity; potential, rather than actual, infinities of any kind (the spatial extent of our known universe, for example, which is potentially infinite in that it could

[2] On the finally insuperable problems see below (e.g., section II.D). Much that we say here in our text would need to be qualified in the particular case of angels.

In holding that an actual infinity is possible in itself, Thomas does, of course, go beyond Aristotle; see below, esp. our treatment of his comments on III *Physics,* ch. 5, 204bff. (where we mention that he benevolently interprets Aristotle's anti-infinity arguments as merely "dialectical").

Concerning our point that a created actual infinity "probably" could not fail to conform to God's wisdom per se, doubts are perhaps likely; the question requires more research. And we must concede that we are selecting here (note our saying "at least under this aspect") one aspect of Thomas's idea of God's wisdom, to the neglect of other aspects. See Appendix 2.

be forever added to); and individual spiritual infinities. These last would notably be angels in Thomas's doctrine. Every angel is actually infinite since it is not limited by prime matter and in that very important sense is "unlimited."[3]

Apart from individual spiritual infinities, namely, angels, can or could there exist an actually infinite, created multitude or material magnitude? Actually existing, or "actual," would mean simultaneously enlarged or multiplied, boundlessly: for example, an infinite multitude of angels themselves or of human souls. Or what of a material mass that would be of infinite magnitude: could a barely conceivable blob, infinite, exist at the bottom of Thomas's hierarchical creation, to complete a "great chain of being"? What of an infinite multitude of material items?

When we say "can or could" infinite creatures exist, rather than simply "could," we are trying to allow for contemporary theories, like Sidney Coleman's, of infinite universes. Nothing is surer than that Thomas, despite his flair for theoretical physics, would never have thought of any such theory. It seems that such theories are compatible, nevertheless, with his final outlook in

[3] Aquinas, *De Ente et &sentia,* c. 5; for a possible qualification, however, see *STh* I, q. 50, a. 2, ad 4. Angels are important for the historian of philosophy to study in Thomas because his discussion of them sheds great light on many of his philosophical ideas. They cannot "equal God" because of a limitation that would belong to any creature, infinite or not; their essence is potential with respect to their own act of being (a question of the potency of *essentia* to *esse)* while the essence of God is entirely in act-actual and in no way potential-in all respects.

Evidently we could not here, if we had the competence, go into all the shades, graces, stages, and areas of infinity that one would need to discuss for full treatment's sake. But it may be noted that another example of a potential, rather than actual, infinity would be a Nietzschean eternal return. It would not be actual, of course, because of its successive stages. (It would be none the less impossible on Thomas's Aristotelian view, on which our earth could contain only species that would be eternal-not individuals, *qua* earthly, which are strictly passing.)

A rather recent article on the question of "actually infinite multitudes" in Thomas was Charles J. Kelly, "Circularity and Contradiction in Aquinas' Rejection of Actually Infinite Multitudes," *Modem Schoolman* 61 (1983-84): 73-100. Kelly deals almost exclusively with infinite causal series. These are a subject that is crucial in Thomas's proofs for the existence of God, and in that respect Kelly contends that Thomas is guilty of lapses in logic. The question of infinite causes ("essentially ordered," which are the only kind that matter in Kelly's context) has more to do with causality than with infinity; we shall not study it here. But see foomote 15 below.

both the philosophy of nature and theoretical physics (as we shall see when we look into his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics).* But what of his outlook in metaphysics? Here complex questions arise. On account of the "way in which God creates"-with its respect, which we have noted, for finite wisdom-Aquinas does rule out such actual infinities as a person of his time could conceive of. But modern theories of infinite universes, partly based on well-founded theories like the quantum theory, bear a trait that might change his thinking on the subject. Like quantum theory itself, they belong wholly to empirical science, yet their empirical verifiability itself lies only in the realm of conceptuality. They are, notably, heavily dependent on mathematical formulation for any soundness that they possess. In view of that trait of, and amenability to, conceptuality one is led to think that the reality they represent would, as intended by the Creator, be compatible with finite wisdom.[4]

We leave enquiry into such possibilities to some other occasion. We intend here to trace the development of the letter, but especially the spirit, of Thomas's teaching on our subject.

That teaching has not been properly studied. It has been the object of several erroneous or incomplete and unbalanced views, which fit more or less well into four categories. In the survey of them that follows, names have been changed (not to protect the innocent!); the reasons for this are various, but one predominates, namely, that the positions described are composites of what has been written by more than one researcher.

[4] In a Thomistic context the "barely conceivable blob" that we mention above would remain impossible, if only for metaphysical reasons.

It ought to be noted that infinite universes, if possible physically, would nevertheless, count, along with our own, as one universe in Thomas's philosophy of nature. For him as for Aristotle the universe is one practically by definition, and on his own view it would remain so even though, apart from metaphysics or not, one should allow that "infinite universes" (in the sense intended) could exist.

As for the lack of real empirical verifiability, whatever the advantages of conceptuality, let us make no mistake: it would be considered a drawback by Thomas as it would be, I believe, by most moderns.

I. INTERPRETATIONS OF ST. THOMAS'S POSITION

A) "Jones": Rather Late in His Career, Aquinas Decided against the Possibility of an Actual Infinity

For the most part, "Jones's" position arose out of discussion of St. Thomas's polemical treatise *On the Eternity of the World* (De *Aeternitate Mundi).* Though brief, that treatise has drawn a good deal of attention in the literature about an actual infinity in St. Thomas, for it makes a famous statement about the subject (which we shall see in a moment). Jones was reacting against the dating of the treatise by "Smith," the latter having put the date at about 1270-71, in turbulent times at the University of Paris, where Thomas was taking part in the controversies with the Western followers of Averroes (the "Latin Averroists"}. Smith had assigned this date on the basis of the treatise's polemical nature and the occasional harshness-nay, vitriol-of its remarks. But his dating was doubtful indeed: he had shown no particular evidence for it, and the treatise was written against theologians of the Augustinian school, not against Averroists.

Assuming that Smith knew the targets of the treatise were Augustinians, we are left to conjecture what reason he would have given for its supposedly falling at the time of strife with the Latin Averroists. One might guess, for instance, that it was written against the Augustinians to restrain the perhaps overweening zeal of their current polemics, against the Averroists, on the eternity of the cosmos, or to defend against their rather ferocious attacks-brought on, presumably, by the heat of the combative atmosphere-on Thomas's own doctrine. It is true that many of them were horrified by his doctrine that the cosmos could have been eternal (although he clearly agreed with them, and of course with the Judeo-Christian revelation, that in fact it had not been).

Smith's dating of *De Aeternitate Mundi* may well seem conjectural and Jones raised various objections, including one about an actual infinity. Near the end of the treatise Thomas makes the famous statement we have alluded to, which runs thus: "It has not

as yet been demonstrated that God cannot produce a multitude that would be actually infinite." Jones held that the statement indicated an early stage of Thomas's thought on the subject, for Thomas's late works, including his famous *Summa Theologiae,* denied the possibility of an actual infinity.

B) "Smith's" Counterattack: Late in His Career, Thomas Declared an Actual Infinity to Be Possible

Smith countered that Jones had overlooked certain key texts. Since Jones had left them out, it is no surprise that Smith took at least one of them to be of vital importance: it comes from a late writing, *Quodlibet* 12. It states (to paraphrase), "In a narrow sense God does have the power to create an actual infinity, as his having it implies no contradiction."[5] Of course, Smith cited the text in an effort to destroy Jones's point and show the compatibility of the *De Aeternitate Mundi* with a late work of St. Thomas's.

Unfortunate for Smith's purposes, however, is a text that he himself omitted, immediately following the one he cited. It reveals the opposite side of Thomas's stance. And it grows clear why we should use the phrase "in a narrow sense" (in the quotation above)-rather than, say, "strictly speaking"-to convey the Latin *absolute:* despite what Thomas affirms for the narrow context, he tells us that, in the total context of how God acts, an actual infinity is impossible. "For God acts through intellect: and through the Word, which gives form to all things. It must follow that all things that he causes be well formed. But the infinite is to be taken as if it were unformed matter." Since Smith had omitted the text, it is no surprise that, tit for tat, Jones found it very important, and used it in an attempt to destroy Smith's position.

Let us grant, at least for the moment, that Smith's premises were shaky. Still, remembering that his conflict with Jones concerned the chronology of the treatise *De Aeternitate Mundi,*

[5] "Non repugnat potentiae Dei absolute [facere aliquid infinitum in actu], quia non implicat contradictionem" *(Quodl.* 12, q. 2, a. 2).

we must give him credit for restraint: regarding the statement, from the treatise, on an actual infinity he did not, as some others would eventually do, claim that it supports a late and not an early dating. He concluded simply that it is insignificant for purposes of chronology.

C) 7amieson's" Interpretation: No Changes

Although Smith said little on the subject, he seemed to imply that Thomas became more favorable to the idea of an actual infinity late in his career. "Jamieson," in contrast, supposes that there are no changes in Thomas's doctrine on actual infinity. He offers to explain the texts as if they all were contemporaneous. (Yet, he sounds as if he attributes great weight to the statement from the *De Aeternitate Mundi,* and he assumes that Smith's late dating is correct.) His explanation has the virtue of simplicity. It is based, certainly, on a creditable study of the subject and, I believe, on the most nearly complete selection of relevant texts that anyone has presented. He admits, however, that his interpretation entails difficulties. He reads Thomas as rather favorable towards the possibility of a created actual infinity.

Smith, Jones, and Jamieson have made acute the question, did Thomas's position on the subject undergo no change during his career? Most would say it did. Not only Jones, but Smith too, would probably agree. So would "McLeod."

D) "McLeod": Change after the "Prima Pars"

Of course the question persists, just what was the change? But, especially in the case of McLeod, the question broadens: how much change was there?

McLeod is much more explicit about a purported change than Smith is. He maintains, against Jones, that there was change after rather than before the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae:* indeed, not mere change but a *volte-face,* namely, an assertion of

the possibility of a created actual infinity after outright denial of it.[6]

McLeod accepts a late dating of the *De Aeternitate Mundi* and thinks-as not even Smith did-that its remark on an actual infinity can prove that the treatise is late. He goes so far as to use the doctrine of an actual infinity to help support a great thesis of his career, that the *Summa contra Gentiles* is one of Thomas's very late works. This thesis, if ever it were proved, would be rather a bombshell for Thomistic literary history.[7]

One must admire the boldness of McLeod's position. At any rate it adds zest to literary-historical studies that otherwise, as the reader well knows, are often dull. Furthermore, his work covers a vast field, much wider than that of a created actual infinity alone, and this is hardly the place to judge it.

However, it must be said that the course of development of Thomas's teaching on an actual infinity, far from yielding support for McLeod's thesis on the *Summa contra Gentiles,* works against it. McLeod pays little heed to the texts on an actual infinity that are to be found in the earliest of Thomas's major theological syntheses, his commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard (hereafter referred to, for the sake of simplicity, as Thomas's *Sentences).* As McLeod pays them little heed, it may be no surprise that I view them as vitally important. But, truly, the texts from the *Summa contra Gentiles* that McLeod likes to believe are entirely compatible with late works of St. Thomas's are not compatible with them, but with texts from Thomas's *Sentences* (and, in some cases, from other early works). We shall discuss the texts from the *Sentences* and from the *Summa contra Gentiles,* making them the first of our groupings.

[6] "McLeod" is primarily Peter Marc, O.S.B., and all our remarks about the dating of the *Summa contra Gentiles* apply only to him (although there were some who agreed with his dating at least when it was broached). Regarding two or three others who have agreed with Dom Marc on other points that concern us, and for pertinent references, see section C of Appendix 1.

[7] "A great thesis of his career" applies to Dom Peter Marc's work alone. It is extremely probable, and is now held by practically all concerned, that the *Summa contra Gentiles* dates from the early 1260s and thus is not among Thomas's late works.

Before we proceed to our own study, however, we must comment on the four theses that we have just reviewed or, rather, on the four persons who were, to a greater or lesser degree, main proponents of each thesis.[8] They all were in the situation that one dreads particularly: slight, or very understandable, in the fault, grave in the consequences. Three of the four ended in a position that was flatly mistaken; the fourth (the main proponent of "Jones") presented a picture that was woefully incomplete.

The primary "Jones" was Franz Pelster, S.J. He ended in his incomplete view, not having examined enough texts, because he was hurried. He felt pressed for time, no doubt, to pursue an overarching concern that subordinated the study of the question of actual infinity itself: his aim was to prove that Thomas was the author of an anonymous work, the *Concordantia dictorum Thomae.* Its author makes a remark that would rule out a late dating of the *De Aeternitate Mundi,* making Pelster eager to prove an early dating. The main proponents of the "Smith" and "McLeod" theses, Pierre Mandonnet, O.P., and Peter Marc, O.S.B., also had overarching concerns. *As* we might surmise, in the case of Mandonnet-"Smith" the concern was to prove a late dating of the *De Aeternitate Mundi,* and in the case of Marc-"McLeod," to prove the same of the *Summa contra Gentiles.*

The other "main proponent" (of the "Jamieson" thesis), James F. Anderson, had no overarching concern. He studied the problem for its own sake and, as we have suggested, made a reasonably complete selection of texts. But he suffered from a certain fixed idea or prejudice that skewed his study. Perhaps under the influence-otherwise very beneficial-of his great Canadian teacher the Rev. Gerald B. Phelan, he allowed for little or no development of Thomas's doctrine. We have seen that he interprets the doctrine, for practical purposes, as if it underwent no changes; in the end, such an interpretation is untenable.[9]

[8] For a fuller treatment, see Appendix 1.

[9] In the case of the other theses, there is a rather clear "main proponent." In the case of "Jamieson," Anderson is the main proponent only as regards the supposition-actually crucial-that the texts can be interpreted, for practical purposes, as if they were contemporaneous. He does not hold other points that make up the thesis: for example, that

It is to be hoped, then, that we may reach satisfactory conclusions in our own study: we have no overarching concern, and we will allow for development and change in Thomas's doctrine. As we go through his texts that deal with the question of actual infinity, it will be noticed that we group them not always according to chronology, but in large part according as they lend themselves to comparison or contrast.

