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IS UNIQUENESS AT THE ROOT OF PERSONAL DIGNITY? JOHN CROSBY AND THOMAS AQUINAS

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PERSONS ARE INDIVIDUALS that exist for their own sake, not just for the use or benefit of some other. This truth, which I shall call the principle of personal dignity, has become so much of a commonplace in our culture that there may seem no need to defend it. And yet, there is anything but consensus about its concrete implications-about which ways of treating persons are and are not consonant with their dignity. This is evident in the ongoing, sometimes acrimonious debates over such issues as euthanasia or capital punishment.

No doubt this lack of consensus has many causes, not all of which are matters for philosophy. But personal dignity itself is certainly a philosophical matter; and despite the general agreement about it, we cannot simply assume that we understand it perfectly. If we did, its implications would probably be dearer. What exactly does being for one's own sake consist in? And just what is it about persons that gives them this status? These are metaphysical questions. It belongs to metaphysics to refine our understanding of principles, by getting at the "ontology" that underlies them, their basis "in the things themselves."

Some years ago, John Crosby published a broad study of the person entitled *The Selfhood of the Human Person.*[1] The book's second chapter, called "Incommunicability," is aimed at

[1] John F. Crosby, *The Selfhood of the Human Person* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996); cited hereinafter by page number alone.

establishing personal dignity in a rigorous way.[2] Its thesis is that the dignity of persons rests chiefly upon what Crosby terms their "incommunicable selfhood." The expression is technical. But what it means, put in plain language, is nearly as much of a commonplace as the principle of personal dignity itself. It is just what it says on the back of the book: "each person is unique and unrepeatable." There is something solemn about the pronouncement. It stirs our sense of how precious each of us is.

Crosby's thesis, then, certainly has an initial appeal. Of course he is not just repeating commonplaces. His task is philosophical. It is the best effort I know to set forth this special, personal uniqueness in a precise and publicly verifiable way, and to show clearly how it makes each person to be, as he puts it, "incommunicably his or her own."[3]

In this article I wish both to draw attention to a number of very valuable points in Crosby's treatment, and to maintain that, despite these, the true basis of personal dignity must be something other than the sort of uniqueness that he proposes. I shall first try to show, partly on Crosby's own grounds, that his argument for the existence of this uniqueness is unsuccessful {sections I-IV). Then I shall argue (section V) that while the dignity of persons-their being for their own sake-does mean that they are irreplaceable in a way that other individuals are not, this irreplaceability is not a function of uniqueness; nor is it the very basis of the dignity, but rather the result thereof.

My discussion relies heavily on the metaphysics of St. Thomas. I do not believe that it is therefore alien to Crosby's way of

[2] Much of this chapter appeared previously as an article in *The Thomist:* John F. Crosby, "The Incommunicability of Human Persons," *The Thomist* 57 (1993): 403-42.

[3] In a recent paper Crosby has returned to the defense of his thesis: "A Neglected Source of the Dignity of Persons," in John F. Crosby, *Personalist Papers* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 3-32. As I read it, the paper has two main aims: first, to show that over and above common rational nature, a sufficient account of the dignity of persons must also include their incommunicability; and second, to resolve certain difficulties regarding the relation between the incommunicability and the common nature. As regards the basic argument for the existence of the incommunicability, however, the paper does not seem to add significantly to the earlier treatment. (On p. 12, n. 8, he refers us to chapter 2 of the 1996 book.) I shall not, therefore, be discussing it at any length.

thinking. On the contrary, Crosby regards Thomas as an important, if insufficient, source for the philosophy of personal dignity; and in my judgment Thomas upholds the "priority of persons" even more strongly than Crosby realizes. I do not think Crosby fully appreciates the nature or the magnitude of the difference in worth that exists, for Thomas, between persons and everything else.[4] But if we understand this difference in the way that Thomas suggests, I think we can see that uniqueness has nothing to do with it.

I. CROSBY: EACH PERSON EXISTS "AS IF THE ONLY ONE"

One very helpful facet of Crosby's discussion is the fact that he distinguishes between various types of uniqueness and shows how many of these do not constitute a basis for properly personal dignity. The most obvious of these is the uniqueness that belongs to all individual entities, as such: the fact of not being predicable of many (46f.). In this sense, although it is obviously true that every person is unique, such uniqueness confers no special value. Just as there are not and cannot be many beings that are Socrates, there also cannot be many beings that are the dog Lassie, or many that are Mount Everest, or many that are the copy of today's newspaper lying on my coffee table. But of course there are other copies of today's newspaper, just like this one. And we can at least imagine another mountain of the same size and shape and makeup as Everest, and even another dog just like Lassie. The personal uniqueness that Crosby is looking for is far removed from what we might call mere "numerical" uniqueness. It is more in the line of what we could call "formal" uniqueness, being "one of a kind."

However, as Crosby shows well, not just any way of being "one of a kind" will establish personal dignity. It is not hard to conceive sets or classes that can have only one member, but do not indicate any special value: "the last dinosaur," "the only daughter of the Smiths," "the first book written by Husserl" (65). Moreover, in each of these examples, the feature making the item

[4] See below, n. 22.

unique is quite accidental to it. There was probably nothing in the last dinosaur itself that made it have to be the last one. What we are seeking is a value that is intrinsic to the person.

Not just any unique and intrinsic value will serve. Crosby also sets aside those sorts of features that do indicate some intrinsic value, and that would be at least practically impossible to repeat, but that pertain only to the realm of abilities, achievements, and so forth: the sort of uniqueness belonging to "great personalities" (68-70). This is an important point. We do not have to suppose that every person makes a unique or outstanding "contribution" to the world-as though, if no category were overlooked, every person would find his or her way into the book of world records. Even if this were true, it would not establish the person's value as one who exists just for his or her own sake. It would only establish the value of something that the person has-some quality or work. What we are seeking is something else: the value pertaining to the very subject, the person himself or herself, in his or her sheer "selfhood." Crosby says:

> In our new personalist perspective it would not only be qualities and excellences but rather also the subject of them, the one who has them, this or that particular human being, which would stand before us as worthy, good. Now for the first time the value datum called the dignity of the human person would appear, and it would appear as rooted in incommunicable selfhood. . . . Love for other persons would also become possible for the first time, for it would now be possible to reach with our love beyond the qualities of persons and to attain to the persons themselves. (66)

What then is this "incommunicable selfhood," this properly personal uniqueness, that grounds personal dignity? Crosby sees it as the absolute version of something that is also found in qualified ways, and in diverse grades, among certain nonpersonal beings-that is, the living ones. Looking at these helps us bring it into focus (47-49).

If we observe any living thing, even a plant, we find that it has what Crosby calls a kind of "inner center" out of which it exists and operates. The living being is not just a passive bearer of "superficial" perfections, perfections that merely "happen" to it

from the outside, as in the case of the bits of paper that carry today's news. The organization and growth of a tree derive from a source within the tree itself. This source is not a bodily part "inside" the tree. It determines the very unity and order among the tree's parts and their movements. It is what once went by the name of 'soul'.

This inner center is even stronger in the case of living things that also have cognition. In these, the center itself is capable of enrichment and development. There are things "going on" in Lassie's soul (e.g., her pleasures and pains). These are what used to be called "immanent" acts, acts remaining "at the source," within the subject, from which they proceed. Through such acts, Lassie relates in much more diversified and significant ways with other beings in the world than do things that lack cognition.

When we turn to persons, we find an inner center that is immeasurably richer and deeper. Much of Crosby's book is devoted to exploring its various aspects. At this point in the book, what he wants us to observe is simply the immensity of it. There is something unconditional about it, a kind of "absoluteness" and "infinity." The idea is not unfamiliar. It is the person's "unfathomable depth," the "infinite abyss of existence" that Newman describes so eloquently (52).[5]

What requires more explanation is the connection between this idea and that of uniqueness or incommunicability. As Crosby acknowledges, it might seem as though this "absoluteness" or 'infinity" does not pertain so much to incommunicability as to another feature of the person, namely, the especially high degree to which he is a whole of his own and not just a part (50).[6] But Crosby argues that in the person wholeness and uniqueness come together. We might say that they converge at infinity. "This absoluteness or infinity seems almost to coincide. with personal incommunicability," for it means that each person has *"so strong*

[5] Crosby cites John Henry Newman, "The Individuality of the Soul," *ParochialAnd Plain Sermons* (London: Rivingtons, 1869), 81-83.

[6] We may recall how St. Thomas understands the meaning of the word 'person': it signifies "that which is most perfect" -most complete, most whole- "in the whole of nature" *(STh* I, q. 29, a 3).

a being of his own that he exists as if in a sense the others did not exist" (51; emphasis in original).

This is the crucial notion. Crosby returns to it time and again. Each person exists "as if there were no other," "as if he or she were the only one," etc. This would be the special incommunicability or uniqueness that is proper to persons, and which, unlike the other types of uniqueness, would match with their personal dignity: to exist as if there were no other. [7]

Of course Crosby does not mean that each person literally is "the only one"; it is "as if," or even (in the case of created persons) "almost" as if (248). He insists that his formula neither implies solipsism nor in any way excludes interpersonal communion (54-58). But to relate to others precisely as persons is to encounter each of them "in his or her infinity, as if he or she were the only person" (54-55). He quotes Buber on the Thou: "with no neighbour, and whole in himself, he is *Thou* and fills the heavens. This does not mean that nothing exists except himself. But all else lives in *his* light" (55). [8]

For Crosby, then, the expression "existing as if the only one," rightly understood, conveys a solid truth about persons. Particularly noteworthy is the rigorous formulation that he gives to it (49f.): namely, that persons are not subject to the "laws of finite numerical quantity."

The thought is this. The units in a number are smaller than the number, parts of a whole; and each is so much the smaller, the larger the number. But persons, in their infinity, are not lessened or relativized by any number of others. Even if the supply goes up, we might say, the value of each stays the same. In this sense, each is so great as to exist as if there were no other. Crosby takes this resistance to "numbering" quite seriously. He quotes Guardini:

> The one who says "I" exists only once. This fact is so radical that the question arises whether the person as such can really be classified, or what the classifications must be in order that man may be placed in them as a person. Can

[7] See also Crosby, "A Neglected Source of the Dignity of Persons," 16-17.

[8] The quotation is from Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 100.

we-to take an elementary form of classification--count persons? We can count *Gestalten,* individuals, personalities-but can we, while doing justice to the concept of "person," speak meaningfully of "two persons"? ... Here reason balks. (51)[9]

Crosby notes that these considerations might lead to an argument for the presence of something immaterial in the being of persons (52-53). Material things are extended in space, and so subject to the laws of finite numerical quantity. Two of them are more than one, four more than two; and if the number is very great, any single unit is practically negligible. It seems that only what is immaterial or spiritual can escape those laws.

Similarly, as regards "classification," Crosby suggests that we might look for a unique "essential content" in each human person, rather like what St. Thomas holds for in the case of the pure spirits, the angels. Just as each angel is his own species, so too, perhaps, each human person is a species of his or her own, a veritable subspecies of mankind (63-64).

II. OBJECTION: THE ONE TRUE WORLD

Clearly the analysis upon which Crosby bases his theory of the unrepeatability and incommunicability of the person contains important elements for the account of personal dignity. In my opinion, however, the decisive affirmation-that each person exists as if (or almost as if) he or she were the only one-is simply not true. Even taking into account all of Crosby's clarifications and qualifications, it does not seem to me that this is at all how personhood, and especially human personhood, presents itself. Several objections might be raised, I think. One of them comes from Crosby himself.

In a later chapter, entitled "Subjectivity and Objectivity," Crosby devotes several fine pages to what he calls the "transcendence towards a certain infinity" that displays itself in human subjectivity (161-73). This transcendence is something

[9] The quotation is from Romano Guardini, *The World and the Person* (Chicago: Regnery, 1965), 215-16.

more than the familiar transcendence of "intentional" acts (i.e., directedness toward objects). It consists in a tension toward what lies even "beyond" the objects surrounding us. Crosby describes it as a "passion for ultimacy," a "metaphysical" passion. Here (166) he cites Aristotle's famous description of the intellectual soul as "in a certain way all things."[10] He associates this transcendence with the distinctively human concern for relating to things just as they are in themselves, or in other words, the desire for truth).

Other animals, Crosby says, dwell in "environments." They do relate to other things, but only within the horizon of particular impulses and desires. By contrast, human beings dwell--or at least have an urge to dwell-in the "world," the totality of all that is. And while there may be different "environments" for different animals, he says, "there is only one world" (166).

At the same time, it is not the case that human persons can "encompass and exhaust" the totality (167). They do not master the world. The passion for ultimacy is an infinite "need" (164). Crosby might have quoted Aristotle again: the soul, by itself, is only "potentially" all things.

Crosby is pointing again, from another angle, to the person's wholeness and infinite depth.

> We can discern a "correspondence" between each person being a whole of his own and never a mere part ... on the one hand, and each person being open to the totality of all that is, on the other. That we are wholes and not parts is somehow expressed and lived whenever we inhabit the world and do not let ourselves be confined by some environment. (168)[11]

Crosby sees this transcendence toward "the world" as an eminently personal characteristic. "We could in fact 'define' personal

[10] Aristotle, *De anima* 3.8.431b20.

[11] He continues: "It is the mark of a non-person to have its whole being in some limited region of the world, whereas persons can surpass every regional limitation and live in openness to the totality. St. Thomas makes this point in arguing that God governs human beings for their own sakes *(Summa contra gentiles* III, 112); one of his atgurnents is based on the fact that the soul, as Aristotle said, is in a sense all things. He seems to mean that world-open beings can only be persons, and must be treated as persons, even by divine providence."

subjectivity in terms of our directedness to the totality; we could say that personal subjectivity is that depth of inwardness in a living being which opens the being to the absolute realm of all that is" (169). It is proof of the person's dignity (168).

I have no quarrel with this account of the human person's transcendence. It does indeed suggest some kind of affinity between the human person and the "totality of aU that is." But does it not also mean that the person is distinct from the totality, and that, in the final analysis, he is exceeded by it? Surely the implication is that the human person is, after all, some sort of part. Even if he need not be part of a mere "environment" -a part of a part, so to speak-he is at least part of the world as a whole. And he is so *qua* person. For again, this need for totality is no mere biological or emotional impulse. It is a strictly personal need.

That it is also a need for truth underscores another fact: the one world toward which it directs me is not "my" world. I do not decide its constitution. We may recall Augustine: I find the light of truth "in" me, but it is not "my" light. It is independent of me and exceeds me.

In short, it is my very personhood, with its passion for ultimacy, that convinces me that I am not the only one, not the whole world; not even almost. It convinces me that not all "lives in my light." Not even I myself live in my own light. It is surprising that Crosby does not perceive at least a tension here.

This objection may not be positively fatal to Crosby's notion of the person's existing "as if the only one." Perhaps he could find a way to resolve it. But in any case, as I shall try to explain in the conclusion, on Thomas's account of personal dignity, it is not even an objection. Furthermore, there are other, even graver objections to Crosby's account. These will be the concern of the following two sections.

IH. THE UNDERLYING ISSUE: CAN PERSONS BE COUNTED?

Crosby's crucial move, in establishing his notion of personal incommunicability, is from the infinite depth of the person to the

person's existing as if he were the only one. Is this move really valid? The argument is that insofar as a person is a kind of infinity, he escapes the laws of finite numerical quantity. His immensity makes him incommensurable with others. Crosby thus argues that each person is incomparable. Even if there are in fact many persons, they cannot, *qua* persons, be grouped together and counted as so many parts of the group. They can only, as it were, be viewed one at a time.

I would submit that it is a fallacious argument. The person's infinity does not necessarily imply that he cannot be compared with others. The implication can be avoided by doing just what Crosby suggests: thinking of the infinity as something immaterial. If we do think of it in a material way-as an infinite mass of something, an infinite extension-then indeed, we may be led to imagine something whose presence will monopolize our whole field of vision, something that will "fill the heavens" for us if we see it at alL But if it is an immaterial infinity, then this is only a metaphor. Arguing from metaphors is risky.

It is not that notions of quantity or magnitude have no proper application to immaterial things. But as St. Thomas teaches, immaterial "magnitude" is not a question of mass or extension. It is a question of perfection *(STh* I, q. 42, a. 1, ad 1). The great magnitude of the intellectual soul, for example-its capacity to "take in" all things-is not a power to eat all things. It is a power to assimilate the "forms," the truths of things. It is indeed great. Nevertheless, even if a person did succeed in containing the whole world in this way-even if he knew all truth-there would be no reason to think of him as "the only one" to do so. For unlike bodily goods, a spiritual good, such as truth, can be communicated to many subjects without being divided up *(SI'h* I-II, q. 28, a. 4, ad 2; III, q. 23, a. 1, ad 3). We do not have to vie for slices of truth about the world, even though we are many and the world is one.

Likewise, the fact that a person remains "'immense" even in the presence of others does not exclude the possibility of comparing

him, *qua* person, with others. Guardini says that reason balks in the face of counting persons. Saint Thomas does not balk at all.

To take the extreme case, Thomas thinks it perfectly reasonable to count the divine persons. Nor does he simply take the possibility of counting them for granted. In fact he faces the question of the "laws of numerical quantity" quite squarely. Against counting divine persons, it is objected that "wherever there is number, there is whole and part; so if in God there is a number of persons, then in God whole and part must be posited, which is repugnant to the divine simplicity" (*STh* I, q. 30, a. 1, obj. 4). Thomas answers with a distinction:

> number is twofold, viz. simple or absolute number, as two and three and four; and the number that is in numbered realities, as two men and two horses. if the number in the divinity is taken absolutely or abstractly, nothing excludes there being whole and part in it. And in this way it does not exist except in our understanding; for number abstracted from numbered realities is only in the mind. But if number is taken as it is in numbered realities, then indeed in creatures, one is part of two, and two of three, as one man is part of two, and two of three. But it is not so in God; for the Father is as much as the whole Trinity.[12]

This is a dense passage; it is worthwhile to spell it out a little.

Wherever there are numbered things, we can consider their number absolutely, just by itself. This does not mean thinking that the number exists just by itself. Numbers exist in reality only by being attached to things that are not numbers. Pure, unattached numbers "exist" only in the sense that they are objects of thought. The mind can entertain a number in an abstract way-mathematically-attending only to what pertains to its own *ratio* or intelligibility.

u "Ad quartum dicendum quod numerus est duplex, scilicet numerus simplex vel absolutus, ut duo et tria et quatuor; et numerus qui est in rebus numeratis, ut duo homines et duo equi. Si igitur in divinis accipiatur numerus absolute sive abstracte, nihil prohibet in eo esse totum et partem, et sic non est nisi in acceptione intellectus nostri; non enim numerus absolutus a rebus numeratis est nisi in intellectu. Si autem accipiamus numerum prout est in rebus numeratis, sic in rebus quidem creatis, unum est pars duorum, et duo trium, ut unus homo duorum, et duo trium, sed non est sic in Deo, quia tantus est Pater quanta tota Trinitas" (*Sl'h* I, q. 30, a. 1, ad 4).

In the *ratio* of a number, there is always whole and part. The intelligibility of any number includes that of a single unit, and it adds to this the intelligibility of another unit or other units. Hence, in the mathematical consideration, a unit of a number is always less than and part of the number: two units of three are always less than and part of three, and so on. And the only way to speak of whole and part in the pure number is with respect to its intelligibility.

But if we ask about whole and part in a number as it really exists, in numbered things, our question no longer concerns the mere *ratio* of the number. It concerns the things, and it has to do with their magnitude, for it pertains to the very intelligibility of whole and part that a whole be greater than any of its parts.

Even in numbered things, of course, the mathematics of the number will never positively rule out whole and part. But neither is there any law of numbers that necessitates the existence of whole and part in the things. This is so despite the fact that we first grasp numerical intelligibilities in creatures, and that the nature of creatures is such that one is always of lesser magnitude than two, two always less than three, and so on. The mathematics of the number abstracts altogether from the natures of the things numbered. It holds even when the number is eventually applied to realities of divine nature, realities in which there can be no talk of whole and part. Each one of the three divine persons is an absolutely infinite perfection, to which nothing can be added to form a greater whole. But, Thomas is saying, it is merely incidental to this that the intelligibility of "three" adds something to the intelligibility of "one."

Thomas's distinction between two senses of "number" is particularly significant. We count the divine persons, and we say that they are a certain number: they are three. But of course we do not mean that they are the pure number three. We mean that they are a number of persons, three persons. In other words, counting them does not mean treating them as abstract units. It does not at all entail losing sight of their divine personhood. It only entails

considering that each one of them has unity in himself, and that each one is distinct from the other ones.

How are they distinct? Not, certainly, as species of a genus. Each species of a genus adds its own proper perfection-its differentia-to the common nature of the genus, and it gives that nature a distinct existence. It would mean that each person is a distinct God. The existence of a number of Gods is incompatible with both the simplicity and the infinite perfection of the divine nature *(STh* I, q. 11, a. 3). Each divine person must exist, not just "as if," but really as, the one God. They are distinct from each other only by the oppositions in their interrelations.[13]

We should consider what this means: none of the persons is even conceivable without the others. It is by the relations among them that the divine persons are constituted *(STh* I, q. 40, a. 2). For the Father to exist *is* for the Son to exist; they have a single existence, that of the one God *(STh* I, q. 30, a. 4, ad 3; I, q. 42, a. 4, ad 3). If we prescind from any two of the divine persons, the third simply disappears from view.

I stress this because Crosby goes so far as to assert that from the point of view of Christian belief, since each of the divine persons has the whole perfection of the divine nature, which is absolutely infinite, each of them displays the "personal incommunicability" that he is trying to establish. He says that "each divine person has the divine nature *as if he were the only divine person"* (58; emphasis in original [see also 252]). It seems to me that from the point of view of Christian belief, this is just what cannot be said. If anything, Trinitarian theology would seem to be the most telling counterexample to the notion that a person exists "as if the only one."

Thomas does grant that the infinity of each divine person means that he is immeasurable. Only what is determined or finite can be measured (cf. *STh* I, q. 7, a. 4; I, q. 14, a. 12, obj. 3). But to number the persons, and to see each as one of many, is not to measure them. In this numbering, what is finite and measured is,

[13] On the fact that the relations do not introduce composition into the divinity, see *STh* I, q. 28, aa. 1-3; I, q. 30, a. 1, ad 2; also I, q. 42, a. 4, ad 3.

again, only the abstract number (*STh* I, q. 30, a. 2, ad 5). Moreover, while it is true that the divine persons, being immeasurable, are also incommensurable, this does not mean they cannot be compared. Things need not be finite or measurable in order to be compared. They need only have something in common, in terms of which they can be considered together. The divine persons have the divine essence in common. Thus they can be counted, and they can even be compared as to magnitude. Their magnitude, which is their perfection, is nothing other than their essence; they are one in magnitude. That is, they are equal (*STh* I, q. 42, a. 1). Thomas even says that they are one in dignity (*STh* I, q. 42, a. 4, ad 2).

IV. ANGELIC PERSONS: INFINITE IN MIND BUT FINITE IN KIND

Thomas insists often on the possibility of counting immaterial realities. To explain it, he draws another distinction concerning numbers, this time within the domain of number as found "in numbered things." On this I shall mainly be following question 30, article 3 of the *Prima Pars.*

Number in numbered things is of two very different types. One type pertains to the accidental category of quantity. It is formed by the division of "the continuous," for example, cutting a pie into a number of slices (see *STh* I, q. 50, a. 3, obj. 1 and ad 1). This type of number is found only in material things subject to the accident of extension. It can apply to immaterial beings, Thomas says, only metaphorically.

There is another type of number in things that is "transcendental," not a function of any one category. It is "metaphysical," pertaining to being as being, as "one" and "many" do (see *STh* I, q. 11, aa. 1 and 3). This type of number does not presuppose material extension in the things numbered. They need not possess the accident of quantity,[14] for there is another type of division, which is not with respect to quantity. Thomas calls it

[14] Thomas's point in *STh* I, q. 30, a. 3 is that although the threeness of the persons in God is really in God, because the persons are really distinct, the threeness is not anything really distinct from the persons themselves; it does not posit any accident in them.

"formal" division. This division is not a matter of slicing something up. It is simply the distinction existing among opposite or diverse forms.[15]

This is how not only the divine persons, but also the angels, which are subsistent forms, can be counted. Angels are highly perfect beings, the best natures in all creation. For this very reason, Thomas judges, their number must be very great *(STh* I, q. 50, a. 3).

On the other hand, of course, the situation of angelic persons is not exactly the same as that of the persons of the Trinity. In the passage quoted earlier, Thomas says that in creatures, one really is part of two, and two of three, as one man is part of two, and two men part of three. A whole multitude of creatures is always greater than any one of them. Even though individual angels are not slices of an extended mass, they are still parts of a greater, that is, more perfect, whole. This is because each of them, no matter how perfect, is essentially finite.

This point is not, I believe, in contrast with the ascription of a kind of infinity to any person, *qua* person. The infinity of persons is in the depth of their capacity for immanent activity. This capacity is what Crosby calls their subjectivity, and Thomas calls their minds. But, as Crosby himself argues in the case of humans, the person's subjectivity is something distinct from his very being or his essential identity, his "selfhood." Crosby in fact sees in this distinction a proof that a human person's selfhood is after all something finite (124-44, 266-68).

For Thomas this point holds of angels too. The angel's mind cannot be identical with his essential being, for the very reason that mind is in a way infinite, extending somehow to all that is *(STh* I, q. 54, a. 2). Absolutely speaking, according to his essential being, the angel is a finite entity. He is a creature, and no creature can have an infinite essence. That would mean that he contains in himself all the perfection of being, and this is proper to God *(STh* I, q. 7, a. 2; cf. I, q. 4, a. 2). The angel's essence is a determinate

[15] This would include the relative properties of the persons of the Trinity, which "signify in the mode of form." See *SI'h* l, q. 31, a. 2, ad 2; I, q. 39, a. 3, ad 4.

species, which is part of a determinate genus. And even the entire genus of angels is only part of reality as a whole. Only in God is essence not confined to a genus (*STh* I, q. 3, a. 5), and only there are essence and mind identical (*STh* I, q. 14, aa. 2 and 4; I, q. 54, a. 2). In a created being, the possession of mind makes for only a qualified infinity. The intellectual creature is not infinite in essence or in intrinsic perfection, but only in scope of operation.

We may also note that the fact that an angel is a species of a genus means that not even the angelic nature is incommunicable in every respect. The genus is communicable. Each angelic person is one of a kind, but he does not exist as if he were the only angel or the only angelic person. Moreover, because the angel's essential form is determined to a species of a genus, his mind does not possess its full knowledge of reality in virtue of his own form alone. It needs additional intelligible forms, ideas infused by the mind that creates the world (*STh* I, q. 55, aa. 1 and 2). Not even an angel lives entirely "in his own light."

I am dwelling on the status of angelic persons in view of Crosby's conjecture that in human persons there is something like the essential incommunicability or uniqueness of angels. Thomas does of course teach that since an angel's substance is nothing but its form, each angel exhausts its species. But since the nature of its species is something other than its mind or subjectivity, the incommunicability of its species is also something other than the infinite depth of its mind or its subjectivity. The properly personal incommunicability that Crosby is trying to establish, the person's existing as if the only one, would be rather a function of the person's infinite depth. It is this incommunicability that he is positing as the basis of personal dignity.

Thus, even if it could be shown that each human person is unique in species, like an angel, I do not see how this uniqueness would pertain directly to his or her properly personal dignity, even in Crosby's own account. The dignity has to do with the immensity of mind, its infinity. But the created person's species, whether or not it is communicable, is a strictly finite reality. It is one species among many. It is only a part of the world as a whole.

I do not mean that the incommunicability of the angelic species is totally unrelated to the angel's possession of mind. The angel's species is incommunicable because its form exists separately from matter, as a complete substance in its own right. The form is not received in matter, and so the angel's species cannot be multiplied by the division of matter. And having a nature that is not "contracted" according to the conditions of matter, a spiritual nature, is the very basis, in a substance, for the type of infinity signified by the word "mind."[16]

However, Thomas's metaphysics also allows for forms that are spiritual-not absolutely dependent upon matter for their existence-and yet are not complete substances. They are naturally ordered to being received in matter. Such forms are human souls. The spirituality of the soul is what gives human individuals powers that are "uncontracted" by matter, powers of mind. It is what makes them personal individuals. Nevertheless the substance of a human being is not wholly spiritual,[17] and, at least in Thomas's metaphysics, only a being that is wholly spiritual can be incommunicable in species. What gives a being its species is its form, but if its nature also includes matter, then there is nothing in it to prevent the existence of another being that differs from it materially but not in species. This holds even if the forms are spiritual.

The doctrine of matter as "principle of individuation" is not a popular one. I think it is often misunderstood,[18] but I shall not go

[16] See *STh* I, q. 14, a. 1; for helpful discussion, see Lawrence Dewan, O.P., "St. Thomas and the Integration of Knowledge into Being," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 24 (1984): 383-93.

[17] The very exercise of the human person's "subjectivity" or mind displays a corporeal dimension as well. For it always involves operations of the senses, and careful analysis of these shows that they are exercised by bodily organs *(STh* I, q. 75, a. 3). It is because the human mind needs the help of the senses in order to bear well upon its own object that the soul by nature needs the body *(STh* I, q. 89, a. 1). See Stephen L. Brock, "The Physical Status of the Spiritual Soul in Thomas Aquinas," *Nova et Vetera* (English edition) 3 (2005): 231-58.

[18] Crosby distances himself from" Aristotelian hylomorphism, at least in the interpretation according to which a general form and individuating matter unite to form a concrete substance" (43 n. 2). This is certainly not how Thomas interprets it. "The proper name of any person," he says, "signifies that through which that person is distinguished from all the others. For just as soul and body belong to the definition *(ratio)* of man, so *this* soul and *this* body

into its details here. I would simply note that, for Thomas, it is only because human beings do not differ in species that, in their essential dignity, they can be judged equal. Difference in species "always entails inequality."[19] It is not easy to square the thesis of the essential equality of human persons, which today is as much of a commonplace as that of their dignity, with the idea that personal dignity rests on uniqueness.[20]

V. THE IRREPLACEABILITY OF PERSONS: *BECAUSE* THEY ARE FOR THEIR OWN SAKE

None of the foregoing is meant to gainsay Crosby's ascription of a kind of infinite depth to the person. This depth is indeed in the line of what we are looking for as the basis of personal dignity. What I have tried to show is simply that it is not in itself grounds for saying that the person is unique, "as if the only one," and that essential or specific uniqueness, such as angels have, is not directly to the point. We also noted that Crosby himself rejects several other types of uniqueness. This itself leads one to suspect that uniqueness is not really to the point.

But if we demur on the person's uniqueness or unrepeatability, are we not inviting the thought that he could be replaced? That is, if we do not exclude the possibility of another person just like this one, what is to prevent us from saying that, at least in principle, this one could simply be eliminated, with the other filling in for him? Can a being be replaceable and yet exist for its own sake? Probably not. I would argue, however, that a person's being for

belong to the identification *(intellectus)* of *this* man, as it says in *Meta.* VII; for it is by these that this man is distinguished from all the others" *(STh* I, q. 33, a. 2). A little earlier he had said, "Persona igitur, in quacumque natura, significat id quod est distinctum in natura ilia; sicut in human natura significat has carnes et haec ossa et bane animam, quae sunt principia individuantia hominem" *(STh* I, q. 29, a. 4).

[19] *STh* I, q. 47, a. 2; cf. *STh* I, q. 75, a. 7. The point is that the differentiation is always by addition or subtraction of some perfection. Each species constitutes a distinct grade of being.

[20] Crosby argues that the very incomparability of persons makes them equal in dignity, by excluding the possibility that one be greater or lesser in dignity than another (Crosby, "A Neglected Source of the Dignity of Persons," 22-23). The number three is neither greater nor less than the color blue; are they therefore equal?

his own sake is independent of uniqueness; and that, for this very reason, his being irreplaceable is independent of it too.

What is really involved in being for one's own sake? Crosby's remark on the "personalist perspective" gives us a lead.[21] If we had this perspective, he said, "it would not only be qualities and excellences but rather also the subject of them, the one who has them, this or that particular human being, which would stand before us as worthy, good"; and then we could "reach with our love beyond the qualities of persons" and "attain to the persons themselves."

Saint Thomas makes this move quite explicitly. Nor for him is it simply a matter of shifting our appreciation or our love, from qualities to their subjects. Rather, he distinguishes between a merely qualified, secondary mode of love, "love of concupiscence," and the unqualified and primary mode, "love of friendship." The distinction is well known.[22] I only wish to note how strong it is and to indicate its bearing on the question of personal dignity.

To love, Thomas says, is to want good for some being, *velle alicui bonum.*[23] It thus involves two relations: a relation to the good that is wanted, and a relation to the being that the good is wanted for. The latter, the being that the good is wanted for, may be either the lover himself, or one that he takes as "another self,"

[21] Quoted above, section 1.

[22] Nevertheless, in his critical discussion of Thomas's conception of *bonum,* Crosby neglects it (177ff.}.For thorough and excellent treaonents of the distinction and of its relation to Thomas's understanding of the person, see the following studies by David M. Gallagher: "Person and Ethics in Thomas Aquinas," *Acta Philosophica* 4/1 (1995): 51-71; "Desire for Beatitude and Love of Friendship in Thomas Aquinas," *Mediaeval Studies* 58 (1996): 1-47; "Thomas Aquinas on Self-Love as the Basis for Love of Others," *Acta Philosophica* 8/1 (1999): 23-44.

[23] *STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 4. It should be noted that Thomas does not regard this as a complete definition of love *(STh* II-II, q. 27, a. 2, c. and ad 1). It only expresses the dimension of "benevolence" that is found in love. What love adds to benevolence is a certain affective union (which is an inclination toward real union) with the one loved. However, for our present purposes, it is sufficient to consider the dimension of benevolence, since our concern is not precisely with what makes persons to be lovable, but with something that this presupposes: what makes them to be for their own sake. See also the following note.

a friend.[24] To love a being with "love of friendship" is to want good for that very being.

As for the good that is wanted, this is often something other than the being for which it is wanted. This is what an object of "love of concupiscence" is: a good that is wanted for a being other than itself. The "wine-lover," for instance, wants the good of wine, not for the wine itself, but for him, and perhaps for his friends. Good qualities are also loved in this way. We want health or knowledge or virtue, but not for themselves. We do not "wish them well." Even happiness is only an object of love of concupiscence (*STh* I-II, q. 2, a. 7, ad 2). It is not happiness itself that we want happiness for. We are not wishing happiness to be happy.

However, it would be a mistake to think that in "wanting good for some being" what is wanted must always be other than the being that it is wanted for. This would make little sense. In loving a friend, one does not just want other goods to exist, for him; one surely also wants him to exist, for him. One wants his well-being. A necessary element of this is his simply being.[25] This does not mean that one also loves him with love of concupiscence; that is true only if one also wants him for another. What I mean is that the object of love of friendship, as such, is not only a being for which good is wanted, but also a good that is wanted-for itself.

[24] Crosby too (see previous note) distinguishes between personal dignity and lovableness (66-68). He finds lovableness to be in some way more concrete or particular than dignity: whereas personal dignity follows directly upon the general feature of being *a* person, a person's lovableness is a function of his being *this particular* person. Crosby therefore suggests that lovableness is even more deeply rooted in incommunicable selfhood. Thomas, I think, would agree that there is something more concrete or particular about lovableness. When lover and beloved are distinct persons, the beloved's lovableness depends not only on how he is in himself but also on a relation to the lover, the relation that gives rise to the affective union of love. This relation is the beloved's status as "another self" for the lover (see *STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 2, ad 2; I-II, q. 28, a. 1). But far from seeing this as a function of something *unique* about the beloved person, Thomas holds it to consist in some sort of *likeness* (*STh* I-II, q. 27, a. 3; I-II, q. 28, a. 1, ad 2). Indeed, is it not possible for one person to have some love for another simply because the other is a person too?

[25] Thus Aristotle says that "the man to whom one wishes good to happen for himself, one must also desire to exist" (*Eudemian Ethics* 7.2.1236b30, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle,* The Revised Oxford Translation, vol. 2, ed. Jonathan Barnes [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1959).

That which is loved with love of concupiscence is the object of only one of love's two relations, while that which is loved with love of friendship is the object of both.

It is clear then that love of concupiscence is a quite secondary mode of love. It always supposes and refers back to a love of friendship, and its object is only loved together with, and for, the object of love of friendship. Love of friendship wants the good for its own object; and the first good that it wants for its object is nothing other than the object itself. What is essential to love is that there be a being that is loved with love of friendship. What is loved with love of concupiscence is only an accompaniment.

The distinction between the object of love of friendship and the object of love of concupiscence is thus very strong. It is not just that the former is loved "more" or that it is valued as a "higher" good. It is treated as good in a different and predominant sense. Thomas goes so far as to compare the difference between the objects of the two loves, as goods, to the difference between subsistents and inherents, as beings.

'Good' is said in two ways, as 'being' is. For in one way, truly and properly, that which subsists is called a being, such as a stone or a man. In another way, that [is called a being] which does not subsist, but is that by which something is; as whiteness does not subsist, but by it something is white. So then, 'good' is said in two ways: in one way, as of something subsisting in goodness; in another way, as of the goodness of another, i.e., as of that by which something fares well. So then, something is loved in two ways: in one way, as a good subsistent; and this is loved truly and properly, viz. when we want good for it. And this love is called by many 'love of benevolence' or 'of friendship'. In another way, [something is loved] in the manner of an inherent goodness, according as something is said to be loved, not insofar as we want good to be for it, but insofar as we want good for something to be by it; thus we say that we love knowledge or health.[26]

[26] "Bonum dupliciter dicitur, sicut et ens: dicitur enim, uno modo ens proprie et vere, quod subsistit ut lapis et homo; alio modo quod non subsistit, sed eo aliquid est, sicut albedo non subsistit, sed ea aliquid album est. Sic igitur bonum dupliciter dicitur: uno modo, quasi aliquid in bonitate subsistens; alio modo, quasi bonitas alterius, quo scilicet alicui bene sit. Sic igitur dupliciter aliquid amatur: uno modo, sub ratione subsistentis boni et hoc vere et proprie amatur, cum scilicet volumus bonum esse ei; et hie amor, a multis vocatur amor benevolentiae vel amicitiae; alio modo, per modum bonitatis inhaerentis, secundum quod aliquid dicitur amari, non inquantum volumus quod ei bonum sit, sed inquantum volumus quod eo alicui bonum sit, sicut dicimus amare scientiam vel sanitatem" *(In De divinis nominibus,* c. 4, lect.

However, the comparison is not quite a strict parallel. Inherents, such as qualities, can of course only be loved with of love of concupiscence. But even many subsistents, Thomas teaches, can only be loved in this way: for example, a bottle of wine, a horse, and in fact any irrational being. We do not love these things, he says, "by reason of their substance," or for the things themselves. We love them for ourselves, by reason of some perfection that we obtain from them.[27] Even though they are subsistent beings and the good is "seated" in them, it is not in them that we want the good to "come to rest." The ones whom we want the good for are always rational subsistent beings, that is, persons.

In order to explain this, Thomas looks more closely at what it is to want a good for someone in the way that love of friendship does.[28] What love of friendship wants is not just that the good be "in" or "near" the one loved. One might want that for a horse. Rather, it wants the one loved to "have" the good, in a specific sense of "have." It wants him to be in control of its exercise. That is, the handling of it shall be up to him. He is to be master of its use. (This does not mean that he must be the sole master.) Not to

9 [Marietti §404]). Similarly: "id quod amatur amore amicitiae, sirnpliciter et per se amatur, quod autem amatur amore concupiscentiae, non sirnpliciter et secundum se amatur, sed amatur alteri. Sicut enim ens simpliciter est quod habet esse, ens autem seCW11dumquid quod est in alio; ita bonum, quod convertitur cum ente, sirnpliciter quidem est quod ipsum habet bonitatem; quod autem est bonum alterius, est bonurn secundum quid" (*STh* I-II, q. 26, a. 4).

[27] "Nee est inconveniens si hoc etiam modo amemus aliqua quae per se subsistunt, non quidem ratione substantiae eorum, sed ratione alicuius perfectionis quam ex eis consequimur; sicut dicimus amare vinum, non propter substantiarn vini ut bene sit ei, sed ut per vinum bene sit nobis vel inquamurn delectamur eius sapore vel inquantum sustentamur eius humore. Omne autem quod est per accidens reducitur ad id quod est per se. Sic igitur hoc ipsurn quod aliquid amarnus, ut eo alicui bene sit, includitur in amore illius quod amamus, ut ei bene sit. Non est enim alicui aliquid diligendum per id quod est per accidens, sed per id quod est per se; et ideo oportet quidem diversitatem amorum accipere secundum ea quae sic amamus ut eis velimus bonum" (*In* De *divinis nominibus,* c. 4, lect. 9 [Marietti §405]).

zs "Non autem proprie possum bonum velle creaturae irrarionali, quia non est eius proprie habere bonum, sed solurn creaturae rationalis, quae est domina utendi bono quod habet per liberum arbitrium." (*STh* Il-ll, q. 25, a. 3; cf. *STh* I, q. 38, a. 1.) So it is not just that irrational beings ought not to be loved with loved of friendship; insofar as they are irrational, they cannot be. There is no such thing as "wishing them well" (or, for that matter, wishing them ill). Aristotle touches upon the idea in the *Physics* (2.6.197a36-b22): things like happiness and good fortune and their opposites are ascribed only to beings endowed with choice.

want the good for someone in this way is simply not to love him with love of friendship.[29] But only individuals endowed with freedom of decision can control the use of things. In other words, only they are even capable of "having" the good. And the root of free decision is nothing other than mind or intellect, the person's "infinite depth" (*STh* I, q. 83, a. 1).

There is a special affinity between intellectual beings and the good. All things exhibit some tendency to the good, Thomas says, but the beings endowed with intellect are the ones that are inclined to it most perfectly and properly, with the kind of inclination called "will."[30] This is because they can grasp it in an absolute or unconditional way, according to its "universal *ratio.*" They alone can relate to the very goodness of what is good, responding to it in a way that is fully proportionate to it. In other words, only in a person does the good finds a true home for itself, one to whom it can really "belong." If goods did not exist for persons, we might almost say, it could only be because there is nothing for which anything exists at all. There would be nothing in which the good could come to rest or function as a true goal. The good itself would be pointless-no good. Another chapter of

[29] It might seem that one can have love of friendship for someone without wanting him to control the use of the good that one wants for him: for example, when a mother wants medicine for her infant. But this is only a temporary situation. What she ultimately wants, if she does love him with love of friendship, is that he eventually grow up and have his life in his own hands.

[30] *Sl"h* I, q. 59, a. 1. Like created intellect, created will is always distinct from its subject's essence, because it extends to a good that exceeds the subject's own substantial being (*STh* I, q. 59, a. 2). Note however that it is still the person himself, not his mind or his will, or even his freedom, that properly "has" the good, and that the good is properly "for." Mind and will, and the freedom of will, are only qualities, powers, by which the person relates to the good. The proper object of love of friendship is the person himself, the subsistent, not some quality in him. We are not seeing the person as the mere "support" for mind (like the newspaper that supports today's news); rather, we are seeing what his possession of mind implies about him. His mind too is for him to have and use; he is related to it, and to all his powers, not only as their recipient, but also as their end (see *Sl"h* I, q. 77, a. 6, ad 2). Still, the thought is not that one should love the person "rather than" his mind. "The person" includes not just the person's substance or essential constitution, but also everything else that pertains to him (see *Qucdl.* 2, q. 2, a. 2). It is not that the person, the subject, has two "parts," his substance and his mind; the substance of the person *is* the person, is himself. The "addition" of mind does not result in a different subject (see *Quodl.* 2, q. 2, a. 1, ad 1).

Crosby's book develops ideas along these very lines.[31] My point is that it is right here that we can find the root of personal dignity.

The idea is very simple. Being free, a person is able to have the good. The first good that he is fit to have is the good that he himself is. To see this *is* to see that he is for his own sake. He "belongs to himself." He is not there merely for another's use. *Liber est causa sui.*[32]

If this account is correct, then a person's being for his own sake has nothing to do with whether or not there can be others just like him. Being for his own sake means, not that he is one of a kind, but that he belongs to himself. He does so by nature. It is in this sense that he is "incommunicably his own."[33] Rather than a matter of how he compares with others, it is a matter of how he relates to his own good. It is his being such that his good-and first of all he himself-is for him to have, not just for another. (Of course it may also be for another.) And this, I believe, is the very reason for saying that he cannot be replaced.

If a person were only a good to be had by another, then indeed the existence of a second being just like him in goodness would mean that he could be eliminated. His double could serve just as well. The one whom the goodness is for would be equally satisfied. But if the person's good is for him to have, then to eliminate him would be to throw the baby out with the bath-water. No substitute could serve, because the one to be served would not be there. Even in economics, it is not strictly true that whenever a supply of goods rises, the value of each unit drops. The value drops only if the demand remains the same. With each new person, there is not only an additional good, but also a new demand for the good. And of course no one else can satisfy a person's demand for himself.

Crosby holds that unless we see a person as unrepeatable or unique we do not have a sufficient basis for judging him or her to

[31] Chapter 6: "Selfhood and Transcendence in Relation to the Good," 174-217.

[32] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.2.982b26.

[33] On "one's own" *(suum),* with an especially interesting use of *liber est causa sui,* see *STh* I, q. 21, a. 1, ad 3.

be absolutely irreplaceable. [34] It seems to me that to say this is to stay entirely in the line of things "good for another," objects of love of concupiscence. [35] It is what is good only in this sense, good for another, that would need to be unique in order to be absolutely irreplaceable. Moreover, even then, its irreplaceability would not be that of a person; it would still not exist for its own sake in the sense in which persons do. In order for an individual to have the irreplaceability of a person, what is needed is not uniqueness, but a rational nature. Between individual substances that have personal dignity and those that do not, what makes the difference is rationality. [36]

CONCLUSION: THE CREATED PERSON- PART OF THE WORLD AND REACHING BEYOND THE WORLD

Personal dignity, then, is indeed a function of the person's "infinite depth. "[37] This is not because his depth gives him a special

[34] Crosby, "A Neglected Source of the Dignity of Persons," 9-13. He is looking for a way to respond to arguments of the kind proposed by Peter Singer.

[35] What I am suggesting is well illustrated by this statement: "When Socrates died, a hole was left in the world, such that no subsequent person could possibly fill it" (ibid., 11.) True or not, this is looking upon Socrates from the standpoint of what his existence contributes to something other than himself-the world. Indeed it is looking upon him as a part of the world. I am not at all objecting to this way of considering Socrates. I am only saying that it is other than the consideration in which we see Socrates as existing for Socrates himself.

[36] This is not to say that abstract rational nature itself is the proper subject of the dignity. The proper subject is the individual that subsists in such nature. Individuality certainly does contribute to the constitution of his dignity, because only individuals subsist. What does not subsist cannot properly "have" the good. "Rational nature" only expresses the formal principle, the constitutive feature that completes the determination of the person's status as one who exists for his own sake. But while a person's individuality, and hence incommunicability, is thus very much tied to his dignity, it is not by involving something that makes him somehow "one of a kind." Of course he must be somehow distinct from the others of his kind, but he does not need to have a proper "differentia," a grade of being that is exclusively his, in order to claim personhood.

[37] This, again, is a function of the spiritual element in his substance. (See above, text at n. 16.) Intellect adds something to the nature of the soul, but it also flows from the soul *(STh* I, q. 77, a. 6). Still, the soul *is* not a "self-contained" principle of its mind. If intellectual light flows from it, this can only be explained by the fact that it in tum finds its origin in an even higher intellectual substance, one in which mind and substance are identified (see *STh* I, q. 79, a. 4, ad 5). This fits with what I am suggesting in this section: that the created person's dignity

kind of uniqueness or unrepeatability, or makes him unlike any other. It gives him dignity because it gives him a special grade of perfection-the highest in the whole of nature-and an especially perfect relation to the good. There may be others like him, but he is not solely for any other.

My conclusion is that personal dignity is quite compatible with the person's being a part of the world. That is, there is no tension between the two. We can look upon him as part of the world without ceasing to look upon him as a person.

I do not think that personal dignity would be compatible with being part of a subject that "has" the good; that is, a person cannot be part of a person.[38] But the world is not a person. This is so even though it truly exists as "the only one"-there is only one world-and even though it is a whole and in no way a part. For the world is one and whole only in the manner of an ordered multitude (*STh* I, q. 47, a. 3). It has only a qualified sort of unity and wholeness.[39] It is not a true subject, that is, an individual substance, let alone one with an "infinite subjectivity," or a mind, or free choice. The world is only, so to speak, something "good to have," not *per se* an object of love of friendship. It does not exist for its own enjoyment, even though some of its parts do. Nevertheless, although nothing in the whole of nature is more perfect than persons, there is more perfection in nature as a whole-more "good to be had"-than in the persons alone.[40]

is not something self-contained either (see below, n. 41).

[33] This is why a human soul is not a person: *STh* I, q. 75, a. 4, ad 2.

[39] It does not have the unity of a single substance. If it does have real unity, real order, this can only be because there is an extrinsic substantial unity upon which it depends. This extrinsic principle must be intellectual, because it belongs to intellect to give order. See *STh* I, q. 11, a. 3; I, I, q. 47, a. 3.

[40] In this respect-in the line of "goods to be had"-they are ordered to the world's perfection; this is no detriment to their being for their own sake, since this is a different "line." See *ScG* III, c. 112: "Per hoc autem quod dicimus substantias intellectuales propter se a divina providentia ordinari, non inteiligimus quod ipsa ulterius non referantur in deum et ad perfectionem universi. Sic igitur propter se procurari dicuntur et alia propter ipsa, quia bona quae per divinam providentiam sortiuntur, non eis sunt data propter alterius utilitatem; quae vero aliis dantur, in eorum usum ex divina ordinatione cedunt." The same sort of discussion would apply to the consideration of the person as part of a common species. A common species is not a subject or a subsistent, not "for itself' in the sense in which a person

Of course I am speaking of created persons. Although they have a certain infinity, this is compatible with their being parts of the world. This is because it is not an "absolute" infinity. I mean this in two ways. First, as mentioned in the discussion of the angels, the created person is not infinite in substance-just in himself, in his own essential being. What is infinite about a created person is his mind or "subjectivity," which is not his substance. Only the divine persons are an infinite substance, one containing in itself all the perfection of being, all goodness. This substance is indeed not part of the world, but rather its origin and ultimate end.

Second, not even the infinity of the created person's mind is "absolute." The created mind, taken just in itself, in its own reality, is finite. It is only a determinate kind of power of the soul, a particular being and good (see *STh* I, q. 82, a. 4, ad 1). It does not consist in all being and all goodness. If infinity pertains to its nature, this is because its nature is not solely what it is just in itself, an "absolute" nature; it is not a substance, but an essentially relative item. It constitutes that "infinite need" that we considered earlier. Created mind enables its subject to unite himself to all being and goodness-not so as to be what he consists in, but so as to be his object, light and nourishment for his life. Only the divine mind lives entirely in its own light. God alone is fully satisfied just by being himself.

So the infinity of created mind is in its relation to something else. Its greatness is indissociable from that of its object. The dignity that it confers is not "absolute" or self-contained. [41]

is. In the line of "goods to be had," the species as a whole may contain more perfection than any one of its members; and in this line, its members are ordered to it. This would be true whether or not they are personal beings. But if they are personal, then the perfection of their species (and of other species as well) is also ordered to them, in the line of "having the good": it is something for them to apprehend and enjoy.

[41] To consider the person's dignity is to consider his status as a "good." But the created person's dignity does not consist in his being the whole or highest good; the good as a whole, and the highest good-the origin and ultimate end of the world-transcend him. The dignity lies rather in the special relation that he has to the good (see *SI'h* 1-11, q. 1, a. 8; 11-11, q. 2, a. 3). That it is not absolute in the way that the dignity of the divine persons is (see above, n. 13) seems fitting. *As* Thomas teaches, "person" as said of God and creatures cannot be univocal; it is analogical, and is said of God in a prior and more excellent way *(SI'h* I, q. 29, a. 3).

Yet the loss in self-sufficiency is more than compensated. If we consider the created person just in himself, as to the good that is intrinsic to or inherent in him-the good that he "contributes"-we find that, however noble it may be, it is only a portion of the good contained in the world as a whole.[42] But if we consider him in relation to the perfection that he is capable of having and enjoying, we eventually find that the whole world-to say nothing of his own selfhood-is too small for him. He is *capax Dei.* Nothing short of the divine essence can fully satisfy him.[43]

It is not that he wants his own essence to become divine; if it did, he would no longer be himself (cf. *STh* I, q. 63, a. 3). But he can be raised to the rank of one who shares with the divine persons in the life of beholding and rejoicing in the divine light. This capacity constitutes an affinity with God that the world as a whole does not boast. Thomas offers a terse formulation: "the universe is more perfect in goodness than the intellectual creature extensively and diffusively; but intensively and collectively there is more of the likeness of the divine perfection in the intellectual creature, which is receptive of the supreme good."[44]

[42] It may very well be that each created person does after all make a "contribution" that no other does. Indeed it is hard to imagine why else God would create a multitude of us. My thesis is simply that this contribution would be something other than what gives the person the dignity of "a person." I would also hold that at least in the case of human persons, it could not be something that is *intrinsically* unrepeatable, even if in fact it were never to be repeated (see above, pp. 187-88}; and, that it would not be an "absolute" or substantial feature, but rather something pertaining to the person's activity-perhaps his very activity as *capax Dei.* C. S. Lewis has some profound pages in which he suggests that each person is distinctive precisely in the *way* that he or she is meant to know, love and praise God (C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* [Glasgow: Fount Paperbacks, 1977), chap. 10 ["Heaven"]).

[43] *STh* I, q. 2, a. 8, c., ad 2, and esp. ad 3: "bonum creatum non est minus quam bonum cuius homo est capax ut rei intrinsecae et inhaerentis, est tamen minus quam bonum cuius est capax ut obiecti, quod est infinitum. Bonum autem quod participatur ab Angelo, et a toto universo, est bonum finitum et contractum."

[44] "Ad tertium dicendum quod universum est perfectius in bonitate quam intellectualis creatura extensive et diffusive. Sed intensive et collective similitudo divinae perfectionis magis invenitur in intellectuali creatura, quae est capax summi boni" (*STh* I, q. 93, a. 2, ad 3). In short, the object of the created person's natural "need" is greater than what he can ever "contribute"; but it is also greater than what the whole world can contribute, and the world as a whole does not even have this "need." Still, it may seem paradoxical that a "need" constitute the greatest natural dignity. Helpful here is one of Thomas's determinations of the greatest created virtue or excellence. "Aliqua virtus potest esse maxima dupliciter, uno modo,

I do not mean that we need to know that only union with God can satisfy human persons before we can say that they are for their own sake. We can see this just by looking at how they are in themselves. But if a person's being for his own sake *is* his being fit to have the good, and if he is so by nature, then perhaps we can say that to see the dignity of persons is to catch at least a glimpse of the fact that they are the targets of the love that moves the one true world.[45]

secundum se; alio modo, per comparationem ad habentem. Secundum se quidem misericordia maxima est. Pertinet enim ad misericordiam quod alii effundat; et, quod plus est, quod defectus aliorum sublevet; et hoc est maxime superioris. Unde et misereri ponitur proprium Deo, et in hoc maxime dicitur eius omnipotentia manifestari. Sed quoad habentem, misericordia non est maxima, nisi ille qui habet sit maximus, qui nullum supra se habeat, sed omnes sub se. Ei enim qui supra se aliquem habet maius est et melius coniungi superiori quam supplere defectum inferioris. Et ideo quantum ad hominem, qui habet Deum superiorem, caritas, per quam Deo unitur, est potior quam misericordia, per quam defectus proximorum supplet" *(STh* II-II, q. 30, a. 4). Charity makes us more like God than mercy does: "per caritatem assimilamur Deo tanquam ei per affectum uniti. Et ideo potior est quam misericordia, per quam assimilamur Deo secundum simi!itudinem operationis" (ibid., ad 3). Thomas draws a similar distinction in explaining why beatitude pertains more to speculative than to practical intellect: *STh* HI, q. 3, a. 5, ad 1.

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AQUINAS'S ARISTOTELIAN AND DIONYSIAN DEFINITION OF 'GOD'

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I. AN ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION TO A FAMILIAR OBJECTION AGAINST THE FIVE WAYS

READERS OF THOMAS AQUINAS have long quarreled over how to address the inadequacy they sense in his conclusions in the 'five ways'. If, as Gilson famously held, to prove the 'Christian God' is to prove the creator,[1] why does not each of Thomas's five ways explicitly conclude to the creator of the world? Without such a conclusion, how can we be satisfied with the 'God' at which a given 'way' purportedly arrives?

Four main answers to this question can be found. First is Gilson's original answer, developed by Joseph Owens: each of Aquinas's five ways must be reinterpreted in light of his doctrine of existence so as to conclude, in fact, to the first cause of *esse*.[2]

[1] Etienne Gilson, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy,* trans. A. H. C. Downes (New York: Scribner's, 1936), 72-73: "Whoever undertakes to prove the existence of God *per ea quae facta sunt* undertakes in advance to prove His existence as Creator of the Universe; in other words he is committed to the view that ... the idea of creation is necessarily implied in every demonstration of the existence of the Christian God." See also Joseph Owens, *St. Thomas Aquinas on the Existence of God: Collected Papers of Joseph Owens, C.Ss.R.,* ed. J. Catan (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1980), 142-43, 156, 163.

[2] Etienne Gilson, *Le Thomisme: Introduction à la philosophie de saint Thomas d'Aquin,* 4th ed. (Paris: Vrin, 1942), 111, 116-17; Joseph Owens, *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1963), 341-51; idem, *St. Thomas Aquinas on the Existence of God,* 162-63, 173-86.

For Owens, then, the favored proof is that of Aquinas's *De ente et essentia,* to which all other arguments must be reduced if they are to succeed.[3] But what if such a reinterpretation fails, as Gilson himself came to admit?[4] A second answer holds that for Aquinas the proof of God's existence is only completed at some stage subsequent to the five ways, once many other properties have been established, such as that God is a personal being, or that there is only one God.[5] In the *Summa Theologiae,* for example, questions 2-11 can be seen as successively establishing a series of properties that, when taken together, comprise what it means to be God. Alternatively, according to a third commonly proposed answer, Aquinas never intended a purely philosophical proof for the existence of •cod' as such in the first place.[6] To pose the question "Does God exist?" is to presuppose a God believed in by faith; the question belongs, therefore, to theology, not philosophy.[7] Finally, the fourth answer insists that Aquinas failed in his project, and the sooner Thomists realize this fact, the better. Fernand Van Steenberghen has argued forcefully that the failure of Aquinas's five ways lies in the uncritical 'nominal definition' with which they begin, that is, in the definition of the *term* ·cod'.[8] Nominal definitions such as 'prime mover' or 'necessary

[3] Owens, *Christian Metaphysics,* 349-51. Of course, Gilson came to deny that the *De ente* contains a proof of God's existence; see Etienne Gilson, "La preuve du 'De ente et essentia'," *Doctor Communis* 3 (1950): 257-60.

[4] Etienne Gilson, *Le Thomisme,* (Paris: Vrin, 1965), 7, 93-94, 97.

[5] See especially William Lme Craig, *The Cosmological Argument from Plato to Leibniz* (London: Macmillan, 1980), 159, 170; Norman Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism: Aquinas' Natural Theology in «Summa contra gentiles I"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 85-89, 112-13, 169.

[6] See Charles J. Kelly, "The Intelligibility of the Thomistic God," *Religious Studies* 12 (1976): 347-64, at356-58; LuborVdecky,Aquinas' *Five Arguments in theSummaTheologiae la* 2, *3* (Kampen, Netherlands: Kok Faros, 1994), 19, 22, 37-38, 41-44, 47.

[7] Antonin Finili, "Is There a Philosophical Approach to God?" *Dominican Studies* 4 (1951): 80-101; Vincent Edward Smith, "The Prime Mover: Physical and Metaphysical Considerations," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 28 (1954): 78-94, at 86-89; Thomas O'Brien, "Reflexion on the Question of God's Existence in Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics," *The Thomist* 23 (1960): 1-89, 211-85, 315-447, at 364-70, 382, 389-99, 425-26, 436-38, 446-47. See also below, at nn. 47-49.

[8] Fernand Van Steenberghen, *Le probleme de I'existence de Dieu dans !es ecrits de s. Thomas t!Aquin* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Editions de l'Institut Superieur, 1980), 287-96; cf. also idem, *Dieu cache: Comment savons-nous que Dieu existe?* (Louvain-Paris: Nauwelaerts,

being' could only be convincing in a culture nursed on Aristotelian science and for whom a widespread belief in 'God' could be presupposed. In place of such definitions, Van Steenberghen examines the use of the term 'God' in our monotheist culture, in which the presence of atheism calls for a serious response. He concludes that a successful proof must arrive at no less than the 'provident creator of the universe'. To such a being, which would therefore be personal and unique, no one, theist or atheist, will refuse the name 'God'.

In my view, Van Steenberghen is correct to reorient the discussion of the five ways on the question of the nominal definition of the term 'God'. But his evaluation of Aquinas fails to take into account the only formula that Aquinas himself expressly offers for what the word 'God' properly means. The present article focuses on this formula, as well as on Aquinas's systematic justification for and development of a nominal definition that could be targeted by his proofs-a much less ambitious definition of 'God' than Van Steenberghen's. In what follows I first present Aquinas's formula, then set forth the principal elements of this systematic justification as Aquinas came to articulate them (part II). These elements are based on Aristotle's logic as it was passed on to Aquinas through the commentary tradition. Next, I sketch the stages in which Aquinas developed his definitional formula, the result of an increasingly deep reflection on Pseudo-Dionysius's account of how we know God (part III). It will become evident that today we no longer conceive of 'God' and the project of a proof of 'God's' existence as does Aquinas. Only by recognizing his simultaneously Aristotelian and Dionysian inheritance can we rediscover how to read and evaluate his five ways.

I base my reading of Aquinas on a little used passage from the *Summa Theologiae: Prima Pars,* question 13, articles 8-10, the only place in Aquinas's corpus where he systematically discusses what the divine name 'God' means. Article 8 asks, does the term 'God' name a nature? The second objection answers no, since humans cannot know the nature or essence of God. In response Aquinas writes:

1961), 27-44.

[A]ccording as we know the nature of something from its properties and effects, we can signify [the nature] by a name .... But from divine effects we cannot know the divine nature as it is in itself so that we know *what* it is; but [we can know it] only by way of eminence, causality, and negation, as was said above. And in this way the name 'God' signifies the divine nature. For, this is the name that has been imposed to signify *something that is existing above all things, which is the principleofall things and is removed from all things.* For, this is what they intend to signify> who name [something] 'God'. [10]

The italicized words here constitute the only formula in Aquinas's corpus for what the word the 'God' properly means, his only explicit and formal nominal definition of 'God' .[11] Admittedly, the *Sermon on the Creed* offers one other express formula, where in explication of the first article Aquinas writes: "We must consider what this name 'God' signifies: none other than the governor of and the one who has providence over all things *fgubernator et*

[9] The body of the same article contains parallel phrasing in discussing the etymological meaning of *'Deus'* (based on imposition *a quo* versus *ad quad):* "filhis name is imposed *from* the universal providence over things. For, all who speak about God intend to name this 'God': what has universal providence for things" ("Imponitur enim hoc nomen ab universali remm providentia, omnes enim loquentes de deo, hoc intendunt nominare deum, quod habet providentiam universalem de rebus" *[STh* I, q. 13, a. 8; all quotations from the *Summa Theologiae* are taken from the Marietti edition (Turin: Marietti, 1948)]).

[10] *STh* I, q. 13, a. 8, ad 2 (emphasis added): "Ad secundum dicendum quod, secundum quod nai:Ul"amalicuius rei ex eius proprietatibus et effectibus cognoscere possumus, sic earn nomine possumus significare. Unde, quia substantiam lapidis ex eius proprietate possumus cognoscere secundum seipsarn, sciendo quid est lapis, hoc nomen lapis ipsam lapidis naturam, secundum quod in se est, significat, significat enim definitionem lapidis, per quam scimus quid est lapis. Ratio enim quarn significat nomen, est definirio, ut dicitur in IV *Metaphysicorum.* Sed ex effecribus divinis divinam naturam non possum us cognoscere secundum quod in se est, ut sciamus de ea quid est; sed per modum eminenriae et causalitatis et negarionis, ut supra dictum est. Et sic hoc nomen Deus significat naturam divinam. Impositum est enim nomen hoc *ad aliquid significandum supra omnia existens, quod est principium omnium, et remotum ab omnibus.* Hoc enim intendunt significare nominantes Deum."

[11] Thus far I have found only two authors who link ihe formula of *STh* I, q. 13, a. 8, ad 2 with the proof of God's existence or wiih the nominal definition of 'God': Jan Aertsen, "Der wissenschaftstheoretische Ort der Gottesbeweise in der Summa theologiae des Thomas von Aquin," in *Medieval Semantics and Metaphysics: Studies Dedicated to L. M. De Rijk,* ed. E. P. Bos (Nijmegen: Ingenium, 1985), 161-93, at 180; and Timothy McDermott in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Latin Text and English Translation, Introductions, Notes, Appendices, and Glossaries* (Cambridge: Blackfriars; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964-), 2: 186-87 (appendix 4). For an exposition of the *ad secundum* and a defense of this formula as a nominal definition, see below beginning at n. 104.

provisorrerum omnium]. "[12] Still, as Thomas explains several times (including in *STh* I, q. 13, a. 8), the word *theos* is from the Greek word 'to behold' as regards its derivation *(id a quo imponitur ad significandum), not* as regards its signification *(id ad quod significandum nomen imponitur).* [13] And so, we may say, the word 'God' in Aquinas means 'provident being' by etymology, but it properly signifies 'something that is existing above all things, which is the principle of all things and is removed from all things'.

Based on this definition, I argue that for Aquinas a proof that 'God' exists need prove nothing more than that there exists an instance of:

a kind of thing that is (1) a cause of other kinds of things and that is (2.1) beyond all other kinds of things and/or (2.2) removed from all other kinds of things.

My contention is that because the *Summa's* five ways prove a being which fits this definition, each can conclude "and this all understand to be / all name God" or "and this we call God." That Aquinas has such a minimal definition of 'God' in mind in the *Summa* follows already from a preliminary inductive argument.

[12] *In Symbolum Apostolorum expositio* 1 *(Inter omnia),* in Thomas Aquinas, *Opuscula theologica,* ed. R. Spiazzi (Turin: Marietti, 1954), vol. 2.

[13] *STh* I, q. 13, a. 8, corp., obj. 1, and ad 1; *STh* I, q. 13, a. 9, ad 3; I *Sent.,* d. 2, q. 1, a. 5, *expos.* ad 1, in Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super Sententiis,* ed. P. Mandonnet and M. Moos (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929-47), vol. 1; I *Sent.,* d. 18, q. 1, a. 5, ad 6: "Deus, quamvis significet essentiam divinam quantum ad id cui imponitur, tamen quantum ad id a quo imponitur nomen, significat operationem, ut supra dictum est ex verbis Damasceni." for this etymology, see also *ScG* I, c. 44 (para.10, "Huius autem"), in Thomas Aquinas, *Opera omnia: iussu impensaque, Leonis XIII. P.M. edita* (Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1882-), vol. 13; *Compendium theologiae* I, c. 35 (II. 6-11), in Aquinas, *Opera omnia,* vol. 42; *In De Divinis nominibus,* c. 12, lect. 1 (948), in Thomas Aquinas, *In librum Beati Dionysii De divinis nominibus expositio,* ed. C. Pera (Turin-Rome: Marietti, 1950); *STh* II-II, q. 1, a. 8, ad 2. For the source of Aquinas's various etymologies, see John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa* 9 (1.9) (II. 20-24, 29-30), in *De fide orthodoxa: Versions of Burgundio and Cerbanus,* ed. E. Buytaert (St. Bonaventure, N. Y.: Franciscan Institute, 1955). For formulas that reliate etymology and proper signification, see I *Sent.,* d. 34, q. 1, a. 2, ad 2: "in nomine Dei importatur habitudo principii creantis et gubemantis"; Thomas Aquinas, *Super De causis,* prop. 3, in *Super Librum de causis expositio,* ed. H. D. Saffrey (Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1954), 18.13-14: "hoc nomen 'deus' universalem quamdam providentiam et causalitatem importat." The informal formula from !:he *Sermon on the Creed* should be read in light of these passages, although it emphasizes etymology. For imposition and etymology, see below, nn. 102, 105.

This is precisely the sort of being that each of the five ways proves. Each appeals to a different efficiently causal series to affirm a cause that is beyond all other kinds of things by being 'first' or superlative in its order, and/or that is removed from all other kinds of things by being 'unmoved', 'uncaused', etc. In support of my contention, this article shows how Aquinas's nominal definition of 'God' is consistent with and, in fact, arises out of his understanding of Aristotle's logic of existential arguments, arguments best exemplified in Aquinas's corpus by the five ways. It is not accidental that from the outset Aquinas understood this logic, as it applies to God, through a Dionysian lens. Through the lens of the threefold "negative way" to God, the so-called *via negativa,* Aquinas is able to put in focus, with a systematic account, the object of proof in the case of something whose nature we cannot properly know.

It is not necessary, then, in my view, to prove the existence of a creator or of a provident or personal being in order to draw the conclusion 'God exists'. In fact, for Aquinas, it is not even necessary to prove the existence of the *one* God. For Thomas, each of these properties can be shown, and to the extent that they are entailed by God's 'nature' as 'a cause beyond all other natures' they can be said to be already implicit in the proof of God's existence. But they need not be explicitly drawn in a proof. In this sense, I call Aquinas's nominal definition 'nonprescriptive', since it establishes only a necessary minimum and allows for a number of proofs of or 'ways of arriving at' the being thus defined. It is immediately evident how this definition puts in a new light the project of Aquinas's five ways. In my view, we have misread them by looking at the outcome that we as theists desire to prove-or that we as atheists desire to disprove-instead of at the systematic logical standards, as Aquinas understood them, for existential arguments and for their corresponding nominal definitions. This logic provides the foundational criteria for Aquinas's Dionysian definition of 'God'. To these logical standards I now turn.

II. AQUINAS'S ARISTOTELIAN INHERITANCE: THE LOGIC OF EXISTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AND THE NOMINAL DEFINITION

The *Summa Theologiae,* begun around 1266, is not the place for a resume of Aristotelian logic. Still, the five ways are preceded by a pithy statement in question 2, article 2 that contains the major logical elements presupposed by the proofs:

[W]hen cause is demonstrated through effect, it is necessary to use the effect in place of the definition of the cause in order to prove that the cause exists, and this occurs especially in the case of God. For, in order to prove that something exists, it is necessary to accept as a middle what the name signifies, not what *x* is; because the question "What is *x?"* follows upon the question "Does *x* exist?" But the names of God are imposed from effects, as will later be shown. Hence, in demonstrating that God exists through an effect, we can accept as a middle term what the name 'God' signifies.[14]

In what follows I present these logical elements under three lemmata drawn from this passage. These elements provide the ground for whatever nominal definition of 'God' the five ways use-which definition I link to the express formula quoted earlier *(STh* I, q. 13, a. 8, ad 2). Of course, evidence for these elements can be found also in other works. One finds much discussion of existential argument in Aquinas's *Exposition of the Posterior Analytics* (ca. 1271), yet two other earlier works treat this logic precisely as applied to God. A dose parallel to question 2, article 2 of the *Prima Pars,* which also serves as a prologue to a set of 'five ways', is found in the *Summa contra Gentiles* (I, c. 12), composed some seven years earlier (1259). Its discussion, as we shall see, in tum relies on extended reflections on methodology in *On Boethius's De Trinitate,* written some two years prior, perhaps in preparation for the magisterial personal works in theol--ogy. We take for granted that both *Summae* open with the

[14] *STh I,* q. 2, a. 2, ad 2: "[D]icendum quod cum demonstratur causa per effectum, necesse est uti effectu loco definitionis causae, ad probandum causam esse, et hoc ma.'Cime contingit in Deo. Quia ad probandum aliquid esse, necesse est accipere pro medio quid significet nomen non autem quod quid est, quia quaestio quid est, sequitur ad quaestionem an est. Nomina autem Dei imponuntur ab effectibus, ut postea ostendetur, uncle, demonstrando Deum esse per effectum, accipere possumus pro medio quid significet hoc nomen Deus."

discussion of whether God exists before considering what God is-or rather, what or how God is not *(STh* I, q. 3, prol.). Nevertheless, no hint of this order can be found in the first book of Peter Lombard's *Sentences* or in Aquinas's writings thereon, whether in the Parisian *Scriptum* (ca. 1252)[15] or in the Roman *lectura* (ca. 1265). Aquinas internalizes and applies to his magisterial works the methodology that he learns from the Latin Aristotle, from the commentary tradition, especially from Grosseteste, from his own teacher Albert, and from others at Naples and Paris. I present the evidence for Aquinas's appropriation of this methodology from his works, together with the available commentators, where relevant. As we shall see, in *On Boethius's De Trinitate,* question 6, article 3, Aquinas couples this Aristotelian methodology as applied to the immaterial with Dionysius's *via negativa,* and on this foundation he subsequently develops his unique formula for 'God'.

A) "The Question What Is x?' Follows upon the Question 'Does x Exist?,,,

Posterior Analytics 2 opens by taking up four questions that generate 'scientific' reasoning, questions that chapter 2 reduces to the principal causal inquiry, 'what *isx?'* Still, this principal inquiry has a prior condition. One cannot investigate the essence of 'nothing', says Aristotle, that is, of something that is not already known to exist *(Post. Anal.* 2.7.92b5-8; 2.8.93a16-20, 27; 2.J0.93b33).[16] For him, we properly have no knowledge of a

[15] Nevertheless, the *Scriptum* does show evidence of the relevant logic; see below, nn. 19, 21, 27, 37.

[16] Aquinas holds that if something does not exist, its essence cannot be known-and as corollaries, that if something's essence is known, it must already be known to exist, and that it is impossible to know *what* something is if one does not know *that* it exists: "[Q]uia *necesse* est quod quicunque scit 'quod quid est esse' hominis uel cuiuscunque alterius rei, quod sciat rem illam esse. Quia enim non entis non est aliqua quiditas uel essencia, *de eo quod non est nullus* potest scire 'quod quid est,' set potest scire significationem nominis, uel rationem ex pluribus nominibus compositam, sicut potest aliquis scire quid significat hoc nomen *'tragelaphus'* uel *'yrcoceruus'* (quod idem est), quia significat quoddam animal compositum ex yrco et ceruo; set *inpossibile est* sciri 'quod quid est' yrcocerui, quia nichil est tale in rerum natura" (fhomas Aquinas, II *Post. Anal.,* c. 7, lect. *6* [ll. 14-26], in Aquinas, *Opera omnia,* vol.

thing or of an essence unless we first know that it exists (cf. *Post. Anal.* 1.1.71a27-71b5; 2.8.93a20-21).[17] Aristotle's logic, unlike contemporary symbolic logic, is wedded to a correspondence theory of truth grounded in extramental reality.[18] It follows, as for our first lemma, that the question *an sit?*, 'does *x* exist?', is prior to the question *quid sit?*, 'what is *x?' (Post. Anal.* 2.1-2.89b32-90a9; 2.8.93a17-22). This methodological principle is found in an objection even in Aquinas's earliest work, the *Scriptum on the Sentences.*[19] And so, continues Aristotle in the *PosteriorAnalytics,*

1.2•; all line numbers in references to the *F.xpositio libriPosteriorum* refer to this edition). See also, in addition to the following note, Aquinas, *VIJ.Metaphys.,* c. 17, lect. 17, (1651), in *In duodecim libros metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio,* ed. M.-R. Cathala and R. Spiazzi (Turin-Rome:Marietti,1950),commentingonMetaphys. 7.17.1041a11-16:"Secundumenim quod propter quid est idem ei quod est quid, oportet esse manifestum an est..•. Et ideo dicit, quod cum quaeritur propter quid, oportet existere manifesta entia ista duo: scilicet ipsum quia et ipsum esse, quod pertinet ad quaestionem an est. Sicut cum quaeritur ... quid est homo? oportet esse manifestum, hominem esse."

[17] That it is impossible to know *what* something is if one does not know *that* it exists, see *!Post.Anal.,* c. 1, lect. 2 (11. 63-65); quoted below, n. 19; II *Post.Anal.,* c. 7, lect. 6 (II. 83-86; quoted below, n. 24); and II *Post. Anal.,* c. 8, lect. 7 (11. 112-24): "[D]upliciter se habet aliquis ad cognoscendum 'propter quid:' quandoque enim habemus 'quia' in nostra cognitione, et querimus adhuc 'propter quid;' quandoque *autem simul manifesta* sunt nobis utraque; tercium autem est inpossibile, ut scilicet *prius* cognoscat aliquis de aliqua re *'propter quid' quam 'quia;'* et *similiter* est de eo *'quod quid erat esse,'* quia aliquando scimus rem esse, nee tamen perfecte scimus quid sit, aliquando autem simul scimus utrumque, sed tercium est *inpossibile,* ut scilicet *sciamus quid est, ignorantes si est."* VII *Metaphys.,* c. 17, lect. 17 (1665-66): "Si ergo in quaestione qua quaeritur quid est, non oportet aliquid supponere, et aliud quaerere de illo, posset ista quaestio fieri et de ente et de non ente. Et ita quaestio quae est quid est, esset communiter facta et de aliquo et de nihilo.... [V]ero in hac quaestione, qua quaeritur quid est homo, oportet habere notum existere verum hoc ipsum quod est esse hominem (aliter nihil quaereretur) ..•. Nam esse est praesuppositum ad hoc quod quaeritur quid est."

[18] This point has been made recently by Rudi te Velde, "'The First Thing to Know about God': Kretzmann and Aquinas on the Meaning and Necessity of Arguments for the Existence of God," *ReligiousStudies 39* (2003): 251-67; see also Gyula Klima, "The Changing Role of *Entia Rationis* in Medieval Philosophy: A Comparative Study with a Reconstruction," *Synthese* 96 (1993): 25-59; "Ontological Alternatives vs. Alternative Semantics in Medieval Philosophy," *S - European Journal for Semiotic Studies,* 3.4 (1991): 587-618.

[19] II *Sent.,* d. 35, q. 1, a. 2, obj. 1; Thomas IV *Phys.,* c. 7, lect. 10 (507), in *In octo libros Physicorum Aristotelis expositio,* ed. P. M. Maggiolo (Turin-Rome: Marietti, 1950), quoted below, n. 29; *!Post.Anal.,* c. 1, lect. 2 (II. 58-71): ".. •*aliauero* suntdequibus oportet praeintelligere *quid est quod dicitur,* id est quid significatur per nomen, scilicet de passionibus. Et non dicit: 'quid est' simpliciter, set 'quid est quod dicitur,' quia ante quam sciatur de aliquo an sit, non potest proprie sciri de eo quid est (non entium enim non sunt diffinitiones), unde questio 'an est' precedit questionem 'quid est;' set non potest ostendi de

first one asks, does a god exist?, then one asks, what is a god? *(Post.Anal.* 2.1.89b32-35). The example, it is worth emphasizing, is used by Aristotle himself, and it is repeated throughout the commentary tradition.[20]

B) "In Order to Prove That Something Exists, It Is Necessary to Accept as a Middle What the Name Signifies, Not What 'x' Is."

1. *Existential Proof through Effects.* We have established the priority in Aristotelian methodology of the question, "Does *x* exist?" Now, if as in the case of god, the thing whose existence is in question is not obvious from experience, that thing's existence requires proof (cf. *Post. Anal.* 2.2.90a24-31). As Aquinas's early *Scriptum on the Sentences* acknowledges, it is possible to prove that such an *x* exists through its effects.[21] This is an application,

aliquo an sit nisi prius intelligatur quid significatur per nomen; propter quad etiam Philosophus in IV Metaphisice, in disputatione contra negantes principia, docet incipere a significatione nominurn."

[20] See especially Themistius, *ParaphrasisAnalyticorum posteriorum* 2.1, in M. Wallies, ed. (Berlin: Reimer, 1900), 42 (II. 7-9), of which the Latin may be found in J. R. O'Donnell, "Themistius' *Paraphrasis of the* Posterior Analytics of Aristotle," *Mediaeval Studies* 20 (1958): 239-315; Philoponus (or Ps-Philoponus in Book 2; cf. Wallies' preface), *In Aristotelis Analytica Posteriora Commentaria* 2.1, in M. Wallies, ed. (Berlin: Reimer, 1909), 336 (II. 12-7), 337 (13-16); Al-Ghazali in Charles Lohr, *"Logica Algazalis:* Introduction and Critical Text," *Traditio* 21 (1965): 223-90, at 282 (II. 12-26); Robert Grosseteste, *Commentarius in "Posteriorum analyticorum" libros,* 2.1 (II. 104-9), in P. Rossi, ed. (Florence: Olschki, 1981); Eustratius, *In Analyticorum posteriorum librum secundum commentarium,* 2.1, in M. Hayduck, ed. (Berlin: Reimer, 1907), 11 (II. 14-15); cf. Paul Moraux, *Le commentaire d'Alexandre d'Aphrodise aux "Seconds analytiques" d'Aristote* (Berlin-New York: de Gruyter, 1979), 86. For the ancients, I leave the word 'god' ('the divine') in the lower case, although the upper case used, not as a proper name, but in my nonprescriptive sense of a "top-most reality," could be justified for some of the Greek commentators on Aristotle; see below, at n. 113.

[21] III *Sent.,* d. 23, q. 1, a. 2: "Cognitio autem de re secundurn id quod est potest dupliciter haberi: scilicet durn cognoscitur quid est et an est..•. Essentiarn autem alicujus rei, intellectus noster tripliciter comprehendit. . . . Alio modo essentias rerurn quas non vidernus, cognoscimus per causas vel effectus eis proportionatos, cadentes in sensu. Si autem effectus non fuerint proportionati causae, non facient causarn cognoscere quid est, sed quia est tanturn, sicut patet de Deo.... Similiter an res sit, tripliciter cognoscit. Uno modo quia cadit sub sensu. Alio modo ex causis et effectibus rerurn cadentibus sub sensu, sicut ignem ex furno perpendimus. Terrio modo cognoscit aliquid in seipso esse ex inclinatione quarn habet ad aliquos actus: quam quidem inclinationem cognoscit ex hoc quod super actus suos reflectitur,

familiar in the ancient commentary tradition,[22] of Aristotle's express procedure in the case of proofs 'of fact *[quia]'* versus proofs 'of the reasoned fact *fpropter quid]':* in absence of the true cause, namely, *x's* definition, one may prove *x's* properties by using a remote genus, or by arguing from effects to their cause *(Post. Anal.* 1.13. 78a22-b30).

2. *Nominal Definition in Existential Proof and the Criteria from Proofs of Fact.* But how can we prove the existence of *x* if we in no way know 'what *x* is'? As the early Aquinas puts it, in language that follows Albert, it is impossible to know 'whether *x* exists' without in some way knowing 'what it is', at least by a confused cognition.[23] Aristotle's answer is that one must use a formula or definition at least of 'what the term *x* signifies' to prove the existence of *x (Post. Anal.* 2.7.92b12-25; 2.8.93a22-31)[24]-one uses what Aristotle himself calls the 'nominal formula'

dum cognoscit se operari."

[21] See especially Albert, *Posteriora analytica* 2.1.3, in Albert, *Opera omnia,* ed. Jammy (Lyon: C. Prost, 1651), 1:614b; Themistius, *In Post. Anal.* 2.2 (Wallies, ed., 43.30-44.2). The application is suggested by *Posterior Analytics* 2.8.93a17-22, in Aristotle, *Analytica priora et posteriora,* ed. W. D. Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964). Abdelali Elamrani-Jamal, in "La demonstration du signe (burhiin al-daltl) selon lbn Rushd (Averroes)," *Documenti e studi sulfa tradizione fil-Osoficamedievale* 11 (2000): 113-31, has shown the link in Averroes between proofs of fact and proofs of existence.

[23] Aquinas, *Super Boetium De Trinitate,* q. 6, a. 3 (ll. 114-26), in Aquinas, *Opera omnia,* vol. 50: "Et tamen sciendum quod de nulla re potest sciri an est nisi quoquo modo sciatur de ea quid est, uel cognitione perfecta, uel saltem cognitione confusa; prout Philosophus <licitin principio Phisicorum quod diffinita sunt precognita partibus diffinitionis: oportet enim scientem hominem esse et querentem quid est homo per diffinitionem scire quid hoc nomen 'homo' significat. Nee hoc esset nisi aliquam rem quoquo modo conciperet quam scit esse, quamuis nesciat eius diffinitionem: concipit enim hominem secundum cognitionem alicuius generis proximi uel remoti, et aliquorum accidentium que extra apparent de ipso." For 'confused cognition', cf. ibid. (II. 129-31, 136-67); Albert, *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus,* c. 1 (pp. 32.12-16, 39.51-52); c. 7, (p. 356.40--45), in Albert, *Opera omnia,* ed. Institutum Alberti Magni Coloniense (Miinster i. Westf.: Aschendorff, 1951-), vol. 37.1. Cf. also Francis Catania, "'Knowable' and 'Namable' in Albert the Great's Commentary on the Divine Names," in *Albert the Great: Commemorative Essays,* ed. F. Kovach and R. Shahan (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 97-128, at 99-113.

[24] See Aquinas, II *Post. Anal.,* c. 7, lect. *6* (II. 71-86): "Et hoc etiam apparet in processu scienciarum: *geometria* enim accipitquid *significat* hoc nomen *'triangulus,' etdemonstrat quod sit,* puta cum demonstrat super lineam rectam datam triangulum aequilaterum constituere. Si igitur aliquis demonstraret solum *quidest* triangulus, praeter morem demonstrationum quibus utuntur scienciae, non demonstraret hoc totum quod est triangulum esse, set demonstraret

(ovoµaTWOTt<; Myoc;; 2.10.93b30-35).[25] He gives examples of preliminary definitions of an eclipse or of the soul, which at least have 'something of' the thing defined, something sufficient to affirm 'that it is' in an accidental sense *(Post. Anal.* 2.8.93a21-22, 24-28).[26] Aquinas's *Scriptum* refers to this as "the most incomplete way of defining": what sets forth the signification of

solum hoc quod dico triangulum; sicut enim propter hoc quod esse non est substancia rei, ille qui demonstrat esse, hoc solum demonstrat, ita si aliquis demonstraret 'quid est,' hoc solum demonstraret. Sequeretur igitur quod *aliquis sciens* per diffinitionem *quid est,* nesciret an est. Quod est inpossibile, ut ex praedictis patet." See also the texts cited below, n. 29.

[25] Aquinas, II *Post. Anal.,* c. 10, lect. 8 (II. 92-114): "[S]upponit [Aristoteles] primo quod *diffinitio* sit *ratio* significatiua *ipsius* 'quod *quid* est'. Si autem non posset haberi aliqua alia ratio rei quam diffinitio, inpossibile esset quod sciremus aliquam rem esse, quin sciremus de ea 'quid est,' quia inpossibile est quod sciamus rem aliquam esse, nisi per aliquam illius rei rationem: de eo enim quod est nobis penitus ignotum, non possumus scire si est aut non. Inuenitur autem *aliqua* alia ratio rei praeter diffinitionem, que quidem uel est *ratio* expositiua significationis nominis, uel est *ratio* ipsius rei nominatae, altera tamen a diffinitione, quia non significat 'quid est,' sicut diffinitio, set forte aliquod accidens. Sicut forte inuenitur aliqua ratio, que exponit *quid significat* hoc nomen *'triangulus'.* Et per huiusmodi rationem *habentes 'quia est,'* adhuc *querimus* 'propter quid est,' ut sic accipiamus 'quod quid est'. Set, sicut supra dictum est, hoc *difficile est accipere* in illis in quibus nescimus an sint. Et huius *difficultatis causa* superius est assignata, quia scilicet, quando scimus rem esse per aliquid rei, non absolute scimus *si est* uel *non, set* solum *<secundum> accidens,* ut supra expositum est." For the proposition that one cannot know whether something is without knowing it nominally, see I *Post. Anal.,* c. 1, lect. 2 (IL 67-69), quoted above, n. 19. Cf. the objection in Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae De Veritate,* q. 10, a. 12, sc 4 (II. 84-85), in Aquinas, *Opera omnia,* vol. 22: "Praeterea, non potest de aliquo sciri ipsum esse nisi quid ipsum sit cognoscatur .... "

[26] See I *Post. AnaL,* c. 8, lect. 7 (II. 126-54): "Et <licit [Aristoteles] quod rem aliquam esse possumus scire absque eo quod sciamus perfecte quid est, dupliciter: uno modo secundum quod cognoscimus aliquod *accidens* eius, puta si per uelocitatem motus esrimemus leporem esse; alio modo per hoc quod cognoscimus *aliquid* de essencia eius (quod quidem est possibile in substantiis compositis, ut puta si comprehendamus hominem esse per hoc quod est rationalis, nondum cognitis aliis que complent essenciam hominis; in suhstantiis uero simplicibus hoc non contingit, quia non potest cognosci aliquid de substancia simplicis rei nisi tota cognoscatur, ut patet in IX Methaphisice). Oportet autem quod qui cognoscit aliquam rem esse per *aliquid rei* illud cognoscat, et hoc uel est aliquid pret.er essenciam rei, uel aliquid de essencia ipsius. Et de hoc ponit exemplum, puta si cognoscamus *tonittuum* esse propter hoc quia percipimus quendam sonum in nubibus, quod quidem pertinet ad essenciam tonitrui, non tamen est tota tonitrui essencia, quia non omnis *sonus nubium* est tonitruum. Et similiter, si cognoscamus *defectum,* id est eclipsim solis uel lune, esse, propter hoc quod est *quaedam priuatio luminis,* cum tamen non omnis priuatio luminis sit eclipsis. Et eadem ratio est si aliquis percipiat *hominem* esse, propt.er hoc quod *est quoddam animal;* uel si percipiat animam esse, propter hoc quod est aliquid *se ipsum mouens."*

the term rather than indicating an essence.[27] In *On Boethius's De Trinitate,* one finds the most extended discussion of nominal definition outside of the *Exposition of the Posterior Analytics.* There Aquinas infers properties of nominal definitions that correspond to the aforementioned characteristics of 'proofs of fact *[quia]':* where a definition of an essence, such as of 'human', through genus and specific difference is lacking, a nominal definition describes it generically by using a proximate or remote genus, and supplies for *differentiae* some outwardly perceptible accidents.[28] And, just as Aristotle takes the definition of 'what *x* is' to be the middle term in proofs of the reasoned fact, so Aquinas makes explicit that the nominal definition serves as the *middle term* in existential proofs.[29] Through nominal definitions using a remote genus or perceptible accidents, proof 'that *x* is' is possible without {yet) knowing *x's* essence.[30]

[27] II *Sent.,* d. 35, q. 1, a. 2, ad 1: "[E]arum [privationum et negationum] etiam potest esse aliquis modus definitionis incompletissimus, qui est quasi exponens nominis significationem, non essentiam indicans, quam nullam habet." Cf. ill *Sent.,* d. 24, q. 1, a. 2, qcla. 1, ad 3. Philoponus *speaks* of a 'nominal definition' (0p1oμcx; *In Post.Anal.* 2.7 [Wallies, ed., 360.4]; 2.10 [Wallies, ed., 372.9-19]).