II. TRULY AN "ENTWICKLUNG": THOMAS'S PRINCIPAL TEXTS ON ACTUAL INFINITY

A) The Early Stage: Indecisive; the Spiritual and the Material (Sentences *and* Summa contra Gentiles)

Two texts from Thomas's *Sentences* may at first sight appear hard to reconcile with each other. One of them, dealing with an infinite number of days, speaks of an actual infinity as impossible. It rules out infinite days as a candidate for actual infinity, simply because of their successiveness, but incidentally concedes that no actual infinity could exist. The other text, on the contrary, leaves open the possibility of an actual infinity. Like the first, it is one of a series of replies to arguments against the possibility of a world eternal in the past. In it, Thomas simply gives the opinion of various philosophers on an infinite multitude of human souls. He ends with Moses Maimonides' position: where human souls are concerned, it has not been demonstrated, he says, that an infinite multitude is impossible. [10]

the statement from the *De Aetemitate Mundi* is of great weight, and that Thomas rather approved of the possibility of an actual infinity (see section B of Appendix 1).

As for Jones, in saying that he did not examine enough texts we make an assumption: the study of the chronology of the *De Aetemitate Mundi* demands a good deal of time and effort (see section A of Appendix 1).

[10] See II *Sent.,* d. 1, q. 1, a. 5, ad 3 and 6 to the objections *sed contra.* This phrase "has not been demonstrated" is, of course, parallel to the statement in the *De Aetemitate Mundi* of which "Jones" made much. But a remark needs to be made here about those who fall under "Smith" and "McLeod": they all overlooked or neglected that particular parallel relationship of the *De Aetemitate Mundi* to the Commentary on the *Sentences* (cf. note 17, below).

A likely way to reconcile the two texts is to say that the first applies to the material realm, the second to the spiritual. And, indeed, the *Summa contra Gentiles,* book 2, makes that distinction explicit. There Thomas says that an infinite multitude of souls can be reconciled with Aristotelian principles (i.e., *the* correct philosophical principles), for it is in respect to natural bodies, not immaterial substances, that Aristotle proves there can be no actual infinity.[11] That relatively early position conflicts with the views expressed in his later works.

These texts bracket Thomas's early stage of thinking on actual infinity. In that stage he was indecisive. We have had a clue to his indecisiveness in his having spoken expressly, in the *Sentences,* in the person of the philosophers rather than in his own person. And in the *Summa contra Gentiles* he again gave the opinion of the philosophers although he did not say explicitly that he was speaking in their person. To be sure, he gave Aristotle's position and that is normally his own, but he cannot be said to have been truly decisive because he would soon change his interpretation of Aristotle on the question. He grew decisive soon, perhaps very soon, after writing book 2 of the *Summa contra Gentiles.*[12]

B) Decision (Summa Theologiae [Prima Pars] *and* Quodlibet *9)*

As regards actual infinity, the doctrine of the *Prima Pars* marks an important turning point, or stage of change, in Thomas's *Entwicklung.* Here he denies outright the possibility of an actual infinity, either material or spiritual. He does so for two reasons. One is relatively unimportant, related to the interpretation of Aristotle, and soon to be abandoned, at least in part. The other,

[11] *ScG* II, c. 81.

[12] In fact, Thomas's first change in interpretation of Aristotle on actual infinity, after tlte *Summa contra Gentiles,* consists of ceasing to depend on Moses Maimonides' interpretation on the particular point concerned, and of reading Aristotle as entirely opposed to actual infinity. Later, after writing the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae,* he will change his own interpretation of Aristotle, seeing him as more favorable towards actual infinity.

On Thomas's speaking in the person of the philosophers in the Commentary on tlte *Sentences,* see his brief introductory paragraph to the replies to objections *sed contra* in II *Sent.,* d. 1, q. 1, a. 5.

which is rather theological, is of great importance. Now that he has decided on it he will never, so far as I know, give it up.

The first argues from the Aristotelian idea of number as expressible in terms of the unit one, hence "measurable" and finite. It concludes, of course, that any number or multitude of creatures must be finite.

Near the beginning of *Quodlibet* 9 also, Thomas gives that reasoning, only more elaborately. The passage from the *Quodlibet* seems somewhat corrupted or fragmentary in the texts we have. However, it still reveals some hesitancy, one may argue, where the immaterial creation is concerned: consider the rather weak remark, "This seems to be the truer" ("hoc verius esse videtur")-which indicates his approval of Averroes' position after he has listed several others; the statements in the passage that more definitely reject the possibility of all actual infinity would apply strictly to material creatures. Thomas's hesitancy here about the immaterial, and the narrow perspective of the interpretation of Averroes, may explain why the text of a *Quodlibet* generally dated before the *Summa contra Gentiles* ·can appear close to the *Summa Theologiae* in doctrine. (If I am not mistaken, however, the question of the chronology of at least this ninth series of Thomas's quodlibetal questions-or of the chronology of parts of it as contained in the available editions-needs a good deal more work.) The treatment here constitutes an elaborate solution of a problem Thomas has put off solving for some time. How may one explain that it will, rather soon afterwards-that is, soon after the parallel writing in the *Summa Theologiae*-be rejected in other works?[13] That the discussion is cast in great part as registering preference for Averroes' interpretation of Aristotle may yield the answer. Thomas shows merely how the authority of Averroes is to be preferred to that of the other philosophers in question. The latter are numerous and important enough to merit a rather lengthy treatment.[14]

[13] See below, section II.D.

[14] *Quodl.* 9, q. 1, a. un. Cf. *STh* I, q. 7, a. 4: "Omnem multitudinem oportet esse in aliqua specie multitudinis. Species autem multitudinis sunt secundum species numerorum. Nulla autem species numeri est infinita: quia quilibet numerus est multitude mensurata per unum.

According to the second reason given in the *Prima Pars* (not given in *Quodlibet* 9), any real multitude of things is created, and everything created falls under some definite intention of the Creator, for no cause acts without purpose. Here we have, in substance, the premise that Jones cited in an effort to make his interpretation of Thomas prevail over Smith's: namely, that the Creator's way of acting is through intellect and wisdom. The conclusion is that every creature conforms to a certain measure or numerableness-nay, to some actual number-and it is impossible for there to be an actually existing, infinite, literally innumerable multitude of things.[15]

Thus in the *Summa Theologiae,* in contrast to the earlier *Sentences* and *Summa contra Gentiles,* a spiritual actual infinity is seen as no more possible than a material one. On the material side, we have kept here to the question of multitude because the famous texts on "infinite souls" have led in that direction, but what of infinite magnitude? Of course the argument from the Creator's "way of acting," namely, with wisdom and measure and so as to respect created intellects, would apply to magnitude as well as to multitude; and it is well to bear in mind that Thomas will never go back on that reason. But the *Summa Theologiae,* here in agreement with the earlier works, denies the possibility of an infinite magnitude "in itself": that is, not only because of the Creator's way of acting. Thomas tells us (in *STh* I, q. 7, a. 3) that all bodies, because each has a surface, must be finite, for the

Unde impossibile est esse multitudinem infinitam actu."

[15] *SI'h* I, q. 7, a. 4: "Multitudo in rerum natura existens est creata: et omne creatum sub aliqua certa intentione creantis comprehenditur: non enim in vanum agens aliquod operatur. Unde necesse est quod sub certo numero omnia creata comprehendantur. Impossibile [igitur] est esse multitudinem infinitam in actu."

When Thomas says that no cause *(agens)* acts without purpose, he means, of course any cause *qua* cause, not acting accidentally. But when the phrase "per accidens" appears in his text, right after our quoted words, it does not mean "accidentally" as we have just used it; rather, it refers to a series of causes that are "ordered accidentally." That is, their very causality does not depend directly on the causality of the previous cause in the series: for example, the offspring of animals generating further offspring, as opposed to, say, the arm and hand moving the hammer, but being moved by muscular action, nerve action, the brain. The latter is a series ordered essentially for, after the first, each cause in the series depends for its causality on the very causality of the previous one.

surface is the terminus that marks the limits of a body-a conception that will change radically when he comes to write his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics.*

Indeed, what of works of Thomas's, like the Commentary on the *Physics,* that are later than the *Prima Pars?* We must look into them, but first we must be certain that we are seeing enough of the whole picture; we must, before turning to certain late works, dispose of some passages, both late and early, that give at least an appearance of being noncommittal.

C) Wavering and Indecision? (De Veritate, De Aeternitate Mundi, *and* De Unitate Intellectus)

In the passage on actual infinity in his *Disputed Questions on Truth (De Veritate)* Thomas is noncommittal explicitly; in the passage in *De Aeternitate Mundi* he is noncommittal implicitly; and in the passage in his treatise *On the Oneness of the Intellect (De Unitate Intellectus)* he may appear noncommittal but is not. This last is a late writing. The first two are early writings, and their outlook on actual infinity is fully compatible with that of the *Sentences* and the *Summa contra Gentiles.* [16]

De Veritate's treatment of actual infinity (q. 2, a. 10) dates from well before the beginning of the *Summa contra Gentiles.* Thomas spends considerable time defining the distinctions, in true medieval style, between the infinite in potency and the infinite in act, and between two supposed types of infinite hosts of causes:

[16] The *De Aetemitate Mundi* is regarded as late by many Tl10mists, probably most, though by no means all. I have been attempting, over the years, to persuade those concerned of its early dating, and believe someone (someone persistent!) will finally succeed in doing so. Its dating is not crucial to the main points we seek to make in the present study.

If the dating of the treatise as late seems to resist being dislodged, it is by some principle akin to "Possession is nine-tenths of the law." The dating is mainly due to the pioneering chronological studies of Pierre Mandonnet, who actually offered little or no evidence for it: see my "Rejecting Mandonnet's Dating of St. Thomas's *De Aetemitate Mundi," Gregorianum* 71 (1990): 763-75.

Note that the treatise's position vis-a-vis actual infinity is a feature (among many) that indicates an early date of origin.

those that would be ordered essentially and those that would be ordered accidentally.[17]

Nevertheless, after making all these distinctions, he takes the expressly noncommittal stance that we have indicated. He declines to solve the problem of whether an actual infinity is contradictory in itself and hence impossible for God to create. He says he will not solve it because it has been raised incidentally.

Devoting so much time to the subject would seem to give the lie to the claim that the question has arisen "incidentally." It seems best to conclude that Thomas gives this reason as a pure formality, in line with the very formalized structure of a disputed question; that he really has not made up his mind; and that he is practically in the same stage of *Entwicklung,* with respect to his doctrine on actual infinity, as in the *Sentences* and *Summa contra Gentiles.* We have seen that he will make up his mind by the time he writes the earliest questions of the *Summa Theologiae.* At any rate, the texts of *De Veritate* yield no evidence, obviously, that in this early writing he is *not* at his undecided stage.[18]

The noncommittal trend is seen again in *De Aeternitate Mundi,* or can be quickly inferred. Near the end of that brief treatise Thomas makes the famous statement about infinity that we have seen much earlier, saying no more and no less than this: "It has not yet been proved that God cannot make an actually infinite multitude exist" ("Non est adhuc demonstratum quod Deus non possit facere ut sint infinita actu").

Rather oddly, a number of commentators have read that statement as if it said "It *cannot be proved* that ... ". What has led them to make that error?

Perhaps it is that the treatise has been dated late in Thomas's career, and this dating has given the statement the air of

[17] Cf. the end of note 3, above, and see note 15 on accidentally and essentially ordered series of causes.

[18] In the *Sentences* Thomas speaks in the person of the philosophers, not in his own; in that sense he avoids commitment, and the passage in *De Veritate* echoes the attitude of the *Sentences.* In the *Summa contra Gentiles* (II, c. 38) he follows practically the same pattern as in the *Sentences,* telling how the philosophers would react to the argument of "infinite souls." (See below, where we deal with *De Unitate lntellectus* and the question of the impossibility of ah infinite number of human souls.)

representing a final, decisive position. In fact, however, the remark "It has not been proved" (or "demonstrated") reveals the direct influence of Moses Maimonides *(Guide for the Perplexed,* 1.74) and mirrors the state of Thomas's thinking that appears in the *Sentences.* If the treatise is ever proved to be late (which seems most unlikely) its statement on an actual infinity will need to be taken as evincing a relapse, permanent or temporary, to his early position.[19]

The statement is notably brief: a fact that seems to have made it sound weighty. Several modern authors, at any rate, tend to find it very significant. But after all, being brief, it does not say much.

The passage on actual infinity in *De Unitate Intellectus* (chap. 5, near the end) makes an interesting study as compared and contrasted with (1) the passage on the same subject in *Quodlibet* 12 (which we shall see in our next section) and (2) a parallel passage in the *Summa contra Gentiles.*

The passage in *De Unitate Intellectus* differs greatly from that of the quodlibet, giving much less of Thomas's doctrine on actual infinity. Why? Is there any justification for saying that he has lost decisiveness on the subject?

The first reason that the treatise differs here from the quodlibet is that Thomas is not prone to speak in the same way on the same subject in more or less contemporary writings; he is not given to wasting time-or parchment. But, in addition, the format of the treatise differs sharply from that of the quodlibet (not only in using a chapter and paragraph arrangement rather than the formal structure of the *quaestio disputata).* Chiefly, the format is one of systematic recurrence to texts of Aristotle. Thomas discusses the teachings of various philosophers but especially those of Averroes and the Averroists, measuring them always against Aristotelian doctrine and showing how in his judgment they fall short.

[19] The statement "It has not yet been proved ... " substitutes for the position of the philosophers that Thomas recorded in his *Sentences* (see note 10 above), in particular the position attributed by his contemporaries to Algazel and agreed on by Maimonides, that an infinity of spiritual things like human souls is possible: that is, that its impossibility has not been proved.

Near the end of the treatise he comes to the question of an infinite multitude of souls. A philosopher who teaches that the intellective soul is immortal and, as the Greeks do, that the world has been eternal in the past may be forced to the conclusion that there is only one intellective soul-or, rather, one intellective being: a Separate Intelligence-for all mankind (i.e., that there is a "oneness of the intellect," an *unitas intellectus).* Otherwise, if every human person had his own intellective-therefore everlasting-soul, the world and generation of the human race having gone on eternally, there would be an infinite number of souls now existing, which is supposedly an impossible outcome. Holding to his pattern of recurrence to Aristotle, Thomas says we do not know how Aristotle would decide that issue; the part of his *Metaphysics* that deals with the separate substances (or "Intelligences") has been lost. Thus the narrow perspective of recurrence to Aristotle, and of the question of the oneness of the intellect, explains the difference from the *Summa Theologiae* and from *Quodlibet* 12. Thomas has no occasion to make the same type of statements on actual infinity. We can scarcely conclude, then, that the passage in *De Unitate Intellectus* reveals an undecided state of mind on the part of its author.