[28] *Super Boet. De Trin.,* q. 6, a. 3 (II. 114-26, 156-76), quoted in nn. 23, 68.

[29] *N Phys.,* c. 7, lect. 10 (n. 2 {507]): "Dicit [Aristoteles] ergo primo quod, cum dictum sit quod quidam posuerunt vacuum esse, quidam vero negaverunt; ad cognoscendum qualiter se habeat veritas, oportet accipere tanquam principium, quid significet nomen vacui. Sicut enim cum dubitatur an aliqua passio insit alicui subiecto, oportet accipere pro principio quid sit res, ita cum dubitatur de aliquo an sit, oportet accipere pro medio quid significet nomen. Quaestio enim quid est sequitur quaestionem an est." Aquinas formulates the following principle as the basis of an objection in *ScG* I, c. 12 (para. 4): "Item. Si principium ad demonstrandum an est, secundum artem Philosophi, oportet accipere quid significet nomen . . . ." See also ibid. (para. 8), and *STh* I, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2, quoted in nn. 14, 45.

[30] A complete account of Aquinas's logic would show that his doctrine on nominal definition as a middle term in the proof 'that *x* is' is an instance of the general principle that knowledge of 'what *x* is' is the middle for knowing 'that *x* is' ("cognoscere quid est est principium ad sciendum quia est" [III *Sent.,* d. 23, q., 1, a. 2]). The other instance would be knowing 'that *x* is' through the real definition, a proof of existence that follows upon the arrival at a real definition of 'what xis'. In addition to texts quoted in nn. 23 and 37, see especially *VIMetapbys.,* c. 1, lect. 1 (1151): "[E]iusdem scientiae est determinare quaestionem an est, et manifestare quid est. Oportet enim quod quid est accipere ut medium ad ostendendum an est. Et utraque estconsideratio philosophi, qui considerat ens inquantum ens. Et ideo quaelibet scientia particularis supponit de subiecto suo, quia est, et quid est, ut dicitur in primo *Posteriorum."*

C) 'When a Cause Is Demonstrated through an Effect, It Is Necessary to Use the Effect in Place of the Definition of the Cause in Order to Prove That the Cause Exists, and This Occurs Especially in the Case of God."

We have seen that in Aquinas's appropriation of Aristotelian methodology, (1) if something's existence is not evident in experience, it may be possible to prove its existence by reasoning from effects to causes; and (2) since the question "Does *x* exist?" precedes the question "What is *x?,"* such a proof must use a definition that precedes the proper inquiry into quiddity: it must use a nominal definition. The question now arises: if one must prove the existence of something immaterial such as God, how will the nominal definition be formed?

1. *The Proof of God's Existence and Nominal Definition in the Commentary Tradition.* Some discussion of the proof in question is found in the commentary tradition. Existential proofs of imperceptible things through nominal definitions are frequently called proofs through effects or 'signs' of their cause.[31] Themistius, followed by Grosseteste, observes that there is no strict demonstration of god as of a reasoned fact, since god is without cause.[32] Instead, according to Themistius, employing Aristotle's terminology (at *Post. Anal.* 2.8.93a22-23), the proof of god or gods is through 'something of' god: namely, through the fact that there is healing, fulfilled prophecy, or everlasting motion (i.e., through effects).[33] In this, as in other cases, the nominal definition

[31] See especially Albert, *Post. Anal.* 2.1.3 Gammy, ed., 1:614b); also Themistius, *In Post. Anal.* 2.2 (Wallies, ed., 43.30-44.2); Grosseteste, *In Post. Anal.* 2.2 (11. 460-71 and 589-617). The language of "demonstration through signs" is evident in Averroes, with roots in the Greek commentators; see Elamrani-Jamal, "La demonstration du signe selon lbn Rushd," 113-31; Donald Morrison, "Philoponus and Simplicius on Tekmeriodic Proof," in *Method and Order in Renaissance Philosophy of Nature: The Aristotle Commentary Tradition,* ed. D. Di Lascia, E. Kessler, C. Methuen (Hampshire, Great Britain: Aldershot, 1997), 1-22.

[32] Themistius, *In Post. Anal.* 2.9 (Wallies, ed., 50.29-51.1); Grosseteste, *In Post. Anal.* 2.2 (11. 460-71).

[33] Themistius, *In Post. Anal.* 2.8 (Wallies, ed., 49.21-16, on 93a22-23);2.9 (Wallies, ed., 50.29-51.2). For the proper interpretation of Themistius in the classical context, see especially the forthcoming paper by Owen Goldin, "Two Traditions in the Ancient *Posterior Analytics* Commentaries."

is for Themistius the principle or basis of all inquiry.[34] Grosseteste adds that the proof of the first uncaused cause is a 'proof of fact' from effects, and that it belongs to metaphysics.[35]

2. *Aquinas on the Nominal Definition of 'God' through an Effect.* Within the commentary tradition, however, Aquinas is the first to reflect in detail on the contents of a nominal definition in an existential proof and to apply this reflection to the case of God. In particular, he infers that such nominal definitions should contain an effect of what is being defined. We find this inference first in *On Boethius's De Trinitate,* and it is reiterated, as we shall see, in both *Summae* in preparation for the five ways. I divide my discussion into three parts, laying out the major texts.

a. On Boethius's De Trinitate, *q. 1, a. 2: An Effect as Middle Term.* In question 1 of *On Boethius's De Trinitate,* Aquinas first states the general principle: in existential proof of unobservable things, the cognition of the effect stands as a principle for knowing whether the cause exists.[36] By contrast, in the typical case of a thing whose essence is known through abstraction from experience, the essence serves as the middle term in a *'propter quid* proof' 'that it is'.[37] In unobservable things, however, the form of the effect serves as middle term. Aquinas writes:

[34] Themistius, *In Post. Anal.* 2.7 (Wallies, ed., 48.11-17). Caution is needed, *of* course, in accepting statements from the discussion *of* the aporetic chapters 3-7 of book 2.

[35] Grosseteste, *In Post. Anal.* 2.2 (II. 460-71, especially 464-66): "Demonstratur tamen in metaphysica per effectum de prima causa quia est.... "

[36] *Super Boet. De Trin.,* q. 1, a. 2 (II. 89-92): "[E]t sic se habet cognitio effectus ut principium ad cognoscendum de causa an est, sicut se habet quiditas ipsius causae, cum per suam formam cognoscitur."

[37] That the essence is the middle in an existential demonstration, Aquinas presents as part of an objection: namely, since God's essence cannot be known, it appears that there can be no middle term in syllogistic reasoning about God: "[Q]uid est est medium demonstrandi an est et ornnes alias rei conditiones" *(Super Boet. De Trin.,* q. 1, a. 2, obj. 5 (II. 32-33); cf. q. 6, a. 3 (II. 52-76). Aquinas follows Grosseteste in affirming two kinds of existential proof, a *'quia* proof through nominal definition prior to knowledge of an essence, and a *'propter quid* proof through the essence as middle term. See III *Sent.,* d. 24, q. 1, a. 1, qcla. 2, ad 2; *ScG* III, c. 50 (para. 4, "Adhuc. Sicut"); II *Post. Anal.,* c. 8, lect. 7 (II. 27-92, 171-80); VI *Metaphys.,* c. 1, lect. 1 (1151), quoted above, n. 30; Grosseteste, *In Post. Anal.* 2.2 (II. 488-512 [on 2.7.92b15-25], 589-619 [on 2.8.93a17-22]). Cf. David Twetten, "To Which 'God' Must a Proof of God's Existence Conclude for Aquinas?" in *Laudemus Viros Gloriosos: Essays in Medieval Philosophy in Honor of Armand Augustine Maurer, C.S.B.,* ed. R. E. Houser (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, forthcoming), at nn. 64-70.

[W]hen something is known, not through its own form, but through its effect, the form of the effect talces the place of the form of the thing: and therefore from the effect itself it is known 'whether the cause exists'.[38]

b. On Boethius's De Trinitate, *q. 6, a. 3: The Reason Why an Effect Enters the Nominal Definition.* According to the prescription we have just seen, in existential proof of unobservable things, an effect stands as a middle term. Hence, an effect enters into the nominal definition used as a syllogistic medium in such proof. But why must Aquinas resort to this prescription in the case of the nominal definition of 'God'? Why cannot God's existence be proved in a '*quia* proof' using a remote genus or accidental differences? Aquinas would allow such nominal definitions in the case of originally knowing that 'human' exists,[39] or, more plausibly, in the case of a lunar eclipse, what is proved to exist as the 'privation of the moon's light'.[40] Yet, he argues, if corruptible and incorruptible bodies for Aristotle do not share the same genus, much less does God share a genus with other things.[41] Furthermore, God has no accidents since he is simple in nature. Each of these two points will be properly proved after knowing that God is. But the fact that they are traditional claims, and that one may plausibly ask how one might prove the existence of something that is not in a genus and that lacks accidents, suggests the need for another approach to defining nominally in such cases. Aquinas proposes, not the 'way of similitude', as he calls it, but the 'way of causality'.[42] Although effects that belong to a different genus from their cause do not suffice to make known

[38] *Super Boet. De Trin.,* q. 1, a. 2, ad 5 (II. 183-86): "quando aliquid non cognoscitur per formam suam set per effectum suum, forma effectus supplet locum forme ipsius rei: et ideo ex ipso effectu scitur an causa sit." Cf. ibid., q. 6, a. 4, ad 2 (II. 171-74): "[D]iffinito effectus accipitur ut principium ad demonstrandum causam esse, et aliquas conditiones eius, quamvis quiditas cause sit semper ignota."

[39] According to *Super Boet. De Trin.,* q. 6, a. 3 (ll. 117-29) (quoted above, n. 23), the investigator into the definition of 'human' presupposes that human exists as known under some nominal definition through remote genus and accidental difference ("featherless biped?" cf. VII *Metaphys.,* c. 7, lect. 14 [1599]).

[40] II *Post. Anal.,* c. 8, lect. 7 (II. 126-54, 171-82).

[41] *Super Boet. De Trin.,* q. 6, a. 3 (II. 77-81, 133-59).

[42] Ibid. (II. 81-89).

'what is' their cause, nevertheless they do suffice to indicate 'whether it is'.[43] In this life, reiterates Aquinas following John of Damascus, we do know not 'what God is', but only 'whether he is'.[44]

c. *Aquinas's* Summae: *Nominal Definition through an Effect.* The claim of *On Boethius's De Trinitate* regarding the nominal definition of 'God' is also summarized by Thomas prior to the five ways in *Summa contra Gentiles,* induding the comparison to demonstrations of fact, as in the commentary tradition:

In arguments by which it is demonstrated that God exists, it is not necessary to take as the middle term the divine essence or quiddity, as the second [objection] proposed. But in place of the quiddity, an effect is taken as the middle, as happens in 'demonstrations *quia'.* And, from such an effect is derived the meaning *[ratio]* of this name 'God'.[45]

Similarly, before the five ways of the *Summa Theologiae* Aquinas twice explains that we use an effect in place of a real definition in demonstrations about God. The point applies not only to philosophical demonstrations that are part of the science of theology, but also to strictly theological demonstrations:

Although we are not able to know about God 'what *x* is', nevertheless in this [sacred] doctrine we use an effect of [God], either of nature or of grace, in place of a definition, for those things that are considered about God in this doctrine;

[43] *Super Boet. De Trin.,* q. 1, a. 2 (IL 81-95); q. 6, a. 2 (II. 123-27); q. 6, a. 3 (II. 70-97); cf. III *Sent.,* d. 23, q. 1, a. 2, quoted above, n. 21.

[44] *Super Boet. De Trin.,* q. 1, a. 2, c. and ad 2 (II. 64-80, 89-95, 105-7, 139-42) (see below, n. 64); q. 6, a. 3 (IL 93-113) (see below, n. 68). See also I *Sent.,* d. 8, q. 1, a. 1, with the ascription to Darnascene; III *Sent.,* d. 23, q. 1, a. 2; *De Verit.,* q. 2, a. 1, obj. 9 {II. 61-63); q. 10, a. 12, ad sc 7 (II. 303-11); *ScG* TI!, c. 50 (para. 4, "Adhuc. Sicut"); *STh* I-ll, q. 3, a. 8; John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa* 4 (IL 3-5); Albert:,*Super De div. nom.,* c. 1 (Cologne ed., p. 32.12-22); c. 7 (Cologne ed., p. 356.40-65). For the distinction between knowledge "that God is" and ignorance of "what is his essence," see John Chrysostom, *Sur fincomprehensibilite de Dieu,* 2d ed., ed. A.-M. Malingrey (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1970), 1:1.291-94.

[45] *ScG* I, c. 12 (para. 8): "In rationibus autem quibus demonstratur Deum esse, non oportet assumi pro medio divinam essentiam sive quiddit:atem, ut secunda ratio proponebat: sed loco quidditatis accipitur pro medio effectus, sicut accidit in demonstrationibus quia; et ex huiusmodi effectu smnitur ratio huius nominis Deus." For the comparison of existential proof to demonstrations of fact, cf. above at nn. 22, 28, and 31-35.

just as in some philosophical sciences, something is demonstrated about a cause through an effect by taking an effect in place of the definition of the cause.[46]

D) Resume and Conclusion

Aquinas's Aristotelian method mandates, as we have seen, that one know 'that *x* is' before properly investigating *x's* definition and demonstrating *x's* properties. Therefore, if one must prove 'that *x* is', the proof has to use a notion of *x* as a middle term that falls short of a proper definition of 'what *x* is': the proof uses a definition of the term *'x',* or a nominal definition. And, since the only proof possible for immaterial things proceeds from perceptible effects to their cause, the proof of God's existence uses a nominal definition of 'God' that is expressed through an effect. Aquinas draws this conclusion by comparing existential arguments to *quia* proofs through a remote genus or perceptible effects.

Thus far we have laid out the logical grounds for the nominal definition of 'God' in an existential proof. Yet these grounds contain only a general criterion for what precisely a nominal definition of 'God' would be: that it be derived from an effect. In part III we shall see how Aquinas arrives at further specification on the only occasion when he explicitly and systematically formulates a definition of 'God' *(STh* I, q. 13, a. 8, ad 2). Still, one conclusion may already be drawn. Unlike for many Thomists, the question "Does God exist?" is for Thomas a *philosophical* theme and does not necessarily presuppose faith in revelation.[47] The use of a nominal definition of 'God' to initiate a proof, far

[46] *STh* I, q. 1, a. 7, ad 1: "Ad primum ergo dicendum quod, licet de Deo non possimus scire quid est, utimur tamen eius effectu, in hac doctrina, vel naturae vel gratiae, loco definitionis, ad ea quae de Dea in hac doctrina considerantur, sicut et in aliquibus scientiis philosophicis demonstratur aliquid de causa per effectum, accipiendo effectum loco definitionis causae." For the limitations on knowing what God is even through revelation, see Aquinas, *Super Boet. De Trin.,* q. 6, a. 3 (ll. 94-113). The other passage on the definition of 'God' through an effect in *Summa Theologiae* I has already been quoted (see above, n. 14).

[47] In addition ton. 7 above, cf. M.-D. Philippe, *De l'etre a Dieu: De la philosophie premiere a la sagesse* (Paris: Tequi, 1977), 309-15.

from begging the question in philosophy,[48] is precisely the proper philosophical approach, and only for that reason is it also appropriated within Aquinas's science of revealed theology.[49]

Ill. AQUINAS'S DEVELOPMENT OF A NOMINAL DEFINITION OF 'GOD' AND ITS DIONYSIAN BACKGROUND

Aquinas's formula for 'God' in question 13, article 8 of the *Prima Pars,* although a unique instance, does not arise in a vacuum. Rather, it has at its foundation the Aristotelian logic of nominal definition, especially for existential arguments. Based on this alone, it is clear why Aquinas introduces the phrase 'principle of all' (effects) into his formula 'something that is existing above all things, which is the principle of all things and is removed from all things'. But what is curious, and apparently without rationale, is his use of Dionysius's *triplex via*[50] in the formula: the ways of eminence, causality, and negation or 'remotion'.[51] In fact, it may

[48] For Victor White, the five ways do not and cannot presuppose any conception of what the word 'God' means, do not and cannot use a nominal definition of 'God' as a middle term. The meaning of 'God' is only discovered in the conclusion of the arguments. See Victor White, *God the Unknown, and Other Essays* (New York: Harper, 1956), 56-60

[49] See, by contrast, Finili, "Is There a Philosophical Approach to God?" 81-86; O'Brien, "Reflexion on God's Existence," 380-91; cf. also Philippe, *De fetre aDieu,* 315, 428-29; Stephane-Marie Barbellion, *Les "Preuves" de fexistence de Dieu: Pour une relecture des cinq voies de saint Thomas tfk]uin* (Paris: Cerf, 1999),_278-80.

[50] Here I make no attempt, of course, to discuss Dionysius in himself or to defend the Latin ascription to him of a *triplex via.* Dionysius usually speaks of two ways of affirmation and removal, but it is clear that his negative way also involves a negation within an affirmation, which results in the affirmation of hyper-attributes; see Fran O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics ofkjuinas* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 14-17, 34. For the *triplex via* in Albert, see Albert, *Super De div. nom.,* c. 7 (Cologne ed., p. 358.34-86); Francis Ruello, *Les ""Noms divins" et leurs "raisons" selon Saint Albert le Grand, commentateur du "De divinis nominibus"* (Paris: Vrin, 1963), 90-96; and Catania, "'Knowable' and 'Namable' in Albert," 120-23.

[51] Aquinas presents the three members of the *triplex via* on some twenty-four occasions in at least five different orders. See, in addition to nn. 58-59 below, Michael Ewbank, "Diverse Orderings of Dionysius's *Triplex Via* by St. Thomas Aquinas," *Mediaeval Studies* 52 (1990): 82-109. To Ewbank's list one might add: to Order C, Aquinas, *De Potentia,* q. 9, a. 7, in Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae,* ed. P. Bazzi et al. (Turin-Rome: Marietti, 1953), vol. 1; *In De Div. Norn.,* c. 1, lect. 3 (79, 83, 85, 102); to Order E, *STh* II-II, q. 27, a. 4; to Order A, Thomas Aquinas, *Lectura romana in primum Sententiarum Petri Lombardi,* ed. L.

seem as if the Dionysian element, so foreign to the Aristotelian, results from Aquinas's eclecticism, or, at best, from his haphazard composition. I propose to show, however, that the *Summa's* doctrine turns out to be a simplification, consolidation, and extension of ideas that Aquinas sketched in his earliest works as a master of theology. I lay out the texts, following an historical order, in four sections. Aquinas's approach to the divine, at once Dionysian and Aristotelian,[52] turns out to be part of a larger project that, like Albert's, has been difficult for scholars to identify and evaluate, governed as we are by traditional historiographical categories.[53]

E. Boyle and J. F. Boyle (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, forthcoming), d. 3, q. 1, a. 2, ad 2; also one might subtract *STh* I, q. 8, a. 1, ad 1; and *ScG* I, c. 14. Cf. also the orders in *In De Div. Norn.,* c. 2, lect. 1 (n. 126); *Super Boet. De Trin.,* q. 1, a. 4 (ll. 86-94), quoted below, n. 66.

[52] See especially the remarks of Edward Booth, *Aristotelian Aporetic Ontology in Islamic and Christian Thinkers* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 221-27, 236-52, 262-65, 269; and Wayne Hankey, *God in Himself: Aquinas's Doctrine of God as Expounded in the "Summa theologiae"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 9-12,46-51; idem, "Aquinas and the Platonists," in *The Platonic Tradition in the Middle Ages: A Doxographic Approach,* ed. S. Gersh and M. Hoenen (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 279-324, at 310-319; idem, *"Ab uno simplici non est nisi unum:* The Place of Natural and Necessary Emanation in Aquinas's Doctrine of Creation," in *Omnia in Sapientia: Essays on Creation in Honour of the Rev. Dr Robert* D. *Crouse,* ed. W. Otten, W. Hannam, and M. Treschow (Leiden: Brill, 2002). Booth gives a "Scholastic" reading of Dionysius; *Aristotelian Aporetic Ontology,* 54, 77-79; see the forthcoming work of John Do Jones, "An Absolutely Simple God? Frameworks for Understanding Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite," *The Thomist* 69 (2005).

[53] For Aquinas and Dionysius on the divine, see also Heinrich Weertz, *Die Gotteslehre des Ps. Dionysius Areopagita und ihre Einwirkung auf Thomas von Aquin* (Cologne: Theissing, 1908); Jean Durante!, *Saint Thomas et le Pseudo-Denis* (Paris: Felix Akan, 1919); Walter M. Neid!, *Thearchia: Die Frage nach dem Sinn van Gott bei Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita und Thomas van Aquin* (Regensburg: Habbel, 1976); Rolf Schonberger, *Nomina divina: zur theologischen Semantik bei Thomas von Aquin* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1981); Ignacio E. M. Andereggen, *La metaffsica de Santo Tomas en la "Exposici6n sobre el De divinis nominibus" de Dionisio Areopagita* (Buenos Aires: Universidad Cat6lica Argentina, 1989); idem, "El conocimiento de Dios en la exposici6n de Tomas de Aquino sabre el *De divinis nominibus* de Dionisio Areopagita," *Sapientia* 45 (1990): 269-76; Harry C. Marsh, *Cosmic Structure and the Knowledge of God: Thomas Aquinas's "In librum beati Dionysii De divinis nominibus expositio* (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1994); Paulo Faitanin, "La huella de la *en6seos tes theias* de Dionisio en la doctrina de la incomunicabilidad divina de Tomas de Aquino, *Anuario Filos6fico* 33 (2000): 593-605.

A) The "Triplex via" and the Proofs of God's Existence: The Scriptum on the Sentences

There are four stages to the doctrinal development that culminates in the above formula for 'God' *(STh* I, q. 13, a. 8, ad 2). The first is marked by Aquinas's use of Dionysius's threefold path to God in book 1 of his *Scriptum on the Sentences.* We know from internal and external evidence that Thomas was already very familiar with the Dionysian corpus by the time he began composing his *Scriptum* in Paris in 1252. Albert, while still in Paris in 1247 or 1248, had taken up his project of commenting on the corpus prior both to finishing his own commentary on the *Sentences* and to starting his Aristotelian paraphrases. Aquinas copied by hand Albert's commentaries on the *Celestial Hierarchy* and the *Divine Names,* in addition to attending Albert's course in Cologne on the *Divine Names.* [54] Aquinas's early works frequently cite each of Dionysius's five works very closely, and the *Scriptum* alone has over seven hundred citations. One passage there gives striking witness to the early Aquinas's Albertian project: Dionysius, remarks Thomas, "nearly everywhere follows Aristotle, as is dear to one who diligently examines his books."[55] Thomas

[54] Jean-Pierre Torrell, in *Initiation a saint Thomas d'Aquin: Sa personrre et son reuvre* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1993), 31-38; Leonard Boyle, "An Autograph of St. Thomas at Salerno," in *Liuera, Sensus, Sententia: Studia in onore del Prof. Clemente J. Vansteenkiste,* ed. A. Lobato (Milan: Universitas S. Thomae in Urbe, 1990), 117-34.

[55] Aquinas, II *Sent.,* d. 14, q. 1, a. 2. Recall that the early Aquinas takes the *Liber de causis,* as does Albert, to be in some way Aristotelian in origin; see I *Sent.,* d. 8, q. 1, a. 3, sc 1; I *Sent.,* d. 42, q. 1, a. 2, sc 2; and as late as *De Pot.,* q. 7, a. 2, obj. 6; see also Alain De Libera, "Albert le Grand et Thomas d'Aquin interpretes du *Liber de causis," Revue des sciences philosophiques et tbeologiques* 74 (1990): 347-78. Even when the late Aquinas, as in *De Malo,* emphasizes Dionysius's Platonic side, this does not mean that he ceases to see him as agreeing with Aristotle; see Aquinas, *De Malo,* q. 16, a. 1, ad 3 (II. 388-90), in Aquinas, *Opera omnia,* vol. 23; Hankey, "Aquinas and the Platonists," 311, 314; cf. Robert]. Henle, *Saint Thomas and Platonism: A Study of the Plato and Platonici Texts in the Writings of Saint Thomas* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1956), 383-84. For the *Liber de causis* as Dionysian, including in Aquinas's eyes, see Cristina D'Ancona Costa, *Recherches sur le "Liberde Causis"* (Paris: Vrin, 1995), especially 239-52; cf. also Henle, *Saint Thomas and Platonism,* 384, 424-25; Giinther Poltner, "The Importance of Dionysius for St. Thomas Aquinas's Comprehension of Being," *Diotima* 23 (1995): 128-32.

also contrasts Dionysius with Basil, Augustine, and many other divines, all of whom followed Plato in matters philosophical.

Of particular interest here is Thomas's 'division of the text' of Peter Lombard's distinction 3 of book 1, where Peter shows 'how God' or 'how the creator' is known.

The second part in which [Master Peter] sets forth [his] proof is divided into four according to the four arguments that he sets forth. Their diversity is taken according to the *ways* that Dionysius sets forth of arriving at God from creatures. For, he says that we arrive at God from creatures in three modes, that is, through causality, through 'remotion', and through eminence. The reason for this is that the *esse* of a creature is from another; hence, according to this [fact] we are led to the cause by which [it] exists. But this can be in two ways: either with respect to what is received-and so we are led through the mode of causality; or with respect to the mode of receiving, because [what is received] is received imperfectly. And in this way we have two modes: according to the removal of an imperfection from God; and according to the fact that what is received in the creature is more perfectly and nobly in the creator-such is the mode of eminence. [56]

Aquinas goes on to explain how Lombard's four arguments fit the three Dionysian ways. In fact, this passage represents the earliest account of the proofs of God's existence in Aquinas's corpus. [57] The first argument, he explains, follows the 'way of causality' insofar as the imperfection and potentiality of creatures reveal that they receive *esse* from another. The second argument follows the 'way of remotion', holding that prior to everything imperfect-whether a body, by being finite and mobile, or a soul or angel, by being mutable-there must be something perfect

[56] I *Sent.,* d. 3, q. 1, pro!.: "Secunda autem pars in qua ponit [Magister Petrus] probationem, dividitur in quatuor, secundum quatuor rationes quas ponit. Harum autem diversitas sumitur secundum vias deveniendi ex creaturis in Deum, quas Dionysius ponit. Dicit enim quad ex creaturis tribus modis devenimus in Deum: scilicet per causalitatem, per remotionem, per eminentiam. Et ratio hujus est, quia esse creaturae est ab altero. Uncle secundum hoc ducimur in causam a qua est. Hoc autem potest esse dupliciter. Aut quantum ad id quad receptum est; et sic ducimur per modum causalitatis: aut quantum ad modum recipiendi, quia imperfecte recipitur; et sic habemus duos modos, scilicet secundum remotionem imperfectionis a Dea et secundum hoc quad illud quad receptum est in creatura, perfectius et nobilius est in creatore; et ita est modus per eminentiam."

[57] See Jules Baisnee, "St. Thomas Aquinas's Proofs of the Existence of God Presented in Their Chronological Order," in *Philosophical Studies in Honor of the Very Reverend Ignatius Smith,* O. *P.,* ed. John K. Ryan (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1952), 29-64.

which is mingled with no imperfection; and this is God. The third and fourth arguments follow the 'way of eminence', arguing, as does the later fourth way of the *Summae,* from degrees of perfection in reality or in our knowledge to something that possesses that perfection in a superlative way, because of which the others are perfect.

What is important is that Aquinas here reads Dionysius's *triplex via* as applying to the proof of God's existence, not merely to the consideration of what God is (not) or of divine names.[58] Furthermore, he accounts for the diversity of the three Dionysian ways by appeal to the principle-which we have seen above is Aristotelian-that we are led to a cause through its effects. A proof of God's existence may focus either on the mere fact of receiving something from a cause (the 'way of causality'), or on the imperfect reception of that effect subsequently denied of the cause (the 'way of remotion'), or on the positive character of what is imperfectly received, which is surpassingly possessed by the cause (the 'way of eminence'). Thus, the diversity of the *triplex via* is explained by reducing it to three successively complex ways of proving from effects that a cause exists.[59] Aquinas reiterates his

[58] Contrast this passage, for example, with I *Sent.,* d. 35, q. 1, a. 1, where Aquinas uses the three *viae* to prove, not that God exists, but that God is a knower. In later passages, the *triplex via* is used in the main to discuss divine attributes; cf. *De Pot.,* q. 7, a. 5; and q. 9, a. 7. Sometimes he explicitly distinguishes the project of proving God's existence from the project of the *triplex via* (ScG HI, c. 49 [para. 8]; and *ITh* l, q. 12, a. 12, quoted below, nn. 80, 93). In one text, only one of the three ways, causality, leads to God's existence: "Potest tamen homo, ex huiusmodi creaturis, Deum tripliciter cognoscere, ut Dionysius dicit in libro *De Divinis nominibus.* Uno quidem modo per causalitatem. Quia enim huiusmodi creaturae sum defectibiles et mutabiles, necesse est eas reducere ad aliquod principium immobile et perfectum. Et secundum hoc cognoscitur de Deo an est. Secundo per viam excellentiae. Non enim reducuntur omnia in prim um principium, sicut in propriam causam et univocam, prout homo hominem generat, sed sicut in causam communem et excedentem. Et ex hoc cognoscitur quod est super omnia. Terrio per viam negationis. Quia si est causa excedens, nihil eorum quae sum in crearuris potest ei competere, sicut eriam neque corpus caeleste proprie dicitur grave vel !eve aut calidum aut frigidum. Et secundurn hoc dicimus Deum immobilem et infinitum ... "*In Ad Romanos,* c. 1, lect. *6,* in Thomas Aquinas, *In omnes S. Pauli Apostoli Epistolas Commentaria* (8"' ed.; Turin: Marietti, 1953), vol. 1.

[59] This is perhaps the only place in Aquinas's works where he justifies a certain order to the *triplex via:* causality, negation, and eminence. Cf. Ewbank, "Diverse Orderings of *Triplex Via,"* 89-92; Hankey, *God in Himself,* 71-72. The passage supports O'Rourke's contention that for Aquinas, as for Dionysius, the *triplex via* is a threefold variation on the theme of

finding in the subsequent article 3, where he asks "Can God be known by a human through creatures?" He writes:

I respond that it should be said that since creatures proceed exemplarily from God himself *just as from a cause* [that is] in a certain way similar [to them] by analogy, it is possible to arrive at God from creatures in those three aforementioned modes, that is, through causality, remotion, and eminence.[60]

Finally, Aquinas's *Scriptum on the Sentences,* as we have already seen, makes no mention of nominal definition in the context of the proof for God's existence. But it does lay down, in an objection, at least, the principle that becomes crucial for the final stage in his development of a nominal definition of 'God': we only know God through effects, either by way of causality, negation, or eminence; therefore we can only name God from effects.[61]

In sum, Aquinas's earliest approach to the project of proving God's existence is already Dionysian in character. In his Parisian *Scriptum on the Sentences,* he reads the proof of God's existence in light of the *triplex via,* and he reads the *triplex via* in light of the proof of a first efficient cause.

B) The Application of the Triplex via' to the Project of Nominal Definition: On Boethius's De Trinitate *and* Summa contra Gentiles *I*

The second and the most important stage in Aquinas's development of his Dionysian formula for 'God' is worked out in

causality; see O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas,* 32, 36.

[60] I *Sent.,* d. 3, q. 1, a. 3: "Respondeo dicendurn, quod, cum creatura exemplariter procedat ab ipso Deo sicut a causa quodammodo simili per analogiam, ex creaturis potest in Deurn deveniri tribus illis modis quibus dictum est, scilicet per causalitatem, remotionem, eminentiam." Aquinas's early expression contradicts his later qualification that effects are similar to God, but not vice versa; see *STh* I, q. 4, a. 3, ad 4; and below, n. 64.

[61] I *Sent.,* d. 22, q. 1, a. 2, arg 2: "Praeterea, Deurn non possumus nominare, nisi secundurn quod ipsurn cognoscimus. Sed non cognoscimus ipsurn nisi ex effectibus suis, vel per viam causalitatis, vel per viam negationis, vel per viam eminentiae. Ergo non potest nominari a nobis nisi ex creaturis." Cf. &GI, c. 12 (para. 8); and *STh* I, q. 13, a. 1, quoted below, nn. 75, 99.

On Boethius's De Trinitate (ca. 1257). In three different articles, including two from question 1, Aquinas uses Dionysius's *triplex via* to expand on his Aristotelian account of how we reason to God from effects. In what follows I take up each of these articles in turn. Then I show how this Dionysian expansion is reflected in the approach to God of the subsequent *Summa contra Gentiles.*

1. On Boethius's De Trinitate, *q. 1, a. 2: The 'Triplex via' and Reasoning from Effects.* After concluding, as we have seen, that in this life we only know God as a cause of effects, and therefore that we only know 'that God is',[62] Aquinas proceeds in question 1 to qualify this conclusion by admitting degrees of this knowledge. Every effect (in the *quia* proof 'that God is'), he observes, is related to God as to its cause.[63] Nevertheless, insofar as one better apprehends the relation *(habitudo)* of the cause to its effect, the cause is more perfectly known from the effect.[64] In every effect that is not in the same species as its cause, he explains (in a way reminiscent of I *Sent.,* d. 3), three features can be noticed in its relation *(habitudo)* to its cause: the "progression" of the effect from the cause (or the very fact that the effect proceeds from the cause), the fact that the effect follows a likeness in its cause, and the fact that it fails to follow this likeness perfectly. As a result, argues Thomas, the human mind advances in three ways in the cognition, not of what God is, but of 'that God is': first, insofar as God's *efficacy* in producing things is more perfectly known; next, according as God is known as cause of *more noble*

[62] See above, nn. 43-44.

[63] *Super Boet. De Trin.,* q. 1, a. 2 (II. 92-93). See above, nn. 36-38.

[64] Ibid. (II. 96-113): "Et tamen unus cognoscentium quia est, alio perfectius cognoscit: quia causa tanto ex effectu perfectius cognoscitur, quanta per effectum magis appreenditur habitudo cause ad effectum. Que quidem habitudo in effectu non pertingente ad equalitatem sue cause attenditur secundum tria: scilicet secundum progressionem effectus a causa, et secundum hoc quod effectus consequitur de similitudine sue cause, et secundum hoc quod deficit ab eius perfecta consequtione. Et sic tripliciter mens humana proficit in cognitione Dei, quamuis ad cognoscendum quid est non pertingat set an est solum: primo secundum quod perfectius cognoscitur eius efficacia in producendo res; secundo prout nobiliorum effectuum causa cognoscitur, qui cum eius similitudinem aliquam gerant, magis eminentiam eius commendant; tertio in hoc quod magis ac magis cognoscitur elongatus ab omnibus his que in effectibus apparent. Unde dicit Dionisius in libro De diuinis nominibus quod cognoscitur ex omnium causa et excessu et ablatione."

effects that bear some *similitude* to him, and thus better communicate his eminence; and, finally, as he is more and more known to be distant from all that appears in his effects. Aquinas concludes that this is why Dionysius affirms that God is known by being cause of all, by excess, and by 'ablation'. [65]

2. On Boethius's De Trinitate, *q. 1, a. 4: Three Divine Designations.* In article 2, Aquinas links the Dionysian *triplex via* in the path to God's existence (found also in the *Scriptum on the Sentences)* with the *Posterior Analytics's 'quia* reasoning' from effects to the existence of their cause. A subsequent passage in article 4 similarly presents the *triplex via* as a systematic explication of the relation to effects that results from such causal reasonmg:

> [We] know God in the wayfarer state only from effects, as can be evident from what has been previously said. And for this reason, by natural reason we are able to know about God only what is perceived about him from the relation *[habitudo]* of effects to him, such as those things that designate his causality and his eminence beyond caused things, and that remove from him the imperfect conditions of effects.[66]

This passage also contains a new element: it speaks of the terms known about God ('those things that designate ... ') and divides them into three groups, each characterized by a different *relation* to effects that corresponds to one of the three Dionysian ways. As we shall see, Aquinas in the next stage explicitly formulates titles of the Deity linked to each of the three ways.

3. On Boethius's De Trinitate, *q. 6, a. 3: Negation, Causality, and Eminence in the Nominal Definition.* The two passages from question 1 of *On Boethius's De Trinitate* use the Dionysian *triplex via* to expand on an Aristotelian account of the logic for arriving at God's existence through effects, even mentioning the conse-

[65] Aquinas's words follow John Sarracen's translation of the *Divine Names,* quoted below, n. 87.

[66] *Super Boet. De Trin.,* q. 1, a. 4 (II. 86-94): "Quod patet ex hoc quod Deum non cognoscimus in statu uie nisi ex effectibus, ut ex predictis patere potest; et ideo naturali ratione de Deo cognoscere non possumus nisi hoc quod percipitur de ipso ex habitudine effectuum ad ipsum, sicut ilia que designant causalitatem ipsius et eminentiam super causata, et que remouent ab ipso imperfectas conditiones effectuum."

quences of this on our theological terminology. Still, neither passage directly applies Dionysius to the project of nominal definition. This most significant development lies in question 6, article 3. As we have seen, Aquinas argues there that in order to know whether an incorporeal thing, such as God, exists, one must use a nominal definition that is drawn from an effect, rather than one, as in the case of corporeal things, that contains a remote genus and a difference drawn from perceptible accidents.[67] Aquinas proceeds to expand on this possibility, using Dionysius. He proposes that we use broad negations of things in our experience in the place of a genus, such as 'immaterial', 'incorporeal', etc.[68] And, in the place of a *differentia,* he makes two proposals: first, successively narrower negations, each of which serves to contract the original negation, and so make our cognition less 'confused' and more 'determinate'. Second, in place of perceptible accidents, he proposes two relations *(habitudines)* to perceptible things: either one that involves a comparison of cause to effect, or one that involves a comparison of 'excess'. Aquinas concludes:

> In this way, therefore, we know the *'an est'* of immaterial forms; and in place of cognition *'quid est'* we have cognition through negation, through causality, and through 'excess', the very modes that Dionysius affirmed in the book *On Divine Names.*[69]

[67] See above, at n. 28 and at nn. 36-44.

[68] Aquinas, *Super Boet. De Trin.,* q. 6, a. 3 (II. 156-68, 172-81): "Et ideo non possumus dicere quod confusa cognitione cognoscantur a nobis substanrie immateriales per cognirionem generis et apparentium accidentium, set loco cognitionis generis habemus in istis substantiis cognitionem per negariones, ut cum scimus quod huiusmodi substantie sunt immateriales, incorporee, non habentes figuras, et alia huiusmodi; et quanto plures negationes de eis cognoscimus, tanto minus confusa est earum cognitio in nobis, eo quod per negationes sequentes prior negario contraitur et determinatur, sicut genus remotum per differentias ... . loco autem accidentium habemus in substantiis predicris habitudines earum ad substantias sensibiles, uel secundum cornparationem cause ad effectrnn, uel secundum comparationem excessus. Ita ergo de formis immaterialibus cognoscimus an est, et habemus de eis loco cognitionis quid est cognirionem per negationem, per causalitatem, et per excessum; quos etiam modos Dionisius ponit in libro De divinis nominibus."

[69] Ibid. (11. 177-81), quoted above, n. 68; on the *triplex via,* see also ibid., q. 6, a. 2 (li. 123-32).

Thus, it is precisely the Dionysian *triplex via* that prompts Aquinas in *On Boethius's De Trinitate* to develop his notion of the nominal definition in the case of the proof of God's existence: in a definition of 'God', *negation* takes the place of a genus, whereas further negations and/or relations of *causality* and *eminence* take the place of a specific difference.

4. *The Dionysian Project in the* Summa contra Gentiles. A cursory reading might suggest that this elaborate use of Dionysius in *On Boethius's De Trinitate* in order to frame a nominal definition of 'God' has no trace in the subsequent *Summae*. In the context of proving God's existence, the *Summa Theologiae*, for example, speaks only of drawing the nominal definition from an effect.[70] Nevertheless, strong marks of this elaborate doctrine are present in *Summa contra Gentiles* I-III (1259-63). Aquinas retains the proposal that in place of a genus we use negations, and in place of a *differentia* we use successively narrow negations,[71] each contracting the previous one.[72] Through such a method, even without knowing 'what *x* is' we may form a more and more

[70] *STh* I, q. 1, a. 7, ad 1; and *STh* I, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2, quoted above, nn. 14, 46.

[71] Cf. also Aquinas, *Super De causis,* prop. 7 (Saffrey, ed., 49.28-50.2, 50.5-7): "Et ideo intelligentia quidem notificari potest enarrative sive affirmative quantum ad suum genus, ut dicatur esse substantia; sed quantum ad differentiam specificam enarrari non potest, sed oportet quod per negationem nobis notificetur in quantum transcendit totum ordinem corporalium rerum quibus convenit divisibilitas. . . . Causa autem prima . . . est supersubstantialis et simpliciter inenarrabilis."

[72] *ScG* I, c. 14 (para. 2-3): "Est autem via remotionis utendum praecipue in consideratione divinae substantiae. . . . [A]liqualem eius habemus notitiam cognoscendo quid non est. Tantoque eius notitiae magis appropinquamus, quanto plura per intellectum nostrum ab eo poterimus removere. Tanto enim unumquodque perfectius cognoscimus, quanto differentias eius ad alia plenius intuemur .... [N. 3] Sed quia in consideratione substantiae divinae non possumus accipere quid, quasi genus; nee distinctionem eius ab aliis rebus per affirmativas differentias accipere possumus, oportet earn accipere per differentias negativas. Sicut autem in affirmativis differentiis una aliam contrahit, et magis ad completam designationem rei appropinquat secundum quod a pluribus differre facit; ita una differentia negativa per aliam contrahitur, quae a pluribus differre facit. Sicut, si dicamus deum non esse accidens, per hoc ab omnibus accidentibus distinguitur; deinde si addamus ipsum non esse corpus, distinguemus ipsum etiam ab aliquibus substantiis; et sic per ordinem ab omni eo quod est praeter ipsum, per negationes huiusmodi distinguetur; et tune de substantia eius erit propria consideratio cum cognoscetur ut ab omnibus distinctus."

'distinct' and 'proper' cognition of a thing.[73] This proposal, although not used for the project of proving God's existence, prefaces Thomas's discussion in the *Summa contra Gentiles* of 'what God is' and gives order to the next fourteen chapters: God is not in time, not potential, not material, not composite, etc.[74] But what is more, in the project of proving God's existence Aquinas also retains part of his Dionysian explication of the nominal definition of 'God'. We have already quoted the passage from book 1, chapter 12, in which he proposes that in place of the divine essence the proof of God's existence use as a middle term an effect, which enters into the nominal definition of 'God'. Now we may understand the provenance of Aquinas's explanation of this statement. He writes:

> [F]rom such an effect is derived the meaning *[ratio]* of this name 'God'. For, all divine names are imposed either from the removal of divine effects from him, or from some relation *[habitudo]* of God to his effects.[75]

Aquinas is merely making a general statement about the origin of all divine names: all receive their 'imposition to' God in two ways, either by 'removal', that is, by negating effects as belonging

[73] See also *ScG* ID, c. 39 (para. 1): "Rursus, est quaedam alia dei cognitio, altior quam praemissa, quae de deo per demonstrationem habetur, per quam magis ad propriam ipsius cognitionem acceditur: cum per demonstrationem removeantur ab eo multa, per quorum remotionem ab aliis discretus intelligitur. Ostendit enim demonstratio Deum esse immobilem, aeternum, incorporeum, omnino simplicem, unum, et alia huiusmodi, quae in libro primo de Deo ostendimus. Ad propriam autem alicuius rei cognitionem pervenitur non solum per affirmationes, sed etiam per negationes: sicut enim proprium hominis est esse animal rationale, ita proprium eius est non esse inanimatum neque irrationale. Sed hoc interest inter utrumque cognitionis propriae modum, quod, per affirmationes propria cognitione de re habita, scitur quid est res, et quomodo ab aliis separatur: per negationes autem habita propria cognitione de re, scitur quod est ab aliis discreta, tamen quid sit remanet ignotum. Talis autem est propria cognitio quae de deo habetur per demonstrationes."

[74] Cf. X *Metaphys.*, c. 3, lect. 4 (1990): "Inde est quod prima rerum principia non definimus nisi per negationes posteriorum; sicut dicimus quod punctum est, cuius pars non est; et Deum cognoscimus per negationes, inquantum dicimus Deum incorporeum esse, immobilem, infinitum."

[75] *ScG* I, c. 12 (para. 8): "[E]t ex huiusmodi effectu sumitur ratio huius nominis Deus. Nam omnia divina nomina imponuntur vel ex remotione effectuum divinorum ab ipso, vel ex aliqua habitudine Dei ad suos effectus." For the rest, see above, n. 45.

to him, or by relating effects to him in some way.[76] Nevertheless, the mention of' divine names', 'removal', and 'relation' *(habitudo)* to 'effects' makes us think of the three Dionysian ways. And it follows, although Aquinas does not make this explicit, that the 'meaning' of the name 'God', or the nominal definition, will consist of an effect negated of and/or related to God; for 'God' is one of the names that is 'imposed to' God. We naturally understand behind 'relation' both relations of causality, already implied by 'effects', and relations of 'eminence'. In fact, Aquinas proceeds in chapter 12, in response to a third objection, to speak of God's *exceeding* all perceptible things.[77] Later in book 1, moreover, Aquinas observes that we can only name God's mode of 'supereminence' by using a negation, or by using a relation *(relatio)*, such as in *'first cause'* or *'highest* good'.[78]

In sum, *On Boethius's De Trinitate* proposes an elaborate Dionysian expansion on the Aristotelian logic, first, for the *quia* proof of God's existence, and second, for the content of the nominal definition of 'God': *negation* takes the place of a genus, whereas further negations and/or relations of *causality* or *eminence* take the place of a specific difference. This expansion is decidedly mitigated though still strongly reflected in the *Summa contra Gentiles,* especially in the apophatic account of the divine nature, but also in the context of the proofs of God's existence. According to Aquinas there, the meaning of the term 'God' is

[76] For the principle elsewhere that we only name God as we know him, through three Dionysian ways, see nn. 61, 66, 99.

[77] *ScG* I, c. 12 (para. 9): "Patet etiam ex hoc quod, etsi Deus sensibilia omnia et sensum excedat, eius tamen effectus, ex quibus demonstratio sumitur ad probandum Deum esse, sensibiles sunt. Et sic nostrae cognitionis origo in sensu est etiam de his quae sensum excedunt."

[78] *ScG* I, c. 30 (para. 4): "Modus autem supereminentiae quo in Deo dictae perfectiones inveniuntur, per nomina a nobis imposita significari non potest nisi vel per negationem, sicut cum dicimus Deum aeternum vel infinitum; vel etiam per relationem ipsius ad alia, ut cum dicitur prima causa, vel summum bonum. Non enim de Deo capere possumus quid est, sed quid non est, et qualiter alia se habeant ad ipsum, ut ex supra dictis patet." Cf. also *In De Div. Norn.,* c. 2, lect. 1 (126), where Thomas describes one of two kinds of essential names as "ea quae dicuntur de Deo, remotive per excellentiam quamdam, *utsuperbonum, supersubstantiale, supervivum, supersapiens et quaecumque* alia dicuntur de Deo per remotionem, propter sui excessum."

taken from an effect: as in all divine names, an effect is 'removed' from-that is, denied as belonging to-its cause, and/or related in some way to its cause. As we shall see, the Dionysian expansion on the nominal definition of 'God' is inherited by the *Summa Theologiae,* but in a new systematic context. [79]

C) The Formulation of a Triad of Divine Titles: The Summae *and* On Dionysius's Divine Names

What is most important about the second stage, for the purposes of this paper, is that Aquinas links the nominal definition of 'God' to the *triplex via* of Dionysius, just as he does in the later *Summa Theologiae (STh* I, q. 13, a. 8, ad 2). But unlike in the latter text, Aquinas in *On Boethius's De Trinitate* does not use the *triplex via* to formulate a triad of divine titles for the definition. The formulation of such a triad, without their being explicitly incorporated into a definition, marks a third stage of development. We find this principally in *On Dionysius's Divine Names* (ca. 1261-68), but perhaps first in book 3 of the *Summa contra Gentiles* (ca. 1262-63). There Aquinas writes: "[T]hrough effects we know that God exists and that he is the cause of other things, 'supereminent beyond' other things, and 'removed' from all things." [80] He adds that according to Dionysius's *Mystical Theology,* this knowledge is the most sublime attainable in this life, even though 'what God is' remains all the while deeply unknown. [81]

[79] See below, at n. 108.

[80] *ScG* ill, c. 49 (para. 8): "Cognoscit tamen substanria separata per suam substantiam de Deo quia est; et quod est omni um causa; et eminentem omnibus; et remotum ab omnibus, non solum quae sunt, sed eriam quae mente creata concipi possunt. Ad quam eriam cognitionem de Deo nos utcumque pertingere possumus: per effectus enim de Deo cognoscimus quia est et quod causa aliorum est, aliis supereminens, et ab omnibus remotus. Et hoc est ultimum et perfecrissimum nostrae cognitionis in hac vita, ut Dionysius dicit, in libro *De mystica theologia,* cum Deo quasi *ignoto coniungimur:* quod quidem contingit dum de eo quid non sit cognoscimus, quid vero sit penitus manet ignotum." A parallel expression is found also among the deletions in Aquinas's autograph of the same chapter; see Aquinas, *Opera omnia,* 14: 16b.

[81] Cf. III *Sent.,* d. 35, q. 2, a. 2, qcla. *le,* where Aquinas refers to the same text of the *Mystical Theology.*

We are not surprised to find an increase in Dionysian formulae in Aquinas's *On Dionysius's Divine Names,* where, in apparent imitation of his master Albert, Thomas comments on Dionysius prior to launching into his own series of Aristotelian commentaries (ca. 1267-74). In five passages Aquinas presents three titles for God, titles that correspond to the *triplex via,* although he uses varying terminology: (1) 'cause of all'; (2) 'existing beyond all' or 'supereminently'; and (3) 'distinct', 'segregated', 'separated', or 'removed from all'.[82] In at least one of these passages, Aquinas consciously presents the titles together as a triad: "And the one, divine itself is cause of all ... and is beyond all by the sublimity of its nature ... and existing separate from all."[83] In a second of these passages, Aquinas follows Dionysius in combining the three into one formula: "the cause segregated from all according to complete excess" (unEpoxtj).[84]

A sixth passage from *On Dionysius's Divine Names* perhaps best points to the ultimate source of Aquinas's doctrine on the *triplex via:*

[82] In addition to the passages quoted in the following two notes, see *In De Div. Nam.,* c. 1, lect. 2 (72): "sicut in causa primordiali, modo ineffabili nobis, propter suam eminentiam . . . . *ab omnibus* distinctus et ... super omnia existens." Three other texts list two of the three titles, following the lemma of Dionysius: *In De Div. Nam.,* c. 1, lect. 3 (98); c. 7, lect. 4 (729); c. 11, lect. 4 (938); see also ill *Sent.,* d. 35, q. 2, a. 2, qcla. 2c. Cf. also *In De Div. Nam.,* c. 5, leer. 1 (623), where something like the *triplex via* is programmatic for Dionysius's discussion.

[83] *In De Div. Nom.,* c. 13 (990): "Et ipsum .unum divinum est *causa omnium* . .. et est *super omnia* sublimitate suae naturae et .. '. ab omnibus separatum existens."

[84] *In De Div. Nam.,* c. 2, lect. 4 (180): "illi *causae* quae est *segregata* ab omnibus rebus *secundum* totalem excessum." For the Greek text, see Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, *Corpus dionysiacum,* ed. B. Suchla (Berlin-New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1990-), vol. 1. In two of the five passages, Aquinas's three titles correspond to three terms found in the lemma from Dionysius: "qui Deus, cum sit *amnium existentium causa,* ipse *nihil* est existentium, non quasi deficiens ab essendo, sed supereminenter *segregatusab omnibus" (In De Div. Nom.,* c. 1, leer. 3 [83]). *"[Qlui est omnium causa,* supereminenter omnibus, habet plenitudinem bonitatis super omnia alia. ••• Designatur etiam quidam excessus, secundum quern Deus ab omnibus segregatur, quasi superior omnibus existens, •.. ita collocatur *super amnia existentia,* ille qui est superior omnibus existentibus, eo quod est causa quaedam *imparticipabilis amnium participantium* et participationum: causa enim excedit causata" *(In De Div. Nom.,* c. 12, lect. 1 [955]).

[Dionysius] says that because we ascend to God from creatures *in the ablation of all and in the excess [of all] and in the cause of all,* therefore *God is known in all,* just as in effects, and *without all,* just as removed from all and exceeding all.[85]

This text is found in chapter 7, on divine wisdom, where Thomas himself sees Dionysius systematically raising and answering the question, How is God known?[86] Dionysius writes:

[W]e must ask how we know God, who is neither intelligible nor perceptible .. . . Not from his nature, for it is unknown and exceeds all reason and every mind; but from the order of all things ... to that which is beyond all, we ascend in power, by a way and an order, in the ablation of all and in the excess [of all] and in the cause of all.[87]

In chapter 1, Dionysius had offered the following description of the Deity known through his apophatic ways: "what is the cause of all existents, whereas it itself [is] nothing [of them], as separated supersubstantially from all."[88] Similarly, the *Mystical Theology* had spoken of what is the "cause of all," and "super-existing beyond all," corresponding to the threefold ways of affirmation, negation, and what is beyond both affirmation and

[85] *In De Div. Norn.,* c. 7, lect. 4 (731): "Dicit ergo primo quod quia a creaturis in Deum ascendimus et *in omnium ablatione et excessu et in omnium causa,* propterea *Deus cognoscitur in omnibus,* sicut in effectibus, *et sine omnibus,* sicut ab omnibus remotus et omnia excedens." Though this passage technically has only two of the titles in question, the most important two are present, and the third may be inferred immediately from *"cognoscitur in effectis."*

[86] *In De Div. Norn.,* c. 7, lect. 4 (727, 729).

[87] "Praeterea inquirere oportet, quomodo nos cognoscimus deum neque intelligibilem neque sensibilem neque aliquid universaliter existentium existentem .... */DI* Non ex natura ipsius; ignotum enim est hoc et omnem rationem et mentem excedens; sed ex omnium totorum ordinatione, sicut ex ipso proposita et imagines quasdam et assimilationes divinorum ipsius exemplarium habente, ad illud quod est super omnia, via et ordine secundum virtutem ascendimus in omnium ablatione et excessu et in omnium causa" (Dionysius, *Nomina divina* 7.3 [869CD, trans. John Sarracen], ed. P. Simon, in Albert, *Super De div. nom.,* c. 7 [Cologne ed., p. 355.80-84]).

[88] "[L]audant ipsum proprie maxime per ablationem a cunctibus existentibus, hoc vere et supernaturaliter illuminatione docti ex beatissima ad ipsum unitione, quod omnium quidem est existentium causa, ipsum autem nihil, ut ab omnibus supersubstantialiter segregatum" (Dionysius, *Nomina divina* 1.5 (593C), in Albert, *Super De div. nom.,* c. 1 [Cologne ed., p. 30.54-58]). My translation of the Latin finds confirmation in the Greek: "but it itself is no one [of them] (&Kiev)"

negation.[89] Thus, Aquinas naturally takes the *Divine Names* itself to present a set of titles that correspond to the *triplex via.* Aquinas's triad of titles in question 12, article 12 of the *Prima Pars* simply picks up this same line of thinking. But it is best to examine this article 12 after locating it within the theological context of the *Summa Theologiae,* and therefore within the consideration of the fourth and final stage of development.

D) The Tripartite Nominal Definition of 'God' Suited to the Divine Names: The Summa Theologiae

We begin to see that the quotation from the *Prima Pars* with which we began *(STh* I, q. 13, a. 8, ad 2) is not the isolated passage that it at first appears to be. Beginning with the *Scriptum on the Sentences,* Aquinas's project of proving God's existence has a Dionysian character. In *On Boethius's De Trinitate,* Thomas uses Dionysius to expand on his Aristotelian account of the logic for the proof of God's existence and the nominal definition of 'God'. This expansion is reflected in the *Summa contra Gentiles,* where, as in *On Dionysius's Divine Names,* Aquinas also formulates a Dionysian triad of titles for God. It remains only for the passage in question *(STh* I, q. 13, a. 8, ad 2) to incorporate such a triad into a definition. Before returning to this response to the second objection, we must locate question 13, article 8 in its doctrinal setting and examine two passages in questions 12 and 13 that provide particularly important background.

1. *The Division of the* Prima Pars *and the Triplex via' ofSTh I, q. 12, a. 12.* The *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae* presents itself as concerned with "God according as he is in himself *[secundum quod in se est]"* (q. 2, prol.), and therefore, first, with "what pertains to the divine essence," as distinct from "what

[89] "Oportet enim in ipsa [causa omnibus superposita] et omnes existentium ponere et affirmare positiones, sicut omnium causa, et omnes ipsas magis proprie negare, sicut super omnia superexistente, et non opinari negationes oppositas esse affirmationibus, sed multo prius ipsam super privationes esse, quae est super omnem ablationem et positionem" (Dionysius, *Mystica theologia 1.1* [1000B, trans. John Sarracen], ed. P. Simon, in Albert, *Super Dionysii Mysticam theologiam* 1 [Albert, *Opera omnia,* vol. 37.2, p. 457.75-78]).

pertains to the distinction of persons" (q. 27) and "to the procession of creatures" (q. 44). Aquinas continues in the same introductory prologue: "But concerning the divine essence, first we should consider whether God is; second, how he is, or rather how he is not; third, we should consider what pertains to his operation" (q. 2, prol.). Recall, as we have seen, that Aquinas introduces the criteria for the nominal definition of 'God', as drawn from an effect, in the context of the question "Does God exist?" in question 2.[90] By contrast, question 3 begins a new inquiry, which culminates in question 13. As Aquinas puts it, "Once it is known 'whether *x* is', it remains to be inquired 'how *x* is' *[quomodo sit],* in order to know 'what *x* is'" (q. 3, prol.). This description could rightly be described as Aristotelian: one examines the properties of an *x* that is already known to exist in order to arrive at its definition. Of course, Aquinas must immediately qualify such a description in this case: "But because we cannot know about God 'what *x* is', but 'what *x* is not', we cannot consider about God 'how *x* is' but rather 'how *x* is not'" *(quomodo non sit;* q. 3 prol.). Aquinas proceeds to subdivide this inquiry into the threefold consideration: how God is not (qq. 3-11),[91] how he is known by creatures {q. 12), and how he is named (q. 13).

The central claim of question 12 is a familiar one, which is developed in a new way in article 4. Aquinas there asks whether a created intellect can see the divine essence through what is natural to it. Since what is known, he answers, is in the knower according to the mode of the knower, no knower by its own nature can know something that has a higher mode of being than its own. Hence, what is subsistent *esse,* namely, God, can be known naturally only by itself, not by any creature, which receives *esse* from another. Since our human mode of knowing is related to our mode of being, that of a form in individual matter, we by contrast naturally know only (1) forms that are in individual

[90] *STh* I, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2, quoted above, nn. 14; see also *STh* I, q. 1, a. 7, ad 1, in n. 46 above.

[91] Aquinas can later still refer to this as the consideration of "in what way *[qualiter]* God is in himself *[secundum seipsum]" (STh* I, q. 12, pro!.).

matter, through the corporeal sense powers; and (2) universal forms that are abstracted from individuals given in sensation, through the incorporeal intellectual powers.

Arride 12 of question 12 asks, then, can we know God in this life through natural reason? Again, answers Aquinas, our natural knowledge, talcing its origin from sense, can only extend as far as it can be led through perceptible things, and therefore not as far as seeing the divine essence. The reason he now gives is one that we have seen in *On Boethius's De Trinitate:* perceptible creatures are not effects that are sufficient to make known the power of their cause.[92] But, continues Aquinas,

> because [perceptible things] are [God's] effects depending on a cause, we can be led from them to this: that we know about God 'whether *x* is', and that we know about him what necessarily belongs to him *[ea quae necesse est ei convenire]* according as he is the first cause of all things, exceeding all of his effects. Hence, we know about him his relation *[habitudo]* to creatures, that is, that he is the cause of aH things; and the difference of creatures from him, that is, that he is not one of the things that are caused by him, and that these are not removed from him because of a defect on his part, but because he super-exceeds [them].[93]

This passage now appears remarkable as both a continuation of and a development beyond passages that we examined in the previous two stages. First, in continuity with the third stage, Aquinas alludes to each member of the *triplex via,* and he lists three divine tides that correspond to the three Dionysian ways: (1) "first cause of all" or "cause of all," "not one of the things that are caused"; (2) "super-exceeding" or "'exceeding aU effects"'; (3) which are said to be "removed from him.'"[94] Second, in continuity with the second stage, Aquinas singles out two things that are known about God through effects and that subsume all of the rest

[92] See above, n. 43. Cf. also *STh* I, q. 4, aa. 2-3.

[93] *ST'h* I, q. 12, a. 12: quia sunt eius effectus a causa dependentes, ex eis in hoc perduci possum us, ut cognoscarrms de Deo an est; et ut cognoscamus de ipso ea quae necesse est ei convenire secundum quod est prima omnium causa, excedens omnia sua causala. Uncle cognoscimus de ipso habitudinem ipsius ad creaturas, quod scilicet omnium est causa; et differentiam creaturarum ab ipso, quod scilicet ipse non est aliquid eorum quae ab eo causantur; et quod haec mm removenttrr ab eo propter eiru;defectwn, sed quia superexcedit."

[94] Regarding Aquinas's terminology, compare, for example, the quotation from ihe *Divine Names,* above, n. 88.

that is known: relation *(habitudo)* to creatures, and the "difference of creatures from God," which includes differences by way of negation and eminence. Similarly, the *Summa contra Gentiles* (I, c. 12) had singled out relation to and removal of effects, thereby encapsulating the expansion on 'relation' *(habitudo)* of cause to effect in triadic terms that was initiated in *On Boethius's De Trinitate* (q. 1, a. 2, a passage whose roots lie, in turn, in I *Sent.,* d. 3).[95]

The third point regards, by contrast, what is novel. Aquinas places the three divine titles and this expansion on effects within a new context, one reducible neither to the question "Does *x* exist?" nor to 'what is *x?'* No longer does Aquinas insist that all that we can know about God is *an sit,* or that we only know 'what God is not'.[96] Instead, he introduces a phrase for what can be known positively about God *beyond* knowing 'that he is': we can know also 'what necessarily belongs to him' *(ea quae necesse est ei convenire).* At the same time, 'what necessarily belongs to God' is understood precisely in light of knowing through perceptible effects 'that he is': namely, 'what necessarily belongs to him *according as* he is the first cause of all things, exceeding all of his effects'. Even this latter, argues Aquinas, and not only 'that God is', is naturally knowable to us through perceptible things. 'What necessarily belongs to him', in turn, is said to include (1) relation *(habitudo)* to effects, such as that he is their cause; (2) difference from effects, including negations, such as that he is not among them; and (3) super-affirmations, such as that he surpasses these effects. The latter affirmations will turn out to include unparticipated perfections predicated of God *substantialiter,* as spoken of in articles 2-6 of question 13, but defended originally in the Fourth Way of question 2 and in questions 4-6.[97] Thus, 'what necessarily belongs to [God] according as he is the first cause of all things, exceeding all of his effects' turns out to cover all of the propositions proved about God in questions 3-11: these

[95] See above, nn. 64, 66-68, and 75.

[96] By contrast, see above, nn. 44, 64.

[97] See especially *STh* I, q. 13, a. 3, ad 1.

questions represent a summary of what can be known naturally about God in himself, besides that he exists.[98]

2. STh *I, q. 13: Article 1 as Background for the Question in Article 8.* In light of question 12's conclusions regarding how God is known by us, question 13 investigates how God is named. Aquinas, after first analyzing the divine names in general, takes up two particular names: 'God' and 'I am who am'. The first and in several ways the most important of these is the former, to which Aquinas devotes three of the twelve articles of question 13. Article 8 opens the three articles with the question, Does 'God' name a nature? The question seems out of place, as the second objection observes, since we name things as we know them, and we do not know the divine nature or essence. Aquinas responds that the name 'God' "has been imposed to signify something that is existing above all things, which is the principle of all things and is removed from all things" (*STh* I, q. 13, a. 8, ad 2). But should this be taken to be a definition of 'God' given that Aquinas makes no mention there of nominal definition, and, as he has established, a real definition of 'God' is impossible? What room is there, we may ask, for a consideration here of a definition of 'God' beyond that of the nominal definition already treated in question 2 in the context of the proof of God's existence?

The answer to this question is embedded in the response to the second objection, as we shall see, but it has its grounds in article 1 of question 13. Aquinas poses there the general question, Does any name belong to God? He responds that, according to *Peri hermeneias* 1, names are related to the things that they signify through the mediation of concepts of the intellect. Therefore-as the prologue to question 13 had already stated in a principle that

[98] In fact, one can already see in the *Summa contra Gentiles* the contrast between knowing 'that God is' and knowing "other things of this kind which it is necessary to attribute to the first principle" (*ScG* I, c. 3 [para. 4, "Cum enim"]), such as knowing that he is causal, eminent, and removed (*ScG* ill, c. 49, quoted above, n. 80; cf. *Super Boet. De Trin.*, q. 6, a. 3 [ll. 176-80], quoted above, n. 68). In *Super Boet. De Trin.*, Aquinas distinguishes knowing that separate substances exist from knowing their *conditiones*, such as that they are intellectual and incorporeal; and, he contrasts the latter *conditiones* with the *proprietates* proved of material things and their causes (ibid., q. 6, a. 4, c. and ad 2 [ll. 136-46, 159-75]).

governs the entire inquiry-according as something is known intellectually by us, it can be named. Aquinas continues:

It has been shown above, however, that God cannot be seen by us in this life through his essence, But he is known by us from creatures according to a relation *[habitudo]* of principle and through the mode of excellence and of remotion. In this way, therefore, he can be named by us from creatures, , , ,[99]

This passage contains a back reference to question 12, article 11, and it resumes the theme of the threefold way of knowing God set out in question 12, article 12. God is named according as he is known. He can be known in three ways from his effects, and, it follows, he can be named accordingly in three ways. Notice that the conclusion applies to all the divine names, without singling out the name for the divine essence itself, that is, 'God'. But there is more:

In this [threefold] way, therefore, he can be named by us from creatures, nevertheless, not in such a way that the name signi.fying him expresses the divine essence according as it is, in the way that the name 'human being' *[homo]* expresses in its signification the essence of human being according as it is, For, it signifies the definition that declares its essence, since the *ratio* which a name signifies is the definition. [100]

Aquinas's explicit point is negative: divine names, unlike names of created species, do not *express* the essence of the thing named according as it is as such. Again, this remark applies to all of the divine names. Still, the name 'human being' is in tacit opposition

[99] *STh* I, q. 13, a. 1: "Ostensum est autem supra quod Deus in hac vita non potest a nobis videri per suam essentiam; sed cognoscitur a nobis ex creaturis, secundum habitudi.nem principii, et per modum excellentiae et remotionis. Sic igitur potest nominari a nobis ex creaturis, non tarnen ita quod nomen significans ipsurn, exprirnat divinam essentiam secundum quod est, sicut hoc nomen homo exprimit sua significatione essentiarn horninis secundum quod est; significat enim eius definitionem, declarantern eius essentiarn; ratio enirn quam significat nomen, est definitio." For knowing through the *triplex via* as a basis for our naming, see also *SI'h* I, q. 13, a. 10, ad *5;* I *Sent.,* d. 3, q. 1, a. 3, quoted above, n. 60.

[100] Aquinas frequently cites this tag, whose source, as he indicates in *SI'h* I, q. 13, a. 8, ad 2; and in *ScG* I, c. 12 (para. 4), is Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 0.7,l012a23-24; cf. ibid. OA.1006a29-b12; *Posterior Analytics* 2.7,92b25-34. In the latter passage, Aristotle argues that the definition of a thing named and any formula for what the name means (nominal definition) cannot be the same.

to the name that signifies the divine essence, namely, 'God', as becomes dear when reading article 1 in light of article 8.

In sum, Aquinas's important innovation in his response to the second objection in article 8, question 13 of the *Pars* is not located within the treatment of the existence of God (or of 'what God is', which is unknowable to us), but within the subsequent consideration of 'what necessarily belongs' to God as such according as he is the first cause exceeding all effects; within the consideration, that is, of (1) God's *causal* relation to creatures and of his difference from creatures-whether it be a difference of (2) *negation* or (3) *eminence* (q. 12, a. 12). Question 13 reflects on the divine names that attend this consideration, since God can be named according to these three ways of knowing him-and according to these three ways alone (q. 13, a. 1). Article 8 subsequently considers a putative name for the divine essence: 'God'. But we already know that if there is a name for the divine essence-which is unknowable as it is in itself-that name must foHow the threefold way in which it can be known.

3. *The Dionysian Answer of* Summa Theologiae *I, q. 13, a. 8, ad* 2. The rest of question 13 is, in effect, an expansion on the position of article 1: God is named according to the threefold way in which he is known. According to article 2, God is named not only (1) by names signifying a relation to creatures (for example, 'lord', 'creator' [*STh* I, q. 13, a. 7, ad 1]), and (2) by names said negatively ('uncreated', 'infinite'), but also (3) contra Maimonides and Alan of Lille, by names said absolutely and affirmatively. The latter names, such as 'wise' and 'good', are even said to "signify the divine *substance,"* to be "predicated substantially" (*STh* I, q. 13, a. 2). or "essentially" of God (*STh* I, q. 13, a. 6). Nevertheless, as Aquinas explains in articles 5 and 6, such names are only said analogously of God and creatures; they are, in fact, denied of God both according to their 'mode of signifying' and according to 'the thing signified' insofar as they fail to circumscribe and comprehend it. Furthermore, 'wise', 'good', 'living', and 'a being' (*STh* I, q. 13, a. 3, ad 1) are imposed for the sake of signifying these perfections absolutely (*STh* I, q. 13, a. 9, ad 3), that is, they signify God "under the *ratio"* of wisdom, goodness, etc. (*STh* I, q. 13, a.

4). Hence, "they are not imposed for the sake of signifying the divine nature" (*STh* I, q. 13, a. 9, ad 3). In other words, they are imposed to signify God, not "from the side of the divine nature" itself as such (cf. *STh* I, q. 13, a 9), but from the side of perfections that proceed from him into creatures: they signify the principle of things according as a given perfection preexists in it, although in a higher mode than is understood or signified (*STh* I, q. 13, a 2, ad 2).[101] Only one name is imposed for the sake of signifying the divine nature itself as such, according to articles 8-9: 'God'.[102] Unlike the Tetragrammaton, 'God' is not a proper but a common noun.[103]

Still, we have just seen in article 1 that none of the divine names signifies by expressing the divine essence according as it is. In this respect, the divine essence is not named in the way that human essence is named by *'homo',* so that the definition of the essence is the very concept signified by the term. We cannot know the essence of God. How then does 'God' signify the divine nature? In answer, the response to the second objection in article 8 returns to the theme of article 1, citing the same passage of Aristotle to the effect that the concept signified by a name is the

[101] According to *STh* I, q. 13, a. 1, God is known and named in three ways. Aquinas uses a similar triad in his most complete description of the ground of such perfections as wisdom and goodness: each creature insofar as it has such a perfection represents God as a *principle* that *excels* over it, from whose form all effects *fall away,* although they possess some similitude to it (*STh* I, q. 13, a. 2). Similarly, the most complete description of the signification of such perfections itself hints at the three ways of arriving at them: each of these signifies "the *principle* of all things according as the perfection named preexists in it in a more *eminent* way than can be understood or signified" (ibid., ad 2).

[102] "He who is" is the most proper name of God "according to its signification" (that is, it is more proper even than 'God' according to "that *from which* the name is imposed" [*STh* I, q. 13, a. 11, ad 1]); for, God's essence is 'to be', and every other name signifies form and so fails to signify this (*STh* I, q. 13, a. 11). Nevertheless, even "He who is" is less proper as regards "that *to which* [ad *quod]* the name is imposed for the sake of signifying" than the name imposed for the sake of signifying the divine nature itself, namely, *Deus* (ibid., ad 1). Elsewhere Aquinas affirms that, as regards imposition *to which (cui),* the name 'God' is beyond all other names: "quantum ad id cui nomen imponitur ... hoc nomen Deus est super omne nomen, quia imponitur sibi secundum divinam naturam" (ID *Sent.,* d. 18, q. 1, a. 4, qcla. 3, ad 2).

[103] *STh* I, q. 13, a. 9, ad 2: "[D]icendum quod hoc nomen Deus est nomen appelativum, et non proprium, quia significat naturam divinam ut in habente; licet ipse Deus, secundum rem, non sit nee universalis nee particularis."

definition.[104] But now Aquinas's example is *lapis, lapidem* rather than *homo:* namely, something that is originally known and named through properties or effects (it strikes the foot: *laedit pedem),* although the name comes to signify the very essence of the thing "according as it is in itself." Similarly, *'theos•* or *'deus'* is taken from the first cause's operations in relation to effects, so that 'that from which the name is imposed' is the 'consideration' of (cf. obj. 1) or providence over all things; whereas 'that to which it is imposed in order to signify' is the divine nature itself.[105] Nevertheless, unlike in the case of *lapis-continues* Aquinas's response to the second objection-we cannot know the divine nature "according as it is in itself" *(secundum quad in se est)* so that we know about it 'what *x* is', that is, its very definition.

As in the case of *lapis,* we know and name the divine nature from effects. Yet, in this case we know a nature only from effects that are not proportional to their cause, and through a mode of knowing that is not proportional to an immaterial and uncreated mode of being *(STh* I, q. 12, aa. 4, 12). We know the divine nature from effects, then, not so as to know it as it is in itself, but, continues Thomas, once again, "through the modes of eminence, causality, and negation." And, it is precisely *in this way* that the name 'God' signifies the divine nature. For, it is imposed in order to signify "something that is existing above all things, which is the principle of all things and is removed from all things." For, this is what those who use the name 'God' intend to signify.

[104] *SI'h* l, q. 13, a. 8, ad 2 is quoted above, n. 10; *SI'h* l, q. 13, a. 1 is quoted inn. 99.

[105] For the distinction between imposition *a quo* and *adquod,* see, in addition to *SI'h* I, q. 13, a. 8; I *Sent.,* d. 23, q. 1, a. 2, ad 1; *SI'h* I, q. 13, a. 2, ad 2; and *SI'h* I, q. 13, a. 11, ad 1. Park notes the distinction between imposition *ad quod* and *cui,* identifying the latter with supposition; Seung-Chan Park, *Die Rezeption der mittelalterlichen Sprachphilosophie in der Theologie des Thomas van Aquin: Mit besonderer Berikksichtigung der Analogie* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 1999), 116, 124. This distinction is operative in texts where imposition *a quo* is taken, not as etymology, but as a quality in the thing (cf. *De Verit.,* q. 4, a. 1, ad 8); e.g., I *Sent.,* d. 2, q. 1, a. 3; III *Sent.,* d. 6, q. 1, a. 3; cf. I *Sent.,* d. 22, q. 1, a. 1, ad 3; *SI'h* Ill, q. 37, a. 2. But in texts on 'God', where imposition *a quo* is taken as etymology, the distinction does not appear to be operative; e.g., I *Sent.,* d. 2, q. 1, a. 5, *e%fJos.* ad 1; I *Sent.,* d. 18, q. 1, a. 5, ad 6, quoted above, n. 13; III *Sent.,* d. 18, q. 1, a. 4, qda. 3, ad 2, quoted above, n. 102.

It is worth emphasizing, with Aquinas, that this formula for 'God' is not, properly speaking, a definition of the divine essence, in the way that 'bipedal, rational animal' is the definition of the human essence signified by *'homo'*. This formula for 'God' does not properly make known 'what *x* is'. It follows that in this case Aristotle's tag is, strictly speaking, false: the *ratio* signified by the name 'God' is not the *definition* expressing 'what *x* is'. Instead, the tag must be modified in this case, in a way that Aquinas himself has previously indicated in the same question 13: "the *ratio* which the name signifies is the intellect's conception concerning the thing signified by the name" *(STh* I, q. 13, a. 4).[106] Accordingly, the formula in question, if not a real definition, must be a *nominal* definition of *x-not* of *x* as it is in itself, but as it is conceived by our intellect, namely, according as it "is known by us from creatures according to a relation *[habitudo]* of principle and through the mode of excellence and of remotion" *(STh* I, q. 13, a. 1).

Is this nominal definition, then, the same as the one discussed in question 2 of the *Prima Pars* in order to show 'that God exists'? Recall that Aquinas had there observed that to demonstrate the existence of a cause one must use, instead of a real definition as the middle term, a nominal definition drawn from an effect.[107] We may answer in the negative, thanks especially to the precise formulations of question 12, article 12 discussed above. By question 13, we have already answered the question "Does God exist?," and we are aware that we can never know 'what God is'. Questions 3-11 consider, therefore, not 'what *x* is', but 'what necessarily belongs to' *x* according as it is already known to exist as the cause of all things *(STh* I, q. 12, a. 12). Through these questions, in brief, we know about *x* that it is related to effects, that it is removed from them, and that it exceeds them. As a result, we name *x* in questions 3-11 through such terms as 'infinite', 'creator', and 'surpassingly good'. Question 13 offers general reflections on these names for *x* taken as a group. Then in article 8 it focuses on one name that signifies the very nature of

[106] Cf. also *De Verit.,* q. 4, a. 1, ad 8.

[107] *STh* I, q. 1, a. 7, ad 1; and *STh* I, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2, quoted above, nn. 14, 46.

this x: 'God'. It offers a nominal definition of 'God' that sums up what this name means in this context: 'something that is existing above all things, which is the principle of all things and is removed from all things'. The definition is very formal, expressing three general titles for *x* based on the only ways of knowing *x's* essence in this case, that is, by causality, negation, and eminence. Article 1 had already indicated that these are the only ways of knowing and *naming* God, and it had tacitly suggested that they must enter into the *ratio* of the name for the divine essence.[108] Such a definition, then, amounts to a formal expression of all that can be known about 'what necessarily belongs to *x* as a cause', while it retains the marks of any good definition: primacy of order and universal commensurability with the *definiendum.* Such a nominal definition is proper, not to the consideration of 'whether God is', but to the consideration of the divine names.[109]

4. *F.isume.* The *ad secundum* of question 13, article 8 remains a unique text because it places the Dionysian titles that correspond to the *triplex via* into a nominal definition of God that is drawn from effects, as prescribed by Aquinas's Aristotelian logic. In seven places, however, Aquinas had already spoken of these three titles together,[110] and in six places he had already linked the proof of God's existence through effects to the *triplex via* of Dionysius.[111] As early as the *Scriptum on the Sentences,* Aquinas had understood there to be three successively complex ways of proving a cause from effects, and, therefore, as in *On Boethius's De Trinitate,* three ways of knowing the cause by

[168] *STh* I, q. 13, a. 8, ad 2 applies to the nominal definition of 'God' the Dionysian strategy that *STh* I, q. 13, a. 1 (above, n. 99) had proposed for any divine name: we know and *name* God only from effects and by way of remotion and eminence. So also rwo passages, &G I, c. 12 (para. 8); and *STh* I, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2, had drawn consequences for the nominal definition of 'God'-in that case a definition proper to the proof of God's existence-from the fact that we name God from effects (although only the former passage mentions the *triplex via);* see above,nn. 14,45, 75.

[109] I am grateful to Lawrence Dewan for this insight.

[110] In addition to the five texts from the *In De divinis nominibus* in rm. 82-85, see rm. 80 and 93 for &G ill, c. 49 (para. 8); and *STh* I, q. 12, a. 12.

III I *Sent.,* d. 3, q. 1, pro!. (cf. I *Sent.,* d. 3, q. 1, a. 3); *Super Boet. De Trin.,* q. 1, a. 2 (II. 96-113); q. 6, a. 3 (II. 156-81) (cf. q. 1, a. 4 [II. 86-94]); *ScG* I, c. 12 (para. 8); ill, c. 49 (para. 8); *STh* I, q. 12, a. 12. See above, nn. 45, 56, 64, 68, 75, 80 and 93.

relation to effects. These three ways even enter into the technique prescribed there-and reflected in the *Summa contra Gentiles*-for how to formulate a nominal definition of 'God': in place of genus and difference, one uses an effect, negating it of its cause and/or relating it to its cause, whether by a relation of causality or eminence. Accordingly, in question 13, article 8, Thomas for the first time formulates a nominal definition of 'God' that employs the Dionysian three tides and that belongs to the consideration of what God is (not), rather than of whether God is.

IV CONCLUSION: RETURN TO THE PROOF OF GOD'S EXISTENCE

I have shown how Aquinas came to develop a formula for what 'God' means that corresponds to his Aristotelian criteria for nominal definition as wen as to his Dionysian account of how God is known and named: 'something that is existing above all things, which is the principle of an things and is removed from an things'. Does Aquinas's proof for God's existence, then, arrive at God under this formula? I have argued, no. This formula is proper to the consideration of the divine names. Nonetheless, it helps us see Aquinas's criteria for what the target in the proof for God's existence must minimally be. In the context the five ways, the *Summa Theologiae* states simply that a nominal definition of 'God' must be taken from an effect. For Aquinas, contrary to Anselm and Bonaventure, for example, the only way that we can know that immaterial. reality exists is as a cause of effects. According to a further darification in the *Summa contra Gentiles,* such effects are found in a definition by being removed from or related to what is defined. Aquinas has dropped the elaborate doctrine of his *On Boethius's De Trinitate* on *negations* in the place of a definition's genus, together with successively narrower negations or *relations* of cause and eminence in the place of a *differentia.* Negation, in particular, is no longer given primacy in the nominal definition. In fact, I argue, causality should be the primary or quasigeneric feature of a nominal definition of 'God' based on an effect. Next, the difference between God and all other kinds of things could be preserved *either* by

negation *or* by eminence. To express both, as in the formula of question 13, article 8 of the *Prima Pars,* is unnecessary. Similarly, it is unnecessary, as in the same formula, to express God's *universal* causality, to express that God is the cause of *all* other kinds of things, as long as God's distinction from ali other kinds is expressed by negation or eminence.

A nominal definition of God, then, that is proper to the proof of God's existence must, for Aquinas, express causality and must differentiate the cause from its effects by negation or through a relation of eminence. Aquinas appears reluctant to attempt to isolate or codify a precise formula, and his five ways do not themselves make such a formula explicit. Still, in light of the criteria that he does provide, a nonprescriptive definition can be formulated, at an instance of which each of his proofs can be seen to arrive. This is what I express in saying that Aquinas concludes to an instance of

> a kind of thing that is (1) a cause of other kinds of things and that is (2.1) beyond all other kinds of things and/or (2.2) removed from all other kinds of things.

Will such a formula be universally commensurate with God? The proof of God's existence will fail if it does not arrive at what could only be God. Not any *cause* is God, but only a *first* (2.1), *unmoved* (2.2) mover (1) (assuming that it can be shown that such a cause can in no way be caused); or a *first, uncaused* cause; or a *first uncaused* being that *cannot* be otherwise and that is the cause of necessity and contingency in other things; or something that is *truest, best,* and *most* noble, and consequently *maximally* a being, and so is the cause of being, goodness, and any perfection whatever in all other beings; or a *first* intelligent cause of the order of things. Aquinas, in effect, offers each of these formulae as nominal definitions of •God' in his five ways. Aquinas's proof in *De ente* 4, if it succeeds, arrives at God as an *uncaused* cause of *esse.* Any precise formula would succeed as long as the cause thereby identified is distinguished from the effect, and there is nothing beyond it, or nothing that in any way causes it. Thus, a variety of proofs of God's existence are possible, proceeding

under a variety of nominal definitions. Each definition, precisely as a definition, must single out one kind of being as distinct from all other kinds. *As* Aquinas puts it in question 13 of the *Prima Pars,* the word 'God' names a nature. An adequate nominal definition of 'God', then, must express causality, but need not *express* both negation and eminence except in order to distinguish one nature, or one kind of cause, from all other natures, from aH other kinds of things. Admittedly, one needs to do a great deal of work to explain how Aquinas's first way arrives, even on the grounds of his own cosmology, at such a minimal notion of the divine nature.[112] And, the fifth way appears simply to rely on earlier ways for some of the premises needed for drawing even such a minimal conclusion. Nonetheless, there does seem to be a common denominator targeted in the five ways that fits well with Aquinas's only explicit and systematic nominal definition of 'God'.

What is omitted from Aquinas's project of a proof of 'God's existence is as important for us to observe as what is contained in it. Aquinas does not target all and only what is an uncreated cause of *esse,* or an infinite, omniscient, omnipotent, and omni-benevolent reality, or a personal and provident creator. Aquinas does not even insist that a proof expressly arrive at a kind of which there is only one instance, namely, at 'the one God'. Of course, he would not exclude a proof that in one feB swoop proved all of the properties of the 'God' of classical theism. But for him it is conceivable that a person not think of a 'God' in these terms yet take an interest in or even accept as a belief or as the conclusion of an argument that 'a God exists'. 'God' may mean here merely 'some kind of thing that is a cause of other kinds and that is beyond and/or removed from all other kinds of things'. In precisely this sense the word still deserves a capital 'G' as opposed to 'god' used of Poseidon, or of a Hollywood actor or star athlete.[113] That for Aquinas one proves 'a God', not

[112] See David Twetten, "Clearing a 'Way' for Aquinas: How the Proof from Motion Concludes to God," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 70 (1996): 259-78.

[113] Cf. *Sfh* I, q. 13, aa. 9-10.

necessarily 'the one God', may be indicating by use of the indefinite article: we may speak of 'proofs of a God's existence'. [114]

Aquinas is not attempting to prove what can only be the 'Christian God', the 'omni-God' of classical theism, let alone the protagonist of the Scriptures whose proper name is 'God'. He is targeting 'a God' as minimally a 'top-most causal reality', something also targeted in classical philosophy (even if, as I believe, Aquinas is wrong that Plato and Aristotle used *theos* in this sense). Assuredly, some of his proofs, such as the Fourth Way, go well beyond this. Yet, for Aquinas, one who affirms that there exists a God under this notion of a minimal, nonprescriptive, 'top-most reality' may have in mind that such a God admits of a plurality of equals, and that such realities are merely impersonal though highly effective causal forces. Aquinas, of course, will go on to argue that such a God must be infinite, creative, omniscient, providential, and unique. He may even argue that a person who denies this does not actually assent to a God as a top-most causal reality. But he would concede that one can accept that a God exists without necessarily believing or knowing how to draw such further conclusions. The project of proving a God's existence is distinct from the project of proving 'what necessarily belongs to a God (according as he is the first cause of all things, exceeding all of his effects)'. We have difficulty making such distinctions, and therefore difficulty understanding the project of Aquinas's five ways, because we do not follow, and perhaps are not cognizant of, Aquinas's Aristotelian logic for existential proof through nominal definition based on effects. In Aquinas's mind this logic was entirely consistent with and, in the case of the definition of 'a God', was completed by a Dionysian account of naming through causality, eminence, and negation. [115]

[114] I follow the suggestion of Lawrence Dewan.