In fact, in comparing the passage to the *Summa contra Gentiles* one sees that it makes a great disclosure. It runs closely parallel to a passage in the latter text which occurs in chapters devoted to the human soul, but it makes a telling omission from that passage: it omits the assertion that an actual infinity of spiritual beings would not contravene Aristotle's principles. From that omission we know that the teaching, along with the decisiveness, of the *Summa Theologiae* remains in force, and that Thomas is as decisive, within the limits of the treatise, as he was in the *Summa Theologiae*-or as he is in *Quodlibet* 12, which is about as late as the treatise.[20]

[20] There is a point to note with regard to "contravening Aristotle's principles". Early in the *Summa Theologiae,* as we have seen, Thomas has given two reasons against an actual infinity: (1) the conformity of multitude and magnitude to Aristotelian standards, and (2) the way in which the Creator, the cause of universal being, acts-namely, through intellect and wisdom. As we have indicated, he would soon give up reason (1). Does that mean he would no longer

The eminent twentieth-century philosopher and Thomist Jacques Maritain speculated cogently on actual infinity, musing about Thomas's advance to a theory of transfinite number or, rather, to a position that would support such a theory ("ainsi faisait-il place d'avance a la validite logique des speculations de la mathematique moderne sur la multitude infinie"). He took the famous "it-has-not-been-demonstrated" statement in the *De Aeternitate Mundi* as late (accepting the chronology from the literary historians of the time), but the apparently erroneous dating did not matter, for the doctrine can be found, as Maritain read it, in late works that we turn to now.[21]

D) Actual Infinity Possible per se, and yet ... (Quodlibet 3, Quodlibet 12, *and* III Physics, *lect.* 8)

It was almost certainly Thomas's doctrine of an actual infinity as possible per se that intrigued Maritain. Much more clearly than in the *De Aeternitate Mundi,* that doctrine appears in Thomas's late works, his *Quodlibet* 12 and his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics.*

There are, in Thomas's *Quodlibet* 12, a *pro* and a *contra* argument on the possibility of an actual infinity (we have mentioned them when speaking of "Smith's" counterattack and "Jones's" rebuttal). The argument *contra,* against infinity, takes into account the whole context of how God acts, notably that he acts through wisdom, with respect for finite, creaturely wisdom. Infinity would be akin to prime matter in its lack of intelligibility; therefore it would conflict with finite wisdom at least, and cannot be put into existence. Nevertheless, it is possible per se in that it involves no contradiction; and this is, substantially, the argument *pro.* But the

form any objection to actual infinity in terms of contravening Aristotle's principles? By no means. For him reason (2), no less than (1), would be Aristotelian (as well as scriptural). Thomas considers Aristotle, and Plato, to have held a doctrine of an intellectual cause of universal being. And reason (2) continues to apply, in *Quodlibet* 12 and, as we know from the crucial omission noted here in our text, in *De Unitate Intellectus.*

[21] See J. Maritain, *Approches de Dieu* (Paris: Alsatia, 1953), 49-50 n. 6.

argument *contra* prevails in Thomas's mind for the reason that God cannot create apart from wisdom.[22]

Thus, near the end of his career Thomas continues to range himself, as in the *Summa Theologiae,* among those who deny the possibility of a created actual infinity. His speaking in terms of the unintelligible character of prime matter evinces his continuing Aristotelian inspiration. But in his argument *pro* he goes counter to-or at any rate well beyond-that inspiration; or, in his own mind, he has changed his interpretation of Aristotle on infinity.[23]

Early in the *Prima Pars* he had interpreted Aristotle very strictly, ruling out infinity from any viewpoint. A text from his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* (III *Phys.,* lect. 8)-dated after the *Prima Pars* and before *Quodlibet* 12-shows how he changed his interpretation afterwards.[24]

What we have called Thomas's "argument *pro"* appears again here. Yet he does not introduce his "argument *contra."* Why not? It is the argument that maintains, in substance, that God creates in so orderly a fashion that he would not be responsible for such a thing as an actual infinity.

One reason that Thomas does not invoke this argument may be that the context hardly requires it. It would lose relevance because the question discussed is not of creation but precisely of the infinity of our cosmos. Moreover, there are other arguments of Aristotle's here that Thomas believes are based on (physical)

[22] We have made what amount to insertions in Thomas's text {not opposed to its spirit, we hope!), namely, the elements of "respect for finite, creaturely wisdom" and "at least finite wisdom." The question implied here is how these three views apply: (1) divine wisdom viewed scripturally as acting "in ... measure" (cf. *SI'h* I, q. 7, a. 4, *"Sed contra* est quod dicitur *Sap.* xi: omnia in pondere, numero et mensura disposuisti"; all things are ordered "by weight, number, and measure"); (2) divine, infinite wisdom viewed as reflected and imaged in finite wisdom and therefore known to act "in ... measure" just as finite wisdom does; (3) divine wisdom viewed as respecting finite wisdom and intellect. All three of these reasons may apply. It is most likely, a priori, that all three do: a consideration of the medieval mentality, of Thomas's in particular, would lead us to that conclusion. But see Appendix 2.

[23] Whether he has changed consciously or unconsciously is a question I do not undertake to decide. I am inclined to think it would be consciously-despite his being, like the typical medieval, a remarkably "unconscious" writer.

[24] There is a brief passage in Thomas's Commentary on the *Metaphysics* {XI, lect. 10 [Cathala no. 2327ff., esp. no. 2329]) which reflects, essentially, the position of *In III Phys.*

nature and are demonstrative. They would seem to constitute a denial of infinity for the actual cosmos, adequate for his present purposes. [25]

The "argument *pro,"* as it appears here, actually consists of a refutation of a few arguments. Examining some of the fifth chapter's arguments against an actual infinity (204bff.), Thomas affirms that these arguments do *not* mean that actual infinity is incompatible with Aristotle's principles; "the Philosopher" intends them as merely dialectical, not "scientific." He who maintains the possibility of an actual infinity would deny the topical suppositions behind the arguments: namely, that a body must be limited by surfaces-that is, must possess surfaces-and that a multitude must be numerable.

While still in the *Prima Pars,* soon after the earliest questions, and hence after the passages that we have looked into (in section B), Thomas has begun to speak of multitude as a transcendental: like being or "the good" in Aristotle, transcending the boundaries of all classes and hierarchies. That accounts perhaps for his change of interpretation on the point of numerability (the strictly Aristotelian idea being that multitudes are in species-classes-corresponding to species of number). But in any case the idea of multitude as not necessarily numerable must appear truly freewheeling to any historian of science. *As* for the idea that a body need not be limited by surfaces, Einsteinians and similar relativists take note! Following Aristotle on this point nonetheless, Thomas defines space strictly in relation to bodies. If body needs no surfaces, both the concept of body and that of space allow thought to go beyond the strictures of three dimensions.

While writing his commentary on the *Physics* Thomas has no doubt come to study Aristotle's passages more closely than ever. Probably as a result, he has changed his interpretation since writing *Quodlibet* 9 and the beginning of the *Prima Pars.* His launching into this extraordinary speculation in theoretical physics will

[25] These arguments fall under the purview of the historian of science; one must regard them as theoretically empirical rather than philosophical (i.e., as "positive"-with apologies to the shade of Auguste Comte). But just below in our text "scientific" means "philosophically demonstrative."

ultimately, one supposes, remain mysterious. But the phenomenon does fit into the historical window, in the thirteenth century, when the medievals were at their freest and boldest in the range and drive of their thought.

Nevertheless, Thomas remains, first and always, a theologian. We have noted that his "argument *contra,"* his rather theological argument against actual infinity, prevails in his thinking. Turning to a passage from his *Quodlibet* 3, and some parallel passages, we can see in some depth what his position entails.

In these passages, Thomas does not ask whether God could create an actual infinity, but whether, if it were created, God could know it. And he answers yes. For example, in *De Veritate* (q. 2, a. 9) he says, "Essentia ... Dei est infinita omnibus modis; et secundum hoc omnia infinita sunt Deo finita, et sunt comprehensibilia ab ipso" *(corp. ad fin.).* The parallel passages in *Quodlibet* 3 (a late work) and in other works carry substantially the same message: God is infinite in every way; therefore, those beings that are infinite in lesser or fewer ways are, or would be, as if finite to him. They would be not only knowable to him but completely understandable ("comprehensibilia").

Although such texts concern knowing rather than creating, they directly imply a doctrine that points up the significance of Thomas's outlook on infinite creation. He believes that a created infinity would be truly comprehensible to God but not to creatures. One is reminded here of what is sometimes said of the great twentieth-century theologian Karl Barth: he holds that God must be a God-for-us. Yet for Barth as for Thomas God is completely self-sufficient; he has no need of creation for his perfection or for his perfect happiness. Now, in this matter of God's comprehending any created infinity, we see the extent to which, for Thomas too, God is a God-for-us. In Thomas's view it is out of the question that God would make a creature that, per se, though understandable by him could be understood by .no intellectual creatures, either angelic or human. In this sense the intelligibility of the cosmos is for them, not for himself.

A favorite medieval saying tells that the Good gives of itself: "bonum sui diffusivum est"; thus the perfect Good, which is God, overflows and pours itself into creation. Accordingly, the wisdom of the creator will respect and enrich the intellect of angel and man.

CONCLUSION

The idea of "bonum diffusivum sui" is characteristic of Christian Neoplatonic thinking. But in Thomas we see, as may well have been expected, the return to Aristotle.

Despite going beyond Aristotle in physics and natural philosophy, Thomas remains in accord, after all, with the Aristotelian spirit. From that great Greek humanist he has acquired a profound conviction. of the intelligibility, the "formfulness," of our created world and a high regard for the intellect of both angels ("separate substances") and men. His final position agrees fully, at the same time, with the Christian view of the dignity of the intellectual creature. For, as we may infer from the texts that we have seen, in Thomas's system the trouble with actual infinity-the evil in it-is not that God would not know it; it is that no intellectual creature· would.[26] The entire created universe, made for God as its highest and ultimate end, is made for intellectual creatures as its very high intermediate end.

Perhaps more than any other medieval, Thomas was imbued with the teaching of Aristotle. Hence Aristotle's view of man and the human intellect have played their part in forming Thomas's doctrine, just as his ancient principles of matter and form are at the base of Thomas's classical, humanistic view of a "formful" cosmos, framed by and for intellect. The dignity of the intellectual creature who knows the created universe and the beauty and rational splendor of that universe itself are-though similar ideas appear in Scripture (not consistently!}-Hellenic intuitions that have inspired Thomas's vision; they have made of him (while he

[26] That single evil ought to be enough to repel the modern Thomist. For Thomas himself there were, no doubt, additional evils (see Appendix 2).

kept faithful, obviously, to the Judea-Christian tradition) the greatest humanist in the Golden Age of philosophy in the medieval universities.[27]

APPENDIX 1

In section I, above, we have reviewed previous studies that deal with our subject. We detail here the chief persons and studies represented by the four pseudonyms used in that review.

A) "Jones" and "Smith"

"Jones" is primarily Franz Pelster, S.J. He set out his position in several articles in *Gregorianum* beginning in 1923 (vol. 4; see esp. p. 91). Sympathetic to him has been C. Vansteenkiste, O.P.: see the latter's review of J. Perrier's 1949 edition of St. Thomas's *Opuscula (Bulletin thomiste* 8 (1947-53]: 29). I have come down on the side of an early dating for *De Aeternitate Mundi,* but would gladly dispense with the statement on an actual infinity as a means to prove that dating (however, see note 15 and section II.C, *supra).*

In the body of our study, when discussing briefly the "main proponents" of the four theses we had just described, we mentioned that Pelster did not examine enough texts. This claim is based on an assumption: namely, that to reach sound conclusions on the chronology of the *De Aeternitate Mundi* one must go through one of two very time-consuming processes-(1) examine

[27] We have spoken in this study from the standpoint of Thomas's metaphysics and philosophy of nature. Where magnitude is concerned, Thomas would still have a way to deny the possibility of an infinite magnitude per se in theoretical physics. He argues from the Aristotelian doctrine of the "natural motion" of bodies, both straight and circular (e.g., *STh* I, q. 7, a. 3). "Modern" theories of the inertia of bodies were to begin before 1300, in the first decades after Thomas's death, with the "impetus" theory. We thus barely miss knowing what his final word on the physics of infinite magnitude in itself might have been. For the rest the modern Thomist ought to think, it seems, of the modern theories much as Thomas would have thought, presumably, of theories of "natural motion": they are no more profound than what is needed to save the appearances.

many texts of the treatise, comparing them with the parallel passages in Thomas' s *Sentences, Summa contra Gentiles,* and *Summa Theologiae;* or (2) study and compare many texts, often conflicting, on the possibility of created actual infinity, scattered through a good number of Thomas's works. Pelster was deceived by appearances, one supposes, into pinning his hopes on the treatise's famous statement on actual infinity. Presumably the statement looked to him as if it offered a quick route to conclusions about chronology.

"Smith" is primarily Pierre Mandonnet, O.P. See his reply to Pelster in *Bulletin thomiste* 1 (1924): 71-72. Fernand van Steenberghen criticized many of Mandonnet's positions, but agreed with him decidedly, against Pelster, on the dating of *De Aeternitate Mundi* and, by implication, on his interpretation of the treatise's remark on actual infinity; see Fernand van Steenberghen, *Siger dans l'histoire de l'Aristotelisme,* vol. 2 of *Sigerde Brabant d'apres ses oeuvres inedites* (Louvain, 1942), 549. There have been attempts to justify Mandonnet's date by conjectured explanations of Thomas's attacking Augustinians at the time of the controversies with the Averroists (conjectured explanations including my own, in my efforts to understand Mandonnet' s position}: for references see my "Rejecting Mandonnet's Dating of St. Thomas's *De aeternitate mundi,"* 765 n. 4. The latest important reassertion of Mandonnet's date (and, again by implication, of his assessment of Thomas's statement regarding actual infinity) comes from the Leonine editors of *De Aeternitate Mundi (Commissionis leoninae,* vol. 43), who favor his date as "based on the historical setting"; for pertinent references and a reply to the Leonine editors see my article just cited.

B) '1amieson"

Classed as "Jamieson" would be, first of all, James F. Anderson; see his *The Cause of Being* (St. Louis and London: Herder, 1952), chap. 4, "The Actual Infinite ... ". The relative completeness of his selection of texts will not surprise those who

know him as a former student of that masterful teacher Fr. Gerald Phelan. Others under "Jamieson" are G. LaMountain, "The Concept of the Infinite in the Philosophy of St. Thomas," *The Thomist* 19 (1956): 312-38; T. Gilby, O.P., ed., "Introduction," in *Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae,* vol. 8 (Blackfriars translation; London: Eyre & Spottiswoode; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967); and A.-D. Sertillanges, O.P., *L'idee de creation* (Paris, 1945), 35. Jacques Maritain could be ranged in this group as a passive participant (cf. the end of section II.C, *supra).* We are reminded of Anderson's virtual acknowledgment of difficulties in his interpretation when Gilby says, "St. Thomas seems to have been in two minds about a multitude actually infinite" (Gilby, "Introduction," 84a); see also Sertillanges, "Sur cette question de la possibilite d'un infini actuel, saint Thomas semble avoir hesite toute sa vie." See also Anderson, *The Cause of Being,* 95-96 and 101-2.