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THOMAS ON THE PROBLEM OF THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA, EXEGETE

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AT SOME POINT toward the close of his teaching career, probably after his lectures on the Pauline corpus, but before his lectures on the Gospel of Matthew, Thomas became aware of the teaching attributed to Theodore of Mopsuestia on prophetic signification. He became aware also of the condemnation that teaching incurred at the time of the Second Council of Constantinople. [1] Based upon his sources, Thomas engages Theodore the exegete on four occasions, each discussion occurring in the context of Thomas's own scriptural expositions. Since these expositions represent the fruit of Thomas's classroom work with

[1] Thomas makes reference to Theodore of Mopsuestia in connection with the problem of Nestorianism as early as &G *N.* Theodore on scriptural exposition, however, does not appear until the Matthew commentary. Weisheipl, following Mandonnet, suggested that the exposition of Matthew belongs to Thomas's first teaching period in Paris, ending around 1259. Torrell, however, favors dating the *Super Matthaeum* to the second Parisian period (1268-72). Torrell's position is persuasive on the grounds that the intervening years in Italy, between the Paris teaching assignments, would have provided Thomas with the opportunity to gather the wealth of Greek patristic sources, including the *acta* of the Ecumenical Councils, that begin appearing in his works during the 1260s. Further, had Thomas known of Theodore's condemned teaching on prophetic signification before 1268, we might reasonably expect some reference to the problem in the initial exposition of the Pauline corpus, generally agreed to have been completed by that year. It seems plausible, therefore, to hold that Thomas discovered sources surrounding Theodore's exegesis some time after 1268, and that he included reference to it in the three scriptural expositions that he taught at the end of his life, beginning with the *Super Matthaeum* in 1269 or 1270. See Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas D'Aquino: His Life, Thought and Works* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1983), 121-22; and Torrell, *Initiation a saint Thomas d'Aquin: Sa personne et son oeuvre* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires de Fribourg Suisse, 1993), 80-86.

students who would be preachers of the gospel and teachers of the faith, we can safely infer that he considered the issues raised by Theodore to be relevant to the preaching mission of the Church.

Thomas characterizes Theodore as one who taught a consistent though erroneous approach to the exposition of the sacred text. I aim to give a summary account of the problem as Thomas saw it. Whether or not Thomas had reliable sources that reflected the actual teaching of Constantinople II is a related, important, but not identical issue.[2] Whether or not the documentation surrounding Constantinople II accurately conveyed what Theodore of Mopsuestia actually taught is another matter entirely.[3] Both questions merit serious theological attention. Here I seek only to examine Thomas's view of Theodore's teaching for its typical implications, that is to say, in the interest of identifying what

[2] Thomas seems to be the first Latin theologian after patristic times to take up the teaching of the council on Theodore's exegetical method. The manuscript tradition flowing into the Renaissance preserved two collections of Theodore's scriptural commentaries translated into Latin. The *acta* of the council provide Latin translations without commentary, appending them to the decrees of the council. The conciliar documentation also preserves a decree from Pope Vigilius containing the same excerpts, only with commentary from the pope characterizing the errors they contain. Vigilius's constitution predates the council. The pope never cites Theodore by name, ostensibly because he opposed the pressure to condemn Theodore posthumously. For the received Latin texts from both the *acta* of the council and the constitution of Pope Vigilius, see J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (Florence, 1763), vol. 9, coll. *N* and V). Morard proposes that Thomas saw the *acta* of the council, but does not think he relied upon the *Constitutum Vigilii.* See Martin Morarcl, "Une source de saint Thomas d'Aquin: Le deuxieme concile de Constantinople (553)," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et theologiques* 81 (1997): 21-56. I suggest that the papal commentary is the principal source for the 'way Thomas characterizes Theodore's mode of exposition. A detailed textual comparison would be needed to secure the point either way.

[3] For a review of the debate concerning the degree to which the excerpts found in the documentation surrounding the council fairly reflect Theodore of Mopsuestia's teaching on scriptural exegesis, see the following: J. M. Voste, "L'oeuvre exegetique de Theodore de Mopsueste au Ile concile de Constantinople," *Revue Biblique* 38 (1929): 382-95 and 542-54; R. Devreesse, "Par quelles voies nous sont parvenus Les Commentaires de Theodore de Mopsueste?" *Revue Biblique* 39 (1930): 362-77; P. Parente, "Una riabilitazione de Teodoro Mopsuesteno," *Doctor Communis* 3 (1950): 3-15; B. de Margerie, *An Introduction to the History of Exegesis,* vol. 1, *The Greek Fathers* (Petersham, Mass.: St. Bede's Publications, 1995), 165-187. See also the reference to Theodore in *L'interpretation de la Bible dans l'F,glise,* III, B, 2 (in the *Enchiridion Biblicum* [Bologna: Dehoiane, 1993] ,nos. 1457-58); finally, see Manlio Simonetti's special contribution on Theodore in Charles Kannengiesser's *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity* (Brill: Leiden, 2004), 2:799-828.

exactly Thomas found theologically objectionable in an exegetical stance bearing the contours of what Thomas identified with Theodore. For my limited purposes it seems reasonable to proceed apart from engaging directly the character of Thomas's sources.

L THE TEXTS

The texts wherein Thomas discusses Theodore the exegete are not readily accessible in either Latin or English. I will begin, then, by presenting the four descriptions of Theodore's position found in the Thomistic corpus, together with some brief contextual remarks.[4] Thomas' *s* first comments on Theodore of Mopsuestia, exegete, appear in his exposition of St. Matthew's gospel; he discusses it again in his later exposition of St. John's gospel. Finally, in his comments on the Psalter, in what is accepted to have been his last lecture series, Thomas engages Theodore's views two more times, once in the prologue, and once in his exposition of Psalm 21. The account in the exposition of Matthew's Gospel and the discussion in the prologue to the Psalter commentary also contain brief remarks outlining what Thomas thinks a proper expositional stance looks like.

The four characterizations are quite diverse in form, focus, and emphasis. To account for this, it is sufficient to note that Thomas discusses Theodore's exegetical method while himself commenting on Sacred Scripture. He comments with an eye attentive to the way the issue affects the proper interpretation of the particular scriptural text at hand. Taken together, though, the four descriptions provide a fairly nuanced picture of what Thomas perceived to be at the heart of the problem vexing Theodore's exegesis.

A) Super Matthaeum 1:22-23

Thornas's exposition of Matthew 1:22-23 attends to the evangelist's citation of Isaiah 7:14. The evangelist says that the

[4] Translations from Latin are my own. When referencing the psalms, I follow the Vulgate numbering, both in the translations and throughout.

prophet's announcement that "the virgin shall conceive and bear a son," is fulfilled in the events surrounding the conception of the Lord. Thomas takes the occasion to describe and then to refute Theodore's approach to prophetic texts.

And another was [the error] of Theodore saying that nothing of those things which are brought forth from the Old Testament are literally said about Christ, but they are adapted, as [for example] when they bring forth that [text] of Virgil: *recalling such things, he hung suspended, and affixed he remained.*[5] Now, this [text of Virgil] is adapted concerning Christ; and next [it is said by Theodore], that [the text of Matthew] *that it might be fulfilled,* ought to be thus explained, as if the evangelist were saying *and this can be adapted.*[6]

Immediately following upon his account of Theodore's error, Thomas gives a terse refutation of it rooted in theological authority, both scriptural and ecclesiastical. Without citing a particular pope or council, Thomas references for his students the fact that the opinion of Theodore is a condemned heresy.

And it should be known that in the Old Testament there are certain things which refer to Christ, and are said about him alone, like that [text which says] *Behold a virgin shall conceive in the womb, and bear a son,* Isaiah 7 [14]; and also that [text of] Psalm 21 [2]: *God, my God, look upon me, why have you forsaken me?* etc. And if anyone should put a different literal sense [on these texts], he would be a heretic, and the heresy is condemned. Against which [can be adduced the text] from the last chapter of Luke: *It was fitting that all those things which were written in the Law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms about me be fulfilled.*[7]

Thomas then briefly adds a theological notation about how the notion of fulfillment extends to Old Testament texts that are

[5] Virgil, *Aeneid* 2.650.

[6] *Super Matt.,* c. 1, lecL 5 (Marietti, no. 148): "alius foit theodori dicenris, quod nihil eorum quae inducuntur de veteri testamento, sunt ad litteram de Christo, sed sunt adaptata, sicut quando inducunt illud virgilii talia pendebat memorans, fixusque rnanebat hoc enim adaptal:Um est de Christo; et tune illud ut adimpleretur, debet sic exponi, quasi diceret evangelista: et hoc potest adaptari."

[7] Ibid.: "et sciendum quod in veteri testamemo aliqua sunt quae referuntur ad Christum, et de eo solo dicuntur, sicut illud ecce virgo in utero concipiet, et pariet filium, is. vii, 14; et illud ps. xxi, 2: Deus, Deus meus, respice in me, quare me dereliquisti? etc.. et si quis alium sensum litteralem poneret, esset haerericus, et haeresis damnata est. contra quod le. ult., 44: oportet impleri omnia quae scripta sunt in lege moysi, et prophetis, et psalmis de me."

known to bear some relation to events contemporaneous to the prophets:

But because not only the words of the Old Testament, but also the things done, signify about Christ, sometimes some [words] are said literally about certain other things, but they [i.e. the words] are referred to Christ, inasmuch as those things [spoken about] bear the figure of Christ, as when it is said of Solomon: *And he will rule from sea to sea,* etc. This was not fulfilled in him [i.e. Solomon]. [8]

B) Super Ioannem 12:41

The second time Thomas chooses to deal with the teaching of Theodore occurs in the exposition of John 12:41. [9] The evangelist invokes Isaiah 6:10 in order to teach that the resistance Jesus encountered in his public ministry was foreseen by the prophet. [10] Concluding his references to Isaiah, John summarizes the condition under which the prophet saw what he prophesied: "Isaiah said these things, when he saw his glory, and he spoke about him." The second half of the verse ("and he spoke about him"), Thomas says, effectively exdudes both the error of the Manichaeans and that of Theodore.

Through that indeed which is said secondly, *and he spoke about him,* is excluded the error of the Manichaeans, who said that no prophecies in the Old Testament preceded about Christ, as Augustine related in *Contra Faustum.* And [also is excluded the error] of Theodore of Mopsuestia, who said that all prophecies of the Old Testament were said about some matter [or other], and were nevertheless cited by the apostles and evangelists to the ministry of Christ through a certain [kind of] appropriation: like those things which are said in [reference to] one thing done, can be adapted to another thing done. All [of these], however, are excluded through this which is said, *and he spoke about him.* [So, it could be said] about me [i.e. Isaiah] as [it was said] about Moses, as chapter *5* [46], above [indicates] Christ said: *about me, indeed, he wrote.11*

[8] Ibid.: "sed quia non solum verba veteris testarnenri, sed eriam facta significant de Christo, aliquam:lo dicuntur aliqua ad litteram de aliquibus aliis, sed refemntur ad Chrisrum, inquantum ilia gerunt figuram Christi, sicut de salomone dicitur: et dominabitur a mari usque ad mare etc.; hoc enim non fuit impletum in eo."

[9] *Super Ioannem,* c. 12, iect. 7 (Marietti, nos. 1703-5).

[10] See John 12:37-41.

[11] *Super Ioannem,* c. 12, lect. 7 (Marielti, no. 1705): "per illud vem quod secundo dicitur et locutus est de eo, excluditur error manichaeorum, qui dixen.rnt nullas propherias in veteri tesramento praecessisse de Christo, ut augustirms narrat in lib. contra faustum, et theodorum

C) Prologus super Psalmos

In the prologue to the expos1t1on of the Psalter, Thomas provides a general framework for understanding the Book of the Psalms. In this inaugural lecture, he proposes to arm his students with the tools needed to begin to read the Psalms properly. He treats, among other things, the issue of proper exposition. [12]

Concerning the mode of exposition, it must be noted that in the Psalter, as in [the exposition of] the other prophets, we ought to avoid one error condemned in the Fifth Synod. Theodore of Mopsuestia, indeed, said that in Sacred Scripture and the Prophets, nothing is expressly said about Christ, but rather [these words were said] about certain other things, and, in fact, they [i.e. these words said about certain other things] adapted to Christ. Like, [that text of] Psalm 21 [19]: *they divided among themselves my vestments,* etc. [is said] not about Christ, but literally said about David. This mode [of exposition] was condemned in that Council, and whoever asserts such a thing in expounding the Scriptures is a heretic. [13]

Thomas moves immediately to elaborate the "rule of Saint Jerome" as a guide to proper exposition of the prophets. The rule amounts to a detailed explication of the position Thomas staked out at the conclusion of his comments on Theodore in the Matthew commentary.

Blessed Jerome, therefore, [in his commentary] on Ezechiel handed on to us a rule which we will use in the Psalms: namely, that concerning things done, they are to be explained thus, as figuring something about Christ or the Church. As,

mopsuestenum, qui dixit omnes prophetias veteris testamenti esse de aliquo negotio dictas, per quamdam tamen appropriationem esse adductas ab apostolis et evangelistis ad ministerium Christi: sicut ea quae dicunt in uno facto, possunt adaptari ad aliud factum. omnia autem excluduntur per hoc quod dicitur et locutus est de eo, de me sicut de moyse, supra v, 46, dixit Christus: de me enim ille scripsit."

[12] The Latin texts from the *Super Psalmos* exist neither in a critical Leonine Edition nor in the Marietti editions; I have relied upon the *F.ditio Parmensis,* dating to 1863.

[13] *Super Psalmos,* prologus: "circa modum exponendi sciendum est, quod tam in psalterio quam in aliis prophetiis exponendis evitare debemus unum errorem damnatum in quinta synodo. theodorus enim mopsuestenus dixit, quod in sacra scriptura et prophetiis nihil expresse dicitur de Christo, sed de quibusdam aliis rebus, sed adaptaverunt Christo: sicut illud psalm. 21: diviserunt sibi vestimenta mea etc., non de Christo, sed ad literam dicitur de david. hie autem modus damnatus est in illo concilio: et qui asserit sic exponendas scripturas, haereticus est."

indeed, it is said in 1 Cor. 10 [11]: *all these things happened to them in figure.* Prophecies, moreover, were sometimes said about things which were of the time then, but [the prophecies] were not principally said about those things, but, in fact, [the prophecies were said about those things] inasmuch as they are figures of future things: and thus the Holy Spirit ordered that when such things are said, certain things are inserted which exceed the condition of that thing done, so that the soul might be raised to the thing figured. Like in [the book of] Daniel many things are said about Antiochus in the figure of the anti-Christ: hence, certain things are read there which were not completed in him; they will be fulfilled, indeed, in the anti-Christ; as also certain things are read about the kingdom of David and Solomon, which were not to be fulfilled in the reign of such men, but were to be fulfilled in the kingdom of Christ, in whose figure they were said: as [for example] Psalm 71 [2]: *God, your judgment* etc. which is according to the title about the reign of David and Solomon; and [he] places something in it that exceeds its capacity, namely [in verse 7], *justice will arise in his days and abundance ofpeace, until the moon be taken away:* and again [in verse 8], *he will rule from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends [of the earth]* etc. Therefore, this Psalm is expounded about the reign of Solomon, inasmuch as it is a figure of the reign of Christ, in which all the things there said will be completed. [14]

D) Super Psalmum 21

Finally, in his introductory comments on the exposition of Psalm 21, Thomas orients his students toward the proper reading of the psalm. Comments at the outset of the exposition focus exclusively upon Theodore's teaching on literal prophecy; no mention is made of the closely allied problem of adaptation.

H Ibid.: "beatus ergo hieronymus super ezech. tradidit nobis unam regulam quam servabimus in psalmis: scilicet quod sic sunt exponendi de rebus gestis, ut figurantibus aliquid de Christo vel ecclesia. ut enim dicitur 1 cor. 10: omnia in figura contingebant illis. prophetiae autem aliquando dicuntur de rebus quae tune temporis erant, sed non principaliter dicuntur de eis, sed inquantum figura sunt futurorum: et ideo spiritus sanctus ordinavit quod quando talia dicuntur, inserantur quaedam quae excedunt conditionem illius rei gestae, ut animus elevetur ad figuratum. etideo spiritus sanctus ordinavit quod quando talia dicuntur, inserantur quaedam quae excedunt conditionem illius rei gestae, ut animus elevetur ad figuratum. sicut in daniele multa dicuntur de anthioco in figuram antichristi: unde ibi quaedam leguntur quae non sunt in eo completa, implebuntur autem in antichristo; sicut etiam aliqua de regno david et salomonis leguntur, quae non erant implenda in talium hominum regno, sed impleta fuere in regno Christi, in cujus figura dicta sunt: sicut psal. 71: Deus judicium etc. qui est secundum titulum de regno david et salomonis; et aliquid ponit in eo quod excedit facultatem ipsius, scilicet, orietur in diebus ejus justitia et abundantia pacis, donec auferatur luna: et iterum, dominabitur a mari usque ad mare, et a flumine usque ad terminos etc. exponitur ergo psalmus iste de regno salomonis, inquantum est figura Christi, in quo omnia complebuntur ibi dicta."

And among others, specifically this Psalm treats about the passion of Christ. And thus, this is its literal sense. Hence, specifically, he spoke this Psalm in the passion when he cried out *Heli Heli Lammasabactani:* which is the same as *God, my God,* etc. as this Psalm begins. And thus, granted this Psalm is said figuratively about David, nevertheless specifically it refers to Christ *ad litteram.* And in the Synod of Toledo a certain Theodore of Mopsuestia, who explained this Psalm about David *ad litteram* was condemned, and [he was condemned] on account of this and many other things. And, thus, [this Psalm] is to be explained as being about Christ.[15]

II. PROPHETIC INTENTIONS AND APOSTOLIC ADAPTATIONS

Thomas's account of Theodore's teaching identifies two principal problematic elements. The first involves Theodore's denial that prophetic texts ever had Christ as their literal referent. Closely allied to this, but clearly distinct in Thomas's mind, is the fact that Theodore is said to hold a theory of adaptation to account for New Testament citation of Old Testament prophetic texts. Both aspects of Theodore's teaching fall under Thomas's reading of the intentions governmg Constantinople H's condemnation of Theodore.[16]

A) Literal Intentionality

Thomas consistently begins his account of Theodore's teaching by noting his denial of the existence of *ad litteram* Christological

[15] *In Psalmum* 21, introduction: "et inter alia specialiter iste psalmus agit de passione Christi. et ideo hie est ejus sensus litteralis. unde specialiter hunc psalmum in passione dixit cum clamavit, heli heli lammasabactani: quod idem est quod Deus Deus meus etc. sicut hie psalmus incipit. et ideo licet figuraliter hie psalmus dicatur de david, tamen specialiter ad litteram refertur ad Christum. et in synodo toletana quidam theodorus mopsuestenus, qui hunc ad litteram de david exponebat, fuit damnatus, et propter hoc et propter alia multa; et ideo de Christo exponendus est."

[16] It is fair to surmise that Thomas has Constantinople II in mind throughout his discussions of Theodore. He references "the Fifth Synod" in his prologue to the exposition of the Psalter. In the exposition of Psalm 21, Thomas seems to refer to the Synod of Toledo. Morard thinks this is a corruption of the text. See Martin Morard, "Une source," 49. Stroobant, though, thinks the reference is to the third Council of Toledo (589). See J.-E. Stroobant, *Thomas d'Aquin Commentaire sur les Psaumes* (Paris: Cerf, 1996), 256. That Thomas never cites a particular conciliar text is perplexing.

prophecies in the Old Testament. This denial is the root, so to speak, of Theodore's teaching on adaptation. In the Matthew commentary, the characterization of Theodore's teaching is sweeping: "nothing" in the Old Testament is literally about Christ. The Johannine commentary states the matter positively, but amounts to the same appraisal: "all prophecies" from the Old Testament, Theodore said, were aimed at something other than Christ and his ministry. The prologue to the Psalter formulates the issue using equivalent phraseology: "'nihil expresse dicitur de Cristo."

Thomas approaches Theodore as one who takes it as a textual "given" that Old Testament words were always composed with an Old Testament person, event, and circumstance immediately in view. The literal referent present to the prophet involves his immediate historical situation, and this situation exhausts the prophet's capacity intentionally to signify. Thomas makes this point plainly while commenting on the text of John 12:41. In that text he says that Theodore limited all prophecies to some particular affair ("de aliquo negotio dictas"). These particular affairs were decidedly not about the ministry of Christ. "Quibusdam aliis rebus" in the prologue is equivalent to the characterization Thomas uses in the Johannine commentary. In Psalm 21, either David spoke about his persecution by one of his many enemies, or he spoke about Christ. Since for Theodore it was obvious that David refers to himself, and had someone like Absalom on his mind when composing the psalm, it could not be that Christ was intended in that text. According to Theodore, Old Testament intentionality is "discrete," that is to say, limited to the immediate and local historical circumstance of the author.

B) Theodore's Version of Adaptation

If the Old Testament prophets did not, on particular occasions, intend to say something literally about the coming Christ, then the only way to account for New Testament citation of such texts is

to suggest that the New Testament authors adapted the prophetic words to fit New Testament circumstances.

Thomas points out in the Matthew commentary that according to Theodore New Testament phraseology involving "fulfillment" of prophecies should be understood to mean that "they can be made to fit" a Christological referent. In the prologue to the Psalter, Thomas describes the activity in similar terms: "[Theodore taught that these words were said] about certain other things, and, that in fact, they [i.e., these words] adapted to Christ.,, The exposition of the Gospel of John describes this adaptation as an active readjustment of textual sense: "[Old Testament prophecies] were cited by the apostles and evangelists to the ministry of Christ through a certain [kind of] appropriation." "Appropriation" suggests "taking for oneself" what belonged to another. It would seem then that Old Testament words intended to signify one thing were taken up by New Testament authors without respect for the original intentions of the prophetic authors. All three of the texts that mention adaptation focus attention upon the act of taking words intended for one context and applying them to a foreign context.

The sharp illustration of adaptation found in the Matthew commentary, taken from *Aeneid* 2, illustrates the gravity of the problematic as Thomas saw it.[17] Thomas does not say that Theodore knew of or used this example. He does say that Theodore taught that New Testament citation of Old Testament texts involved a kind of adaptation that is comparable to what is done in the example cited.

Martin Morard has identified Jerome's *Letter* 53 to Paulinus of Nola as the source of the example.[18] Jerome rebukes those who

[17] Beryl Smalley *(The Gospels in the Schools* [London: Hambledon Press, 1985], 267-68) suggested that the text from Virgil was probably adapted to Christ in that he would not be dissuaded from his purpose, which is more in keeping with the poetic sense. Morard is aware of Smalley's reading, though he does not advert to its specifics. The more literal reading of Virgil's words, evoking images of the Crucified, in this context seems incontrovertible, based on Morard's identification of the origin of the example, something Smalley admitted had eluded her.

[18] Morard locates the reference in Saint Jerome, *Epistola* 53.7.2-3, which, he notes, was variously transmitted through the tradition of the Vulgate manuscripts and the glosses. See Morard, "Une source," 32-33.

contort the sense of a classical text in order to find a Christian reference; the activity involves imposing (by will of the reader) a meaning on a text that is at variance with the original author's intentional use of words. Thomas was obviously aware of the tradition of reading *Aeneid* 2.650 as a reference to Christ, and he shares Jerome's negative evaluation of the practice. [19] Thomas cites Virgil, though, for the sake of indicating the force of what Theodore teaches about apostolic reading of the Old Testament. In the light of the example, to say that the apostles and evangelists adapted prophetic texts to Christ implicates them in a falsification of textual integrity of the kind Jerome harshly ridiculed.

The example from Virgil confirms that Thomas understands Theodore to hold a theory of discrete prophetic intentions, limiting intentionality to only one historical circumstance. Virgil had no intention of writing about the Christ, so to push his words into a Christological prophecy does violence to his text; on this point Jerome and Thomas (and presumably Theodore) agree. But Theodore sees the same violence being done to Isaiah and David by Matthew and John whenever prophetic texts are cited in the New Testament. As we shall see, Thomas energetically disputes such a characterization; the novelty of divine revelation enhances the intentional capacity of the scriptural authors of both testaments.

C) Thomas's Sense of the Authority

In the Matthew commentary, Thomas first counters Theodore's teaching by identifying the special character of certain prophetic announcements that refer to Christ *ad litteram.* He provides two specific examples. The first is Isaiah 7:14, cited in

[19] Jerome, *Epistola* 53.7.2-3, (see *CSEL* 54:453-454): "Qui si forte ad scripturas sanctas post saeculares litteras venerint . . . quicquid dixerint, hoc legem Dei putant nee scire dignantur, quid prophetae, quid apostoli senserint, sed ad sensum suum incongrua aptant testimonia, quasi grande sit et non vitiosissimum dicendi genus depravare sententias et ad voluntatem suam scripturam trahere repugnantem. Quasi non legerimus Homerocentonas et Virgiliocentonas ac non sic etiam Maronem sine Christo possimus dicere christianum, quia scripserit ... verba Salvatoris in cruce: talia perstabat memorans fixusque manebat. Puerilia sunt haec et circulatorum ludo similia."

Matthew 1:22. The second is taken from Psalm 21:2, the text uttered by Christ upon the cross. If someone attempts to place "a different literal sense" on these two texts, Thomas says, he would have fallen into a condemned heresy. Heresy is not a term Thomas uses lightly or loosely; his reference to a condemned heresy indicates that he has understood that the highest Church authority has definitively prohibited an Old Testament historical referent for either of the two texts cited. Thomas is careful here. He does not say that all New Testament citations of Old Testament texts necessarily signify according to the literal sense; he has, however, identified texts that Constantinople II seems to have singled out as literal prophecies aiming intentionally at Christ.[20] Thomas understands the authoritative condemnation of Theodore's teaching to require that these texts be understood intentionally to signify Christ according to a direct word-to-res relation. "De eo [Christo] solo dicuntur" summarily expresses Thomas's sense of the authority. By this phrase he means that the virginal conception of the Lord and the cry of Christ from the cross are historically unique events; the prophet Isaiah and King David had these events in mind while enunciating their respective prophecies.

Thomas expresses himself less strenuously in the prologue to the commentary on the Psalter. He does not say that the text from Psalm 21 refers to Christ alone; nevertheless, he affirms that the words are literally about Christ, indicating thereby that the text refers principally to Christ through the prophet's intentional use of words. He also says that explaining the prophetic text of the psalm as one adapted by New Testament authors without regard for its original prophetic intention is a condemned heresy.

Thomas also perceives in the condemnation of Theodore a further implication. His comments at the outset of the exposition of Psalm 21 suggest that he recognizes that the adjudications of

[20] Thomas consistently defended the literal Christological sense of Isaiah 7:14. See his early exposition of Isaiah (*Super Isaiam ad Litteram,* c. 7, v. 14 [Leonine ed., II. 311-13]); he teaches similarly in *Super ad Ephesios,* c. *5,* lect. 10 (Marietti, no. 335). The Isaiah exposition surely predates Thomas's awareness of Theodore's exegetical stance, and the Ephesians exposition most likely does.

Constantinople II have an impact on the traditional distinction between the literal and the mystical senses. The tradition of the mystical senses, upheld by Thomas throughout his teaching life, relies upon the explicit recognition of an Old Testament historical referent which itself signifies a New Testament reality.[21] Thomas will frequently comment on a psalm by referencing first the historical circumstance of David's life, referring subsequently to the mystical meaning.[22] When setting forth the mystical sense, Thomas describes how the Davidic *res* itself figures Christ. He then points his students toward discerning how the history of David bears a divinely intended resemblance to the life of Christ. Reading this way, he takes the history to be the literal referent, and the life of Christ to be figured in the history. Thomas is particularly careful not to grant for Psalm 21 this kind of relation between the literal referent and the future reality it figures. He understands the conciliar teaching so to insist upon a literal reading of the psalm according to its Christological sense that to read it as referring literally to David, and mystically to Christ through the figuration of the *res,* is also inadmissible.

Thomas, then, does not take Theodore's teaching on prophetic signification to be directed initially against a mystical or allegorical reading of the Old Testament. He does not characterize Theodore as one who denied that Psalm 21 (or Isaiah 7:14, for that matter) referred to the mysteries of Christ according to a spiritual signification. In fact, Thomas never directly adverts to what Theodore thought about the spiritual sense; Theodore, Thomas insists, has a problem with Old Testament texts that are claimed to be *ad litteram* about Christ.[23]

[21] See Thomas's earliest formulation of the traditional teaching in *Quodl.* 7, q. 6, a. 2; and his last in *STh* I, q. 1, a. 10.

[22] See, for example, his comments on Psalm 3.

[23] On this point, I differ with Morard's assessment of Thomas's reading of Theodore's error. Thomas's description of the error does not place the onus upon an assimilation of the spiritual sense of Scripture into a purely extrinsic adaptation, but rather-and more deeply-on the assimilation of literal Old Testament Christological prophecy into purely extrinsic relation to the New Testament. See, Morard, "Une source," 33.

III. THOMAS'S RESPONSE

Against the theory of adaptation, Thomas argues that Theodore undermines the New Testament's understanding of itself as an authoritative disclosure of Old Testament intentionality. Responding to Theodore's denial that prophetic texts ever intentionally signified a New Testament fulfillment, Thomas offers a nuanced theological account of prophetic intentions.

A) Adaptation and the Self-Understanding of the New Testament

From the earliest days of his teaching career, long before we find him jousting with Theodore, Thomas distinguished between explaining an author's intention and adapting an author's text. He characteristically enjoined his students to keep focused upon explaining the intelligible authorial intention governing the textual composition.[24] In his commentary on the fourth book of Peter Lombard's *Sentences,* for example, Thomas makes the point that St. Jerome occasionally adapted a text; he "not inconveniently adjusted" its sense to one that was not according to the intention of the author.[25] The telling characteristic of adaptation is its lack of conformity to the principal sense intended by the author. For Thomas the exegete, adapted senses, even if not at odds with the author's intention, are not the primary interest of scriptural commentators. The kind of adaptation Thomas associates with Theodore, however, is not the benign type utilized by Jerome and many other Fathers. Indeed, as the example cited from Virgil illustrates, Thomas's Theodore attributed to the New Testament authors the consistent and unseemly practice of quarrying prophetic texts and, through a kind of imaginative construction project, refashioning their original sense to suit a

[24] Thomas's handling of Galatians 4:9 exemplifies this stance. See *Super ad Galatas,* c. 4, lect. 4 (Marietti, no. 223).

[25] IV *Sent.,* d. 21, q. 1, a. 2, ad 3: "ad tertium dicendum, quod in sacra scriptura praeter principalem sensum quern auctor intendit, possunt alii sensus non incongrue aptari. et sic hieronymus per adaptationem quamdam loquitur, et non secundum intentionem apostoli."

new circumstance. Thomas will allow for Jerome's having done what he will not admit possible for New Testament authors.[26]

Thomas, commenting on Matthew 1:22-23, counters Theodore's claim that the evangelist adapted the prophecies by offering the text from Luke 24:44 as his theological authority: "It was fitting that all those things which were written in the Law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms about me be fulfilled." The onus of the citation of Luke 24:44 rests upon the sense of the word "fulfilled," as used by the Lord, and linked to Matthew's use of the term. Matthew referring to the fulfillment of Isaiah could not have intended to teach that "the text can be thus adapted," because he only conveyed what he knew from Christ, namely, that "all these things" written in the Law, the prophets, and the psalms were written about the Lord. According to Thomas, Luke 24:44 teaches that the evangelists and apostles conveyed the intentions of Old Testament prophecy authoritatively, based upon what the Lord himself knew and revealed to them about the intentions of the prophetic authors. Luke 24:44 meets the immediate need at hand, namely, to instruct students in the basis of the New Testament use of Old Testament texts as testimony to Christ. This basis is Christ's knowledge of the authorial intent of the Old Testament, an intent culminating (fulfilled) in his own coming.[27]

Thomas's line of argument manifests itself differently in the exposition of the Gospel of John, but it converges on the same point. In his comments on John 12:41, he teaches that the gospel text provides a sure refutation of Theodore's entire account of prophetic intentions. Thomas understands John to mean that Isaiah, in his vision of the six-winged seraph, saw the One who would become flesh; this same One manifested himself and taught the evangelists in his incarnate state.[28] The words of John refer to alternate apprehensions, one belonging to Isaiah, and one

[26] For reasons Thomas succinctly outlines in *STh I,* q. 1, a 8, ad 2.

[27] Thomas does not cite the text of Luke to argue that all New Testament use of the Old Testament is based upon the literal sense. His focus is upon intentionality, not *modus. As* I will discuss presently, Thomas includes the spiritual senses within the divine intention communicated to the prophet.

[28] See *Super Ioannem,* c. 12, lect. 7 (Marietti, no. 1703).

belonging to John. These are diverse according to modality, but identical with regard to the *res* encountered. And it is the *res* himself who authoritatively affirms this identity. Thus, focusing the text toward the issue of authoritative disclosure of prophetic intentionality, Thomas draws the parallel between John 12:41 and John 5:46. In that earlier text, Jesus speaks about Moses' intentionality. What Jesus says about Moses' intent, John says about Isaiah's intent. Through this comparison, linking the text before him with John 5:46 *(de me enim ille scripsit),* Thomas roots the authority for New Testament interpretation of the Old Testament in what Christ knew and revealed about himself as the *res* intended by the prophet.

Explaining the Johannine text in this way, Thomas makes it dear that his dispute with Theodore centers on the character of the human author's intention. He does not place the burden of refutation on the intention of the divine author considered apart from the intention of the human prophet; on the contrary, he insists that the intentionality of the words of the prophet who received what Thomas calls the "imaginative vision with understanding" be the sense referenced by the apostles and evangelists.[29]

Given the character of the refutation of Theodore in both gospel commentaries-a reduction to Christ's knowledge-Thomas sees Theodore's error on the exposition of the prophets as resting upon a deeper Christo logical error. Christological error, it is good to remember, ultimately rests upon a misreading of the New Testament. This explains why Thomas treats Theodore as one who misreads Matthew and John. He misinterpreted what the New Testament authors understood about themselves as recipients of a revelation encompassing specific awareness of prophetic intentions. Misreading Matthew's *ut adimpleretur,* for example, Theodore did not take sufficiently into account what the apostles said about the source of their awareness of Old Testament intentionality. Theodore misread the New Testament in a most serious way, for his error could not do injury to the apostolic

[29] See ibid. (Marietti, no. 1704).

hermeneutics of the Old Testament without threatening the New Testament teaching on the identity and authority of Christ.

Thomas is not concerned to offer a refutation of the theory of adaptation ascribed to Theodore in the prologue to the commentary on the Psalter. Instead, he offers a kind of monition concerning how not to interpret the scriptural text. The reference to the conciliar teaching of the fifth synod is sufficient to mark for the students that such an approach is inadmissible in commenting on the Psalter. Still, it is one thing to affirm that it is of the faith to hold that Jesus knew himself to be the fulfillment of Old Testament messianic prophecies, that he disclosed this mystery to his disciples, and that the highest organs of Church teaching have prohibited a retreat from this New Testament *datum.* It is another thing, however, to indicate in what way those prophecies signified the Savior. On this issue, Thomas counters Theodore's limited sense of how texts could signify with his own more expansive account.

B) Complex Intentionality and the Rule of Saint Jerome

In the commentary on Matthew and in the prologue to the exposition of the Psalter, Thomas turns the discussion toward the discernment of the principal sense of a text, a sense he identifies with the author's literally intended sense. As already noted, Theodore's position implies that the local literal sense exhausts the possibilities of prophetic intention. Thomas disputes this view, and proposes an alternative approach. Thus, in the commentary on Matthew, after making specific room for Old Testament texts that signify Christ *only,* that is to say, literally and singularly, Thomas enunciates a compound principle that reconfigures the discussion about the literal sense of a prophetic text.

The first part of the principle involves a reference to the way a prophecy can intentionally signify two circumstances at the same time. The principle indudes a kind of signification involving words naming things, and things signifying other things: "sed quia non solum verba veteris testamenti, sed etiam facta significant de

Christo." The reference to how things can be made to signify other things invokes the classic teaching on the way God chose to accommodate Old Testament history in order to signify New Testament events. Thomas's reference here to the spiritual senses serves primarily to highlight the fact that prophetic intentions are not limited to the simple literal *word-to-res* relation. This first aspect of the principle serves as the basis for proposing a further elaboration involving the existence of something other than either a straightforward literal sense, limited to an ancient historical circumstance, or a classic spiritual sense signifying the future through the prophet's attending to the local *res.*

Because *things* signify, Thomas says, words can sometimes be said about Old Testament things *ad litteram* which nevertheless are referred primarily to Christ: "dicuntur ad litteram de aliquibus aliis sed referuntur ad Christum." Thomas describes a real and direct relation between the *verba* of the Old Testament and the *facta* of the New, while admitting the existence of Old Testament *facta* also at play in the intentionality governing the words. Thus, the second part of the principle involves specification to what we could call "the principle of exceeded conditions." In the Matthew commentary Thomas adduces the example of Psalm 71, focusing on one of those lines Thomas says was not fulfilled in Solomon. The example confirms that the focus of Thomas's attention rests upon a principally intended sense that is Christological yet not devoid of relation to the ancient historical context.

Thomas articulates his description of this kind of prophetic signification much more formally in his prologue to the exposition of the Psalter. He repeats substantially the same teaching he briefly proposed in the exposition of Matthew; here, though, the whole proposal comes under the patristic authority of Jerome. His phraseology merits comparison to what we have from the Matthew commentary. On Matthew Thomas says that the prophecies were *ad litteram* about ancient events and yet are properly referred to Christ; speaking about the Psalter, Thomas says they were said *non principaliter* about events from the prophet's times. Thomas's last and presumably most mature treatment focuses exclusively upon discerning a principal sense

distinct from the prophet's local circumstances. Such a refined distinction can be sustained only if the prophetic intentions can be complex, that is to say, capable of signifying more than one thing at a time.

Clearly Thomas wants to say that the text of Psalm 71 is principally about the reign of the Messiah; and he has no trouble admitting that the words bear some relation to the kingship of Solomon. Still, if Thomas's sources locate Psalm 21 as a principal text of contention with Theodore, it is remarkable that he does not propose the premier passion psalm as exemplary in his positive formulation. It may be the case that Thomas wishes to say no more than he has to about Psalm 21's mode of signification, given the weightiness of his sources on what Constantinople II had to say about the psalm.[30] Another reason may be at work here, though. Jerome's rule comes independently to Thomas, that is to say, from a theological tradition distinct from his sources on Constantinople II and the imbroglio with Theodore. He considers the rule commensurate to the task at hand, countering Theodore's narrow account of inspiration with a theologically more expansive account. Tracking down the source of Thomas's summary of Jerome's rule will help clarify what he means by invoking the principle in response to Theodore.

C) *Aristotle and Theodore meet Jerome*

Long before his encounter with Theodore, Thomas had spent a great deal of time considering how best to handle the issue of prophetic signification. Evidence of this can be found as early as the response to the Aristotelian objector in question 6, article 1 of *Quodlibetum* 7.[31] In fact, a citation of Jerome in that text

[30] Thomas does read the other literal passion psalms according to this rule. For example, he discerns the mode of signification operative in parts of Psalm 2, and parts of Psalm 15 in this manner. He is, I think, noticeably circumspect in discussing Psalm 21.

[31] *Quodl.* 7, q. 6, a. 1, ad 5. Ranging from the last considered opinion of Fr. Mandonnet in 1926 to Fr. Gauthier's opinion in 1992, none of the modern commentators date *Quodlibetum* 7 later than Advent 1257. Torrell provides an expanded version of Boyle's summary of the proposed dates corresponding to all the quodlibetal disputes *(Initiation,* 305. 6).

provides us with the best source for understanding what Thomas comes to develop as the "rule of Jerome" in the later prologue. First the objection:

Besides, whatever sense is drawn forth from the words of some writing, which an author does not intend, is not the proper sense [of that writing]; for an author, through one thing written, cannot understand any but one thing, because it does not happen that [we] understand many things at the same time, according to the Philosopher. Therefore, there cannot be many senses proper to the Sacred Seriptures.[32]

The Aristotelian objector anticipates the problematic later raised by Theodore's Hmited sense of prophetic intentionality. The objector's argument centers on the definition of the *proper* sense of a written text. That sense must be in accord with what the author understood and intended to signify. The force of the objection rests on the Aristotelian contention that an author can, in reality, have only one proper understanding at any one time, and hence only one governing intention while putting thoughts to words. The objector, therefore, identifies the proper sense of words with the literal sense, the sense by which words intentionally convey knowledge of a single thingo If signifying intention is rooted in and limited to what the author understands prior to the use of expressive words, and if an author can understand only one thing at a time, then it follows that the expositor should seek only one sense, properly literal, of the words found in a text. Thomas contests the consequent.

To the fifth, it must be said that the principal author of Sacred Scripture is the Holy Spirit, who in one word of Sacred Scripture understands many things more than are expounded by the expositors of Sacred Scripture, or are discerned [by them]. Nor is it unfitting that a man, who was the instrumental author of Sacred Scripture, understand many things in one word: because as Jerome says [in his commentary] on Hosea, the prophets thus spoke about present things done, which they also intended to signify future things. Hence, it is not impossibie to

[32] *Quodl.* 7, q. 6, a. 1, obj. 5: «praeterea, quicumque sensus ex verbis alicuius oc:riprurae ttahirur quern auctor non intendit, mm est sensus proprius; quia auctor per unam scripturam non potest imelligere nisi u.mum, quia non contingit plura simul intelligere, secundum philosophmn. ergo non possum esse plures sensus proprii sacrae scripturae."

understand many things at the same time, inasmuch as one is the figure of the other. [33]

The second part of the reply proves most relevant to our understanding of Thomas's later articulation of the rule of St. Jerome. The human author of a prophetic text spoke *about present things done,* which were themselves intended to signify future realities. It is not impossible, then, that a human author understood more than one thing, as long as he was aware that what he intended to signify was itself a figure of something further: the intentionality of the author's words extends beyond the present things done. Thomas thus argues that there is no anthropologically rooted reason prohibiting the prophet from intending to signify series of realities related through a continuum of signifying words and things.

It appears that Thomas here appeals to Jerome's comments on Hosea 1:3. The text Jerome comments on involves God's command to the prophet to marry Gomer, and the prophet's explication to the people of the significance of the action in the context of their infidelity to God. Jerome calls attention to the significance of the events narrated for that time, events which themselves point to the future calling of the nationso In this context, Jerome states the following principle:

The prophets promised about the coming of Christ after many centuries and the calling of the Gentiles in this way, in order that they [i.e. the prophets] might not overlook the present time, lest they seem not to teach the assembly-convoked by reason of some event-about the things that occur [then], but instead seem to rejoice about obscure and future things. [34]

[33] Ibid., ad 5: "ad quinrum dicendum, quod auctor principalis sacrae scriprurae est spiritus sancrus, qui in uno verbo sacrae scripturae intellexit multo plura quam per expositores sacrae scriprurae exponantur, vel discemanrur. nee est etiam inconveniens quod homo, qui fo.it auctor instrumencalis sacrae scripturae, in uno verbo plura intelligeret: quia prophecae, ut hieronymus <licitsuper osee, ita loquebantur de facris praes.entibus, quod etiam intenderunt futura significare. uncle non est impossibile simul plura intelligere, in quantum unum est figura alterius."

[34] *In Osee Prophetam,* 1.1.3.4 *(CCL* 76: 10, II. 148-52): "Prophetae sic multa post saecula de aduentu Christi et uocarione genrium pollicentur, ut praesens tempus non neglegant:, ne concionem ob aliud conuocatam non docere de his quae stant:, sed de incertis ac futuris ludere uideantur."

Jerome does seem here to teach that the prophets both addressed present conditions-for the pedagogical benefit of their contemporaries-and promised future realities in a single prophetic instance. Jerome orders the intended signification in terms of the direct relation between words, present realities addressed by the words, and future realities signified by the Old Testament realities.

In his response to the objector, Thomas applies this element of Jerome's teaching about the prophet's intention to signify. Thomas's *nee est etiam inconveniens* allows that the prophet knew and intended his words to have a terminus in the New Testament through the mediation of an Old Testament pedagogical event or circumstance. Inasmuch as the prophet knew and intended the announcement of the Old Testament event as a figure of a future event, "it is not unfitting" that several things be understood at the same time. His knowledge of the future significance derives from his understanding of the vision granted him. In short, the prophet understands the divinely intended mystical sense accruing to the historical circumstance of his own time. The unity of the signification is rooted in God's Wisdom and shared with the prophet; his participated knowledge allows him to speak properly, while intending to signify distinct but related realities.

Thomas appears over time to have deepened his appreciation for the principle enunciated by Jerome. [35] Elements of Thomas's developing work on the issue appear in the Pauline commentaries, presumably prior to his encounter with Theodore's adaptation theory. [36] All of his treatments rest upon the notion that the

[35] The received textofThomas's prologue to the commentary on the Psalter reads "Jerome on Ezechiel" not Hosea. There appears to be no other reference to Jerome on Ezechiel in the entire Thomistic corpus, and the principle enunciated in the prologue mirrors too finely the text referenced in *Quodlibetum* 7, where the citation is clearly and accurately to Hosea. Stroobant, in his French translation of the *Super Psalmos,* corrects the text to read "Jerome on Hosea," but I think he has incorrectly identified the specific text Thomas has in mind; he cites comments Jerome makes in his prologue *In Osee Prophetam* (Stroobant, *Commentaire,* 37).