Anderson's chapter is noteworthy as constituting the most thorough and profound study to fall under "Jamieson" (and, indeed, to be found among all those we discuss). In any case others, not Anderson, hold two of the points that are "Jamieson's" (see above, note 8): (1) that Thomas was rather favorable towards the possibility of an actual infinity and (2) that the statement on actual infinity from *De Aeternitate Mundi* is particularly important. We may add, obliquely regarding the latter, that Anderson found the statement difficult or troubling. So has Joseph Owens, C.Ss.R., according to a letter he wrote me in the 1970s. The difficulty largely disappears, I believe, if we regard *De Aeternitate Mundi* as an early work, rather closely related to the commentary on the *Sentences.*

C) "McLeod"

"McLeod" is primarily Peter Marc, O.S.B. Reviewers have thrown enough cold water on his work, overall. For example, see *Rassegna di letteratura thomistica* 2 (1970): esp. 53-56; the reviewer concludes: "Aucun des arguments proposes pour changer

la chronologie traditionelle de la ScG [ne] nous semble etre valide." However, Dom Marc's tendency to use the statement on an actual infinity as a means of dating *De Aeternitate Mundi* as a late writing has appeared again in the late James Weisheipl, O.P.; see his "The Date and Context of Aquinas' *De Aeternitate Mundi,"* in L. P. Gerson, ed., *Graceful Reason: Essays Presented to Joseph Owens, C.Ss.R* (Toronto, 1983), 248. But it had appeared in Professor Anton Antweiler, too: *Die Anfangslosigkeit der Welt nach Thomas von Aquin und Kant* (Trier, 1961), 105. Antweiler saw the statement as falling in with Thomas's late teaching, notably in *Quodlibet* 12; he had slipped into Pere Mandonnet's error, however, of invoking the "argument *pro"* of the quodlibet while disregarding the "argument *contra."* The latter predominates over the former: as we have seen, on the "pro" side actual infinity would be possible in itself, but on the "contra" side it is impossible, finally, because it would violate the Creator's way of acting.

APPENDIX 2

Our interpretation of Thomas on actual infinity and the violation of the Creator's wisdom entails a problem that we have, to a great extent, simply bypassed. For Thomas, God's being able to know any supposed actual infinity by no means necessarily implies that such a creation could be reconciled with his wisdom. That is true for three reasons (besides the obvious lack of identity between the idea of God's wisdom and that of his knowledge). One of them we have considered in the text of our study: creation, to conform to God's wisdom, must in some way conform to creaturely intellects.

But we have neglected these other two.

(1) *A Scriptural Reason.* As Thomas reads Scripture, God's creating according to his wisdom extends to his creating strictly "in ... measure" (Wisdom 11:20; see *STh* I, q. 7, a. 4, sc: "in pondere, numero, et mensura").

The medievals interpreted Scripture in a manner that was, in the end-notwithstanding the famous allegorical and anagogical interpretations, etc.-very literal. And Thomas, despite his superiority to his contemporaries in insight, penetration, balance, and tendency towards modernity as a scriptural commentator, by no means entirely escaped their literalness. He would expect the world to conform almost rigidly to "the balance, number, and the rule." (The Vulgate version of the passage has them in the reverse order: "in mensura, numero, et pondere"; cf. Douay-Rheims, "Thou hast ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight.") Where does that leave the modern Thomist? We can scarcely expect him to continue in the same line, for he is brought up on whole new schools of scriptural interpretation.

(2) *A Related Philosophical Reason.* Granted that the Creator is supremely wise, and must create in a wise manner, creative wisdom was defined about as narrowly as under the scriptural reason above. True, the modern Thomist must acknowledge that the material creation, not only the spiritual, reflects the divine wisdom. Thomas's envisaging of the material creation differs markedly, nevertheless, from the modern Thomist's. For the medievals as for the ancient Greeks, the cosmos was orderly, much as it appeared to common sense. Their scientists had an idea of the vastness of the universe, but no idea of the massive changes that occur in the universe and of the enormous lengths of time consumed in those changes; even species of plants and animals seemed very permanent to them. They were familiar with the predictability of eclipses, for example, and could project calendars into the future; they observed the relative regularity of the return of the constellations, but they had no idea how relative, in more senses than one, that regularity really was. Thomists nowadays, however, have new-fangled knowledge which they must integrate into their conception of the Creator's wisdom. They are brought up, again, on whole new schools of thoughts: for example, on ideas of "indeterminacy" or "uncertainty" in the micro- and macrospheres, of stupendous explosions that make up cosmic events and processes, on theories of chaos, of evolution by natural

selection (or such sub-theories, variant or not, as that of cladism, or of punctuated equilibrium) and the rest.

Such considerations have led to our disregarding, for the most part, the other two reasons. We have wished to present a doctrinal picture acceptable to modern Thomists.[28]

[28] Related articles by Thomas P. Bukowski:

"The Eternity of the World according to Siger of Brabant: Probable or Demonstrative?", *Recherches de theologie ancienne et medievale* 36 (1969): 225-29.

"An Early Dating for St. Thomas's *De aeternitate mundi,"* in *Gregorianum* 51 (1970): 271-303.

"L'influence de Thomas d'Aquin sur Boece de Dacie," in *Revue des sciences philosophiques et theologiques* 57 (1973): 627-31 (with B. Dumoulin).

"J. Pecham, T. Aquinas, et al., on the Eternity of the World," *Recherches de tbeologie ancienne et medievale* 46 (1979): 216 -21.

"Siger of Brabant vs. Thomas Aquinas on Theology," *The New Scholasticism* 61 (1987): 25-32.

"Note on Thomas's *In Physic. libr. Sum," Recherches de theologie ancienne et medievale* 56 (1989): 224-27.

"Rejecting Mandonnet's Dating of St. Thomas's *De Aeternitate Mundi," Gregorianum* 71 (1990): 763-75.

"Siger of Brabant, Anti-theologian," *Franciscan Studies* 50 (1990): 57-82.

"Understanding St. Thomas on the Eternity of the World: Help from Giles of Rome?", *Recherches de theologie ancienne et medievale* 58 (1991): 113-25.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus. Edited by THOMAS WILLIAMS. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Pp. 424. $65.00 (cloth), $23.00 (paper). ISBN 0-521-63205-6 (cloth), 0-521-63563-2 (paper).

John Duns Scotus, known to history as the Subtle Doctor, is a notoriously difficult thinker. Only recently have studies on the historical and philosophical milieu of the last quarter of the thirteenth century revealed the importance of Henry of Ghent as a significant background figure for Scotus's own philosophical positions. While traditional studies contrasted the Franciscan with Thomas Aquinas, recent work tends to focus on the texts themselves, for the most part available in critical edition, allowing for a more nuanced portrait of the thinker to emerge. Research on Scotus over the past fifty years has covered a broad spectrum of interpretive approach, ranging from studies based primarily upon a Thomistic/Scholastic or systematic reading to those that focus on the texts themselves in their historical context. In the present volume, we find articles representing both sorts of methodology. In addition, we find good basic information on several key texts along with a fine bibliography.

The introductory chapter offers a basic chronology of the little that is known about Scotus's life in a solid and clear presentation. Of particular value is the presentation and descriptive commentary on his works and a very concise listing of '.Englishtranslations now available (xv). Peter King's "Scotus on Metaphysics" opens the volume with a systematic and comprehensive study, moving from the science of metaphysics and its object (being), identity and distinctness (the formal and formal modal distinctions), to the structure of reality (the transcendentals and categories), concluding with causality (the essential order and existence of God) and particulars (matter, form, and the composite). This is an excellent beginning, since the Franciscan's position on the univocity of being has received much criticism, especially of late. While several authors in this volume refer to Scotus's position on univocity, it is King alone who notes the key connection of the univocity of being to the formal modal distinction as a safeguard for divine transcendence (56-57). The dense material presented here could easily have served as the subject for several chapters of the volume. Neil Lewis's "Space and Time" is an intriguing surprise whose inclusion appears odd at first, given the introductory nature of the volume. Nevertheless, the chapter does a good job of contextualizing Scotus's thought in light of the Condemnation of 1277 and

offers excellent information on the historical continuity of the Franciscan's philosophical insights as part of an overall reassessment of Aristotle's physics in the final quarter of the thirteenth century. Lewis argues that Scotus confronted key Aristotelian conclusions from a perspective largely influenced by his theological commitments, affirming the possibility of an intracosmic void, time without motion, and the contingency of the present. Timothy Noone's "Universals and Individuation" also offers a very good historical and textual discussion of Scotus's position on the principle of individuation. The essay presents excellent historical information, especially related to the Franciscan influences, helping to situate Scotus within his own tradition. It concludes with a careful presentation of *haeceitas,* Scotus's principle of individuation, as a moderate response to the conceptualism of Henry of Ghent and simplified ontology of William of Ware.

Calvin Normore's "Duns Scotus's Modal Theory" offers an innovative approach to multiple levels of Scotist thought, with the touchstone for all lying in modal logic. The essay ties significant insights of Scotus to their contemporary counterparts in modal logic and is quite successful in seeing logic, contingency, and freedom as refracted through a single prism. The approach enables him to take up the question of the freedom of the blessed in heaven (144) in terms of *firmitas,* rather than in terms of the position that is traditionally ascribed to him: namely, that, in heaven, God prevents the exercise of freedom (this position is claimed by other authors in this volume). Dominik Peder's contribution, "Duns Scotus's Philosophy of Language," is also an original piece. Perler argues that, though it is not overt, a philosophy of language underpins Scotus's texts, and proceeds to demonstrate this through his use of logical texts, in particular the *Peri hermeneias.* Specific attention is paid to the importance of modes of signification in Scotus as well as the activity of naming and intentionality as progressive. This article offers important references to main European secondary literature, not found in other contributions.

Two articles in the volume proceed in a more traditional, Thomist-inspired framework. In "Duns Scotus on Natural Theology," James Ross and Todd Bates present Scotus's argument for the existence of God and the demonstration of divine attributes. The chapter rightly emphasizes the *a posteriori* nature of Scotus's demonstration, despite its Anselmian similarities. The contrast with Aquinas on univocity, however, misreads Scotus's position as a reaction to analogy of proportionality (197), rather than as a critique of Henry of Ghent's position on analogy. In addition, the discussion of Scotus's position on freedom (219-23) is overly influenced by contemporary models of freedom. Despite the traditional reading of Scotus (Gilson's 1952 study seems to be the main secondary source), the article has some very good moments and moves carefully through the argument for God's existence found in *Ordinatio* I, distinction 2. William Mann's "Duns Scotus on Natural and Supernatural Knowledge of God" uses the *Ordinatio* Prologue and Book I, distinction 3 to explicate the difference between natural and supernatural knowledge. Here again, the discussion of the univocity of being (245-46) focuses on Aquinas .rather than Henry of Ghent.

Scotus's affirmation of univocity is discussed without the formal modal distinction, significant in the analysis of *ens infinitum* as the most accurate concept of God. Given the title of this article, an analysis of the controversy between philosophers and theologians depicted and critiqued by Scotus himself in the Prologue would have provided a suitable foundation for just the sort of clarification the author was trying to achieve.

A better use of Aquinas as touchstone for Scotus appears in Richard Cross's "Philosophy of Mind." The author presents Scotus's approach to Aquinas's position on the immateriality of the soul, as it appears in *Ordinatio* IV, distinction 43, where he accepts the position, and in *Quodlibet Question* 9, where he critiques it. The discussion moves from the domain of abstract mental content to the soul as immaterial substance. Overall, Cross offers a dear and helpful presentation (with very good notes), tying Scotus's position to that of Henry of Ghent and the post-1277 discussion. Robert Pasnau's "Cognition" takes up the topic of intuitive cognition (conspicuous by its absence thus far in the volume), arguing that Scotus is no innovator but that he is valuable for his "penetrating analysis of the field as it stood at the end of the thirteenth century." (285) After a helpful overview of Aristotelian abstractive theories operative in the high middle ages, Pasnau refers to intuitive cognition as a form of extrasensory perception. Given the author's analysis of intuition and of Scotus's rejection of illumination (the former termed "bold" and the latter "new"), it is surprising that the article began with a denial of Scotist thought as innovative.

Hannes Mohle's "Scotus's Theory of Natural Law" begins the final section of three articles on ethics. Mohle develops the theme of practical science and Sc0tus's innovative concept of the will, arguing that Scotus's theory of natural law is foundational insofar as it provides a rational standard with content that is universal and naturally accessible. The article rightly shows that Scotus's theory is not limited to formalism with indeterminate content, but that the position on the two tables of the law *(stricte/largeloquendo)* and the reflexive act of the will *(velle/non velle)* are critical to an accurate understanding of Scotist ethics, one that "deprives the debate about voluntarism a good deal of its explosiveness" (321). Thomas Williams's "From Metaethics to Action Theory" presents a distinction between Platonic and Aristotelian perspectives on being and goodness in order to broaden the scope of Scotist thought to reveal the metaphysical backdrop at work. The opening distinction limits the options for a solution, however, when it comes to reconciling Scotist texts on happiness, goodness, and human fulfillment. The simple choice between a Platonic and Aristotelian model is insufficient for the deeper understanding the author seeks to achieve. A more fruitful approach would include the Stoic framework, present in Anselm, to unearth the deeper connections between moral and metaphysical perspectives. Along with other essays mentioned in this review, Williams's contribution presents Aquinas as the standard for ethical thought, thereby confusing an alternative approach to moral questions (that is, alternative to Aquinas) with what is deemed a "rethinking of the metaphysics of goodness" (343). The author concludes with the statement that Scotus "never thought

through the connection between moral and metaphysical freedom"(349). If the texts had been read according to a different interpretative principle, this conclusion might not have appeared so obvious to the author. Finally, Bonnie Kent's "Rethinking Moral Dispositions: Scotus on Virtues" offers a concise presentation of the issues surrounding the Christian discussion of Aristotelian ethics at the close of the thirteenth century. Kent presents Scotus's positions on prudence, virtues, and moral goodness in a comprehensive and textually rich manner, offering an excellent depiction of Scotus's position on natural dignity and virtue possible without divine assistance. The Franciscan's optimism reveals a central aspect of his departure from traditional Augustinian positions on nature and grace.