[36] In the exposition of the Letter to the Hebrews, Thomas, without mentioning Jerome, anticipates his remarks on the Rule of Saint Jerome in the prologue to the Psalter (*Super ad Hebraeos* c. 1, lect. 3 [Marietti, no. 51]): "sciendum est autem, quod in veteri testamento

prophetic author could signify a continuum of realities through one set of words, *so* long as he was privy to the way God used the contemporary circumstance to signify future realities.

D) Literal Prophecy and the Principally Intended Sense

By the time Thomas encounters Theodore, he frames the principle with the added reference to exceeded conditions; the principle allows him to discern what the human author had principally in mind. Put another way, excessive descriptions signal that the prophet beheld a future that his particular circumstance opaquely adumbrated.

Granted a continuum of related and intended significations, the expositor must do his best to follow the lead of the author, letting the words he left signal what he held principally in view.[37] Through excessive descriptions, the prophet signals to the expositor that he principally intends (sees and understands) the future reality. Thomas's comments at the outset of his exposition of Psalm 21 help illustrate his meaning here. The psalm sings the history of the Passion, and is about Christ; the one figured, Thomas says, is David. This is the meaning of the phrase "licet figuraliter de David, specialiter ad litteram refertur ad Christum."" David saw himself figured in Christ, not Christ figured in himself. This distinction is a vital one for Thomas, for it reverses the traditional order governing mystical significations. Instead of the

quaedam dicuntur de eo quod est figura, non inquantum quaedam res, sed inquantum est figura, et tune non exponitur de illo, nisi inquantum refertur ad figuratum. verbi gratia in ps. lxxi quaedam dicuntur de david, vel de salomone, inquantum figurabant Christum tantum. quaedam vero etiam secundum quod sunt homines quidam, et istomm dicta de ipsis possunt exponi et de Christo; sicut illud: *Deus, iudicium tuum regi da:* quia illud potest convenire salomoni. ilia vero quae dicuntur de ipsis inquantum sunt figura, numquam de ipsis possunt exponi, sicut illud: *et dominabitur a mari usque ad mare,* etc.; quia nullo modo verificari potest de salomone." See also Thomas's comments *Super ad Ephesios,* c. 5, !ect. 10 (Marietri, no. 335).

[37] Thomas's articulation of a theology of prophetic signification in his scriptural commentaries is consonant with his teaching on prophetic inspiration in the treatise on prophecy in the *Summa Theologiae.* To illustrate this adequately, however, would require a distinct essay.

present *res* adumbrating for the prophet a future *res,* the future *res* illuminates for the prophet the significance of his present *res,* thereby making the prophet's present a figuration in the contemplated reality. The prophet is not focused principally upon his local circumstance, even though he may hold it in view. Literally, the prophet sees himself in light of the revealed nexus of intelligibility; in that light the prophet could hardly be the principal focus.[38]

Exposition follows intention. In his discussion of Theodore Thomas directs our attention toward what the prophet has principally in mind; this is for him the best way to discuss the literal sense. Thomas can maintain that Psalm 21 is a literal prophecy because the direct character of David's mode of apprehension secures the literality of his mode of speaking.[39] The presence of an Old Testament referent in the text, and in the view of the prophet, is not the decisive issue.

In response to Theodore, therefore, Thomas argues for a variety of prophetic modes of intentional signification. He identifies particular ways by which this intentionality manifests itself in Old Testament texts. Sometimes the prophets spoke with no Old Testament referent in view; Thomas consistently proposes Isaiah 7:14 as such a text. Sometimes the prophets intend to signify through a local circumstance in a straightforward mystical signification involving the prophetic intuition that the present figures the future; this seems to be predominant mode in the Psalter. Sometimes, however, the prophetic intentions involve an Old Testament *res* considered as figured in a future more directly beheld by the prophet.

[38] In that sense, David and the post-New Testament reader of the psalm have something in common. Both can see themselves figured in the Lord. This is a higher mode of perception than that of seeing the Lord figured in oneself.

[39] David's prophetic grace is of the highest kind, without admixture of outwardly manifested images. Speaking of David earlier in the prologue, Thomas says of him, "solius Spiritus Sancti instinctu sine omni exteriori adminiculo suam edidit prophetiam, ... iste nude doctus fuit de veritate." In *STh* II-II, q. 174, a. 4, ad 1, comparing the prophecy of David to that of Moses, he says, "visio tamen Moysi fuit excellentior quantum ad cognitionem divinitatis, sed David plenius cognovit et expressit mysteria incarnationis Christi."

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Theology has much work to do before it can find a balance between respecting the historical integrity of the Old Testament and respecting New Testament self-understanding as an authoritative disclosure of prophetic orientation toward Christ. Thomas's encounter with Theodore, even if fraught with historical and textual ambiguities, may offer us a way to appreciate some of the principal issues in play.

First, Thomas's dispute with Theodore occurs within the context of his own unified view of revelation. He takes it as given that the God who revealed himself in visions in the Old Testament is the same God who manifests himself in the person of the Word made flesh. This is not a Thomistic presupposition; according to Thomas, it is a New Testament *datum.* Issues of prophetic intentionality, therefore, are properly theological issues; they cannot be cohesively explicated in isolation from the Church's faith in the identity, mission, and authority of the Lord Jesus. This in tum is directly a matter of understanding the intention with which the New Testament authors wrote their account of Jesus as fulfillment.

Second, a great deal of work remains to be done in order to discern the binding character of Constantinople II. Admittedly, this is a thorny issue. Still, Thomas understood himself bound to respect the council's teaching regarding the literal sense of certain key Old Testament texts. He is particularly careful to protect Psalm 21 and Isaiah 7:14. What did the council intend to teach, and what is its binding force? How have subsequent adjudications by the Church's teaching authority clarified what the council intended? These are questions that must be pursued as an aid to modern discussions of scriptural interpretation.

Thomas's appreciation of Jerome is decisive as he unties the knot Theodore represents. Thomas proposes that an exegetical stance before the two Testaments cannot rely only upon a hermeneutical theory merely framed by anthropological presuppositions uninformed by the revelation itself. The Church

cannot read the text of the prophets in exactly the same way a Latin scholar reads the text of Virgil; and an Aristotelian account of the capacities of human authors is not adequate to the modes of revelation. The revelation itself involves new modes of apprehension that expand without vitiating human modes of perception and communication. Thomas views the prophetic modes of apprehension as operating within human perimeters "opened up," so to speak, by the novelty of a word or vision granted by God. These new modes of apprehension in turn leave a written record requiring new modes of exposition, modes commensurate with the character of the revelation received by the sacred authors responsible for the sacred text.[40] The distinction Thomas draws between the sense touching upon the prophet's local circumstance and the principal sense intended by the author involves just such an appreciation of complex modes of perception, signification, and exposition.[41]

Finally, Thomas dearly understands that dispute about how to discern the literal sense necessarily involves a theological estimation of the tradition of the mystical sense. Disciplined *as* he was in focusing upon the literal sense of a scriptural text, he treats the mystical sense as part of a patrimony that cannot be jettisoned. He includes the mystical sense within the original prophetic intention of the human author, and understands it to play an important part in the overall unfolding of the biblical revelation. The mystical sense may not ordinarily be the stuff of Thomas's argumentative theology, but neither does he think it a method developed by expositors to lie fancifully on top of the literal sense. Thomas thinks that in its purest form it issues from a divine

[40] This issue seems to be on the mind of Pope John Paul Il when in *Fideset ratio* 93-95 he urges theologians to work toward developing a properly theological hermeneutic, informed by but not limited to the insights of the lower sciences.

[41] Joseph Fitzmyer, commenting on the Pontifical Biblical Commission's 1993 report *On the Interpretation ofthe Bible in the Church* notes that the document deliberately retreats from identifying the literal sense with the sense intended by the human author, limiting it rather to the sense expressed by the text. This is a notion that Thomas would likely find ominous on a number of counts. See Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Biblical Commission's Document "The Interpretation ofthe Bible in the Church": Text and Commentary* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1995), 120, wherein he comments on section II, B, 1, of the report.

intention shared with the prophetic authors, and suited to the divine purposes. He may be taken as a witness to an ecdesial intuition on this point, an intuition echoing significantly through liturgical tradition.[42] It remains for us, therefore, to re-examine the issue of the tradition of the mystical sense relative to the intentions governing the literal sense, its theological relevance to discussion about the progressive character of revelation, and its theological import for the overall pedagogical. intent of the Scriptures.

[42] Roland Murphy, speaking about the tradition of the mystical senses ("What is Catholic about Catholic Biblical Scholarship?-Revisited," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 28 [1998], 114), says the following: "A rather rare taste is required for a modern reader to appreciate those time-honored approaches. They are part of Catholic tradition, but they cannot be identified as *the* Catholic approach. Indeed, they play a relatively insignificant role outside the liturgy, which keeps their memory alive. They are hardly a vivid part of the current 'living tradition,' since they force the earlier Testament into the mold of the later," Thomas esteemed the theological import of the tradition of the mystical senses much more generously.

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JOHN PAUL H'S MORAL THEOLOGY ON TRIAL: A REPLY TO CHARLES E. CURRAN

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HARLES CURRAN'S *The Moral Theology of Pope John Paul 11*[1] contains an introduction, six chapters, and an afterword. In the introduction Curran stresses that he will address the moral teaching and moral theology of John Paul H "as pope" and thus will not consider his prepapal moral writings (5). Successive chapters consider the following aspects of the pope's moral theology: theological presuppositions; theological methodology; ethical foundations and method; conscience, human acts, and human life; marriage, sexuality, gender, and family; and social teaching. Curran's analysis is principally concerned with the pope's most authoritative writings, that is, his fourteen encydical letters, although he also considers less authoritative documents such as apostolic exhortations and *per se* nonauthoritative documents such as his Wednesday audiences known as "The Theology of the Body."

His first purpose, he says, is to "analyze and criticize the moral theology of John Paul II" on the basis of Curran's own "'understanding of the Catholic moral tradition today" (5). In the afterword he says that he thinks that John Paul H's "major failure" was

[1] Charles E. Curran. *The Moral Theology of Pope John Paul II.* Washington, D.C. Georgetown University Press, 2005. xii+262 pages. $26.95. ISBN 1-58901-042-6. In Moral Traditions Series, James F. Keenan, S.J., series editor.

not emphasizing or at times even recognizing the Catholic approach "as a living tradition" (253).

In the course of his work Curran makes more than a score of extremely serious charges that, if true, would be sufficient thoroughly to discredit John Paul II as a moral teacher. Here we will consider eight of Curran's principal criticisms in order to show their inaccuracy and falsity. The same could be done for his other charges.

According to Curran, John Paul II (1) adopts a deductive, "classicist" moral method and fails to acknowledge the role of "historical consciousness;" (2) fails to recognize the significance of "change" in Church teaching on moral questions; (3) misuses Scripture in *Veritatis splendor;* (4) seriously misunderstands the teaching of *Dignitatis humanae* on the use of coercive power by the state; (5) presents a seriously flawed natural law method; (6) has a legalistic notion of conscience; (7) advances a "theology of the body" irrelevant to many persons; and (8) so emphasizes sexual complementarity that one is led to conclude that "men and women who are not married are not complete and lack something about their humanity."

I. A "CLASSICIST" METHOD VS. "HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS"

An overarching criticism of the pope's ethical method is that it is "classicist." By this Curran means a deductive method of moral reasoning which moves from abstract, unchanging, universal principles to concrete and particular conclusions. Classicism sees reality "in terms of the static, the immutable, the eternal, and the unchanging," assumes the existence "of a universal human reason that all have," and pays little attention to "experience, finitude, and sin as affecting how we know and act" (107).

Curran juxtaposes this method to what he judges to be the more adequate moral method of "historical consciousness." By this he means an inductive method of moral reasoning that begins with the particular, the historical, and the concrete and moves to

moral general conclusions. Historical consciousness occupies itself with "the subject-the person who knows and decides":

> We all bring with ourselves the experience that has shaped our persons. People look through different lenses as they seek truth and try to do good. In addition, our own finitude and sinfulness color our knowing and acting. (Ibid.)

Curran's "classicist" charge against the pope's theology deserves careful consideration, since in the past thirty-five years magisterial teaching has frequently been charged with the same deficiency.[2] The deficiency, Curran says, is most pronounced in the 1993 encyclical *Veritatis splendor.* Among a list of seven problems with the natural-law method employed in the encyclical, Curran indudes

> the failure to give enough importance to history and to recognize a more historically conscious approach. According to *Veritatis splendor,* we find moral truth about the human being written in human nature. The inclinations of nature are morally determinative. Moral truth is thus given in human nature and not in history. And because human nature remains basically the same, there is no real change or development. The methodology ... does not give that much attention to the signs of the times and the historical developments and diversity existing at present time. (117-18)

Such an unreasonably static conception of human nature has reinforced a false overconfidence on the part of the Church's magisterium: "None of us is ever able to see the total picture-we

[2] See for example Charles E. Curran, "Anthropological Bases of Catholic Social Teaching," in *Change in Official Catholic Moral Teachings,* ed. Charles Curran (New York: Paulist Press, 2003), 181-82; Richard M. Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith: Foundations of Catholic Morality* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1989), 32-33; Richard P. McBrien, *Catholicism,* rev. edition (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publisher, 1994), 148-49, 609-11; for origins of the idea of historical consciousness, see Bernard Lonergan, "The Transition from a Classicist World-View to Historical-Mindedness," *A Second Collection* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974), 1-9; referenced in John Finnis, *"Historical Consciousness" and Theological Foundations,* The Etienne Gilson Series 14 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1992), 1-2. Christine E. Gudorf charges magisterial moral teaching with ignoring the relevance of "biological evolution" and hence working from a "static" view of human nature; see Gudorf, "Contraception and Abortion in Roman Catholicism," in *Sacred Rights: The Case for Contraception and Abortion in World Religions,* ed. Daniel Maguire (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 67, 76 n. 45.

only have a partial and limited perspective" (119); "one cannot claim absolute certitude for these approaches [used in *Vertiatis splendor]"*(120); "one cannot claim to exclude all possibility of error" {ibid.); "But moral judgments about the nature and role of these inclinations by their very nature cannot claim absolute certitude" (ibid.).

What *specifically* troubles Curran about the papal method? Although Curran's "classicist" criticisms appear to be cast widely-he mentions not only *Veritatis splendor* but *all* the pope's encyclicals dealing with "personal morality" and "social morality" (107)-they nevertheless are focused on a particular contentious issue: the method's tendency to reinforce "hierarchical teaching on intrinsically evil acts and the existence of negative absolute norms, especially in the area of sexuality" (109). Curran explicitly questions the papal reassertion of the intrinsically evil nature and derivative condemnation of contraceptive acts (174-76, 111, 116-17, 130, 131, 132, 181-82), abortion (51, 132, 133, 140, 152-53), homosexual genital relations (131, 140, 168), masturbation (140), artificial insemination (130, 140), premarital sex (140), and euthanasia (140, 154-55); he mentions as well the condemnations of female ordination (192) and divorce and remarriage (173-74, 140, 181-82). On these and other difficult moral issues "there is less certitude than the pope is willing to admit" (156). Hence, the hierarchy's moral teaching has been a source of disagreement for "those who have been called revisionist or dissenting Catholic theologians" (140). Curran's argument is clear: certitude in our moral judgments is not possible; classicism, either denying or unaware of the historically provisional nature of human moral judgments, tends to formulate its conclusions in unreasonably certain terms; the moral teaching of John Paul II is marked by classicism; therefore, the authoritative judgments he sets forth on some of the most controversial moral issues of our day lack certitude. Historical consciousness, on the other hand, implies epistemological modesty in our moral reasoning; it implies that the moral judgments of a given time and place are always provisional and should never be held or taught as if they were certain.

Curran's conclusions presuppose a premise, unstated in his text, but made explicit in antecedent authors writing on historical consciousness upon whom he relies (principally Lonergan and Rahner), that "'concrete" and "'categorical" human nature is subject over time to changes so extensive as to deprive human moral judgment of any claim to being transtemporal and universally valid.[3]

Several theologians have shown this claim to be false. We quote here John Finnis's rather lengthy refutation:

> In its historical actualisations human nature of course changes, for the worse by way of sin and corrupt cultures, for the better by putting on the new man in grace. But the relevant question, never confronted even historically, let alone philosophically, Rabner and Lonergan and the exponents of historical consciousness in moral theology, concerns not human nature in its *de facto* actualisations, but human nature in its basic possibilities of fulfillment, possibilities which are adequately known only by adverting to the basic forms of human flourishing which are understood in our grasp of fundamental reasons for action. Is there, then, anyone for whom it was not or is not or will not be the case that life and health, knowledge of truth and beauty, excellence in work and play, the harmony in friendship with others, the procreative friendship of marriage with another, personal harmony in interior integrity and peace and outer authenticity, and harmony with the source of all meaning and value, are the basic reasons for action, the basic forms of the human fulfilment in which he or she would wish to share and outside of which no benefit or goal could seem really worthwhile? No. No such human person can be identified, and the talk of human nature's changeability . . . fails to impinge on the foundations of morality.[4]

[3] For Rahner on the changeability of human nature, see Karl Rahner, "Basic Observations on the Subject of Changeable and Unchangeable Factors in the Church," in *Theological Investigations* 14 (New York: Crossroad, 1976), 15; Rahner sets forth his view that the "objective structures of human nature" are limited to those which are "implicitly affirmed by a transcendental necessity even in the act of their denial" in "Natural Moral Law," in Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, *Concise Theolog'.cal Dictionary* (Fribourg: Herder, 1965), 305; Lonergan uncritically follows Rabner in this: see, Lonergan, "The Transition from a Classicist World-View to Historical Mindedness," in Bernard Lonergan, *A Second Collection* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974), 6. Jean Porter confidently asserts that "the critiques of [by] Karl Rahner and Bernard Lonergan [led] most Catholic scholars to reject so-called classical natural law theories"; Jean Porter, *Natural and Divine Law: Reclaiming the Tradition for Christian Ethics* (Ottawa: Novalis; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 54.

[4] Finnis, *"Historical Consciousness" and Theological Foundations,* 24-25; cf. Grisez, *Christian Moral Principles* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983), 183; see also 202 n. 21.

He writes again,

> General discourses about the changeability of human nature need not be taken seriously unless and until they [the revisionists] get down to the serious business of considering someone for whom life (bodily life, including bodily health) or the transmission of life, or play, or aesthetic enjoyment, or speculative knowledge, or friendship, or religion ... are not really good. Not surprisingly, such considerations are not to be found in the literature. [5]

In these two passages, Finnis is referring to the goods perfective of human persons toward which we are naturally inclined. These goods were goods for our first parentS and for those living at the time of Christ, and they are so for us today. And it is on respect for these goods that morality, as *Veritatis splendor* teaches, is based.

Moreover, as Finnis again notes in criticizing this "historicism" (which John Paul II himself criticized),

> Against such loose talk about changing human nature, we should set the Christology affirmed by Vatican II, "Christ fully manifests man to man" *(Gaudium et spes,* 22).... He is the "perfect man" *(Gaudium et spes,* 22, 38, 41, 45). "In Him, human nature is assumed, not annulled" *(Gaudium et spes,* 22).. . . For "all human beings . . . have the same nature and the same origin"*(Gaudium et spes,* 29; *Lumen gentium,* 19), a single nature *(Lumen gentium,* 13), which is "more fully manifested by the experience of past ages, the advance of the sciences, and the treasures hidden in the various forms of human culture" *(Gaudium et spes,* 44); and all have the "same calling and divine destiny," and so, fundamentally equal both in nature and in supernatural calling *(Gaudium et spes,* 29) can be citizens of the one People of God regardless of race or place or time *(Lumengentium,* 13).[6]

II. "CHANGE" IN CHURCH TEACHING

The evidence Curran most frequently adduces to demonstrate the historically conditioned character of Catholic moral teaching

[5] John Finnis, "The Natural Law, Objective Morality, and Vatican II," in *Principles of Catholic Moral Life,* ed. William E. May (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1980), 113-50, esp. 140

[6] Ibid., 141.

is this: *over the centuries the Catholic Church has "changed" its position on authoritative moral teachings:*

History reminds us that over the centuries and the years the church has changed its teaching on a number of significant issues-such as slavery, usury, freedom, religious freedom, human rights, democracy, torture, the right of the defendant to remain silent, the death penalty, the intention and role of procreation in marital sexuality, the nature of the family, and the role of women in society. (42)

"Thus," he continues later,

at some time in its formulation, papal teaching has been wrong. Thus, history bears out that even the papal teaching office itself has experienced the limitations of reason and even to some extent the sinfulness that affects all human reason and human decision making. (120; see also 130-33, 183-84) [7]

Curran thinks that we thus have reason to conclude that Catholic moral teaching on issues like contraception, abortion, and artificial insemination lacks certitude and that Catholics are warranted to dissent from such teaching: "[my reasons are adduced as] supporting the fact ... that Catholics might in theory and practice disagree with such teaching" (132).

The question of change in the Church's moral teaching, and the relationship of the concept of "change" to the concept of "development of doctrine," is very important and cannot be done full justice here. But an adequate answer to Curran's argument can be presented and now follows. He says the Church has "changed its teaching" on the twelve important moral issues stated above (i.e., slavery, usury, freedom, religious freedom, human rights, democracy, torture, the right of the defendant to remain silent, the death penalty, intention and role of procreation in marital sexuality, nature of the family, role of women in society). This means that the judgment of the magisterium on those issues was erroneous. Curran's claim is that if this is true for these twelve issues it follows that the Church's judgment on the issues Curran

[7] "John Paul H's encyclicals," Curran writes, "fail to recognize that the church not only teaches the truth about humankind but must also learn it. The church is both learner and teacher" (42).

is interested in changing (i.e., contraceptive acts, artificial insemination, abortion, homosexual acts, euthanasia, masturbation, premarital intercourse, and divorce and remarriage) might also be erroneous and subject to change.

Is Curran's argument from "change" sound? For many good reasons the answer is no. First, most of the kinds of acts specified as having been "changed" are not analogous in a necessary respect to those that Curran would like to see changed. The latter (i.e., contraceptive acts, artificial insemination, abortion, homosexual acts, euthanasia, etc.) are all acts whose objects have been judged by the magisterium to be intrinsically evil because in each case what is freely chosen radically contradicts the *good* of the human person; to freely will any such act is to freely will contrary to someone's good and hence is to have a bad will. Of the issues Curran lists as having "changed," only slavery, usury, and torture are acts that can be condemned *ex objecto* as violating a good of human persons. But precisely what moral object is being condemned when the subject concerned is freedom, religious freedom, human rights etc.? (We take up the question of usury below.) Most of these acts are political concepts with varying construals, not all of which are compatible with Catholic faith. To condemn a particular construal of religious liberty (e.g., liberty to carry out harmful behavior in the name of religion), or rights (e.g., as unrestrained moral license), or democracy (e.g., as affirmed by the French Revolution denying the traditional liberties of the Church), is not incompatible with affirming the same concept construed in more adequate ways. This is one way Catholic teachings associated with these concepts have changed. The Church was critical of assumptions (atheistic, relativistic, anti-ecclesiastical) associated with Enlightenment rationalism. It therefore distanced itself from concepts such as subjective rights,[8]

[8] For an analysis of the classical Greek and medieval Catholic philosophical antecedents to the modem concept of subjective rights ("my rights," "his rights") and the development of that concept in the Church's moral teaching, see E. Christian Brugger, "Bioethical Controversies and the Language of Rights," *Global Virtue Ethics Review 5,* no. 1 (April 2004), electronic journal <www.spaef.com/GVER/v5nl/ gver5-1-5-brugger.htm>.

religious liberty,[9] and democracy until it was possible to disentangle these concepts from the erroneous assumptions of the political theories to which they were attached or upon which they depended.[10]

Addressing the question of apparent contradictions in the Church's teaching on religious freedom, Cardinal Renato Martino was asked: "Is the papal magisterium of the 19th-century Popes in the matter of religious freedom in contradiction with the deliberations of Vatican II?" The Cardinal confidently replied:

> Not at all. In *Mirari Vos* [of Gregory XVI, 1832] and in the *Syllabus* [of Pius IX, 1864] [both of which condemned a conception of religious freedom] in fact, religious freedom was not condemned, but rather a certain philosophical conception of religious freedom, which prevailed at the time. This conception entailed relativism, syncretism and even indifference in religious matters, with an equating in essence of truth and error. It is totally obvious that these positions are incompatible with the nature of the Church.[11]

Second, the kinds of ethical judgments specifying the morality of the acts in the two lists are not analogous. Curran's examples of change are meant to provide warrant for concluding that the Church's judgments on the controversial fifth and sixth commandment issues he mentions are provisional and uncertain. For this argument to work the moral judgments whereby the Church taught on those other issues in the past must have relevant analogies with the moral judgments of the magisterium on the

[9] John Courtney Murray, the most significant theological contributor to the drafting of Vatican II's document on religious liberty, argues that the changes introduced by Vatican II in the teaching on religious liberty did not proceed from fundamental changes in the Church's moral affirmations, but rather were due to "a progress in the understanding of the tradition"; Vatican II discarded "an older theory of civil tolerance in favor of a new doctrine of religious freedom more in harmony with the authentic and more fully understood tradition of the church." The chief stimulus for the development was the changing sociological relationship in modem societies between political communities and religion: see John Courtney Murray, "The Declaration on Religious Freedom," in *Change in Official Catholic Moral Teaching,* 3-12 (quotations on 12, 9); see also John Courtney Murray, "The Problem of Religious Freedom," *Theological Studies* 25 (1964): 503-75.

[10] Grisez examines "some examples of alleged errors in Catholic teaching" in chapter 36, appendix 1 of Grisez, *Christian Moral Prin.ciples* (899-901).

[11] *'Zenit,* Daily News Dispatch, Thursday, 30 June 2005.

latter acts. All the judgments in the latter list are condemnations of acts *ex objecto.* Changing any one of them would mean beginning to teach that a particular act whose moral object has been clearly characterized as incompatible with love for persons insofar as it violates a good intrinsic to persons and condemned under that characterization is now legitimate to choose precisely under that formerly condemned characterization. *None* of the examples Curran lists except usury even remotely fits this description.[12] But even usury does not provide a satisfactory example. While practices of borrowing, lending, and profiting from lending have changed vastly in the past five hundred years, the fundamental affirmation of the medieval and post-Reformation condemnation of usury is still maintained today. John T. Noonan, Jr., states it well: "the old usury rule, narrowly construed, still stands: namely, that no profit on a loan may be taken without a just title to that profit."[13] On the issue of

[12] "Slavery" was not condemned but tolerated; "torture" was formerly judged useful for extracting confessions and later judged not to be so; "freedom," "religious freedom," "human rights," "democracy," nature of the family," "the role of women in society" are not acts as such that can be condemned or approved but rather concepts with multiple possible construals, each of which can be accepted or rejected on its own terms; "the intention and role of procreation in marital sexuality" relates to a development that has brought greater specificity to the teaching of the nature of the procreative good in marriage, but has not entailed tolerating much less accepting something authoritatively condemned by the Church in the past; the "death penalty" is something that magisterial teaching has in the past defended, and now still apparently defends in principle, but says is no longer needed in practice; the "right of the defendant to remain silent" is a point of juridical order and not an act whose object has once been judged intrinsically evil, and now tolerated.

[13] John T. Noonan, Jr., "Development in Moral Doctrine," in *Change in Offrcial Catholic Moral Teaching,* 287-305 (quotation on 288); this point has been repeated over the years in response to the charge that the Church "changed" its teaching on usury. John Gilchrist, a leading historian of economic activity in the Middle Ages, wrote back in 1969: "The failure of modern historians to understand [the relevance of the development of just economic markets to the moral issue of charging interest on a loan] leads them to make such bald and unqualified statements as that the taking of interest was forbidden in the middle ages or that the Church came to change its doctrine" (Gilchrist, *The Church and Economic Activity in the Middle* Ages [New York: Macmillan, 1969], 64). For two fine discussions of the correct understanding of the Church's medieval teaching on usury and how that teaching is compatible in principle with interest-bearing loans in modern economic structures, see: Rodger Charles, *Christian Social Witness and Teaching,* vol. 1 (Herefordshire: Gracewing, 1998), 199-203; John Finnis, *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 205-10.

marriage, the fact that ecclesiastical teaching on marriage and the family in the past forty years has elaborated aspects of the institution implicit but not emphasized in the ancient teaching (e.g., broadening our understanding of the purposes or goods of the marital relationship beyond the procreation and education of children to include the "good of the spouses") illustrates indeed the depth and richness of the revealed teaching insofar as new aspects of the ancient doctrine still emerge into the consciousness of the Church. But it hardly justifies the conclusion that intrinsically evil acts like the intentional killing of unborn children or homosexual genital actions are no longer radically incompatible with the good of the human person.

Third, Curran's argument begs a very important question: on the twelve issues he says have changed, is it truly the case that the fundamental philosophical affirmation of the magisterium on each issue (or even on any one them) has changed? Has the magisterium taught proposition X at one time, then not-X at a later time? It is not enough for proposition X to undergo an organic development (say proposition X develops into complex assertion XAB) while maintaining consistency with its antecedent (X). It is not enough for the change to be a rejection of one construal of a concept (say X construed *as* A) in favor of a more adequate construal that does not entail the element that led to its rejection (say X *as* B). It is not enough for action X (e.g., charging interest on a loan), whose object by definition entails condition Y (e.g., in the context of an economy lacking a just market able to establish market rates of interest in the loaning of money), at one time to be authoritatively and later to be accepted because condition Y no longer prevails (i.e., an economic market able to establish market rates of interest does exist). [14]

For Curran's argument to work, the so-called changed teaching must assert a proposition once authoritatively rejected. Curran

[14] It is not the case that the Catholic Church condemned *ex objecto* all charging of interest on capital without regard *to* the conditions in which the practice was being done; see Pope Callistus III's interesting defense in 1455 of receiving profit from "the selling of revenues" and rejection of the allegations that the enforcing of such contracts was usurious; Callistus III, Constitution *Regimini universalis* (6 May 1455), DS 716.

argues that since the twelve teachings he names have changed, we are warranted in expecting that the sex and life teachings too can change. But if one of those latter teachings changed, as Curran suggests it might, it would entail a rejection of a proposition formerly authoritatively taught. For example, if the magisterium taught that it was legitimate (under specific circumstance) to intend to kill an unborn child, that act of teaching would entail a denial of the proposition that it is never legitimate to intend to kill the innocent. *As* we noted above, the concept of development of doctrine is beyond the scope of this essay. But this much should be said. No one, including the former Holy Father, means to deny that doctrine develops in the Church; that there are assertions in the creeds and other authoritative ecclesiastical teachings that are not found explicit in Sacred Scripture or the apostolic deposit; that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and facilitated by the contingencies of history and culture, new aspects of ancient teachings become dear to the mind of the Church that before had not been dear. The notion of development of doctrine was elaborated and defended by John Henry Newman in his famous *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine,* first published in 1845,[15] and endorsed in varying degrees by both Vatican I[16] and Vatican II,[17] as well as Popes Pius XI[18] and Pius XII.[19] This concept of development is entirely compatible with the papal teaching that certain authoritatively taught moral judgments are certainly true. For Curran to answer the question whether the magisterium has in fact changed its fundamental moral affirmations, his examples of change would need to be carefully examined; the former magisterial teaching would need to be dearly formulated; in particular, the moral object once rejected and now accepted would need to be dearly specified; this would need to be set alongside the dearly formulated later teaching with

[15] *JohnHenryNewman,AnEssayontheDevelopmentofChristianDoctrine(NotreDame:* University of Notre Dame Press, 1989).

[16] Vatican I, *Dei Filius,* ch. 4.

[17] Vatican II, *Dei Verbum* 8; *Gaudium et spes* 62.

[18] Pius XI, *Mortalium animos,* in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (1928): 14.

[19] Pius XII, *Humani Generis* (1950), *DS* (30'h ed.) 2314.

its moral object carefully specified, and the disparity between the two teachings-the "change"-identified. Curran provides no such philosophical, much less historical, examination and comparison of any of the twelve issues stated above. He merely asserts that they have changed and adduces that change as evidence of his thesis that the pope's categorical reassertion of certain moral condemnations lacks credibility.

Our purpose has not been to discredit the idea of historical consciousness, but rather to demonstrate that Curran's use of the concept to discredit papal teaching is unsuccessful. The term historical-consciousness in philosophy (or historical-mindedness, as used by Bernard Lonergan, who first used the concept in Catholic philosophy) [20] proceeds from the premise that truth exists only in the mind of knowing subjects. Things known, to be sure, exist apart from knowers. But knowers have limitations; hence too does their knowing. They are conditioned by their history, and have particular perspectives and points of view because of their historical situationso [21] All this may be admitted without concluding what Curran does about human ability to arrive at certitude with respect to moral knowledge. The atheistic historian of the Enlightenment, Carl Becker, whose ideas influenced Anglican theologian Alan Richardson, [22] to whom Lonergan attributes the origin of the idea of historical-mindedness, expresses systematically what Curran argues for throughout his book. Becker writes:

> Because we [i.e., those at Yale Law School to whom he was speaking in 1932] are nowadays historically minded, we can understand an idea or a doctrine only

[20] Bernard]. F. Lonergan, S.J.,."The Transition from a Classicist World-View to Historical Mindedness" in *A Second Collection,* ed. William Ryan, S.J., and Bernard J, Tyrell, S.J. (Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1974), 1-9.

[21] Benedict M. Ashley, O.P., develops the idea in a defense of Thomism against a classicist charge in *The Ashley Reader: Redeeming Reason,* 18-25 (Naples, Fla.: Sapientia Press, forthcoming); for an earlier version of the essay see "Thomism and the Transition from the Classical World View to Historical Mindedness," in *The Future of Thomism,* ed. Deal W. Hudson and Dennis W. Moran (South Bend, Ind.: American Maritain Association, 1992), 109-21.

[22] For Richardson's use of the term "historical-mindedness" see Alan Richardson, *History, Sacred and Profane* (London: SCS Press, 1964), 253.

when we relate its history; we can identify a concept only by regarding it, not as something static ... but as a living, developing reality."[23]

The insinuation is that those who are *not* historically minded wrongly think that at least some concepts are not "living, developing realities," but rather unchanging principles. Becker's statement, like Curran's, begs critical questions. Does he mean there are no universal no concepts in any field of inquiry or knowledge that transcend the flux and particularity of history? The moral judgments of the magisterium derive from the data of sense experience, imagination, natural inclinations, and witness of the Church throughout the ages; and it is a dogma of faith that the magisterium is assisted in its teaching by the Holy Spirit. Can there be no induction from such principles warranting firm assent?[24] Those who look in Curran's book for answers to these questions will be disappointed. His only reply is: the Church has changed its moral principles on basic ethical issues in the past, from which it follows that we have good reason to be uncertain about allegedly irreformable teaching in the present.

Uncritical defenders of historical consciousness need to avoid the mistake of placing too much faith in their method. What assurance is there that the novel beliefs of a particular "social location" are anything more than regurgitated errors from the past? We must not talk as if the filter of history is a guarantee against the contamination of ideas: "We cannot assume that every belief that emerges in the historical consciousness of modern man affirms a genuine human value and establishes a valid human right."[25]

[23] Carl Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (New Haven; Yale University Press, 1932), 19; quoted in Finnis, *"Historical Consciousness" and Theological Foundations,* 7.

[24] Finnis, *"Historical Consciousness" and Theological Foundations,3.*

[25] Francis J. Canavan, S.J., "The Concept of Religious Freedom as a Human Right," in *Religious Liberty; An End and a Beginning,* ed. John Courtney Murray, S.J. (New York: The Macmillan Co: 1966), 67.

III. THE "MISUSE" OF SCRIPTIJRE IN *VERITATIS SPLENDOR*

Curran faults John Paul H's use of Scripture in *Veritatis splendor* on three counts:

> First, it distorts the meaning of the story of the rich young man as found in Matthew 19.... the thrust of the story ... is the question of riches and not the question of all Christians being called to obey the commandments found in the Old Covenant. Second, the encyclical distorts the meaning of Christian morality as found in Scripture. The encyclical makes primary the insistence on obedience to the commandments. But morality, as portrayed throughout scripture, involves much more than obedience to commandments. Morality involves a change of heart, conversion, response to a loving God, and the virtues, attitudes and dispositions that characterize the Christian person. . . . A third distortion concerns the attempt to use scripture to support what the pope is proposing today based on philosophical and ethical concepts that were not known in biblical times.... *Veritatis splendor* explicitly uses scripture to support the notion of intrinsic evil proposed by the contemporary hierarchical magisterium in its arguments against proportionalism and consequentialism. But scripture does not know any of these concepts. (52-53)

These accusations explicitly contradict what is said in the encyclical. Here the first two will be considered (space limitations prevent consideration of the third).

First, John Paul II makes it clear, in his reflections on Jesus' dialogue with the rich young man, that the moral life is *not* a matter of obeying rules. Throughout the encyclical the pope vigorously rejects a legalistic understanding of the moral life. The pope insists that "for the young man the question is not so much about rules to be followed, but *about the meaning of life* . . . the question is ultimately an appeal to the absolute Good which attracts and beckons us; it is the echo of a call from God who is the origin and goal of man's life" (*VS* 7). It is, he goes on to say, *"an essential and unavoidable question for the life of every man"* (*VS* 8) and is indeed "a *religious question*. ... The goodness that attracts and at the same time obliges man has its source in God and ... is God himself" (*VS* 9).

It is an existential question about the meaning of our lives as persons gifted with freedom of choice, the freedom to give to

ourselves our identity as moral beings, a truth emphasized later in the encyclical. Thus John Paul II states that human freedom is rightly regarded as being "not only the choice for one or another particular action" but "is also, within that choice, a *decision about oneself*" (VS 65). In connection with this the Holy Father quotes a marvelous passage from St. Gregory of Nyssa:

> All things subject to change and becoming never remain constant, but continually pass from one state to another, for better or for worse.... Now human life is always subject to change; it needs to be born ever anew. But here birth does not come about by a foreign intervention, as is the case with bodily beings; it is the result of free choice. Thus *we are,* in a certain sense, our own parents, creating ourselves as we will, by our decisions. (Quoted in *VS* 71)[26]

The essential link between obedience to the commandments and eternal life that John Paul II sees is not a matter of obeying rules but rather a matter of love of persons. After noting that God's commandments show us the path to life and lead to it and that Jesus, "the new Moses," definitively confirms and proposes them to us "as the way and condition of salvation" (VS 12), the Holy Father emphasizes that the negative precepts of the Decalogue, of which Jesus reminds the rich young man, are rooted in the commandment that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves, a commandment expressing *"the singular dignity of the human person,* the 'only creature that God has wanted for its own sake'" *(VS* 13).[27]

The pope emphasizes that we can love our neighbor and respect his dignity as a person only by cherishing the goods perfective of him and by steadfastly refusing to damage, destroy, or impede these goods. Appealing to the words of Jesus, John Paul II stresses that

> the different commandments of the Decalogue are really only so many reflections on the one commandment about the good of the person, at the level of the many different goods which characterize his identity as a spiritual and bodily being in relationship with God, with his neighbor, and with the material world.... The

[26] The citation from St. Gregory of Nyssa is from his *De vita Moysis* 2.2.3 *(PG* 44:327-28).

[27] The internal citation is from *Gaudium et spes* 22.

commandments of which Jesus reminds the young man are meant to safeguard *the good* of the person, the image of God, by protecting his *goods.* (Ibid.)

He stresses that the negative precepts of the Decalogue "express with particular force the ever urgent need to protect human life, the communion of marriage" and *so* on (ibid.).

Moreover, John Paul II goes on to emphasize that Jesus not only reconfirms the law given to Moses-the "ten words"-he also is the one who gives us the Sermon on the Mount, the *"magna carta* of Christian morality" *(VS* 15). In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said that he had not "come to abolish the Law and the Prophets," but rather "to fulfill them" (Matt 5: 17). John Paul says, "'Jesus brings the commandments to fulfillment ... by interiorizing their demands and by bringing out their fullest meaning" *(VS* 15). The Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount "'speak of basic attitudes and dispositions in life and therefore *do not coincide exactly with the commandments.* On the other hand, *there is no separation or opposition* between the Beatitudes and the commandments: both refer to the good, to eternal life" *(VS* 16). They are "above all *promises,* from which also indirectly flow *normative indications* for the moral life. ... they are a sort of *self-portrait of Christ* ... and ... *invitations to discipleship and to communion of life with Christ"* (ibid.). The moral life, John Paul II emphasizes, means ultimately the following of Christ. But we follow him not by any outward imitation but "by *becoming conformed to him* who became a servant, even to giving himself on the Cross" (cf. Phil 2:5-8) *(VS* 21). Following Christ means *"holding fast to the very person of Jesus" (VS* 19).

And it is possible to be conformed to Jesus, to hold fast to him, to love as he does, "only because of God's grace" *(VS* 22; cf. *VS* 11). "To imitate and live out the love of Christ is not possible for man by his own strength alone. He becomes *capable of this love only by the virtue of a gift received" (VS* 22; cf. *VS* 24).

IV. *DIGNITATIS HUMANAE:* PUBLIC ORDER VS. COMMON GOOD

Curran claims in chapter 2 and again in chapter 6 that the papal teaching on the proper role of civil law and legitimate use of coercive force by civil authority (see *Evangelium vitae* 68-77) departs from the teaching of Vatican II. John Paul II's understanding "follows the traditional Thomistic approach" while Vatican II "proposes a different theoretical framework," which Curran calls "the religious freedom approach" (231). The Thomistic approach sees the proper role of civil authority as "ensuring the common good of people through the recognition and defense of their fundamental rights" (61; EV71); Vatican H's approach adopts the principle, "as much freedom as possible and as little restraint as necessary" (232).[28] The Thomistic approach justifies coercive intervention for the sake of "the common good"; Vatican II justifies intervention "to protect and promote public order" (ibid.). In other words, the concept of the "common good" implies something different from civil authority, something more than the concept of "public order." "Public order is a more restrictive concept" (ibid.). By employing the concept of the common good, papal teaching implicitly concedes more power to public authority than Vatican II is willing to concede:

> *Dignitatis humanae* 7 refers to these three aspects of fundamental rights, peace, and public morality as 'public order' not common good. Public order is a narrower concept than common good. In discussing civil law in *Evangelium vitae,* the pope never refers to public order, the term used in *Dignitatis humanae.* By emphasizing the common good as the purpose of civil law, he proposes a criterion that gives greater scope to law and a lesser scope to freedom .... The pope giveii more emphasis to truth and less to freedom than does the Vatican II declaration .... he is unwilling to accept the narrower criterion for civil law as proposed in that document. . . . he does not follow what was proposed by Vatican II. (61)

[28] *Dignitatis humanae* teaches "that principle of full freedom is to be preserved in society according to which people are given the maximum of liberty, and only restrained when and in *so* far as is necessary" (DH 7).

Curran writes later: "Throughout his writings, he invariably refers to the common good as the end of the state and does not invoke the narrower concept of public order as proposed in the Declaration on Religious Freedom" (233). In preferring a greater scope for the state's coercive law, the pope rejects the concept of political liberty defended by Vatican II: "he has not accepted the understanding of political freedom found in the Declaration on Religious Freedom" (ibid.).

To say John Paul Il's teaching on the proper role of civil law and the state's coercive authority is inconsistent with the teaching of Vatican II is false. It is true that the pope consistently invokes the concept of the common good as the justifying framework for the exercise of public authority. [29] But by doing this he is doing nothing more than handing on the teaching of Vatican IL The primacy of the common good in shaping the duties of civil authority is at the heart of *Dignitatis humanae's* conception of state authority, notwithstanding Curran's claim that the document has abandoned the concept in favor of the "more restrictive" concept of public order. The document teaches plainly that the "proper purpose" of "civil authority *fpotestas civilis]* ... is to provide for the temporal common good *[bonum commune]"* (DH 3). It defines the *common good* as the sum "of those conditions of social living which enable people to develop their own qualities most fully and easily"; the common good "consists chiefly in the safeguarding of the rights and duties of the human person." Protecting these rights, especially the right to "religious liberty" *(libertatem religiosam),* "lies with individual citizens and with social groups, *with the civil authorities fpotestates civiles],* with the church and other religious communities, each in their own way in view of this obligation towards the common good *[bonum commune]"* (DH 6; emphasis added). In addition, "civil authority must ensure that the equality of citizens before the law which is itself part of the common good *[bonum commune]* of society, should never be impaired either openly or covertly for religious reasons" (ibid.). Not only political authority, but the exercise of

[29] See *Evangelium vitae* 71, 90; *Centesimus annus* 11.

all personal and social liberties, *Dignitatis humanae* teaches, is limited by the requirements of the common good: "The moral maxim of personal and social responsibility must be followed in the exercise of all liberties: in the use of their rights individuals and social groups are bound by the moral law to have regard to the rights of others, to their own duties towards others and to the common good of all *[boni omnium communis]"* (DH 7).

The document does use the expression "public order" *(publicus ordo)* four times. In the first three instances, its use of public order is not in the context of a discussion of civil law, or the nature of civil authority's coercive prerogatives, but rather in the context of a general statement about the nature of the right of religious liberty. Because that right derives from human nature itself, it persists inviolable "as long as due public order is preserved" (DH 2), "within the limits set by due public order" (DH 3), "as long as they [i.e., religious believers] do not disturb the proper requirements of public order" (DH 4). Public order is used in these instances as an application of the general requirements of the common good to the particular question of the scope of the free public exercise of religion. In other words, the common good *requires* the free exercise of religion as long as public order is preserved. It does not mean that public order is itself the universal standard for the scope for civil law and the exercise of public authority. The fourth instance makes this clear. *Dignitatis humanae* teaches that civil society has the right to defend itself against harms that might come to it in the name of religion; civil authority provides the relevant safeguards; its rules should not be arbitrary but rather in conformity "with the objective moral order," should provide adequate protection and taken into consideration "the rights of all citizens," should be the basis for a peaceful and orderly community that enables people to "live together in true justice," and should provide "due protection of public morality." The next sentence states: "These factors constitute a fundamental part of the common good, and are included in the idea of public order." To extrapolate from this the conclusion that Vatican II has set aside the traditional concept of

the common good for the more restrictive concept of public order as the normative term defining the scope of civil law and authority's legitimate scope is a serious misreading of the council documents.[30]

The assertion that "the pope gives more emphasis to truth and less to freedom than does the Vatican II declaration" implies a misunderstanding of the moral teachings of both Vatican II and John Paul II. In its fifteen short numbered sections, *Dignitatis hum.a.nae* refers to "truth" *(veritas)* thirty-two times. In fact the document's main thesis is built around the proposition that "all men are bound to seek for the truth, especially about God and his church, and when they have found it to embrace and keep it" (DH 1). The *libertas* that the document refers to dozens of times indeed implies an immunity from interference, but the immunity is seen as a condition for seeking and finding the truth. Its emphasis on truth implies no minimizing of freedom, and its emphasis on freedom implies no minimizing of truth. The concepts are not adversarial. To imply that they are is to miss the point of the document.

Such an assertion also implies a misunderstanding of the traditional way Catholic theology has conceived of the relationship between truth and freedom. In the opening paragraph of *Veritatis splendor,* the pope restates this conception: "Truth enlightens man's intelligence and shapes his freedom, leading him

[30] Further support for our contention that Vatican II firmly maintains the traditional view, against Curran's novel reading, is found in other conciliar documents (see *Gau.dium et spes* 74; cf. no. 73), and in the teaching of John XXIII, who called the council (see *Mater et magistra* 65, 151; *Pacem in terris* 54, 60, 84, 85, *55,* 56), as well as Paul VI, in whose name its sixteen documents were published (see *Octogesima adveniens* 46; *Populorum progressio* 24); the teaching is so universally and firmly a part of Catholic moral teaching that there is good reason to judge that it has been infallibly taught by the ordinary and universal magisterium (see Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium ofthe SocialDoctrine of the Church* [Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Varicana, 2004], no. 168; cf. nos. 409, 567; *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* nos. 1898, 1903, 2236, 2241; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, mDoctrinal Nore on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life" [Nov. 2002], no. 1; Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei 5,* 18, 44; *Libertas praestantissimum* 16, *AAS* 18 [1887-88]; Pius II, *Summi pomificatus* 59; "Christmas Radio Message" *1941,AAS* 35 [1943]: 9-24; "Christmas Radio Message" 1944,AAS 37 [1945]: 15; Pius XI, *Divini redemptoris 31; Mit brennender Sorge* 30).

to know and love the Lord." In other words, truth and freedom are correlative. Choice and action in accordance with moral truth is defining not restrictive of human moral freedom. The pope says a chief reason for writing *Veritatis splendor* is to respond to currents of theological dissent "which end by detaching human freedom from its essential and constitutive relationship to truth" (*VS* 4). The pope calls this false conception of freedom "an illusory freedom" (*VS* 1).

Curran's concept of freedom is legalistic. It conceives moral norms as rules that restrict freedom, rather than rational guides opening possibilities for the creative, fulfilling expression of human freedom. Ironically, Curran concludes that the moral theology of *Veritatis splendor,* with its reassertion of the existence of irrevocable moral norms, is shot through with legalism (60-61, 127-28). This turns the pope's theology on its head. In *Veritatis splendor,* moral norms represent, not arbitrary rules, but rather signposts, as it were, pointing towards human fulfillment: "The commandments thus represent ... the *first necessary step on the journey towards /reedom"* (*VS* 13).[31] Saint Augustine sums up this traditional notion well:

> The beginning of freedom is to be free from crimes ... such as murder, adultery, fornication, theft, fraud, sacrilege and so forth. When once one is without these crimes (and every Christian should be without them), one begins to lift up one's head towards freedom. But this is only the beginning of freedom, not perfect freedom.[32]

Curran fears that conceptions like the pope's that link freedom and truth might lead to policies or laws that unreasonably restrict the scope of people's behavior. This is illustrated when he asks whether civil law ought to restrict abortion. Curran replies: "Some Catholics, including myself, use the religious freedom

[31] "Those who live 'by the flesh' experience God's law as a burden, and indeed as a denial or at least a restriction of their own freedom. On the other hand, those who are impelled by love and 'walk by the Spirit' (Gal 5:16), and who desire to serve others, find in God's Law the fundamental and necessary way in which to practise love as something freely chosen and freely lived out" (*VS* 18).

[32] Quotation is from Augustine, *In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus,* 41.10.

approach to give more emphasis to the benefit of the doubt favoring freedom from law, especially where there is no societal consensus against abortion" (232). It should be noted that Vatican II includes abortion among a number of "infamies" against the human person, "unspeakable crimes," actions that when permitted "poison human society" *(Gaudium et spes* 27, 51), and teaches that "from the moment of its conception life must be guarded with the greatest care" *(GS* 51). The religious liberty teaching of Vatican II simply cannot be construed as being consistent with permissive abortion laws.

V. NATURALLAW

Curran finds "seven problems in John Paul II's understanding of natural law as presented in the 1993 encyclical *Veritatis splendor"* (113). Some have already been addressed. Here we consider two closely related ones.

Curran contends that John Paul II's use of the expression "natural inclinations" in the encyclical indicates "acceptance of the Thomistic understanding of human nature as involving the inclinations that we share with all living things, with animals, and those that are proper to us as human beings." Curran claims that

> this involves a three-layered anthropology with a bottom layer of what we share with all living things,[33] a second layer of animality added on top of that, and a third layer of rationality on the top .... This ... is the ultimate reason why I judge the papal teaching to be guilty of physicalism-the identification of the physical or biological act (e.g., the act of sexual intercourse) with the moral. (113-14)

This criticism is rooted in a flawed understanding of St. Thomas. Thomas recognized that some of our "natural inclinations" are shared by all substantive entities (e.g., the inclination to preserve

[33] It is worth noting that Curran mistakenly claims that the first kind of "natural inclinations" that we have as human beings we share with other *"living* things." In the relevant Thomistic text, referred to in the next foomote, Aquinas speaks of inclinations we share "with other *substances."*

our being), that others are shared by other animals (e.g., the inclination to mate and have offspring), and that some (e.g., the inclination to know the truth about God and to live in fellowship with other persons) are unique to human beings, are "natural" only to humans.[34] But he did not think that human beings have three anthropological layers superimposed on each other, as Curran indicates. For Aquinas, and for John Paul II, human persons have *one human nature.* As Aquinas notes, these inclinations orient us to the goods perfective of us as human persons, goods such as life itself, marriage and the procreation and education of children, knowledge of the truth, action in accordance with reason, etc.[35] It is because these inclinations orient us toward the goods perfective of us that they are so important, particularly in the eyes of John Paul II (see *VS* 12, 13).

Curran also raises "the problem of physicalism as found in papal teaching, especially in the area of sexuality" (115). Papal teaching "insists" that marital intercourse must always remain open to new life, that is, remain a "natural sexual act": "one cannot interfere with the sexual act either to prevent procreation or even to encourage it. Thus the Catholic position condemns both artificial contraception and artificial insemination, even with the husband's semen" (ibid.). "From my perspective," Curran responds, "'human sexuality . . . must be seen in relation to persons .... For the good of the person or the relationship, one can interfere with the sexual faculty and its act. *The physical conjugal act cannot and should not become a moral absolute"* (116; emphasis added).

The charge of physicalism is empty. According to Curran's own description, physicalism consists in the "identification of the physical or biological act (e.g., the act of sexual intercourse) with the moral" (114). But this is precisely what John Paul II explicitly rejects. With Thomas Aquinas, he insisted that *"the morality of the human act depends primarily and fundamentally on the*

[34] Aquinas, *STh* HI, q. 94, a. 2.

[35] Ibid. See *STh* HI, q. 94, a. 3, for the good of acting in accord with reason or the moral good. On this entire matter see Finnis, *Aquinas,* 79-102.

'object' rationally chosen by the deliberate will" (*VS* 78). In an important passage, he then says:

> In order to be able to grasp the object of an act which specifies that act morally, it is therefore necessary to place oneself *in the perspective of the acting person.* The object of the act of willing is in fact a freely chosen kind of behavior. To the extent that *it* is in conformity with the order of reason, it is the cause of the goodness of the will; it perfects us morally .... By the object of a given moral act ... one cannot mean a process or an event in the merely physical order, to be assessed on the basis of its ability to bring about a given state of affairs in the outside world. Rather, that object is the proximate end of a deliberate decision which determines the act of willing on the part of the acting person. (Ibid.)

Note here the statement: "By the object of a given moral act ... *one cannot mean a process or an event in the merely physical order,* to be assessed on the basis of its ability to bring about a given state of affairs in the outside world" (emphasis added). But on Curran's own account physicalism identifies the *moral* meaning of a human act with the *physical event.* Sexual intercourse is an illuminating example. According to Curran, physicalists, among them Paul VI and John Paul II, identify "the act of intercourse with the moral" (114). Yet Paul VI explicitly denies this in *Humanae vitae,* where he notes that a conjugal act "'imposed upon one's spouse with no consideration given to the condition of the spouse or to the legitimate desires of the spouse, is not a true act of love. They understand that such an act opposes what the moral order rightly requires from spouses" (*HV* 13).

VI. A LEGALISTIC NOTION OF CONSCIENCE

Curran criticizes the pope's account of conscience for operating on a "legal model":

> There can be no doubt John Paul Il develops his understanding of conscience in terms of a legal model. ... The emphasis on a legal model in *Veritatis splendor* is to be expected because the whole thrust of the encyclical is to insist on universal and absolute moral norms .... But a legal model of conscience is not adequate. (127-28)

Curran misunderstands the papal account. Because the encyclical refers to "law" often in its discussion of conscience (e.g., "the relationship between man's freedom and God's law is most deeply lived in the 'heart' of the person, and his moral conscience" [*VS* 54]; "conscience is the application of the law to a particular case" [*VS* 59]; numerous other examples could be cited [see *VS* 54-64]), therefore he calls it a "legal model." But what Curran means by "legal" and the encyclical by "law" are quite different. Legal to Curran means legalistic. Law in the encyclical means the rationally intelligible moral order that guides human action in accord with human fulfillment. Grisez defines legalism as "thinking about moral norms as if they were simply rules to be obeyed by someone who wants to get along."[36] This characterizes Curran's conception. Curran says the pope's model is inadequate because "the most important decisions in life-marriage partner, vocation, friends, coping with limitations, shortcomings, and sufferings of human existence-are not made in response to law" (128). Law here is conceived as a rule; and there are no certain rules to follow in discerning a vocation or choosing a spouse, no easy answers, no "laws" telling me what I should do. This is undoubtedly correct.

But *Veritatis splendor* never enjoins a legalistic conformity to rules or laws. Rather, it teaches that the dignity of conscience derives from the truth. Conscience therefore has the duty to seek the truth, and to adhere to it when it is found. The truth which conscience seeks is moral truth, or the moral law, or the principles of the natural law, established by God as the rational standard for human goodness. Conscience does not establish the moral law; it rather bears witness to it (*VS* 60). It is able to bear witness to it because the moral law is intelligible. In bearing witness to the moral law the subjectivity of conscience and the objectivity of moral truth correspond. They unite in the judgment of conscience and allow the human person to shape his acts and himself in accord with truth: "the truth about moral good, as that truth is

[36] Germain Grisez and Russell Shaw, *Fulfillment in Christ: A Summary of Christian Moral Principles* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 5.

declared in the law of reason, is practically and concretely recognized by the judgment of conscience" *(VS* 61); "it is always from the truth that the dignity of conscience derives" *(VS* 63).

John Paul H's account of conscience is an elaboration of Vatican H's famous and lovely paragraph on conscience from *Gaudium et spes:*

> In the depths of his conscience man detects *a law* which he does not impose on himself, but which holds him to *obedience.* Always summoning him to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience can when necessary speak to his heart more specifically: 'do this, shun that'. For man has in his heart a *law* written by God. To obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged (cf. Rom 2:14-16). (GS 16; emphasis added)

Veritatis splendor's account (along with Vatican H's) can be called "legal" only to the extent that it conceives the natural moral law as the rationally intelligible norm directing conscience to its proper object, which is moral truth. But the account is not legalistic. The law to which it refers is not imposed from the outside but arises from the requisites of human nature and its fulfillment: "a law written on the heart." It is an ordinance @f reason enjoining conformity for the sake of human flourishing. Curran insinuates that the pope's emphasis on the normativity of truth for conscience is restrictive:

> John Paul H's penchant for the legal model goes much deeper. . . . His fundamental and all-embracing emphasis on the role of truth in the moral life means that conscience must always be seen in terms of obedience to truth .... But a legal model of conscience is not adequate. (127-28)

Does Curran mean to suggest that moral truth is not the proper object of conscience? Or that the imperative to obey the truth when it is found is restrictive? To what then is conscience accountable? Or is it accountable at all to anything outside the agent?

Curran contrasts the legal model with what he calls the "relationality-responsibility model" (128). This model, he says, is grounded in the insight that there is a "connaturality" between the

human person's natural inclinations and "the true and the good" (129).[37] Curran is vague on the nature of this connaturality but he seems to mean the following: over time, as a Christian strives to live well a life of discipleship, his subjective emotional inclinations correspond increasingly to the good; when such a person is faced with a moral decision, his feelings and emotions will incline towards what is good; should he act in accord with the object of his inclinations, such a person acts in accord with a good conscience. The testimony of that conscience (which he calls elsewhere a "true" conscience) wiH be an experience of joy and peace:

> Connaturality or congeniality grounds the criterion of the joy and peace of conscience as indicating that the conscience is true .... When a proposed course of action is placed before such a person, if the action is in accord with his or her basic thrust, one's inclination will have found its proper object. The person then experiences the joy and peace of having found what she is searching for.[38]

"How can I be sure," Curran asks, "that my conscience is not wrong?"[39] He replies: "the most adequate criterion in my judgment is the peace and joy of a good conscience";[40] or again, "the criterion of a good conscience (is) the peace and joy of conscience" (129). In other words, having come to a moral judgment on a particular course of action, if I experience peace and joy at that judgment, then I can be sure I have a good and true conscience. Is there a danger that in appealing to the subjectivity of feelings and emotions to establish the objective veracity of moral judgments our conclusions will be subject to the same inconsistencies to which human emotions are subject? "Yes," Curran replies, "there is the danger of abusing the criterion, but authentic subjectivity and tme objectivity coincide" (ibid.).

[37] He develops the model in Charles Curran, "Conscience in the Light of the Catholic Moral Tradition," in *Conscience,* ed. Charles E. Curran (New York: Paulist Press, 2004), 19.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid., 18,

[40] Ibid.

Veritatis splendor's concern is more serious than Curran's. Criticizing "radically subjectivistic" conceptions which "exalt freedom to such an extent that it becomes an absolute," the encyclical states "in this way *the inescapable claims of truth disappear,* yielding their place to a criterion of sincerity, authenticity and 'being at peace with oneself'" (*VS* 32; emphasis added).

VII. A "THEOLOGY OF THE BODY" IRRELEVANT TO MANY BODIES

Curran claims that John Paul H's "theology of the body"

> cannot serve as a theology for all bodies .... what the pope develops in terms of the nuptial meaning of the body really does not apply to people who are single or those who are widows or widowers .... Implicitly, John Paul II's theology of the body maintains that heterosexual marriage is the only context of human sexuality. (168)

He says that John Paul II so emphasizes concupiscence and lust that he ignores the fact that "sexual passion is basically a good that is often disturbed by sin. . . . The impression given by *The Theology of the Body* is that passion and sexual pleasure are totally suspect and in need of control. The pope does not seem to acknowledge a fundamental goodness about sexuality" (171). "These talks for all practical purposes ignore the positive aspect of sexual pleasure ... [which] itself is a good .... The failure to develop the proper role of sexual pleasure seems to be associated with a fear of such pleasure and a tendency to see it primarily in a negative way" (172).

Curran chose not to consider pre-papal works such as *Love and Responsibility.* However, we think it pertinent to cite some passages from that work. In it Karol Wojtyla Gohn Paul II) affirms that "sensuality" is a response to the person as a "potential object of enjoyment" and thus has a "consumer orientation." [41] Nonetheless, he emphasizes that sensuality is "a sort of raw material for true, conjugal love," and he insists that "an exuberant

[41] Karol Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility,* trans. H. Willetts (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1981), 105.

and readily roused sensuality is the stuff from which a rich-if difficult-personal life may be made."[42]

It is improbable that the same person who wrote these lines could have the negative attitude toward human sexuality, sexual passion, and sexual pleasure that Curran attributes to John Paul II as author of the addresses on the "theology of the body." It appears that Curran failed to read carefully the audiences making up the theology of the body. In addresses 47 and 48, entitled, in English, "'Eros' and 'Ethos' Meet and Bear Fruit in the Human Heart" and "Spontaneity: The Mature Result of Conscience," John Paul II has much to say about the goodness of sexual passion.[43] Thus he writes:

> "Eros" must not be confused with lust. For Plato it "represents the interior force that drags man toward everything good, true, and beautiful" [47.2]. It refers also to the natural and hence "good" desire experienced in the attraction of men for women and vice versa. However "erotic" desire is often identified with lust [47.3]. A proper interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount, taking into account the multiple meanings of "eros," allows room "for that ethos, for those ethical and indirectly even theological contents which, in the course of our analyses, have been seen from Christ's appeal to the human "heart" [47.4]. Christ's appeal is "the ethos of redemption. The call to what is true, good, and beautiful ["eros" in the Platonic sense] means, at the same time, in the ethos of redemption, the necessity of overcoming what is derived from lust in its three forms .... H the words of Mathew 5.27-28 represent this call, then they mean that, in the erotic sphere, "eros" and "ethos" do not differ from each other, are not opposed to each other, but are called to meet in the human heart, and in this meeting to bear fruit. [47.5]

John Paul II thus recognizes that the sexual desire of man for woman and vice versa is itself something good, although "lust," sinful desire, is not. He explicitly recognizes that sexual desire can have a "noble" fulfillment, in other words, a joyful, pleasurable,

•2 Ibid, 108-9.

H In sections VII and VIII of this article the text of John Paul II's "Theology of the Body" employed is that found in *The Original Unity of Man and Woman: Catechesis on Genesis* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1982); and in *Blessed Are the Pure of Heart: Catechesis on the Sermon on the Mount and Writings of St. Paul* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1983). This text is preferred because it provides the paragraph numbers for each address.

sinless sexual union between husband and wife in the conjugal act. He declares:

Ethos must become the "constituent form" of eros. Ethos is in no way hostile to "spontaneity." The person who accepts the ethos of Matthew 5.27-28 "must know that he is called *to full and mature spontaneity* of the relations that spring from the perennial attraction of masculinity and femininity. This very spontaneity is the gradual fruit of the discernment of the impulses of one's own heart" [48.2]. "This discernment ... has an essential relationship with spontaneity ... *a noble gratification is one thing, while sexual desire is another; when sexual desire is linked with a noble gratification, it differs from desire pure and simple"* [48.4; emphasis added]. Only by self-control can man attain "that deeper and more mature spontaneity with which his 'heart,' mastering his instincts, rediscovers the spiritual beauty of the sign constituted by the human body in its masculinity and femininity" [48.5].

VIII. SEXUAL COMPLEMENTARITY

The claim that the pope's understanding of sexual complementarity "means that men and women who are not married are not complete and lack something about their humanity" (192-93) is rooted in Curran's understanding of sexual complementarity as a "fractional" complementarity, as if a male person or a female person is only one-half a full human being and becomes "whole" only in some kind of androgynous union.[44] For John Paul II, the sexual complementarity between man and woman is integral and asymmetrical. In his thought man and woman are gifts to each other; they are called to "give" and "receive" each other, but each does so in complementary and asymmetrical ways.

In a remarkable passage concerned with the way in which man and woman "give" and "receive" each other, the Holy Father said:

If the woman, in the mystery of creation, is the one who was 'given' to the man, the latter, on his part, in receiving her as a gift in the full truth of her person and

[44] On this point see Sr. Prudence Allen, "Integral Sexual Complementarity and the Theology of Communion," *Communio: International Catholic Review* 17 (1990), an essay commenting on John Paul II's "theology of the body."

> femininity, thereby enriches her, and at the same time he, too, is enriched. The man is enriched not only through her, who gives him her own person and femininity, but also through the gift of himself. The man's giving of himself, in response to that of the woman, is an enrichment of himself. In fact, *there is in it,* as it were, *the specificessence ofhis masculinity, which, through the reality ofthe body and ofsex, reaches the deep recesses of the "possession of self.,, thanks to which he is capable both ofgiving himself and ofreceiving the other's gift.* The man, therefore, not only accepts the gift, but at the same time is received as a gift by the woman, in the revelation of the interior spiritual essence of his masculinity, together with the whole truth of his body and sex.... Subsequently, this acceptance, in which the man finds himself again through the "sincere gift of himself," becomes in him the source of a new and deeper enrichment of the woman. The exchange is mutual, and in it the reciprocal effects of the "sincere gift" and of the "finding oneself again," are revealed and grow. ("The Theology of the Body," 17.6; emphasis added)

John Paul H's position here harmonizes with the view taken by Robert Joyce concerning the complementarity in the way men and women "give and receive" each other. According to Joyce, both the man and the woman are called both to give and to receive, but the man is the one who emphatically *gives in a receiving way,* whereas the woman is the one who emphatically *receives in a giving way.*[45] This is beautifully illustrated in the conjugal act. In it the man-person, precisely because of his complementary sexuality, is able personally to enter into the body-person of his wife, *giving himself* to her and in doing so *receiving her.* Moreover, his wife, precisely because of her complementary sexuality, is uniquely able *to receive his body-person into her body* and in doing so *to give herself to him.*

That the woman is called on to "receive in a giving way" and that the man is summoned to "give in a receiving way" is also illustrated in the "gift" of new human life. John Paul II noted that new life is entrusted "to each and every other human being." But

[45] See Robert Joyce, *Human Sexual Ecology: A Philosophy and Ethics ofMan and Woman* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1980), 67-71; see also William E. May, "Marriage and the Complementarity of Male and Female," *Anthropotes: Rivista di Studi sulla Personae la Famiglia* 8, no. 1 Gune 1992): 41-60. A shorter version of this essay was published as chapter 2 of May's *Marriage: The Rock on Which the Family Is Baseti* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1995), 39-66, at 50-54.

it is entrusted "in a special way to woman, precisely because the woman in virtue of her special experience of motherhood is seen to have a specific sensitivity towards the human person and all that constitutes the individual's true welfare, beginning with the fundamental value of life."[46] Indeed, he declared:

Motherhood involves a special communion with the mystery of life as it develops in the woman's womb. The mother is filled with wonder at this mystery of life and "understands" with unique intuition what is happening inside her. In the light of the "beginning," the mother accepts and loves as a person the child she is carrying in her womb. This unique contact with the new human being developing within her gives rise to an attitude toward human beings-not only towards her own child, but every human being-which profoundly marks the woman's personality. It is commonly thought that women are more capable than men of paying attention to another person and that motherhood develops this predisposition even more. The man--even with all his sharing in parenthood-always remains "outside" the process of pregnancy and the baby's birth; in many ways he has to *learn* his own *"fatherhood,, from the mother*. ... the mother's contribution is decisive in laying the foundation for a new human personality. [47]

In other words the woman is disposed to receive her husband and others in a giving way. The husband-father, to exercise his fatherhood, must give himself in a receiving way, something he learns from the wife-mother, to his child, just as he is summoned to give himself in a receiving way to his wife in the conjugal act.

CONCLUSION

We hope that in these pages we have succeeded in showing how false are major criticisms Charles Curran levels against the moral thought of John Paul IL Other criticisms he levels in his book can likewise be shown to be gratuitous and rooted in a

[46] Pope John Paul II, *Christifideles laici* 51. See also *Mulieris dignitatem* 30: "The moral and spiritual strength of a woman is joined to her awareness that *God entrusts the human being to her in a specialway.* Of course, God entrusts every human being to each and every other human being. But this entrusting concerns women in a special way-precisely because of their femininity-and this in a particular way determines their vocation."

[47] Pope John Paul II, *Mulieris dignitatem* 18.

profound failure to read carefully the texts he criticizes and also to a failure on his part even to consider criticisms his views have met from other theologians on such issues as physicalism and historicism.

BOOK REVIEWS

Trinity in Aquinas. By GILLES EMERY, 0.P. Ypsilanti, Mich.: Sapientia Press, 2003. Pp. xxix + 361. $44.95 (cloth). ISBN 0-9706106-9-6.

According to its author, Gilles Emery-Swiss Dominican priest and professor of theology at the University of *Fribourg-Trinity in Aquinas* does not supply a comprehensive treatment of Aquinas's Trinitarian doctrine but seeks to present some of its major themes. The book comprises seven chapters, six of which were written previously as independent studies, and together they provide a trusty guide into the heart of Thomas's often difficult Trinitarian theology, situating it in its medieval milieu and illumining its central themes and insights from various perspectives.

The book is a combination of historical and speculative theology, offering us a colorful palette ofThomas's doctrinal sources and contemporary interlocutors while hewing closely to the framework and terminology of the master's own thinking about the Trinity. Emery displays expert knowledge of the medieval environment in which Thomas's thought finds its home, and his understanding of Aquinas's Trinitarian themes is nuanced and correct; the reader may feel secure under the guidance of one who knows every contour of the land he has chosen to survey. Topically, the book distills itself into four main areas of inquiry: it begins with an overview of the threeness and oneness of God in medieval Scholasticism; chapters 2-4 and 7 discuss and compare Thomas's Trinitarian doctrine in the commentary on the *Sentences,* the *Summa contra Gentiles,* the *Summa Theologiae,* and the commentary on St. John's gospel; chapter 6 shows why Aquinas deems it necessary to hold that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father; and chapter 5 concerns itself with the contemporary debate about whether Aquinas's treatise on God is essentialist or personalist.

Latin Scholasticism's investigation of plurality within God takes place in an ambience of strict monotheism, and its treatment of the relationship between God's threeness and oneness coalesces into two discussions. The first gauges the epistemological connection between our knowledge of God's oneness and our awareness of God's threeness. Anselm had transmitted to the medieval Scholastics the expectation of finding certain "necessary reasons" which would discover the threeness in the oneness: for Richard of St. Victor and Bonaventure, God's charity and God's goodness, respectively, are those facets of God's

oneness that necessarily plurify into threeness. Aquinas takes a more modest, "apologetic" tack: although no necessary reasons can conclusively affirm the Trinity, reason under the guidance of faith can disprove any arguments advanced against belief in the Trinity. The second discussion explores the notions of relation and person as the best ways to articulate the divine plurality and also synthesize that plurality with the divine oneness. Trinitarian plurality exercises a creative causality and, antithetical as it may be to certain monist strains of Greek philosophy, even bestows upon created plurality the exalted status of a transcendental.

Thomas's three great theological syntheses hold that natural reason cannot conclusively know the Trinity, but only God's unity of being. There can be no "necessary theological reasons" allowing one to deduce the Trinity from the fecundity of the divine being, although human understanding can help to make the Trinity "reasonably thinkable." These syntheses also ground God's plurality in a theory of relation, though the Trinitarian theology of the *Summa contra Gentiles* does not investigate the meaning of the word *person* (nor does the commentary on John) or use *hypostasi$* at all. The *Summa Theologiae* is clearest and most insightful about Thomas's relational understanding of the divine persons: the inner divine processions of understanding and loving are the foundations of the mutual divine relations, and these relations, as subsisting, *are* the three divine persons, who are endowed with the three defining marks of personhood: individuality, subsistence, and understanding. On the one hand, Thomas protects a strict Trinitarian monotheism by proving that the divine essence, relations, and persons are all identical in reality; on the other hand, he upholds faith in the Trinity by showing that the divine relations are really distinct vis-a-vis one another.

According to Emery, Aquinas avoids any prerelational conception of the Father or of any other divine person. Thus, he disagrees with Bonaventure about how to understand the doctrine of the Father's innascibility, which Bonaventure sees as a positive nucleus tending to constitute the Father as a divine person prior to any relation to the Son. Aquinas understands the Father's innascibility only negatively, as a "not-being-begotten." In order to comprehend the Son, he uses the concept of the word or interior mental concept (the commentary on John especially stresses the Son as God's Word), which, unlike his contemporaries according to Emery, he distinguishes from the intelligible species by which the intellect is first informed through abstractive cognition. There is a difference in emphasis between the *Sentences,* the *Summa contra Gentiles,* and the *Summa Theologiae* as to how they view the Holy Spirit: while the pneumatology of the first focuses on the Holy Spirit as a subsisting act of love proceeding in God as a mutual bond between Father and Son, the latter two see the Holy Spirit as the fruit of the Father and Son's act of love, that is, as the impression, surge, or dynamic impulse that comes to pass in the loving will of the Father and the Son.

Although building in the *Sentences* on the contributions of his predecessors Albert the Great and Bonaventure, Aquinas is nevertheless entirely original in his systematic use of the thesis, unparalleled in the commentaries of the other two,

that the Trinitarian processions exercise-at the nexus of exemplary, efficient, and final causality-a deep influence over creation: "processiones personarum aeternae sunt causa et ratio productionis creaturarum" (I *Sent.,* d. 14, q. 1, a. 1). Paying special attention to the personal dimension of divine actions outside of God, Aquinas states that the Trinitarian processions cause the multitude of creatures to be distinct both from each other and from their Creator: "ex processione personarum distinctarum causatur omnis creaturarum processio et multiplicatio" (I *Sent.,* d. 26, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2).

Closest in style to the *Summa contra Gentiles,* the commentary on John is for Emery a clear testament to the biblical and patristic bases of Thomas's Trinitarian theology. Emery refers to this commentary to show that Thomas's Trinitarian theology combines biblical exegesis and speculative reflection into a complex unity, although Thomas's style of speculative biblical exegesis, however much Emery tries to justify it, often looks more like eisegesis than exegesis to contemporary theologians and biblical exegetes. He also uses the commentary on John to show that Thomas, *pace* his critics, does indeed possess a rich understanding of the economic Trinity. Emery argues, moreover, that Thomas's economic Trinity does not spontaneously arise from his reading of the Bible but is rather the third and last stage of a speculative Trinitarian theology, which begins with the scriptural revelation of the Trinity through the economy of salvation and progresses in its second stage to a reflection on the immanent Trinity.

Emery has written a rich, detailed, and well-balanced chapter on Aquinas's attempt to show that the *filioque's* inclusion in the creed of the Roman Catholic Church is consonant with the faith expressed by the Scriptures, the patristic writers, and the early Church councils. Although Aquinas has no trouble accepting the Cappadocian formulations (through Augustine's Latin) that the Holy Spirit proceeds *principaliter* from the Father (because of the Father's *auctoritas* within the Trinity), and *per {ilium,* he still argues that it is necessary to hold that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. He lines up an impressive array of scriptural texts which speak of the Son sending the Spirit, but his explaining away of the Greek-leaning John 15:26 ("the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father") is weak and unconvincing. He also lays before us an extensive Latin patristic dossier in favor of the *filioque,* and even does some investigation of the Greek dossier, but he has a limited understanding of Cappadocian and Byzantine Trinitarian theology, and does not really grasp that, for the orthodox East, *ekporeusis(processio)* is a term reserved for the Father's notional acts within the Trinity. Moreover, to the biblical, patristic, and historical records, Thomas adds the considerable weight of his speculative Trinitarian theology. He first eliminates all forms of distinction between the divine persons (including the Cappadocian diversity of origin from the Father) except the distinction based on relative opposition, and then argues that the only way there can be more than one set of mutually opposed relations within the Trinity is if the Holy Spirit proceeds simultaneously from the Father and the Son. Indeed, he cannot really comprehend, according to his Latin medieval logic,

how the Greeks can believe in a relational and personal Trinity and yet not grasp the necessity of the *filioque* to protect and bolster that faith. For Emery, what Aquinas's treatment shows us is that the Roman Catholic Church cannot without great loss simply jettison all that is involved in the affirmation of the *filioque,* no matter what happens to the official creedal status of the *filioque* in the future.

Responding to the wave of criticism from Rabner and Kasper and many others, Emery devotes a chapter to the question of whether Aquinas's treatise on God is essentialistic or personalistic. His answer is that it contains both elements, and that the real issue is how well the essentialistic and personalistic elements are integrated together, and in what order they appear in the treatise. The original question can be broken down into two others: Does Aquinas's use of Augustine's "psychological" analogies for the Trinity manage to posit in God some properly personal acts that go beyond the acts of the divine essence? And does the fact that Aquinas discusses the one God before the triune God mean that his overall treatise on God is essentialistic?

As to the first question, Emery shows that for Thomas there can be no derivation of divine persons from an essential divine act, and that even if he explains the divine processions of the second and third persons by reference to acts of the divine mind and will, which belong to God's essence, the resulting names of the divine persons and our understanding of them (e.g., Word and Love), *must* be taken personally and not essentially. In other words, even if Thomas must include the divine essence whenever he considers the Trinity's processions and notional acts-after all, these are identical to the divine essence-it is still true that the divine relations and persons must be understood personally and not essentially.

As to the second question, Emery correctly emphasizes that Aquinas's whole treatise on God is not to be seen as a treatise *De Deo trino* tacked on to a treatise *De Deo uno,* but that the whole treatment concerns the one and only triune God, but from differing perspectives. Thomas is following a long tradition in using the two perspectives to discuss the triune God, one which goes back to Basil of Caesarea, who in order to challenge the Arian Eunomius distinguished between what is commonly held by all three persons because of their common divinity and what properly distinguishes them one from the other. Acutely conscious of the distinction between the proper and the common in God, Thomas realizes it is always necessary to bring in the double perspective of the common divine essence and the proper personal relations if one wants to give a full account of the Church's Trinitarian faith. It is also eminently clear that in questions 27-43 of the *Prima pars,* where the pedagogical order progresses from processions to relations to persons, he is totally oriented toward what is personal in God.

Would not Thomas have better emphasized the personalism of his Trinitarian theology, as his critics have asserted, if he had begun his treatise on God with the person of the Father and not with the essence of the one God? Emery realizes there are benefits to both approaches but offers two reasons why Aquinas chose the order of presentation he did. First, there is the epistemological principle that one should treat of what is common before one treats of what is proper. The

second and deeper reason is that to begin the treatise on God with the person of the Father would be to treat the Father in an extensive manner before having grasped the Father in his relation to the Son, which would be tantamount to thinking about the person of the Father prerelationally. In Emery's eyes, then, since Thomas's theology of God is resolutely relational, it is only fitting that he should begin his treatise on God with the one divine essence.

Emery's second reason is quite ingenious and turns the tables on Thomas's critics, though it is perhaps a tad too ingenious to argue that in order to emphasize God as personal one should begin with God as essential. I would like to recommend a third possible reason for Thomas's order of presentation, which as a Christian monotheist he may have felt congenitally though he never adverts to it explicitly: from the perspective of a Christian religion that grew out of a revealed Jewish monotheism, it would appear quite fitting that a speculative treatment of God should mirror the historical course of revelation about that God. The revelation of monotheism had to come first, with good reason, for to think about Trinity before monotheism is firmly entrenched in the human mind would almost certainly end up inviting in the multiple divinities of polytheism. Thomas has to show that the confession of the Trinity is the Christian form of monotheism, and the best way to do this is to start off with the one God and then introduce the divine subsistent relations as both identical with the one God and distinct from one another. From this viewpoint, Aquinas's order of presentation turns out to be more historically astute than his historical-minded critics have imagined.

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Michel de Montaigne: Accidental Philosopher. By ANN HARTLE. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Pp. 296. $60.00 (cloth). ISBN 0-521-82168-1.

Howsoever great Montaigne's standing as a man of letters, he occupies a negligible place in most standard "histories" of philosophy. Even as compared with the other philosophers of his age-that the historians should name it the "Renaissance" provides as clear an indication as any to just how derivative a group of thinkers they suppose them to be-the author of the *Essays* is generally ranked in the second tier. While many of his contemporaries dreamed of the rebirth of a "Platonism" of one form or another, he seemed to proselytize for one of the lesser schools of philosophical antiquity-scholarly opinions vary as to whether his ultimate allegiances were to Stoicism, Epicureanism, or

skepticism- which all have in common, despite or because of the differences between them, the propensity to reduce philosophy to a moral doctrine. Or if the attempt is not made to reconcile Montaigne's endless borrowings from ancient writers of every stripe by alleging some sort of development on his part, they are taken as proof of an eclecticism lacking all rigor or consistency. It is generally agreed, in any case, that he is not a philosopher in the strict or highest sense of the word, notwithstanding his exceptional ability to wield a pen.

In *Michel de Montaigne: Accidental Philosopher,* Ann Hartle seeks to set straight this piece of the record. On her view, Montaigne was a philosopher of the very greatest stature, whose writing "takes up the most philosophical questions in a profoundly original, comprehensive, and coherent way" (1). Her thesis should make her book of interest to any philosophically inclined reader, and especially to those who desire better to grasp the great temporal or rather argumentative fault lines of philosophy's course through history. It ought also to earn for the book the particular attention of Thomists and other friends of high Scholasticism, who better than most ought to know how much can be learned about one's friends from their foes. For whatever else we might say about Montaigne the philosopher, he has few rivals in the breadth and depth of his opposition to medieval philosophical theology, which he had experienced at fairly close quarters, having published, at his father's behest, a translation of *Theologia naturalis sive liber creaturarum* by Raymond of Sabunde, a deservedly obscure Spanish Scholastic. Hartle believes that Montaigne's philosophy continues to merit serious consideration; but given her own very real sympathies for Christian Aristotelianism, as also for the school of Plato, she is well equipped to lead into the *Essays* many who will have hitherto been inclined to leave them behind.

The title of her book is drawn from a statement that appears, as if in passing, in what is by far the longest and easily the best known of the essays, "The Apology of Raymond Sebond," wherein Montaigne makes clear how little he really shares with the theologian whom he had translated some dozen years earlier (the first edition of the *Essays* appeared in 1580; more or less the definitive edition appeared in 1595, three years after his death). Roughly half way through that essay, he purports to discover himself, by happenstance and after the fact, as a "new figure: a philosopher unpremeditated and accidental." Hartle, then, takes the author at his word. *Michel de Montaigne: Accidental Philosopher* attempts to demonstrate that Montaigne is not really a "Renaissance" philosopher at all, that he affords us a dramatically new understanding of philosophy and the philosopher. Just how new, though, is Hartle's Montaigne?

The jibes against the schoolmen that are scattered throughout the *Essays* are not of themselves especially memorable; much worse was written by others in the century and a half or more during which Christian Aristotelianism was the philosophical stalking horse of choice; but those barbs do not really begin to convey the extent of his quarrel with Scholasticism, signs of which may be found at every level of his work. Far more telling in this regard is his astonishing

announcement, in the last of his essays, that study of himself constitutes both his "metaphysics" and his "physics." And lest we be tempted to construe the point in an unduly spiritual way, Montaigne devotes a great deal of the concluding essay to a consideration of his various bodily functions, which are discussed with a candor that is poles apart from the *modus loquendi formalissimus* perfected by St. Thomas Aquinas. It is to Hartle's great credit that she does not treat such passages as mere effrontery. By entertaining the possibility that they actually mean what they seem to say, she is led to argue in the second and the sixth of the book's nine chapters that Montaigne does not so much abandon traditional metaphysics as "bend" and "stretch" its categories.

The direction of his conceptual manipulations is, as she readily allows, unilaterally downward (29, 40). She holds, however, that notwithstanding his drastic lowering or hobbling (61) of the old metaphysical standards, Montaigne is not a genuinely "modern" philosopher. In his constant debunking of earlier positions, as in the repeated claims he makes to his own originality, he surely bears some kinship to Machiavelli, Bacon, Descartes, and Hobbes, none of whom ever balked in his efforts to put philosophy on a lower but putatively more solid footing than it had enjoyed in either antiquity or the Mi.ddle Ages, at calling attention along the way to his virtues as an innovator. What distinguishes Montaigne from the early modern thinkers, Hartle claims, is that his break with medieval philosophy and theology is not for the sake of rule over human affairs by an allegedly autonomous "reason," a quasi-political ambition that she takes to be the defining feature of modern philosophy as such (1, 8, 77, and 217-39). Otherwise stated, although her Montaigne does have in view a certain "reformation" not only of philosophy but of human affairs, he is not at all a "progressive" thinker. But if his critique of Scholastic metaphysics does not principally look forward, must we not conclude that he is an advocate of a philosophical "Renaissance" after all?

Certainly he cannot rightly be deemed a "skeptic" in the traditional sense. If ancient skepticism is defined by the denial that knowledge of the nature of things is accessible, by the counsel on the basis of that denial to suspend aH judgment in one's ongoing engagement with the world, by the desire fueled by that suspension to attain to a state of imperturbability, and, as a consequence of all three premises, by the readiness to accept the laws and customs of one's place at face value, then, Hartle observes, Montaigne was no skeptic (14-15). Although his diffidence about our prospects for kno11vingcertain kinds of things can hardly be denied, he manifests throughout the *Essays* a very high degree of confidence in his ability to distinguish what is good by nature from what is not. Furthermore, his ultimate "end or goal" cannot be imperturbability or indifference, for he "insists on his changeability and the consistency that he does display is not dependent on his being unaffected by the accidents of life" (16). And while he is respectful of the common *moeurs* of his country, he does not blindly submit to them (104-5), because he has reason to believe that they contain but thereby also veil truths that are not commonly acknowledged (210-17). In general, Montaigne deems the skeptic's impassibility to be excessively

high flown or unrealistic, and for this and other reasons he cannot really be counted a Stoic either, or even an Epicurean for that matter, as Hartle notes astutely (27-28, 57-58, 94-97,116, 196).

Our author also makes clear that in the measure that the ancient philosophers were given to voicing moral exhortations or encomia, Montaigne wants little or no part of them. Having argued, in the first part of the book, that the ontological ground so to speak of the "accident" that is his philosophical existence is "contingency," which she terms "the most fundamental category" of his "metaphysics" (172; cf. 7, 38, 123, 157-59), she goes on in her final three chapters to characterize the stance he assumes and perhaps also recommends in the face of the world's, and his, radical contingency. She aptly summarizes this stance, following Montaigne himself, as a combination of the laughter of Democritus and the compassion of Heraclitus, with fellow feeling tempering Democritean scorn, and guffaws ultimately prevailing over sobs (172). More elaborately stated, his "magnanimity without pride" joins a keen appreciation for the fragility of every human life to an exalted sense of his independence, a rare self-detachment to an even rarer self-affection, a preference for the "idleness" of private life to an extraordinary willingness to "go public" in writing, a shameless indifference to ordinary moral sensibilities to an uncompromising defense of the existing social order.

Montaigne's reconfiguration of virtue is paradoxical in numerous ways, as Hartle indicates, and one must agree with her that those paradoxes point to the extent to which Montaigne diverges from most traditional conceptions of virtue. That is not to say, however, that his "moral philosophy" is entirely without ancient precedent, for many, though of course not all (see 176, 227), of the characteristics just mentioned call the Platonic Socrates to mind. This is scarcely surprising, given his admiration for the Athenian philosopher, whom he describes as "the most perfect soul that has come to [his] knowledge." To be fair to Hartle, though, it is not her view that Montaigne's rejection of Scholasticism means to effect a complete break with the philosophical tradition. It would be more accurate to say that he "carries the tradition forward by deepening it" (2). She grants, accordingly, that there are significant affinities between Socratic dialectic and Montaigne's rendering of the relation between philosophy and prephilosophical life (see especially chap. 4). And this brings us to the most novel feature of her interpretation of the *Essays,* or rather, the very heart of it.