As noted, the essays of this volume fall into two main categories: the systematic approach, governed either by traditional Thomist positions or another systematic framework, and the historical approach, focusing largely on the texts and the historical context within which Scotus wrote. Of serious concern throughout the volume is the narrow way that the univocity of being is presented by several authors. Only King deals adequately (but too briefly) with it, tying it to the formal modal distinction and showing how Scotus safeguards language about God. It is also regrettable that no single contribution was devoted solely to Scotus's position on freedom. This topic is among the best-known aspects of Scotist thought and has historically fueled much criticism against him. Its absence from the volume may suggest to the unwary reader that a consensus on the issue has been reached. It may also reflect the analytic assumptions that inform the collection.

best balance of textual and systematic approaches is found in the original contributions of Normore and Perler. Noone's historical-textual approach is highly valuable for the wealth of information it provides. Lewis is the most forthright in tying Scotus's positions to theological commitments. It is unfortunate that, given the recurring thematic of naturaVsupernatural that appears in several contributions, the theological perspective could not have been the focus of a least one article. Scotus's theological interests appear either as points of critique or as broader contexts, rather than as representing substantive and positive contributions to his thought. Given the philosophical perspective of the series and its authors, this is not surprising. It does, nevertheless, contribute to a partial picture of the Franciscan's vision of reality.

For scholars familiar with Scotist thought, the publication of this volume is welcome. At several points, one finds original insights, valuable textual references, and excellent historical information. Nonetheless, the dangers of an overly Thomistic reading of the Franciscan cannot be overestimated. Several scholars quite well known for their work on Scotus (Dumont, Adams, Honnefelder, Boulnois) are conspicuous by their absence. Given the overall complexity of the Subtle Doctor, their textual expertise would have enhanced the collection. Those unfamiliar with Scotist thought would do well to consult the textual references and bibliography carefully and be cautious of the interpretive assumptions at work. Scotist thought is notoriously difficult and one doe$ well to heed Peter

King's caveats that any survey of the Subtle Doctor be taken with a grain of salt and that one turn to the texts themselves (57).

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Thomist Realism and the Linguistic Turn: Toward a More Perfect Form of Existence. By JOHN P. O'CALLAGHAN. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003. Pp. 368. $59.95 (cloth). ISBN 0-268-04217-9.

How are language and thought related to the world? Aristotle initiated a tradition of inquiry into this question, which has become a central problem for modern philosophy. Given that it continues to occupy some of the most talented intellects in the fields of philosophy of mind and language, one may wonder whether anything new and genuinely useful can be learned from a study of Thomas Aquinas's position on the subject. That is, can something novel and substantive be said about Aquinas's account, given the long tradition of commentary on his work? Furthermore, can a new interpretation of his views be of service to current thinking about these relationships? In *Thomistic Realism and the Linguistic Turn,* John O'Callaghan takes on the complex and ambitious challenge of accomplishing both these objectives. With some important exceptions, he manages to make a significant contribution in both of these areas.

O'Callaghan offers an interpretation of Aquinas that is simultaneously traditional and innovative. He defends a traditional interpretation of Thomas's axiom that intelligible species and concepts are not *what* we understand, but that *by which* we understand the world. Reconsideration of this traditional view is timely since recent scholarship, in particular Robert Pasnau's influential book *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge University Press, 1997) has cast doubt upon the standard interpretation of Aquinas. Pasnau argues that, despite defending a type of qualified direct realism, St. Thomas ends up treating intelligible species as the immediate objects of cognition. O'Callaghan maintains on the contrary that Aquinas rejects a representationalist conception of knowledge, and that he holds a form of extemalist realism. O'Callaghan is not the first to argue that Aquinas is an extemalist with respect to conceptualization. (Surprisingly, he does not mention Fr. John Jenkins's ground-breaking work on Aquinas's externalism.) His book does, however, give the most thorough and comprehensive defense of this position to date.

It is unfortunate for those familiar with the long tradition of reflection arising from Aquinas's work that O'Callaghan does not elaborate much on the innovativeness of his position with respect to the tradition. Aside from a brief

mention of his disagreement with the *"verbum mentis"* interpretation of Aquinas, he is vague about the status of other traditional Thomistic interpretations. Curiously, he presents the book as an attempt to advance the "Thomistic-Aristotelian tradition." We learn very little about what members of this tradition other than Aquinas have thought, and O'Callaghan's argument entails some doubt as to whether there has been a coherent tradition of reflection on this subject. While O'Callaghan's basic thesis in the book is highly plausible, his treatment of certain essential components of Aquinas's position, such as the role that sensory perception plays in judgment and the cognition of singulars, should be strengthened.

Concerning the contemporary relevance of O'Callaghan's study, critics have pointed out that its findings are substantially negative. Numerous positive elements of Aquinas's theory need to be developed more fully: the status of natural kinds, the viability of the categories of formal and final causality, the nature of the formal identity between the knower and known, the role of judgment, and the significant differences between Aquinas and contemporary externalists, among other things. At the same time, the book engages in positive consideration of some of these issues. O'Callaghan discusses how Aquinas's theory of cognition, which requires direct apprehension of the essences of natural kinds, can accommodate error, vagueness, and conceptual clarification. He also argues that St. Thomas's position provides a needed corrective to some moderns who fail to see an essential dependence of language and thought upon our immediate contact with the world. He concludes that contemporary attempts to repossess Aristotelian realism, such as John McDowell's *Mind and World,* remain captivated by a kind of dualism, and that contemporary theorists would profit from careful consideration of Aquinas's moderate realism. Indeed, one of the principal merits of O'Callaghan's approach lies in the very fact that he shows that modern theorists have by and large misinterpreted the Aristotelian and Thomistic accounts of concepts. Clearing away this misconception by itself is a worthy accomplishment and should prompt a reexamination of the "traditional" view.

The central chapters of the book have a single common purpose: to demonstrate that Aquinas is not a mental representationalist and to offer a positive account of putative mental objects as "nominalized" descriptions of mental acts. According to O'Callaghan, rejecting the false interpretation of St. Thomas requires the consideration of three theses, each of which would render him a representationalist. The first is the "third thing thesis." According to this view, St. Thomas postulates certain mental entities, intelligible species and concepts, that are the direct objects of our cognitive processes. Proponents of this thesis must explain away the claim that intelligible species are not *what,* but that *by which* we understand. Even if Aquinas denies that concepts are independent mental entities, O'Callaghan observes that he could be said to hold the "introspectibility thesis." According to this view, we are immediately aware in cognition of the introspective quality of concepts, even if concepts themselves

are identical with certain mental acts. This thesis can more easily grant Aquinas's claim that concepts are means of understanding. Thirdly, Aquinas may hold the "internalist thesis," according to which the extension or reference of our concepts is wholly determined by features internal to the mind. Even if we deny that certain intrinsically representational entities or introspective states exist in the mind, we may postulate some other internal means of making thought intrinsically representational.

The sources of the misinformed view of Aquinas's theory of cognition are treated at length in the first five chapters of the book. The first two chapters deal with the Aristotelian texts and Aquinas's commentaries. Chapters 3 through 5, which cover more recent developments, from the early modern period through contemporary work in the philosophy of language, will be of interest primarily to readers who are not familiar with recent work in the field. O'Callaghan's effort to resolve a debate about the correct interpretation of Aristotle seems tangential to his purpose of interpreting Aquinas, since Aquinas reads Aristotle through the lens of the ancient and medieval commentators. On the whole, these chapters provide a helpful preparation for the core argument of the book. O'Callaghan points out that Aristotle's "semantic triangle," which symbolizes the relationship among words, passions of the soul, and extramental reality, has frequently been misinterpreted as the original source of mental representationalism.

Commenting upon Aristotle's deployment of the semantic triangle in the *De lnterpretatione,* Aquinas affirms that spoken words conventionally 'signify' passions of the soul (which are concepts), and passions of the soul are natural likenesses of things. Strictly speaking, words do not signify concepts, because general words do not signify general things, but individual things. The relation between a word and a passion of the soul is therefore not a relation between a word and the thing it signifies, but between a word and a *"means by which"* a word signifiesindividual extramental realities. Furthermore, concepts are natural likenesses of the things words signify, but signification and similitude are different. For O'Callaghan this is a first and most important indication that concepts are not cognitional entities thrown up between symmetric relations of words to thoughts and thoughts to things. The semantic triangle does not entail a form of mental representationalism because Aquinas postulates an asymmetric relationship between words, thoughts, and things. We may then wonder why Aquinas embraces the mediating relationship between words and concepts, since the representationalist interpretation runs contrary to the conclusion that concepts are not the direct objects of cognition, but the means by which we cognize individual extramental beings. O'Callaghan argues cogently that St. Thomas's purpose for endorsing the semantic triangle is quite different. Aquinas accepts that words signify individual things, but this presents a difficulty with respect to general words. Plato made the mistake of assuming that general words referred to general things, hence general terms were ·matched in reality by universal subsistent ideas. Aquinas, on the other hand, holds fast to the notion that only individual substances exist extramentally. General words must therefore signify individual substances, but by means of concepts which provide

a universal *mode* of signification. The semantic triangle thus provides an account of how language "hooks onto the world," not a theory of private mental objects.

Chapters 6 through 8 constitute the core argument for the book's anti-representational interpretation of Aquinas. Chapter 6 considers whether concepts are "third things." O'Callaghan points out that Aquinas maintains intelligible species provide the form of an intellectual act, concerning which the concept is "the informed activity of the intellect as it grasps *res extra animam"* (168). Thus, intelligible species and concepts are not direct objects of understanding, but means by which an act of understanding something else takes place. Recognizing that there are other passages in which St. Thomas refers to species and concepts as apparent entities, O'Callaghan observes that Aquinas frequently makes conceptual distinctions for the sake of analysis of things that are not really distinct. Thus, he argues that the term 'concept' is for Aquinas a useful "nominalized" way of describing the act of understanding, rather than a reference to some independent mental entity. Having rejected intelligible species as distinct mental entities, O'Callaghan argues in chapter 7 that they are also not self-introspectible properties of mental acts. There is a tendency to think that intelligible species must be self-introspectible properties because the intellect requires an "object" abstracted from material conditions. O'Callaghan points out that there is a false hidden assumption about the nature of an "object" here. For St. Thomas the "object" of the intellectual power is not necessarily a distinct thing *(res)* or mental quality received, but the form by which the power is actuated. Color is the proper "object" of sight, but it is colored *things* that are the efficient causes of the alteration that takes place in seeing. Sensation and intellection are not literally the receiving of some thing, but the act of intellect coming to be 'informed' in a certain way. Aquinas rejects the idea that the mind can come to know individual things by receiving some abstract object or being aware of some introspectible quality. Chapter 8 completes this line of thought, arguing that for St. Thomas it is never true that concepts are individuated purely because of some internal features of the mind. O'Callaghan calls attention to Aquinas's point about the order of cognition. We are not first aware of our concepts and then of extramental things; rather we only come to know our concepts by reflection upon our awareness of extramental things. So, Aquinas rejects internalism.

A thorough assessment of the viability of each of these arguments is beyond our present consideration. We may therefore briefly consider a few significant difficulties.

Aquinas grants that intelligible species are objects of understanding in a secondary sense, because the intellect can reflect upon its own act. O'Callaghan sees no problem with this admission, since it is consistent with the claim that concepts are not "third things" in the intellect. Nevertheless, the admission does appear to imply that intelligible species have an introspectible character and perhaps representational content. This point is exploited by Robert Pasnau in his attempt to show that Aquinas does treat intelligible species as intellectual entities of some sort. Some further consideration of how intelligible species are direct

objects of understanding in the secondary sense is therefore appropriate, if O'Callaghan is to succeed in showing that Aquinas rejects any form of representational theory. This line of argument suggests another potential difficulty. O'Callaghan attributes to Pasnau a version of the "third thing" thesis, since Pasnau argues that there are three essential elements of cognition for Aquinas: the cognitive power, an object, and intelligible species. The strongest point of O'Callaghan's argument is his assertion that Pasnau has misinterpreted the causal nature of species as "principles" of cognition in Aquinas, since they are formal and not efficient causes of cognition. Pasnau does refer to species as efficient causes. Whether this fully captures Pasnau's account of Aquinas on intelligible species is uncertain, though, since he goes on to say that Aquinas denies that species are known by cognitive acts distinct from those by which we know things, and even that Aquinas opposes "representative realism." According to Pasnau, Aquinas rejects "representative idealism," or the position that we are immediately aware of *only* our mental impressions. He also maintains that Aquinas rejects a more subtle view, "representative realism," whereby we are indirectly aware of extramental realities, because we are immediately aware of the introspectible content of intelligible species. Pasnau settles upon the view that, for Aquinas, we are *immediately* aware of extrarnental reality, because we are simultaneously aware of intelligible species. Pasnau's conclusion would permit him to agree with O'Callaghan in rejecting the application of the "third thing" and "intro-spectibility" theses to St. Thomas. What Pasnau appears to hold onto is the internalist thesis that concepts are related to their objects because of certain internal features, even if those features are not what is 'immediately known': "Aquinas never calls into question that it is the external world that is cognized directly.... But he seems to explain this cognition of an external object in terms of an apprehension relationship between the cognizer and the species repre-senting that object" (Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition,* 203).

Pasnau holds onto this "act-object theory" in light of a textual analysis of a key passage in Aquinas's commentary on Lombard's *Sententiae* and some supporting texts where Aquinas refers to sensible species as the first things seen and intelligible species as the first things understood. This approach holds out the prospect of granting the dependence of cognition upon external objects, a key tenet of O'Callaghan's argument for externalism in chapter 8, while maintaining internalism and the representational theory of mind. Because of the significant challenge this line of argument poses for O'Callaghan's thesis, it is surprising that he offers no critique and alternative reading of the texts cited by Pasnau. It is certainly possible that an argument favoring O'Callaghan's position could be developed by placing these passages in a broader context. For example, in the passage Pasnau cites, Aquinas allows that the intelligible species is the first thing understood *(primum intellectum),* but as the principle *(principium)* of understanding. In a similar passage from *De Potentia* (q. 9, a. 5), Thomas reiterates that the intelligible species is the form and principle of the act of understanding, but he adds that it is not its terminus. Significantly, he also denies that both the singular extrarnental thing and the intelligible species are "first and

immediately understood" *(primo et per se intellectum).* Instead, it is the essence of the thing absolutely considered that is first understood. The apparent contradiction between these passages can be resolved by a careful consideration of the difference between the principle and terminus of the act of understanding. In *De Veritate* (q. 3, a. 2), for instance, Aquinas argues that a form can exist in the intellect as its direct object *(terminus)* or as the principle of the act of understanding. The intelligible species is the principle of the act of understanding, not its terminus. Hence it is the "first means by which understanding takes place" *(primum quo intelligatur).* When Aquinas is careful to elaborate his position fully, we find that he is not arguing that the intelligible species is the first thing understood in the sense that it is the immediate object of cognition. Rather, it is first understood in the broader sense that it is the means by which the first operation of the intellect reaches to the nature of the thing absolutely considered.

These considerations point to a further difficulty. A missing link in the book's argument is a discussion of the intellectual cognition of singulars. O'Callaghan generally restricts his treatment of conceptualization to the first operation of the intellect, which grasps the nature of an individual absolutely considered in abstraction from its individuality. Cognition of individuals requires reflection upon phantasms or sensible images. That sensible species are not mental representations, however, does not fully explain the relationship between intellection and perception. Perhaps perceptual contents become introspectible objects in the act of reflection by which the cognition of singulars takes place. One example that illustrates the need for further explanation is the case of true singular existential judgments. As Aquinas notes, truth is attained in a judgment when the intellect is able to know the conformity between the likeness of the thing known and the thing itself. In the case of singular existential judgments he argues that perception does not grasp this conformity between the thing and its act of apprehension, but the intellect does. This apparent act of comparison invites a representational interpretation. A full account of Aquinas's theory of reference thus requires some treatment of perception and judgment.

On the whole, O'Callaghan's book undertakes a worthy effort to revitalize the traditional interpretation of Aquinas's theory of cognition so that it can engage the contemporary debate about the relationship of language and thought to the world. His argument is timely, largely successful, and it makes an important contribution to the field.

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The Two Wings of Catholic Thought: Essays on "Fides et ratio." Edited by DAVID RUEL FOSTER and JOSEPH W. KOTERSI, S.J. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003. Pp. 247. $19.95 (paper). ISBN 0-8132-1302-9.

"Truth and love are conjoined wings ... for truth cannot fly without love . . . and love cannot hover without truth." So hymned St. Ephrem the Syrian. Some sixteen hundred years later, Pope John Paul II began *Fides et ratio (FR)* with the same metaphor. He likened faith and reason to "two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth." The book under review takes its title from this opening line of the encyclical. This volume joins two previous book-length collections in English on the encyclical, *Faith and Reason,* edited by Timothy L. Smith (St. Augustine's Press, 2001) and *Restoring Faith in Reason,* edited by Laurence Paul Hemming and Susan Frank Parsons (SCM Press, 2002). Of the three collections, *The Two Wings* is the most unified. The contributors share a philosophical perspective congenial to the pope's. Four of eight completed their doctoral studies in philosophy at the Catholic University of America; Robert Sokolowski's spirit broods over the essays. The book has three parts: four essays on "Doctrinal Perspectives" and four on "Historical Perspective" bookend two essays on practical "Implications." There is a summary outline and an index of topics and proper names for the encyclical, a six-page selected bibliography, and indices of topics and proper names for the book itself.

Avery Cardina"l Dulles opens the book with a masterful reading of *FR* as reframing the 1930s French debate on "Christian philosophy." He identifies three "classical positions." In the first or Augustinian/Gilsonian position, philosophy after Christ can only be Christian. The second, associated with Louvain Thomism, affirms philosophy's independence from faith. Jacques Maritain, Maurice Blondel, and Henri de Lubac represent three variants on the third position. Dulles relates these positions to the three "stances" of philosophy treated in *FR* 75-77. He locates the pope's own positions as closest to de Lubac's mediation between Gilson and Blondel. Dulles notes both the priority the pope gives to philosophical inquiry over system and his desire to put personalist anthropology at the center of a renewed metaphysics.

Delighting in the irony of a pope defending reason, Joseph Koterski reflects on how the metaphysical courage urged by the pope might play out in country, church, and college. He defends the pope's use of the language of liberal political philosophy *(FR* 24-25) in support of human dignity and solidarity. He contextualizes it in papal social thought, which he in turn correctly frames against the social atomism engendered by modern states. A more than instrumentalist view of democracy requires a philosophy of "genuinely metaphysical range" *(FR* 83). Without such a metaphysical focus, theology tends to "spiritual good feeling" without intellectual rigor and to the "dislocated philosophical rationalism that is often taught in academic theology courses" (31).

Prudence Allen's "Person and Complementarity" recalls an earlier discussion of the "problem of the act of faith" as recapitulated by Roger Aubert in 1958.

Faith is an integral human act. A dynamic philosophy of the person demands "complementarity" between the three couplets of reason and faith, philosophy and theology, and philosophers and theologians. Integral complementarity is more than fractional. It creates something new. A "new evangelization" has taken place in certain Catholic philosophical faculties, including Catholic University's. Allen urges philosophers to join theologians in a new evangelization of Catholic colleges and universities. She decries curricular separations between philosophy and theology that marginalize the latter.

As he concludes *FR,* the pope invokes Mary, Seat of Wisdom. David Meconi enlarges on this brief mention of Mary as a model for philosophers. For an understanding of the "sapiential" dimension of philosophy, this essay is central. It captures the spirit of the encyclical as a whole. Echoing maternal imagery from the history of philosophy, Mary's posture privileges awe and wonder over methodic doubt. Philosophy's openness to a reality not its own ends in the human vocation to receive God. Meconi, like Dulles, returns to the French debate on Christian philosophy (78-79). Philosophy is autonomous but not self-sufficient. Yearning for the truths of revelation is in philosophy's very nature. If contemplation and adoration of truth rather than manipulation of it is philosophy's last end, then philosophy is most deeply a search for wisdom rather than an analytic enterprise in which knowledge is finally power. Josef Pieper's *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* demonstrates that to *philosopharün Maria* is not to abandon rigor.

Bishop Allen Vigneron begins "Implications" with a programmatic *tour de force* on teaching philosophy as part of the new evangelization. He situates the pope's theological defense of philosophy in the new evangelization. To evangelize a culture is to inculturate the gospel. Philosophers must therefore be citizens rather than aliens in the city. The first evangelization produced Christendom, a culture of creation based on the truth that only one being is not a creature. It climaxed in aii unstable medieval compound from which emerged the modern self as "anti-creature." The papal strategy well into this century was to undo modernity. The Second Vatican Council's "rejection of confessional states as the only possible form of Christian culture" (103) calls for a new strategy: to evangelize modernity, to identify its emancipated self as a seed of the Word, to purify this seed as articulating the dignity of human persons as creatures, and to create a new "culture of communion." This requires a metaphysics of communion (to be is to be with) and an account of the body as a resource rather than an obstacle to communion.

David Ruel Foster argues that *FR* not only explains how the Church, as a fellow pilgrim, can enter into true dialogue, but also offers a more robust account of academic freedom than does *Ex corde ecclesiae.* Though *FR* doesn't mention academic freedom, Foster identifies four principles for its defense: the dignity of the individual, autonomy of disciplines, intrinsic rights of reason based on the existence of objective truth, and a scholar's right to search for the truth. He distinguishes first-level or personal academic freedom from second-level or communal academic freedom, the right of the community to speak for itself. He

sees the latter as built on the former such that a scholarly community must provide "for someone who wants to get off the boat, but not be cast into the sea" (122). Curricular pluralism cannot be "based on the impossibility of truth but on the impossible riches of truth" (124).

Building on a brief section in chapter 2 of *FR* (16-21), Koterski begins the "Historical Perspective" section with a reflection on faith and reason in light of biblical Wisdom literature. Solomon models the "epistemological humility" that faith offers reason. The wisdom of God can free wounded reason but the cross is such a challenge that the gain of yielding to it is often obscured. Koterski reads Wisdom literature intertextually as a philosophical debate between the quest for wisdom in Proverbs and Wisdom and the reflections on evil and death in Job and Qoheleth.

The chapters by Michael Sweeney and Timothy Quinn, on medievalism and modern philosophy respectively, engage most critically with the encyclical. *FR* presumes a reading of the history of philosophy that privileges Aquinas but not in the same way that *Aeterni Patris* had done. Sweeney pinpoints the difficulties involved in promoting a general Christian philosophy for which Aquinas is the model but that is not identical with his thought. The pope's account of reason's desire for God doesn't mention Aquinas ·but relies instead on the "erotic phenomenology" of Augustine and Anselm. *FR* does not even necessarily tie nature and metaphysics "to a philosophical starting point in the material world" (165). In refusing to identify Christian philosophy with a particular philosophy, *FR* appears to promote "a vague and ambiguous general philosophy," to sacrifice clarity for legitimate pluralism. In a series of penetrating questions (175), Sweeney asks how the pope knows, apart from specific metaphysical commitments, that Christian philosophy finds the link between faith and reason in metaphysics. The encyclical's historical argument that the modern separation of faith and reason impoverishes philosophy offers a preliminary answer. But this raises the further question of whether the encyclical imposes a medieval standard on contemporary philosophy. Since *FR's* treatment of modern philosophy is not entirely negative, Sweeney defers this last question to Quinn's essay.

Modern philosophy's "anti-theological ire" at Christianity's presumed dehumanizing effects made it emancipatory rather than sapiential from the start. With the dismantling of Aristotelian final causality, humans emerged as masters of a nonteleological nature. *FR* 46 records, in a list of six philosophical afflictions, "the wages reason paid to emancipate itself from faith" (184). Quinn divides them into three pairs as representing failures in the key areas of metaphysics, ethics, and epistemology. Reason's attempt to emancipate itself completely from extrinsic authority ends in nihilism. Quinn asks if the pope's diagnosis is "apt," presumably in the sense of "fitting." Sweeney had deferred his question to Quinn, who concludes that an answer to his own aptness question would require "the sort of careful study of the history of philosophy which *FR* recommends as an antidote to eclecticism" (189). Though Sweeney had appealed to it, Quinn doesn't deal with *FR's* lone paragraph (48) on the insights of modern philosophy. *FR* is then only a beginning, albeit an inspiring one,

Cardinal Dulles returns to clarify the continuities and discontinuities between Vatican I's *Dei Filius* and *FR*. With erudition and analytic skill Dulles maps clearly the "striking differences" (195) between the documents. Dulles likens the pope's positions on faith and reason to de Lubac's. One would do no violence to *Dei Filius* by reading it as cast in the very dualism that Blonde! and de Lubac opposed. & Dulles explains, the pope reads it canonically with Vatican II and softens the dualism. Without questioning such a reading, Dulles could have paid more attention to the seams.

Professors and students in programs that study philosophy and theology together could use this book with profit. The authors revisit the creative strains of early twentieth-century Catholic thought that flowered at the council. We need more of this latter-day *ressourcement.* At the end, however, the question that generally haunts American receptions of the pope's thought remains: How radical a critique of American culture does he intend? Prudence Allen rightly reads *FR* as a critique of business as usual in Catholic higher education, and particularly of dominant forms of academic theology. But doesn't the fragmentary and disintegrated state of our colleges and universities simply reflect our culture? Doesn't the critique need to be more radical? Most of us embody some version of the modern self Bishop Vigneron so aptly dubs the "anti-creature." How deeply into this anti-creature do we have to go to find the *semina verbi?* Vigneron's hopeful call for the evangelization of modernity makes the encyclical's diagnosis of modern philosophy's ills seem counterintuitive. He urges (104) reading the Bill of Rights together with the Bible. American Catholics from Orestes Brownson to John Courtney Murray have been doing just that for more than a century and a half. They regularly distinguish the godless French Revolution from the godly American one, and malign modern liberalism, against which the popes fought, from benign American liberalism. In the wake of such developments as *Roe vs. Wade* and two Gulf wars strenuously resisted by the pope, this Catholic version of American exceptionalism appears more and more tendentious. Except for brief references by Vigneron (103) and Quinn (183) and Koterski's insightful discussion of *FR* in the context of our country, the modern state is almost invisible in this collection. But ean we really imagine the drama of reason's separation from faith, philosophy's from theology, apart from the emergence of modern states (public) and their separation from the church (private)? Bishop Vigneron's vision for a culture of communion is inspiring. But this otherwise fine collection lacks a sense of how difficult it might be for a philosophy "of genuinely metaphysical range" to arise and flourish in the form of life we know as the United States of America.

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Liberty, Wisdom, and Grace: Thomism and Democratic Political Theory. By JOHN P. HITTINGER. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2002. Pp. 314 + .xxvi. $70.00 (cloth), $25.95 (paper). ISBN 0-7391-0411-X (cloth), 0-7391-0412-8 (paper).

Liberty, Wisdom, and Grace collects material from two decade's worth of John Hittinger's essays and reviews. The volume's subtitle may seem a bit misleading, for, while much of the content does concern Thomism and democratic political theory, substantial space is also given to issues of metaphysics, aesthetics, and education. This is, however, intelligible in light of the fact that the book's most consistent concerns are rooted in the thought of Jacques Maritain, a mentor and interlocutor Hittinger turns to throughout. Indeed the index contains more references to Maritain than to any other figure, including Aquinas. Thus, the title is not so misleading after all: when one thinks of Thomism and democratic theory one must think of Maritain as well as of Yves Simon, to whom Hittinger qlso devotes a great deal of attention.

The central problematic of the book is the contemporary political and cultural situation in the developed West. Hittinger is a fierce critic of the quest for radical autonomy that pervades our politics and that is underwritten by the reductionism and relativism of the academy: both begin with the quest for mastery of nature in Cartesian philosophy and end in the infamous "mystery passage" that is the center of the Supreme Court's 1992 abortion decision, *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (179, 197-99 with 182). He is also, however, mindful of the achievements of liberal democracy and particularly of American democracy, as interpreted especially by Tocqueville (11, 25, 52, 297). This latter thought gives Hittinger's critique a moderation and sobriety about politics that tracks his more radical questions about the metaphysical roots of the modern project.

Of the book's sixteen chapters, three could be said to constitute anchors, whose themes resonate throughout the rest of the book. The first of these, "Jacques Maritain and Yves R. Simon's Use of Thomas Aquinas in their Defense of Liberal Democracy" (chap. 3), aims to establish warrant in the writings of Aquinas for Maritain and Simon's advocacy of democratic politics. Hittinger argues that the Thomistic grounds for universal suffrage can be found in texts where Aquinas distinguishes the rule of reason over the body from the rule of reason over the appetites, the latter said to be "royal or political rule" (STh I, q. 81, a. 3, ad 2), as well as in the famous text where Aquinas distinguishes servile dominion from political dominion in his discussion of whether or not there would have been dominion in the state of innocence (*STh* I, q. 96, a. 4). Grounds for consent-based theory of political authority can be found in Thomas's statement that authority to make law is vested in a whole people or in one vested with care of the whole people (*STh* 1-11, q. 90, a. 3). Hittinger locates a ground for Maritain and Simon's championing of liberty in general and subsidiarity in particular in Aquinas's discussions of the relationship of human freedom and divine power: in one text Aquinas holds that the wife of a t:;ondemned thief can

rightly wish that his life be spared while the judge rightly wills his punishment, a difference rooted in the distinction between the divine or common good materially and formally considered, a distinction of central importance in Simon's theory of political authority *(STh* I-II, q. 19, a. 10). The second text affirms that everything is governed by the divine will, but some things are so governed immediately and others by means of some intermediate cause *(STh* I, q. 103, a. 6). Finally, Bittinger locates a Thomistic ground for the notions of equality and human rights in Aquinas's treatment of the universal character of essences considered as such, and thus of the human essence *(De Ente et Essentia,* 3.17-18).