Hartle's is a decidedly Christian reading of Montaigne. It is Christian in the sense that she interprets his thought in the very best light available to her, and thus with a keen desire to put it to the test, not so much for the sake of refuting his errors as in order to secure whatever is good in it. Yet it is also Christian in the sense that she regards the *Essays* as itself the expression of a thoroughgoing Catholic piety or "outlook" (123). That Montaigne regards his philosophizing as an "accidental" consequence of the world's "contingency" is entirely of a piece, she believes, with his deepest conviction, namely, that the world is created by God *ex nihilo.* The Christian doctrine of creation illumines every aspect of his philosophy, as she understands it.

Of course, many readers take Montaigne to be a "fideist," but Hartle is not one of them. To the contrary, she argues-quite convincingly I think-that it staggers all belief to hold that such a compulsively reflective writer could "deliberately keep himself from thinking about the truths that are most important to him" (136), to say nothing of the internal incoherence that infects every fideistic "faith" (see 266 n. 26). She dispatches a second common interpretation of Montaigne's relation to Christian belief in an analogous fashion. To those who ascribe a "mild" or "tepid" religiosity to the author of the *Essays,* Hartle bluntly but reasonably counters that no "serious" human being can be so indifferent as to "leave the most important questions of human life unexamined" (135). Montaigne is worth reading only on the supposition that he is not a thoroughly shallow pate. By far the most venerable approach to the question of his piety is to take it with a grain of salt. This appears to have been the view of the *libertins erudits,* so called, who together constituted the closest approximation to a school of Montaigne (Charron, La Mothe le Vayer, Naude, and others). But it was also the view of quite another sort of reader entirely, namely, Pascal, who is on record as saying that "for those who have any inclination to impiety or vice Montaigne is absolutely pernicious" *(Entretien avec* M. *de Saez),* though he himself never hesitated to acknowledge his debts to him. Hartle is perfectly aware of this approach to the *Essays* (134-36, 233-34), and grants that it enjoys some textual support, for example, "the highly ambiguous character of the 'defense' of natural theology found in the 'Apology"' and his open acknowledgment of "the tradition of the 'noble lie'" (134), although one might also mention, among other things, the numerous assertions throughout the work that are on their face at odds with Christian orthodoxy. She argues, all the same, that the phenomena are better saved if we treat him as no more but also no less than a Christian philosopher. How she elaborates this thesis defies easy summary for, as indicated, it informs the book's every page. It is especially prominent, however, in the fifth chapter's account of "the dialectic" and "the harmony" of faith and reason in the "Apology," and in the ninth and final chapter, wherein Hartle claims that the practical political implication of Montaigne's philosophizing is a "Christian republic."

One need not be persuaded by Hartle's attempt to reconcile Montaigne's reason to Christian faith to be grateful to her on that account. Those who construe his understanding of Christianity exclusively in function of his "prudence" are easily tempted to reduce him, in effect, to a pamphleteer of unbelief, albeit a long-winded one. Hartle never makes that mistake. Montaigne's one hundred and seven essays add up to what is undoubtedly one of the most perplexing books ever written. In its parts and as a whole *Michel de Montaigne: Accidental Philosopher* is faithful to the insight that persistence in perplexity is a sign, or *the* sign, of philosophical activity. *H* its leading thesis should give rise to disputation, that can hardly be counted a stroke against it, especially if it moves the reader to reexamine for himself Montaigne's own words, the questions they pose, and the answers they attempt.

It should be noted, by way of conclusion, that Hartle's scholarship is a model of its kind. Her footnotes afford the reader a clear, synthetic, and fair-minded survey of an impressively large sample of a voluminous secondary literature.

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Being Reconciled: Ontology and Pardon. By JOHN MILBANK. London and New York: Routledge, 2003. Pp. 232. $24.95 (paper). ISBN 0-415-30525-X.

From a certain theological perspective, anything that exists, if is to be properly and completely understood, ought to be conceived as a *gift.* John Milbank's new book is the first in a series of writings designed to articulate such a perspective. At the same time, he identifies it as a sequel to the collection of essays published in 1997 as *The Word Made Strange.* The present volume guides its readers on an intellectual journey across a wide theological terrain: creation and fall, Incarnation and atonement, sin and grace, Church and Spirit are all among the topics explored here in relation to the core set of insights being developed in the book. The result is a work that is both significant in scope and penetrating in its analysis, an important contribution to contemporary theological conversation.

The focus of Milbank's concern is *reconciliation* or "for-giveness"-not primarily with the original act of giving, bur rather, "with the restoration of a refused and ruptured gift" (xi). Importantly, Milbank's God is one who "is eternally for-giving as well as giving," a claim that he will press without sacrificing the priority of God's goodness over evil (xii). Nevertheless, it is with an extended meditation on evil that the book begins, followed immediately by a chapter portraying evil as a form of violence. Milbank's first argument is a critique of the theory of "radical evil" which he traces to its origins in Kant's philosophy. Rather than conceiving of evil as something positive, Milbank defends a traditional Augustinian perspective on evil as privation, as lacking "any positive foothold in being" (1).

This argument is by no means a simple one, nor is it easily summarized Milbank's contention that "evil as positive is evil's own fondest illusion" (22} is buttressed by a subtle analysis of the nature of volition, one that contrasts a Kantian view of the will as "self-bound" and of freedom as something "given" with the preferred Augustinian view of freedom as a gift of grace, and of the will as something that one cannot truly "possess." The upshot of this analysis is Milbank's remarkable conclusion that evil is itself "radically without cause," thus

inexplicable, so that "there has never been for theologians a 'problem of evil'" (18). That is to say, Milbank links the problem of evil to its roots in modern philosophy, "roughly, the time of Leibniz," much as he perceives the theory of radical evil as being a modern, Kantian invention. Augustine and the medieval theologians were thoroughly innocent of such misconceptions, although the fall into modernity, on Milbank's account, begins already with Duns Scotus, more precisely with a "post-Scotist univocity of Being." From such a perspective, "if the finite equally *is,* as much as the infinite, then even the lacking that is evil equally *is,* along with the good," and thus its existence must be accounted for in terms of the original purpose of creation.

This last argument, consistent with Milbank's treatment of Scotism elsewhere, seems to me to be a caricature and dangerously misleading. It seems equally a caricature of modern "liberalism" to identify it as a nascent form of totalitarianism, as the author does in the final pages of the chapter. (I tend to agree with Jeffrey Stout, in his recent book on *Democracy & Tradition,* that the continued use of the term "liberalism" by contemporary theorists may actually be blocking the road to inquiry.) His insistence that the modern theory of evil is not only wrong-headed but also partially responsible "for the modern actuality of evil" (4) is overkill, not necessary in order for him to expose that theory as problematic. Nevertheless, the chapter does supply a forceful argument for conceiving of evil as essentially privative; evil is substantively, albeit "not purely and simply," nothing (see 213 n. 14).

Milbank regards evil and violence as "convertible but not identical: exactly like a couple of malign transcendentals" (28). For the privation theorist, peace is a positive reality, not the mere absence of conflict. Evil not only disturbs the peace but also conceals the Good. Violence is *really* violence, in Milbank's view, only to the extent that it removes or destroys something good, that is, only to the extent that it is evil. Consequently, an act cannot simply appear as violent but must be interpreted or diagnosed as such; not every use of force will constitute an act of violence. Indeed, evil insofar as it is "predatory upon the positive" ought to be opposed with force. And the pacifist who passively gazes on violence without intervening ought also to be judged as violent.

Evil and violence are ultimately to be overcome by forgiveness, conceived not as "negative gesture" but as "positive gift," not as something essentially human but as divine (50). On Milbank's account, forgiveness is as positive as evil is negative; it is not the mere removal of a debt, but an actual gift given *for* someone, a "for-giving" moved by charity and with the aim of reconciliation. Augustine's meditations on time and memory are central to that account. In order for any evil to be forgiven, whatever is deficient in the past must be "revised out of existence" (54). The past as remembered can be redeemed, much as the meaning of a musical note can be shaped by its relationship to other notes that fall later in a sequence. Meaning is a relationship between events rather than the property of some discrete event isolated in the past. Now while this work of redemption is the gift of an "infinite eternal memory" (55), it must somehow be

mediated to us, thus the significance of the Incarnation as "the prime paradigm for positive forgiveness" (60).

In his chapter on the Incarnation, Milbank once again identifies Duns Scotus as a favorite target of criticism. The essential link between Incarnation and forgiveness in Thomism is severed by Scotus, for whom Christ represents the "ontological completion of the Creation" (67). Post-Scotus, forgiveness is conceived increasingly as something negative, in legalistic terms, as the removal of a debt, rather than the "sustained giving of the original gift despite its refusal" through sin (68). It is interesting to note that Hans Urs von Balthasar, while also suspicious of the Scotistic doctrine of the univocity of being, nevertheless leaned toward affirming Scotus's view that the Incarnation was presupposed in the act of creation and not simply a consequence of human sin. Milbank rejects Scotus wholesale and actually links the two doctrines. It is precisely his teaching about univocity that infects Scotus's theology of the hypostatic union, with its "reduction of God to one ontic pole within a common univocalized being" (78). For Milbank, "the Scotist God has become more like a bestowing tyrant ... and positive forgiveness has begun to be dissolved"

Once again, it seems to me that Duns Scotus has become a whipping boy and the principle of univocity a wand that Milbank waves in order to account for much of what he regards as problematic in modern thought. Without denying altogether the revolutionary features of Scotus's philosophy, I perceive him as standing much more in continuity with Augustine and with the medieval Scholastics who came before him.

I remain convinced that it is most productive to trace the trajectory of Scotus's thought to its modem development in the philosophy of Charles Peirce. For Peirce, it was precisely his discovery of Duns Scotus and the Scholastics that supplied him with the intellectual resources he needed in order to repair what he regarded as most defective in Kantianism. Further, a more generous reading of Scotus's theology would portray him as articulating some of the perspectives that Milbank is anxious to affirm. Scotus actually offers a compelling argument for the coincidence of God's justice and mercy in the forgiveness of sins *(Ordinatio N,* d. 46). Nor should Scotus's theology of the Incarnation be interpreted as irrelevant to his understanding of the Atonement and of reconciliation, revealing instead the special quality of divine love as steadfast <*firmitas)*.All of this is to say that it is possible to reject this consistently negative critique of Scotus while nevertheless embracing some of the basic features of Milbank's own constructive theological position.

Chapters on the crucifixion and Atonement develop some of the insights introduced earlier in the book. It is Christ crucified who "overcame violence and restored peace" (79). But this Atonement is not achieved as a sacrifice, in compensation to God for sins committed; rather it is to be viewed as God's own continuous "giving in and through our refusals of the gift, to the point where these refusals are overcome" (100). Our dying with Christ is a dying to evil-as-nothing, simultaneously the passing into a new kind of life. That life is always

one lived in community, a Church nourished and sustained by the Eucharist. Consequently, Milbank's meditations on the Atonement lead naturally to his reflections on ecclesiology.

Milbank wants to affirm both the hierarchical and the democratic aspects of the Church, contending that they exist not in tension but as logically dependent upon one another. This is an interesting claim with important implications for understanding theological method and the proper answer to the question "what authorizes theology?" (109). In exploring this question, Milbank returns the reader yet again to Scotus and the fading of the thirteenth century. Not only Karl Rahner but also Balthasar is faulted for engaging in the "enterprise of 'natural theology', which historians have now shown to go back at the very furthest only to Scotus" (117). Milbank is not proposing a return to the thirteenth century, but rather to "an *unknown* future that we have missed and must seek to rejoin" (119). I share his concern about the corrosive effects of nominalism on modern thought. But that concern is mediated to me by Peirce who advocated a return to Scholastic realism, albeit of a Scotistic variety, modified and updated in the light both of healthy nominalistic criticisms and insights supplied by modern science. This does not rule out for me the sort of philosophical or "natural theology" in which both Rahner and Balthasar engaged. It does for Milbank, who looks to Nicholas of Cusa in his attempt to recover "what might have been" if the history of thought had not been interrupted by nominalism en route to modernity. Despite my discomfort with Milbank's narrative of events post-1300, his treatment of Cusanus is laced with insight. His account of the bishop as "the true theologian" and "the original President of the Eucharist" (123) is also illuminating, and wonderfully "radical" in its "orthodoxy." This chapter is typical of much of Milbank's writing: aggressively argued, it is easy to find something with which one might disagree, yet one cannot fail to be impressed by the intelligence of the argument or neglect to admire the brilliance of some of its details.

The final three chapters, from this reader's perspective, radiate a very special brilliance. Without abandoning his grand narrative concerning the origins of modernity, Milbank nevertheless devotes a more sustained attention to his concept of "gift," and to the theological vision that enables it. Opposing Patocka, Levinas, Derrida, and others, Milbank rejects the notion of gift as pure self-sacrifice without hope of reward. This austerely other-regarding ethic, as Milbank's subtle argument suggests, is not only "impossible" but also peculiarly self-absorbed. I am inclined to resist some of the details of that argument's formulation; for example, I would contend that there are alternative concepts of "indifference" and of "self-control"--different from the ones that Milbank eschews (e.g., on 141-42) and worth preserving. But the overall argument is a compelling one, with its portrayal of the moral life as endless and reciprocal gift-exchange, understood as absolute surrender to the divine gift of grace (Milbank's theological appropriation of the idea of "moral luck"). This reciprocity is not contractual but is characterized by a certain indeterminacy or asymmetry. Here

the ethical is not grounded in a hope for death (necessary for the purest form of self-sacrifice), but in hope for community (because every true gift presupposes a mutual exchange of gifts), as well as in hope for the Resurrection (where giving and receiving coincide in a perpetual and ecstatic feast of love).

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Avicenna's Metapbysics in Context. By ROBERTWISNOVSKYIthaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003 Pp. xii+ 305. $65.00 (cloth). ISBN 0-8()14-4178-1.

As Whitehead claimed that all philosophies are footnotes to Plato, too many histories of philosophy reduce Avicenna's metaphysics to a summary of and commentary on Aristotle, with some footnotes and adaptations. In fact, Avicenna offers a powerful new synthesis, which critically assesses the work of previous philosophers and theologians and courageously rethinks many issues. Its originality and the interest of its philosophical moves can only be understood in context. For Wisnovsky the context has to do with (1) the Greek and early Arabic commentators' efforts to reconcile Aristotle not only with himself but also with Neoplatonism and (2) the works and discussions of the "Mutakallimfm," the practitioners of Kalam or Islamic theology.

Beginning with the first context, that of the various commentators, Wisnovsky shows how Alexander of Aphrodisias and others tried to reconcile Aristotle's texts, in particular the view of "entelechia" in the definition of the soul in *De anima* 2.1 and in the definition of change in *Pbysics* 3.1. In order to do so they introduced various distinctions which affected the way these Aristotelian passages were translated and understood in the Arabic tradition. The Ammonian synthesis went further and attempted to reconcile Aristotle with Neoplatonism. Wisnovsky contends that Avicenna follows the Ammonian synthesis in shifting the focus from the question of the relation of soul to body to the question of how the soul causes the body. Such a shift, which makes the soul the final cause of the body, allows commentators to find a way to argue for the immortality of the soul, which many passages in Aristotle seem to exclude. Wisnovsky shows, by going painstakingly through various commentators and their terminological shifts, that Avicenna mainly inherits the Ammonian synthesis on this issue. His originality shines in other purely metaphysical themes.

A second issue, which in fact is a double one, that of the distinction of essence and existence and of necessity and possibility, then takes center stage. This

double issue likewise takes its origin in the commentators and the terminological choices of the Arabic translators but leads to a new synthesis, which displaces that of Ammonius, thanks to an integration of sophisticated Kalam notions. The clear distinction between essence and existence takes its origin in an integration of the Kalam concept of "shay," that is, "thing" or "res" in Latin, as a concomitant of "being," the primary metaphysical concept. This also ensures that no multiplicity ensues from considering God as both an efficient and a final cause. *As* for the famous development of a matrix of distinctions based on "necessary in itself" and "possible in itself," the latter being equated with the "necessary through another," we have to consider Kalam discussions about God's attributes and the need for Avicenna to find a way to distinguish God from any other eternal realities, such as Intelligences, Heavenly Spheres, and their Souls. For each of these issues Wisnovsky indicates various stages of development in Avicenna's own works, though he considers them more as determined by the specific readership and the length of the various works than by what one could call a distinctive evolution. Wisnovsky also alludes to how much these two elaborations of distinctions influenced the Latin West (a fact very well known, though not always much explored) as well as post-Avicennian philosophy (as illustrated in the Philosophy of Illumination), and also Kalam, a discovery Richard Frank already adumbrated with his emphasis on the way Avicenna influenced al-Ghazali. Wisnovsky is now working on a systematic exploration of Arabic postclassical philosophical commentaries in order to develop and ground this claim (see, for instance, his essay "The Nature and Scope of Arabic Philosophical Commentary in Post-classical [ca. 1100-1900 AD] Islamic Intellectual History: Some Preliminary Observations," in *Philosophy, Science and Exegesis in Greek, Arabic and Latin Commentaries,* ed. Peter Adamson, Han Baltussen, and M. W. F. Stone, vol. 2 [London: Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 2004], 149-91).

Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context is compact and cites many texts for which the author kindly provides an English translation, highlighting the technical terminology in both Greek and Arabic, and based on the Arabic translations or original of these texts. In each case the author delineates the philosophical advantages of making a certain distinction or shift in terminology, as well as its problems. It is a great example of a successful and happy marriage between philology and philosophy. If some readers lose the forest for the technical trees, they may find it useful to look at Wisnovsky's presentation of Avicenna in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy* (ed. Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005], 92-136), which lays out the three principal issues without going through the various texts.

This rich book is a great contribution to the study of Avicenna's metaphysics. The author is fully aware that such a grand project at this stage of our knowledge of the field is somewhat daring and that future research will certainly bring correctives to it. However, such a project does allow us to correct some previous assumptions, such that "falsafa" or philosophy and "Kalam" were mortal

enemies, and to develop new research to check and develop some of the avenues opened by Wisnovsky.

Wisnovsky, whose knowledge of both the Greek commentators and Avicenna is truly extensive and nuanced, wisely limits himself to three issues, all of them focused on a study of immaterial beings such as the rational soul, God as both efficient and final cause, and God as distinct from other eternal realities. He examines themes diachronically. Such an approach leads to interesting perspectives and discoveries, but it may also lead the reader to assume (mistakenly) that Avicenna's main concern in metaphysics is a study of immaterial beings and God in particular (i.e., rational theology). Yet, Wisnovsky takes Avicenna's daims in his autobiography very seriously; he is reluctant to speak too hastily of an evolution in Avicenna's thought, since Avicenna there denies it. He also accepts the claim that initially and even after forty readings Avicenna could not make head or tail of Aristotle's metaphysics up to the time he read one of al-Farabi's treatises, which cleared up the mystery of its purpose. He also seems to accepts the view that Avicenna's problem was his confusing metaphysics with rational theology or a form of Kalam, instead of realizing that it is mainly a study of being and it> attributes. The diachronic approach prevents Wisnovsky from highlighting how much these issues emerge from a study of being and its attributes and are consequent and subordinate to ontology.

The careful reading of so many Greek commentators in Arabic translation is very impressive, but one may wonder how much the translators and the commentators themselves were aware of the fuU philosophical import of their terminological shifts. Besides, Avicenna was mainly self-taught and if, indeed, his basic philosophical insights were already reached when he was eighteen or nineteen, one may wonder how many of these texts he himself had already studied. Avicenna refers to commentaries on books 2 and 12 of Aristotle's *Metaphysics,* and it is not clear whether or not he had access to much more even if he praises the quality and richness of Sultan Nfih ibn Mansur's own library in Bukhara in which he worked up to around 1002 and where he claimed to have found titles unknown to most and texts he had never seen before and would never see again. At times the development through the commentators and terminological shifts seems somewhat too tidy to me, but this is one of the avenues for research so well opened for us, thanks to the immense and careful work of Wisnovsky.

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La naisstlncede la volonte. By MIKLOSVETO. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002. Pp. 332. 26,50 €(paper). ISBN 2-7475-3776-5.

Miklos Veto, a Christian philosopher from Hungary who teaches in France, brings together a number of his areas of interest in his most recent book. While he is no doubt best known for his studies in German Idealism-Schelling, in particular-he has also written on the problem of evil in Christian thought, and provided philosophical interpretations of figures outside the mainstream (Simone Weil and Jonathan Edwards). As the title of the latest book suggests, it recounts the genesis of the notion of will in intellectual history. Veto's aim in this account is above all philosophical: rather than trace the complex web of historical influences in the ideas of a particular thinker or school of thought, he intends to unfold the concept of will "through thinkers that do not necessarily have historical connections to each other" (7). In this regard, one might compare his approach to Hannah Arendt's work on the *Life of the Mind,* which Veto himself cites as an early inspiration.

Such an approach, of course, always begins with a precise destination in mind. For Veto, "at the end of its more than two-thousand year history, the notion of Will finds its fulfillment in Kant" (304). To understand why requires an understanding of what Veto means by the "birth" of the will. As he explains in the introduction, the story of the birth of the will is a story of its gradual "purification," by which he means its dissociation from a number of related orders and its emergence into a sphere proper to itself alone, a sphere that Veto insists possesses a *sui generis* intelligibility. On the one hand, this entails a separation of the will's activity from its effects in the world, and on the other hand it requires the more difficult, but for Veto the more essential, dissociation of the will from both the natural desire for the good and the order of the (theoretical) intellect. The confusion of these orders accounts, according to Veto, for both the impoverishment of some notions of will-for example, the varieties of classical naturalism and intellectualism--and the monstrous exaggerations of the will in more modern thinkers such as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. The story of the will's "birth," then, is the story of the increasingly decisive articulation of its autonomy, a story that thus reaches its climax in eighteenth-century Konigsberg.

The story unfolds in stages. The book's first chapter, "Commencements," covers the broad stretch from Greek thought to the Reformation. While it is Stoicism that first "discovers" the will, Aristotle prepares the way by making a distinction in the practical realm between immanent action *(praxis)* and production *(poesis);* the former designates an action whose end lies in itself and thus already marks a certain independence from external effects. Seneca carries this movement a step further by dissociating the will's immanent intention from action. The reduction of will to intention, in fact, is what inaugurates the will's autarchy, that is, its sovereign independence from the vicissitudes of the outside world (28). Nevertheless, the Stoics' internal world is still the world of cosmic (and therefore natural) reason. It is Augustine, according to Veto, who

introduces a division within that internal world itself (39), which leads him to draw the crucial distinction "between what is natural in the will and what is spiritual" (40), that is, between what Augustine eventually calls *potestas* or *facultas,* and what he calls *voluntas* proper (45). Later Christian thinkers specify this distinction and its implications further: Anselmrealizes that the will's proper object is not the (appetible) good, but *justice* (51); Duns Scotus extracts the "non-naturality" of the properly free will, which transcends all creatures and is inferior only to God (53); Calvin, finally, succeeds in *formalizing* the will by subordinating the multiple material instances of its acts to its general orientation or permanent intention (68). Aquinas, according to Veto, represents a regression in this development insofar as he "resolutely subordinates [the will] to the intellect" (50).

As the book progresses, the historical scope of the chapters begins to narrow. The second chapter weighs the philosophical import of a certain Christian mystical tradition for the notion of the will. The figures that stand out most of all here are John of the Cross and Fenelon, and their contribution concerns the purification of the will. The goal of mysticism, as Veto reads it, is the creature's union of will with the Creator. To attain this goal requires a detachment from sensible desires, a transcendence of the discursive power of the intellect, and ultimately the perfect disappropriation of self. In this disappropriation-the paradigm of which Veto finds in Fenelon's notion of disinterested love-the will acquires for the first time a pure spontaneity, insofar as it is no longer moved in any sense by desire, but wills the good, so to speak, utterly gratuitously (100).

Next comes Malebranche, whom Veto acknowledges as having provided the pivotal insight that shaped his own thinking regarding the will. Radicalizing and generalizing the classical view that traces the choice of evil to a deficient cause, Malebranche identifies the *essence* of freedom-in contrast to the (natural) will-as *nothingness (le rien).* The most significant "actions" a person takes, whether they be a consent to sin or a consent to grace, are ultimately "nothing" (118). What Veto interprets Malebranche to mean by this provocative assertion is that, while the particular goods to which the natural will adheres in a positive way are substantial realities, goodness *per se,* which transcends these multiple goods in its formal absoluteness, is not itself a positive entity of any sort, and thus neither is the freedom that determines itself in relation to this goodness. Freedom, one might say, is-like the Good-"beyond being."

The pure spontaneity of freedom raises the question of its relation to the moral law. Jonathan Edwards sets into relief a further dimension in Veto's attempt to address this question. His analysis of Edwards is-in this reader's opinion-one of the book's highlights. Edwards vehemently attacks the notion of freedom of indifference (that is, the identification of freedom with sheer indeterminacy), which makes the determination of moral responsibility problematic. According to Edwards, the freedom of indifference can escape the logical absurdity of an infinite regress only by becoming a perverse imitation of *creatio ex nihilo,* the introduction into the world of something without any prevenient cause (155). Edwards's response is to reject the Newtonian view of

causality, which would reduce all determination to the temporal sequence of efficient cause and effect, and would thus make freedom and necessity dialectical opposites. In its place, Edwards proposes what he refers to as "the necessity of a proposition" (157)-what we might call formal causality-which makes freedom and necessity simultaneous. This perspective allows us to judge the morality of the will not merely in terms of sincerity (i.e., according to the disposition *{Jriorto* choice) but in terms of the objective content of the will in the actuality of its operation: Edwards locates "the good and evil of an act of the will not in its cause, i.e., that which precedes it, but in the act itself" (171).

Rousseau is a bit of an anomaly in Veto's account; his contribution to the notion of will lies not in the sphere of anthropology, but in that of politics. Nevertheless, Veto insists on an analogy between the two. He reads Rousseau's rejection of any extemal representation in the political realm as providing the will's final formalization. This rejection implies a view of the will as a power of legislation in and for itself (214). One suspects that Rousseau appears in this book primarily because of his well-known influence on Kant. However that may be, the step from the rejection of representation to the notion of the autonomy of practical reason is dear.

Veto offers a thorough treatment of Kant's practical philosophy in two fuH chapters. While there is little that is new in his presentation, the fundamental aspects do acquire a distinctive character when viewed as the flower of a certain movement in history. The only thing that remains after the climax of the story in Kant is a final chapter-a denouement, as it were-in which Veto presents Hegel's notion of the reciprocity of wiHs as the unfolding of an insight left implicit in Kant: here the "heteronomous" classical problem of the will's effective causality in the world of objects is replaced by the will's effect simply on another will, for which the external world provides nothing but an occasion. With this final step, the will's separation from all that is not itself comes to completion.

The biggest weakness of Veto's book is that it makes no argument for the normative statuS it accords Kant's practical philosophy. Kant's notion is the culmination of the history of the will because that history is a progressive attempt to articulate a Kantian notion of will. Indeeo, there are a number of fundamental questions one could raise regarding the book's governing presuppositions. For example, Veto takes for granted that a genuine distinction must be a separation, that is, that orders must be strictly unrelated if they are to possess their own integrity. In other words, he excludes the possibility of metaphysical complexity, which perhaps explains why Aquinas has nothing to offer to the notion of will in his telling of the story. Moreover, the separation of goodness and being that Veto insists on, and his assertion, with Kant, that the goodness or evil of things is due solely to the wiH's spontaneous activity (278), arguably justifies Nietzsche's accusation of nihilism since it empties nature of any intrinsic significance. In this respect, his assertion of the goodness of reality seems gratuitous (275). Further, if all receptivity is removed from the will's proper activity, and by the same token all desirability removed from the

goodness at which it aims, in what sense is the foundation of morality anything but "arbitrary"? (Surely, even the pure formality of the Categorical Imperative must be seen as desirable in some sense in order to have any binding force.) Along the same lines, one can ask how what Veto refers to as the *sui generis* intelligibility of the will differs from irrationality. In short, there would be many grounds for raising concerns about the twofold dissociation that Veto takes at the outset to be an ideal, and his treatment provokes such questions without providing answers.

Whether or not one is willing to accept this ideal, there is a great deal to be learned from Veto's book. Among other things, the notion of will that governs his analyses sets into relief an unusual constellation of figures in intellectual history, introduces surprising affinities, and shows the philosophical significance of figures normally left out of philosophical discussions. His suggestion, for example, that the structure of the mystical experience of John of the Cross anticipates in decisive ways Husserl's phenomenological reduction (91, 93, 103) is excellent, and the insights he draws from Puritan theology offer a new solution to an old philosophical problem. Even a reader more inclined to espouse a classical understanding the will in relation to the intellect and natural desire will find the story stimulating and provocative, and certainly anyone interested in the history of ideas will find this an exceedingly rich and illuminating book.

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Inspired Metaphysics? Gustav Siewerth's Hermeneutic Reading of the Onto-Theological Tradition. By ANDRZEJ WIERCINSKI. Toronto: The Hermeneutic Press, 2003. Pp. 214. ISBN 0-9525333-3-2.

Andrzej Wiercinski has written the first English monograph on Gustav Siewerth (1903-63), the twentieth-century German thinker whom Hans Urs von Balthasar regarded as the greatest philosopher of the contemporary age. In numerous major works, in which he negotiates a precarious synthesis of Hegel, Heidegger, and Aquinas, Siewerth constructs some of the most original speculative philosophy of the contemporary period. Yet notwithstanding a significant readership in Germany, Siewerth remains largely unknown in North America.

Wiercinski's book, *Inspired Metaphysics? Gustav Siewerth's Hermeneutic Reading of the Onto-Theological Tradition,* represents the culmination of twenty years of work on Siewerth. Wiercinski presents Siewerth as an example of the

hermeneutic vitality of Thomism. Criticized for his speculative departures from the texts of Aquinas, Siewerth in his relationship to Aquinas has methodologically much in common with Bernard Lonergan, Max Miiller, Johann Baptist Lotz, and to a lesser extent, Joseph and the young Karl Rahner. With these thinkers, Siewerth regards the dialogue with modernity as the essential task for Thomism. Yet Siewerth is critical of Thomist appropriations of Kant, as Wiercinski points out in his well-researched chapter "The Transcendental Turn in the Thomist Revival." Siewerth's emphasis on the irreducibility of being, the act of existence *(esse)* grasped by the intellect as a pure positivity, aligns him with Gilson and the existential Thomists and distances him from the "transcendental Thomists." Siewerth however does not engage in the close textual analysis characteristic of the Gilson school. He retains from his years studying under Martin Heidegger in the 1930s the method of directly engaging the matter of the text *(die Sache),* even if this requires rethinking it in new terms.

While Wiercinski appears to distance himself from Siewerth (hence the question mark in the title), the central contribution of this volume is not Wiercinski's critique but his thorough exposition of Siewerth's ontology, accompanied by numerous translated quotations from Siewerth's works. After setting the stage by introducing the idea of "hermeneutic reading" ("the situation of the interpretation, of the appropriation of the past in understanding, is always the situation of the living present," Wiercinski writes, "the text has something to say to me, something which requires my attentive response"), Wiercinski deftly guides us through Siewerth's extremely difficult speculative ontology. He argues that Siewerth cannot be understood without a knowledge of the history of medieval philosophy, German idealism, and Heidegger, and carefully illustrates the significance of each of these. Particularly helpful is the examination of Siewerth's understanding of the relationship of Scotus's metaphysics to what Heidegger calls the forgetfulness of the ontological difference between being and beings. Scotus's *univocatio entis* denies the "mediating mediation" between the Creator and creatures, precipitating both late medieval nominalism and modem idealism.

Siewerth's first attempt at interpreting Aquinas through Hegel and Heidegger was his 1930-31 doctoral dissertation, "Die Metaphysik der Erkenntnis nach Thomas von Aquin." He followed this with his 1937 *Habilitationsschrift,* "Die transzendentale intellektuelle Anschauung bei Thomas von Aqnin. Der Grund der Moglichkeit der Gotteserkenntnis." All but banished from the academy by the Nazis (and his revered teacher Heidegger did nothing to help), Siewerth continued his research without an academic post. Siewerth owes much to Hegel, but, as Wiercinski shows, he does not share Hegel's idealization of being and nothingness. He substitutes a notion of "exemplary identity" for Hegel's dialectical identity. A is not not-A; rather it is imaged in not-A, as God is imaged in being. Even more essential than the appropriation of Hegel is Siewerth's more intimate connection with the later Heidegger. Siewerth singles out Heidegger and Aquinas as the only figures in the history of Western philosophy who

endeavored to think being in its difference from beings. According to Siewerth, Heidegger's critique of the forgetfulness of being indicts everyone except Aquinas. That Heidegger seems to have missed this in Aquinas-Heidegger is far more interested in Scotus, Suarez, and Luther than he is in Aquinas-does not stop Siewerth from drawing this surprising connection. For Siewerth the question of what Heidegger calls "the ontological difference" is the beginning of every genuine metaphysical inquiry. Metaphysics inevitably takes one of two directions with respect to the question of being: either a monism in which the ontological difference is reduced to appearance (Platonism, conceptualism, essentialism, Scotism), or a pluralism, in which the difference is held to be irreducible (Aquinas, Heidegger}. Only in the latter does the difference become a creative spur for philosophy.

The modern forgetfulness of being begins with Scotus, for whom being is exhausted in *essentia.* The Scotistic denial of the real distinction of *essentia* and *existentia,* and the related denial of the inconceivability of God in the notion of *univocatio entis,* gives birth to the essentialism of modern philosophy and the subjectivism of German idealism. Against this trend Siewerth unfurls a set of hermeneutically revised Thomistic concepts. He shows how Aquinas distinguishes being *(esse)* from beings *(entia)* on the grounds that the latter possess *essentia, quidditas,* which can be abstracted and conceptualized, where the former is pure nonessential act. The "existentialist" formulation of the *distinctio realis,* however, is not enough to meet the challenge of Heidegger, for both whatness *(essentia)* and thatness *(existentia)* belong to the being of substance. Siewerth argues that, in order to answer Heidegger's critique, we must retrieve Aquinas's distinction between act and subsistence: the former is the pure, nonsubstantive, dynamic energy of coming into presence; the latter is the stasis of that which has come to be. The act of being subsists in a being while remaining distinct from it. The distinction underscores Aquinas's often overlooked distinction between the being of God *(ipsum esse subsistens)* and the being of beings *(ipsum esse non-subsistens).* The being of a being is a nonsubsistent act, the event of the sheer upsurge of beings from nothingness. It cannot be abstracted into a concept. *As* Siewerth says, it can be thought (there is a *conceptio entis)* but not abstracted (there is no *conceptus entis).*

Neither a being nor God, the being of beings is the perfect image of God, a pure reflection of divine kenosis. It empties itself into beings and comes to realization in them. Hence it depends upon the subsistent being of God as much as beings depend upon it. By distinction, the being of God is subsistent act, that which resides in itself, infinite, eternal, self-sufficient, excluding all potency and requiring nothing else in order for it to be. *As* the first creation, the being of beings is horizoned by the nothingness of primordial potency; it is "complete and simple, but not subsistent." Just as the triune God is a mediation through otherness (the Father is Father by virtue of the relation to the Son, etc.), being is an identity-in-difference, an identity that realizes itself through its other. It was this Hegel-inspired Trinitarian ontology that proved so fertile for Balthasar. In

the act of creation, the self-emptying Trinity images itself in that which only exists insofar as it empties itself into a being. Being is kenosis. As nonsubsistent, being is not identical with itself: it is only real insofar as it has poured itself out and allowed a being to be.

Siewerth believes that this nonsubstantive notion of being can accommodate Heidegger's retrieval of the pre-Socratic notion of *physis,* "self-blossoming emergence," while preserving the Scholastic principle of the subsistence, eternity, and infinity of God. The First and Absolute Being remains the eternal ground of all that is; it excludes time. The being of beings is the condition of the possibility of time. The being in which all things participate, the being the horizon of which is time, to speak Heidegger's language, is not the being of God, but the first act of God, the donation of the energy of his presence in the othering by which creation becomes possible. It is the simple unlimited being of every thing that exists, "das einfache, nicht begrenzte Sein des Seienden." However near to us, it is "a profound mystery," for it includes within itself all possible conceptual determinations, while remaining "uncircumscribed" by any concept. It is the act that actualizes every thing that is, but is "captured and consumed" by none of them.

Siewerth refers to many texts of Aquinas in constructing his central points. One might question whether this metaphysics is true to Aquinas. One cannot, however, question that it is in its own right an important contribution to contemporary metaphysics. That Wiercinski has gone to such lengths to make this contribution better known forgives some of the idiosyncrasies of *Inspired Metaphysics?* Wiercinski has recently announced the publication of a translation and commentary of Siewerth's seminal treatise, *Das Sein als Gleichnis Gottes.* Let us hope that these valuable works are the first of many studies of Siewerth.

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Theism or Atheism: The Eternal Debate. By F. F. CENrORE. Aldershot, Hants, England and Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2004. Pp. 206 + xiii. $94.95 (cloth). ISBN 0-7546-3670-4.

F. F. Centore begins his book with a playful account of his Thomistic academic pedigree: "It is not too much to say that Gilson begot Owens, who begot Azar, who begot Centore" (xi). A note "About the Author" on the following page observes that Centore died on 24 August 2003, and that the work is being published posthumously. It recalls that "his love of teaching and

interaction with his students" became "his whole life, second only to his family." The author's love of Aquinas as well as his devotion to his students is evident throughout. The work shows all the fervor of a true disciple of Aquinas along with the occasional outrageousness of a college philosophy classroom.

The book aims to examine rational arguments for the existence of God (vii). It comprises nine chapters. The first serves as a prologue, showing the compatibility of faith and reason and reviewing some ways in which arguments about God can go wrong. The next three deal with atheism and various types of theism. The remainder of the work examines arguments for God's existence by presenting the thought of representative philosophers for various types of arguments and then using other thinkers to critique them. The historical situation of each philosopher is presented, though with uneven detail.

Atheism (chap. 2) is divided into "naive atheism," represented by Bertrand Russell, who tried to affirm the reality of evil without affirming the reality of God, and "sophisticated atheism," represented by Nietzsche, who denied the reality of God, good and evil, repudiating "all value, meaning and desirability" (16). Theism, in contrast, affirms the existence of God and recognizes that the "unchanging divine standard" is essential for distinguishing good from evil (22).

Theism is divided into "naturalistic theism" (chap. 3), in which God is "the same as the world or some fundamental aspect of the world" (25), and "supernaturalistic theism" (chap. 4), in which God is "separate from the natural world" (35). Examples of naturalistic theism are Hinduism, Buddhism, Stoicism, and Epicureanism. Supematuralistic theism is divided into polytheism (Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Confucianism, and classical paganism) and monotheism, which comprises deism and traditional theism ijudaism, Islam, and Christianity). The latter religions are mentioned but not formally discussed (36).

The rational arguments for God's existence which comprise the rest of the book are of two fundamental types: "as-if' and "for-real." "As-if' arguments (chap. 5) do not prove the existence of God but only "the need to believe in the existence of God" (45). Examples include Blaise Pascal's wager, Immanuel Kant's postulate of practical reason, and William James's pragmatism. The critique of the "as-if' approach is provided through Voltaire, who recognizes that "even though someone might sincerely want to believe in something, such a desire in no way shows the real existence of the thing in question" (58).

The "for-real" way to God can employ either a priori or a posteriori arguments. Saint Anselm's ontological argument exemplifies the a priori approach (chap. 6). A posteriori arguments may begin with either internal or external experience. The "internal" approach is represented by such historically and theologically diverse thinkers as Augustine, Boethius, Descartes, Hegel, and Newman (chap. 7). Each argues in some way from inner knowledge or experience to the existence of God. The thought of Schopenhauer and Freud is used to critique this approach. The conclusion is that, while inner experience may bring some to affirm God as a being existing independently of the world,

it leads others to see God as identical with the world and fails to provide any objective grounds for deciding between the two (115).

A more secure approach is through "external" experience, which may *be* based on either essence (chap. 8) or existence (chap. 9). Newton, Paley, and proponents of the "anthropic principle" are presented as examples of the former, which argues from the presence of order in nature to the existence of a designer God. These arguments are critiqued through the thought of David Hume and Charles Darwin. Hume contends that arguments from causality cannot get to God and, even if they could, they would not require the all-perfect God of religion, but only a less-than-perfect "designer" (132). Darwin's theory of evolution requires no designer or creator to explain the complex order of biological life. The ethical and social consequences of these different positions are also reviewed.

For Centore, the best way to argue for the existence of God is the "a posteriori external experience method based on existence," which he identifies as the way of Thomas Aquinas (chap. 9). In distinguishing Aquinas's philosophy from that of his Greek predecessors, Centore argues that "Aquinas could not accept the Greek doctrine of the unintelligibility of matter, for the very simple reason that it conflicted with the biblical book of Genesis. If God produced the universe, then matter ... must be knowable because God knows what he makes" (171-72). Apart from the rather fideistic cast this gives to Aquinas's philosophy, the argument ignores the distinction between matter as pure potency (unintelligible for both Aquinas and Aristotle in that it has no actuality) and material substances (intelligible both for Aquinas and Aristotle in virtue of their actuality). He contends that for Aquinas God's existence "must be proven" in the "science of metaphysics (natural theology) and not in the ... lower science of physics" (173), and so seems to ignore Aquinas's own claim, at the conclusion of his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics,* that Aristotle "ends his general discussion of natural things with the first principle of the whole of nature, who is over all things, God, blessed forever. Amen."

Centore spends only five pages on Aquinas' actual arguments, concentrating on what he calls "Aquinas' core argument for the existence of God" which he finds in *On Being and Essence* (180). He presents this as a series of three syllogisms, but does not specify from what part of the text he is extracting his arguments. If he is referring to the paragraph in chapter 4 where Aquinas shows "there must be something which causes all things to exist inasmuch as it is subsistent existence," his arguments (which includes such premises as "Any existentially dependent being that has completely exhausted every possible other already really existing external explanatory cause is caused by an existentially independent being") are far more complicated and less clear than those of Aquinas.

Centore makes no reference to the controversy over whether the argument in *On Being and Essence* is truly a demonstration of the existence of God and whether it was intended as such. Gilson, for instance, contends in his later

writing that the work "contains no proof of the existence of God" (*Le thomisme*, [6th ed.; Paris: J. Vrin, 1965], 97 n. 85), quoted in L. Dewan, "St. Thomas and the Existence of God: Owens vs. Gilson, and Beyond," in *God and Argument* [Ottowa: University of Ottowa Press, 1999], 116).

Aquinas's "five ways" to show God's existence are covered in a brief paragraph, with less than complete accuracy. The fifth is said to conclude to God as "the final cause of all existence and change" (184), though it actually concludes to God as an efficient cause: the "intelligent being by whom all natural things are directed to their end."

It is not clear what audience Centore has in mind for his work. Some insights, such as his analysis of how contemporary issues in the divine action debate find their roots in Descartes, might be useful even to advanced readers (89, 117-18, 133). Aspects of his humor might appeal to many. I enjoyed, for instance, his definition of "panentheism" as "pantheism with an extra syllable in the middle to indicate that [it] is not the usual sort of pantheism" (153). Not infrequently, though, the humor seems odd. Noting that Augustine died in 430, for example, he quips, "a good union man always quits at 4:30" (76). The work is sprinkled with little factoids, such as Darwin's wife taking piano lessons from Chopin (139), Hegel's love for dancing (91), Kant's distress at a delayed delivery of dried fruit (63), and Descartes's practice of sleeping late, the violation of which seems to have caused his death (82, 86). There is also a mistaken reference to the Dominican Catherine of Siena as a "Benedictine saint" (166).

One gets the impression Centore is speaking to undergraduates, where the wise teacher assumes nothing. So he somehow finds it necessary to inform his readers that "[t]o this day, Augustine himself is the subject of many books and articles" (77) and that the Council of Trent was called "to reform the Church from head to toe" (165). He sometimes slips into a rather preachy mode, attacking contemporary "pseudo-liberals" (94-96) or lamenting today's sexual mores in which "the only purpose of sex is fun" (152). In this context, feminism is a recurrent theme and is presented with little nuance.

Centore also offers spiritual advice to his readers which, laudable in itself, seems somehow misplaced in a work whose goal is to review rational arguments for the existence of God. He assures us, for instance, that God "created things for our good and demands our love and obedience. Yet, when we fail to do his will, he is always ready to forgive and welcome home the truly repentant sinner, especially if approached through the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, as when someone sincerely says, 'Lord Jesus Christ, Lamb of God, I trust in your mercy, have mercy on me, a sinner'" (190).

To its credit, the book allows a considerable number of philosophers to speak to one another and so to the reader about the question of the existence of God. As guide in this, Centore shows considerable skill in arranging the conversation, but is often obtrusive in pressing his own point of view. In its tone, the work seems less a discussion of arguments for or against the existence of God and more a polemic on where the modern world went wrong. This takes the form of

a philosophical romp through the history of ideas, where historical tidbits and snatches of poetry are shaken together with philosophical opinions to produce a montage of arguments roughly centered on the question of the existence of God. For those in the mood for such an adventure and willing to tolerate a certain amount of "attitude" from the author, it's not a bad ride.

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