Hittinger admits that some of these grounds are tenuous. The second, for example, used as warrant for the "transmission theory of authority," is only unambiguously suitable to this purpose when one accepts the interpretations of Cajetan, Bellarmine, and Suarez, as Maritain and Simon did. The fourth point about grounding equal human rights in a universal human essence is similarly tenuous; certainly many steps in the argument need to be supplied to get from the metaphysical point to the political conclusion. Nevertheless, Hittinger's location and discussion of these various texts is important and helpful in assessing the project of Thomistic democratic theory. Similarly important is Hittinger's noting that Simon especially thought that Thomists can be led to an advocacy of liberal democratic political institutions for prudential-historical considerations connected to the character of the modern state with its immense destructive potential (e.g., 38, 47, 49, 51, 280). It is such historical considerations, taken against the backdrop of the totalitarian politics of the first half of the twentieth century, that Bittinger sees as the essential connection between Thomas's views and those of Maritain and Simon. This perspective links the "anchor" essay to several briefer essays that introduce the thought of Maritain and Simon, as well as to the last two essays in the book, which treat Maritain's views on the cooperation of Church and State in light of the Second Vatican Council and the contributions to political thought by James V. Schall, himself an important Thomist and interpreter of Maritain and Simon.

The second anchoring essay of the volume, "The Two Locke's: On the Foundation of Liberty in Locke" (chap. 7), takes up some of these modern themes by way of an interpretive dispute over the meaning of Locke's political teaching. Bittinger pits what he calls the "new Locke" against an older view. The old view saw Locke as the founder of liberal individualism and opponent of the premodern Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition of political thought in continuity with Hobbes and is exemplified by the work of Leo Strauss and C. B. MacPherson. The new Locke, on the contrary, is a Christian thinker and advocate of natural law, who, when seen in the proper historical context, is both more connected to the premodern tradition and more relevant to contemporary liberal democratic politics than previously thought. The new Locke is associated particularly with the work of John Dunn, Richard Ashcraft, and James Tully. Bittinger uses the conflict over Locke's teaching on murder and suicide in the

Second Treatise to enucleate the dispute and then argues for a resolution on the basis of the *Essay concerning Human Understanding*. The New Lockeans emphasize Locke's statement that murder and suicide are wrong because human beings are God's property-the "Divine workmanship model"-and see in this model the theological root of his whole theory of natural law. The Old Lockeans saw the root of Locke's natural law in his statements about self-preservation, statements that require no theological premises and that link Locke with Hobbes. Bittinger thinks this latter view is correct and that it makes Locke the founder of "radical autonomy" in contemporary liberalism. Hittinger's main argument for this is the *Essay's* empiricist metaphysics, which lays the groundwork for replacing the notion of "person" with that of "self" as the locus of radical freedom and constructs a new system of natural law stripped down to a minimum of rules intended to protect life, liberty, and estate.

This interpretation of Locke and his central role in modern liberalism is connected to briefer essays on Locke's turn from virtue to utility, on the thought of the contemporary liberal theorist, David Richards, and to essays that compare the thought of Maritain, Simon, Richards, and the recent Hungarian thinker, Aurel Kolnai, on equality and human rights. In all of these discussions Locke stands for the modern turn, an essentially metaphysical rejection of the premodern tradition, while Maritain and Simon demonstrate how the premodern view remains a viable alternative even in the context of modern democratic political regimes.

The third anchoring essay, "Newman, Theology, and the Crisis in Liberal Education" (chap. 14), deals with the fragmentation in contemporary higher education and the opening it has provided to the opposed forces of scientific reductionism on the one hand and postmodern relativism on the other. The former movement is represented by E. O. Wilson's 1998 book *Consilience,* and the latter by Richard Rorty's many essays. Wilson and Rotty debated one another at the Wilson Center in Washington, D.C., in 1998, and that event incarnates for Bittinger the contemporary debate in Western intellectual life generally, but in higher education in particular. The perspective of Newman is offered as a necessary corrective to this standoff, especially Newman's thoughts about the place of theology in education. Newman argues for the presence of theology in the university as a genuine branch of knowledge without which the university's claim to universality fails; as an integrating discipline that, while respecting the autonomy of the other disciplines, provides a context for thinking about the whole; and as a prophylactic against the imperialism of any one of the specialized disciplines against the others. Bittinger thinks all of these arguments are indicative of the condition of knowledge today in the culture. Higher education has been led to an impasse ·between Wilsonian reductionism and Rortyan relativism by the exclusion of theology from colleges and universities.

This essay is connected to others treating John Paul II's encyclical letter *Fides et ratio,* Marion Montgomery's literary criticism, and Maritain's account of the intuition of being. All are linked by the connection between metaphysical realism

and theology in any adequate critical perspective on modern cultural life. The essay on Newman is particularly appropriate as a conclusion, since, for Bittinger the political theorist, the problems posed by radical autonomy in politics are mirrored in the fragmentation, reductionism, and relativism that characterize the contemporary academy. And the solutions to the political problems seem to be primarily educational and religious: reform of education in a Newmanesque direction and renewed placement of theological discourse in the public sphere seem to be Hittinger's favored remedial policies (see, e.g., 70-71, 182, 199, 260, 283). This too links Bittinger to Maritain, for whom education was a central concern. Moreover, this suggestion of a cultural treatment for political maladies seems close to the views of John Paul II.

Hittinger's essays constitute thoughtful engagements between the Thomist tradition and modernity in various arenas. That engagement can be described as a kind of cultural criticism and this itself merits reflection.. In modern times political philosophy has become a kind of cultural critique and the solutions proposed to political problems are often broadly cultural. This seems to be a direct result of democracy in so far as the triumph of democracy means that the important differences between political regimes are more cultural than political in the traditional structural sense. Hittinger's Thomism aims to provide an interpretation and grounding for democratic political practice superior to that provided by modern political philosophy. One question that deserves more reflection in this context concerns the relationship of political *philosophy* and political *theology.* Bittinger suggests that one difference between Maritain and Simon is what one could call Simon's realism about political things as distinct from what one could call Maritain's optimism. The latter spirit is not unrelated to a very high opinion on Maritain's part of the modern scientific project and its implications for human affairs generally (64, 67, 83, 148, 281, 289-90). Yet Bittinger is careful to differentiate Maritain's metaphysical thought from the metaphysics at the origins of the modern project in Descartes. This suggests that the difference has more to do with Maritain's theological thought, that is, with the contextualization of contemporary scientific and political developments in a theology of history. One can wonder just how much of Maritain's enthusiasm for democracy was related to properly theological ideas and to what extent even these theological expectations were shared by Aquinas.

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The Mystical Thought of Meister Eckhart: The Man from Whom God Hid Nothing. By BERNARD MCGINN. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001. Pp. 292. $45.00 (cloth). ISBN 0-8245-1914-0.

Over fifty years ago a young man began to read the works of Meister Eckhart in English translation. He grappled with the complexity of the writings, the paradoxes of the teachings, the seemingly outrageous unorthodox statements contained in the works of the Dominican theologian. In this present book Bernard McGinn shares with the academic community his mature understanding of the Master's mystical thought after so many years of reading the texts, pondering their message, wondering about their meaning, and being inspired by their author. This study McGinn planned to form part of volume 4 of his comprehensive series *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism.* He found the material and his own interest in this extraordinary Dominican teacher to be too comprehensive and discovered that he had to write a separate book.

As the focus of the book McGinn poses several questions: "Who was Meister Eckhart? Why were his teaching and preaching so powerful and so controversial? What was the relation between Eckhart ·the *lesemeister* and Eckhart the *lebemeister,* and between the learned Latin writings that give us access to the former and the more than one hundred sermons and handful of treatises that allow us to overhear Eckhart the preacher and 'soul friend'?" (2). He gives answers to these questions in six chapters: the first, providing an introduction to Eckhart's life and works; the second, dealing with problems of interpretation;

third, arguing for a characterization of Eckhart's mysticism as being the "mysticism of the ground"; the fourth, analyzing the preacher's sermons; and the final two chapters, presenting the main themes of Eckhart's teaching on how all things flow out from and return to the divine *grunt* (ground).

Eckhart can be investigated as *lesemeister* or *lebemeister.* Scholars study the works of Eckhart, the master of theology *(lesemeister),* the teacher of doctrine, the formulator of new modes of thinking about the Godhead, God, the Trinity, Jesus Christ, and the human person. One can also study Eckhart the spiritual master *(lebemeister)* of the Christian life, who reflects theologically on the implications of his written works on the lives of Christian believers, be they Dominican friars, novices, nuns, or lay folk. In the first chapter, McGinn rehearses Eckhart's personal background and education, considers the wide spectrum of Eckhart's Latin and German works, and reminds the reader of Eckhart's call to trial for heresy and his own defense against the charges. This functions as background for a reconsideration of the controversy over Eckhart's teachings.

In this second chapter, McGinn surveys earlier scholars such as Fischer, Flasch, Kelley, and Mojsisch, pitting them against recent critics such as Ruh, Haas, and Largier, on the interpretation of Eckhart as mystic or teacher of the mystical life. McGinn shows the unique character of Eckhart's "mystical hermeneutics"-"unique," despite his use of sources from Christian tradition, such as Augustine, and from non-Christian writers, such as Maimonides. McGinn

adamantly asserts that the Bible, as the source of truth about *the Truth,* is the first principle of Eckhart's hermeneutics. Eckhart "dehistoricizes and decontextualizes the text .into sentences, fragments, or even individual words that he then recombines with other biblical passages in a dense web of intertextuality through a system of cross-referencing that is one of the main characteristics of his hermeneutics" (27). Eckhart is concerned "with the basic opposition between inner and outer" (ibid.) in his exegesis. Precisely as biblical preacher Eckhart endeavors to "break through" or "explode" the text for its hidden meaning in order to benefit the hearer of his word, but "his word" must always be the "Word of God, which is 'God's Power and God's Wisdom' (1 Cor 1:34)" (29). McGinn concludes: "Eckhart's place in the history of Western mysticism is primarily rooted in the German preaching of the *lebemeister,* but his vernacular message cannot be understood apart from the Latin learning of the *lesemeister* who had absorbed and recast the spiritual wisdom of a millennium" (34).

The relationship of Creator and creature, God and human, has been explained in various ways throughout the history of Christian theology, and specifically as part of mysticism. McGinn rehearses the various attempts to classify and explain mystical experience. He advances "mysticism of the ground" to describe the Meister's project. He finds this a "helpful prism for understanding the special character of the mysticism of Eckhart and those influenced by him, Dominican and non-Dominican" (37). Eckhart proclaimed this new explanation of mysticism in his blunt and thought-provoking way: "God's ground and my ground is the same ground" (38). McGinn goes on to assert, "The of the ground, a form of awareness different from all other forms of experience and knowing, is the foundation of Meister Eckhart's mysticism" (ibid.).

The Middle High German word *grunt* (ground) is presented as the most appropriate breakthrough concept for piecing together mysticism from both the German and the Latin works. McGinn calls *grunt* a "master metaphor" or "explosive metaphor" that discloses its meanings in a multifaceted way that no Latin term or group of terms could express. Because of this, *grunt* becomes the very "ground" of Eckhart's mysticism. It operates as the key to the Meister's way of expressing the relationships of God and humans, Creator and creature, and the inner life of the Trinity. It explains, in a way that *Brautmystik* (bridal mysticism) cannot, how God and man are one. It seeks to explain the ancient maxim: God became man, so that man might become God. Bridal mysticism, the safer choice in explaining this union, offers an explanation of the unity and distinction involved that seems quite logical. For Eckhart, this account is wholly unsatisfying and ultimately untrue. Eckhart treads on shaky ground when he claims, as McGinn describes it, "the ground is nothing other that [sic] the 'uncreated something in the soul' *(not of the soul)"* (45). McGinn explains, "The language of the ground is meant to confuse in order to enlighten" (49).

The role of the theologian/preacher is to help to proclaim this new mystical teaching. McGinn asserts that "it is within the very act of preaching and the

ascesis of attentive listening that awareness of the divine birth taking place in the ground is attained" (53). A cycle of four sermons (Pfeiffer I-IV) showing how the eternal birth takes place in the *grunt* "contains one of the Dominican's most extensive explorations of the language of the ground" (54). McGinn calls these sermons "a vernacular *summa* of his mysticism" (ibid.). Eckhart made clear the importance of the ground when he wrote: "This [the ground] is by nature receptive to nothing save only the divine essence, without mediation. Here God enters the soul with his all, not merely with a part" (56). Eckhart insists that utter passivity of the person is the only possible preparation for this to happen. Eckhart thus explains the dynamic of union in terms of "flowing" and uses the Thomistic concept of *exitus-reditus* to describe the entire process by which the human comes forth from God and returns to God. His favorite biblical texts used to fashion this construct are the revelation of God as "I am who am" (Exod 3:14) and the creation from nothing. He moves on to the inner life of the Trinity as an exemplar of "flowing" and the "source" of all "flowing-out."

Eckhart's account of the meeting of God and human can be summarized by adverting to some of his favorite texts. "While all things held quiet silence and night was in the midst of its course, your Almighty Word, Lord, came down from heaven" (Wis 18:14). This text prophetically speaks of the Incarnation. It may also speak of the encounter of the soul with God, for such a meeting depends upon the total passivity of the soul and the gracious divine initiative to begin the union and bring it to fruition. Eckhart also favored another quotation to help image the union. "I will lead you into the desert and speak to your heart" (Hos 2:14). This was also presumably a favorite verse of St. Dominic because it is quoted in the ninth of his Nine Ways of Prayer, which speaks of the heights of contemplation. There it is used to indicate the solitude and intimacy necessary for a mystical encounter, for it is in such a place that the Word can be spoken and the believer may hear it and let it penetrate into his being. This verse has rich associations with the Exodus event. The Israelites wandered in the desert totally at the mercy and under the care of their God, being fed on manna and quail, guided by the cloud and the pillar of fire, led by God's appointed leader, Moses. The experience of Israel in the desert, as the prophets reflected on that time, becomes a fond memory of aloneness with God, a privileged meeting with their God.

McGinn also shows that "Eckhart's mysticism has an important Spirit-centered dimension" (89). Since that is so, love must play a vital role in the relationship of the Trinity and humans. "For this reason, the very same love with which the Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father must be the love by which we love God" (ibid.). He even claims that Eckhart would believe that "we are fully united to God because we *are* the Holy Spirit, the very bond of the triune God" (ibid.). Ultimately, McGinn wants to "show how God's inner life as a communion of three Persons is both the source of all that is and the way by which we find our way home" (90).

Throughout this book, McGinn shows how Eckhart is like other theologians-using phrases such as "Like any good medieval theologian"-but

he also shows how totally unique his teachings are by contrasting them to those of St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine, and others. Eckhart's basic weakness is also mentioned: "Although Eckhart analyzed the harmful effects of the fall of humanity on the order of the universe and in daily life, his fundamentally optimistic view of creation had little appreciation for the demonic power of evil" (106).

McGinn presents a fascinating exposition on the meaning of *imago Dei* first by rehearsing earlier teachings on it and then contrasting *imago* with *ad imaginem.* Eckhart's teaching radicalizes something that is already quite radical. "'If I am to know God without medium,' says Eckhart in Pr. 70, "without image, and without likeness, God actually has to become me and I have to become God'" (111). Just as in the Incarnation God underwent hominification so that humans might be deified, so for every soul God must be hominified so that the soul might be deified. This can only happen because of the *grunt.* It can only happen because of the "uncreated something" in the soul and "this uncreated something in the soul is *intellect insofar as it is intellect"* (113).

The task of the preacher was to "rouse his hearers to a new state of awareness that would lead back to the divine ground within" (114); "Eckhart basically wanted his audience ... to be so dedicated to fulfilling the will of God, so unconcerned with self, that their every action proceeds from the 'well-exercised ground' in which God and humans are one" (161).

An appendix on Eckhart's sources is a very valuable addition to the book; the notes are extremely useful and informative. The book as a whole is as clear as an exposition of Eckhart can get, profound in its simplicity and simple in its profundity. If Eckhart's teachings are true then he truly was, as he claimed, the man from whom God hid nothing.

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Josef Fuchs on Natural Law. By MARK GRAHAM. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002. Pp. 292. $49.95 (cloth) ISBN 0-87840-382-5.

Mark Graham has written a very useful book. Students now have a cogent source to help them grasp the parade of complicated journal articles and books on revisionist thought that have appeared over the last decades. Graham's book may well supersede other sources on revisionist thinking and become a standard of sorts for those interested in both the recent history of Western moral theology and a clear and fair defense of the revisionist method itself. Graham is excellent at analyzing both the strengths of revisionism as phrased by Fuchs and others,

and clearly noting its weaknesses. He has researched the critics of Fuchs as well and explicated their thinking fully and fairly. Fuchs himself is presented as groundbreaking in his move from a "nature" -centered natural-law approach to a *recta ratio* approach, but also noted is his frustrating generalized thinking and expression as he attempts to explain his method.

The key controversial point within Fuchs's method, as expected, centers around the theoretical existence or nonexistence of intrinsically evil acts. Graham invites the reader to consider this issue again as he discloses his own agreement with Fuchs on the nonexistence of such acts, known from the object alone. Graham also gives one of the clearest explanations of what revisionists do and do not hold regarding judgments about moral evil.

> Nobody [i.e. revisionists] denies that formal norms such as "be just" ... are always valid.... Nor does anyone dispute that analytic moral norms such as "do not commit murder" ... are exceptionless .... A third class of valid exceptionless norms, which articulates specific circumstances for an act to be considered wrong, also is not disputed by anyone. "Do not kill your spouse in anger or jeal.ousy." The only class of norms at issue in the contemporary controversy over exceptionless norms is that prohibiting concrete, specifiable actions in which the object chosen by the moral agent and described in ... morally neutral language is always wrong, regardless of attendant circumstances. (224-25)

This last class is the group of norms that traditional moralists would call intrinsically evil, prohibiting actions that are known to be morally wrong from the object alone (e.g., do not contracept during intercourse, do kill babies *in utero).*

In Graham's approach to the problem the real rub is to be found in the theoretical realm since many moral norms in the practical arena can be considered exceptionless. "Although one might be able to imagine circumstances in which the norm 'do not intentionally engage in sexual intercourse with someone other than your spouse' would be inapplicable, the current absence of these circumstances and the inability to foresee the emergence of these circumstances in the near or distant future means that the norm, on the practical level, should be considered exceptionless"(225). The strength of the book lies in Graham's own analysis of Fuchs and in his nuancing and applying of Fuchs's principles to current moral problems.

The book consists of six chapters in two parts. In part 1, Graham reviews the early Fuchs in his rejection of situational ethics, and in his articulation of natural law as an unwritten internal law corresponding to the demands of human nature which gives rise to norms cast in propositional form (37). Graham also deals with Fuchs's role on the papal birth-control commission in part 1. In part 2, Fuch's .new and developing views on theological anthropology, *recto ratio,*

Christian faith, and natural law are all reviewed and analyzed. Graham characterizes Fuchs's conversion as one that led him to posit that human nature is an indispensable but insufficient source for moral analysis. Nature does not disclose ethical obligation but only its own being. "Human nature indicates general human goods ... but specific knowledge of natural law requires reason to interpret and assess the concrete situation" (126). Most provocatively Graham describes Fuchs's ideas as leading to such conclusions as "salvation has no intrinsic, necessary relation to categorical actions; they might express the status of one's fundamental option ... but categorical actions are no longer directly linked to one's soteriological standing" (123).

The disconnect between one's freely chosen acts and their relation to one's salvation is of course a weighty consideration for those theologians and churchmen who reject Fuchs's approach to moral thinking. For Fuchs a person's moral standing before God is to be found in the agent's "striving," not his or her accomplishing what is objectively right. Is it really just moral effort or striving that orders one to communion with God? One is led to ask, "Doesn't actually living the moral truth have some impact upon communion with God"?

After reading this work I am convinced that Fuchs's influence on future moral theologians will be minor, even as it now wanes for certain contemporary thinkers. Graham's attempt to apply Fuchs's thought to a contemporary problem such as topsoil erosion underscores how nondescript Fuchs's method really is. Graham concludes by saying that Fuchs's "methodology not only allows for, but requires, that natural law analysis consider the manifold links, sometimes remote and subtle, between individual acts and their consequences." Whose methodology doesn't do this? Even the traditionalist has to do just this kind of analysis for the myriad of moral problems that are not considered intrinsically evil, including the problem of topsoil erosion. *Reeta ratio,* Fuchs's expression for moral deliberation that does not depend exclusively on attending to human nature, is simply the mind apprehending the truth as best it can within a context of real relationships and allegiances, guided by available analytic and synthetic mental tools. Outside of the clearly reforming principle of rejecting intrinsically evil acts, no unique approach to moral discernment has been put forth by Fuchs.

Fuchs is basically a thinker in the formal realm of moral theology. He is not a casuist in any real sense. Graham notes that Fuchs's work must be completed in normative ways. "The generality of Fuchs' presentation precludes any determinative notion of the human good" (135). Since Fuchs rejects the theory of intrinsically evil acts "nothing in Fuchs' theological anthropology, as it stands, immediately rules any moral judgment out of court" (136). This is not to say that he does not eventually get to judgment about right and wrong, but it is not really an objective judgment for others to follow !;mt simply a guideline for one to consult in any concrete situation. In the end, for Fuchs, the moralist ought to stay on the formal level of his or her craft because only the agent involved in the concrete decision can "name goods" (140). Graham, himself, finds this approach too formal and not robust enough, offering only "general moral guidance and formal human values" (ibid.).

Whether or not Fuchs has retrieved Thomas's understanding of natural law correctly-and many like John Finnis *(Moral Absolutes,* 36-37) believe that he did not-Graham's own work will, we hope, continue and his own approach to moral method become more specified. I cannot accept the arguments against the theoretical existence of intrinsically evil acts but I can welcome Graham's conclusion that

> we should regard the accumulated moral judgments synthesized in moral norms and tested over long periods of time as correct and indicative of *recta ratio.* There might arise instances ... that will reveal defects in certain ... norms and render them inapplicable in specific concrete situations, but this possibility should not influence one's practical, everyday readiness and willingness to accept received ethical wisdom as valid. (230)

One ought not normally make the hoped-for development of moral doctrine a standard of behavior, unless he or she has been anointed with some gift of prophecy. The sound pragmatic norms of the "received ethical wisdom," such as do not commit adultery, or do not kill innocent life, reflect truths that have stood the test of time.

In the final chapter, Graham charts a course for the future for those who are interested in completing Fuchs's work. The list of labor unfinished by Fuchs makes evident why so many have found his method wanting. Graham admits that Fuchs needed to develop an anthropology-indeed, he notes, "he never outlines in any detail the contents of human nature." Graham posits that the "wedding of human nature and contemporary personalism might prove to be a highly potent anthropological basis for Roman Catholic natural law theory." This has already been done by John Paul II, and other thinkers, who of course disagree with Fuchs's approach to naming moral evil. Graham also notes that there are grave problems with Fuchs' inability to set a standard for assessing the value of disparate goods. The whole approach to determining the so-called premoral values and disvalues, so central to revisionists, thereby appears "arbitrary"(245). Finally, Graham mentions the soteriological issue again, as Fuchs disengages salvation from concrete acts by placing it in the realm of striving to be good, not actually performing right actions. This move, Graham argues, removes an inherent bias against the unintelligent person in moral theology theory. Does it? Fuchs's system demands that each person not be guided by moral norms but that each

> individual moral agent whose knowledge of concrete circumstances and various premoral values and disvalues at stake allow her to discern the right course of action in the immediate situation .... By insisting that all premoral values and disvalues of an action be considered to determine its

> rightness or wrongness, whether proximate or remote, or direct or indirect, or slight or readily apparent ... Fuchs expand[s] our understanding of an action's moral import. (250)

I do not know how such complexity assists the "unintelligent" any better than the simple norm of "do not engage in sex outside of marriage," or "do not kill innocent persons," or "do not beat your spouse." How does this level the playing field and deliver a more "egalitarian" moral method?

Whether or not one accepts the revisionist school, Graham has given us a vital source of reflectioll'on the method itself which can be utilized to argue for its demise or, for those so interested, its ongoing development. If revisionists are practical absolutists in the area of intrinsically evil acts, we can continue to engage in dialogue about the theoretical level. With so much work left unfinished by Fuchs, Graham will be working hard over the next decade to complete it himself. I look forward to him developing a moral method and the conversation that ensues. Graham's take on the revisionist approach is expressed in such irenic tones one can only wonder what his voice would have contributed to lessening the shrill pitch and personal veriom during the 1970s and 1980s in American moral theological circles. Perhaps we could only have such a voice because of the passage of time. Conversation with such a partner as Graham promises to be both civil and quite productive.

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Bernard Lonergan's Philosophy of Religion: From Philosophy of God to Philosophy of Religious Studies. By JIM KANARIS. Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 2002. Pp. xii+ 200. $21.95 (paper). IBSN 0-7914-5466-5.

In this insightful study, Jim Kanaris successfully demonstrates his thesis that we should refer to Bernard Lonergan's "philosophy of religion as it is literally, as a *philosophy of religious studies,* distinguishing it firstly from his philosophy of God and secondly from his model of religion" (6). Following the historical method, he traces the emergence of Lonergan's philosophy of religion and aptly demarcates it both from his older philosophy of God and from his model of religious experience, which is more or less concomitant with his philosophy of religion. He considers the notion of religious experience as the linchpin between Lonergan's early philosophy of God and his later philosophy of religion (5; see chart, 145).

Kanaris rightly sees that Lonergan's philosophy of religion is a "foundational methodology of religious studies" (131). It plays two roles. First, its ground in cognitional theory provides a heuristic structure for research; second, it proceeds in a dialectical fashion as it critically examines actual practices in religious studies. "Dialectic is all about engaging implicit and explicit assumptions (cognitional, metaphysical, ethical, and religious) that shape methodical and methodological inquiry and their horizons" (121). Again, Lonergan's philosophy of religion is not the same thing as his model of religion. "The shift, then, is from articulating his own model to scrutinizing the philosophical assumptions of models proposed by religion scholars" (123). While the model is undoubtedly valuable, the foundational-dialectical tool offered by Lonergan is methodologically more basic.

Kanaris's complex interpretation of Lonergan is sound throughout. He shows his understanding to be nuanced as he characterizes two stages in Lonergan's development, that is, from an intellectualist stance to a position that covers the whole of human intentionality, culminating in the fourth level (the level of values and religion). He is also balanced as he does not want to exaggerate the reorientation: Lonergan's *Kehre* seems to have been more a shift than a break (11, 62, 80, 95, 98, 104). Kanaris is generally favorable to Lonergan while being aware of his limitations, for instance, the use that Lonergan makes of Heiler, which seems to have misled Lindbeck in his construing of Lonergan (111-12). He situates the issues and options within a contemporary context and shows that some of Lonergan's solutions overlap with those of other philosophers. At other times, he clarifies Lonergan's thought by contrast, for instance with Chalmers on co11sciousness (32-35). Or he elucidates with clarity the debate between Lonergan and Rasmussen (82-83). In sum, he is perfectly acquainted with the primary and the secondary literature. Readers of *The Thomist* are likely to be interested in what he says about Lonergan's Thomist side (11-13, 63, 65-66, 69, 73, 79-80).

Kanaris often introduces useful clarifications, for example, three notions of experience (24, 29-30 with a chart, and 41). Moreover, the distinction between, on the one hand, Lonergan's cognitional theory and, on the other hand, epistemology in the Cartesian manner is particularly helpful (27). Whereas cognitional theory directly derives from the selfs actual performance, most modern epistemologies endeavor logically to establish foundations. This contrasting characterization may be applied to the battle between the foundationalists and the antifoundationalists. Similarly, the difference in preoccupation and style between Lonergan's philosophy of religion and Anglo-American forms of it helps the reader to realize that the later Lonergan's work was more about phenomenology and hermeneutics than a logic disconnected from existential concerns (147-49).

In this serious, although never boring, book, it is refreshing to come across humorous remarks such as the one about Aquinas and Tolkien (12), and bold phrases such as "a whiff of leonine quality" (32, quoting Chalmers), or "conceptually incarcerating" (50).

Readers who would like to know more about Kanaris's thinking will find the list of his articles on page 184 of his book. Because it explains the main concepts elaborated by Lonergan, this study constitutes a good general introduction to several fundamental aspects of Lonergan's thought.

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