The Thomist 73 (2009): 349-79

THE ERROR OF THE PASSIONS

STEVEN J. JENSEN

University of St. Thomas
Houston, Texas

IN HIS 1970 ARTICLE on weakness of will, Donald Davidson faults Aquinas for presenting the weak person with two one-sided arguments, that of reason and that of the passions.[1] Since these two arguments reach contrary conclusions, and since they are both valid, Davidson concludes that Aquinas must maintain that the argument of the passions contains a false premise, which Davidson plausibly supposes to be the major premise. The upshot, says Davidson, is that Aquinas's moral universe is rather flat and one-sided. It cannot contain conflicting goods that pull the agent in opposite directions and which the agent must weigh in his deliberations.

Is Davidson's portrayal of Aquinas fair?[2] If one takes Aquinas's descriptions of the reasoning of the weak person absolutely literally, then it would seem so, but reflection upon other statements of Aquinas concerning practical reasoning reveals that the rather didactic syllogisms of the weak person must be nuanced. Given these nuances, the views of Aquinas and Davidson may not be that distance from one another. In particular, the premises of practical reasoning turn out not to be one-sided categorical statements but sometimes quite elaborate evaluations

[1] Donald Davidson, "How Is Weakness of Will Possible?", in idem, *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980): 21-42, at 33-36.

[2] Bonnie Kent notes that several authors argue, contrary to Davidson, that according to Aquinas the will is involved in weakness (see "Aquinas and Weakness of Will," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 75 [2007]: 70-91). The focus of this article, on the other hand, is the faulty reasoning that Davidson attributes to Aquinas's weak person.

of the pros and cons of a course of action. Furthermore, reason can consider what the passions have to say, for the error of the passions resides primarily in the minor premise rather than in the major. [3]

I wish to locate this error of the passions, and in so doing to reveal some elements of practical reasoning common to Aquinas and Davidson. I will begin with Davidson's portrayal of Aquinas (section I). I will then show that Aquinas seems to think, contrary to Davidson, that the error of the passions is found in the minor premise (section II). Explaining how this can be so, however, is no simple matter. It demands, first, an explanation of the major premises (section Ill): how reason can consider both the pros and cons, by using propositions that are not straightforwardly categorical, but rather involve the consideration of actions in themselves. These universal major premises of actions considered in themselves, however, must be applied to actions as they actually are by way of a minor premise that eliminates further consideration (section IV). Precisely in this elimination, the weak person errs; he cuts from his deliberation that which should not be eliminated. I conclude by returning to the major premise, considering how it can be true even while the weak person abandons the human good (section V).

I. DAVIDSON'S PORTRAYAL OF AQUINAS

Davidson faults Aquinas for presenting the weak person with two one-sided arguments, that of reason and that of the passions. The passions pull the weak person away from the judgment of reason, so that he acts contrary to what is best. A person tempted

[3] By speaking of the error of the passions or the syllogism of the passions I do not mean to intellectualize the passions. The passions themselves do not present this reasoning. Passions desire; they do not reason. The error is an error of reasoning, prompted by the passions. The syllogism of the passions is simply that line of reasoning that takes the side of the passions. Aquinas says that the passions suggest premises or focus a person's attention upon them. Any reference in this paper, then, to the argument of the passions, or to the error of the passions, is to an argument or error of reason, but as influenced by the passions.

to commit adultery, for instance, might have the following two arguments:

REASON	THE PASSIONS
Adultery is to be avoided.	Pleasure is to be pursued.
This action is adultery.	This action is pleasurable.
∴ This action is to be avoided.	∴ This action is to be pursued.

The weak person uses the argument of the passions, so that he acts contrary to the knowledge of what is best, which he possesses in the argument of reason.

Davidson's complaint is not so much that there are two arguments, for his own analysis of weakness involves multiple arguments; rather, he complains about the nature of the two arguments. All the propositions, both premises and conclusions, are categorical statements. Since the contrary conclusions cannot both be true, and since both syllogisms are valid, there must somewhere be a false premise. The minor premises appear to be true (or we can imagine situations where they are), so it seems that one of the major premises-that of the passions-must be false.

The consequent worldview, Davidson thinks, is rather flat and one-sided. It does not allow for moral conflict. The passions have nothing to say worth listening to; only the dictates of reason have any worth. There can be no combined view that considers the merits of both sides, both of reason and of the passions, coming to an overall evaluation of what is worth pursuing. The side of the passions, since it is false, can have no value. Only true statements deserve to be considered, and only reason provides the truth.

Davidson thinks it more realistic to allow for moral conflict that is ultimately resolved by an overall evaluation, by what he calls an all-things-considered judgment. Pleasure is truly something good and worth pursuing, and we should take it into consideration in our practical judgments. Pleasure can have at least some weight in our deliberations, even if its value is ultimately overridden by the consideration that this action is an act of adultery. Davidson would desire, then, at least three

judgments: the judgment of reason, the judgment of the passions, and an overall comparative judgment, which includes the first two and which he calls the judgment of conscience or of the will.[4] Aquinas cannot allow for such an overall judgment, claims Davidson, since it would include the false premise of the passions.

II. THE INCLUSIVE VISION OF REASON

A) Is the Error in the Major or the Minor Premise?

Aquinas does suppose, as Davidson claims, that the passions err in their judgment. He does not, however, identify the source of the error with the major premise. He says very little about the major premise, except that it is suggested by the passions; indeed, his entire account of weakness dwells upon the minor premise. The weak person is led into error precisely because the passions focus his attention on the minor premise, that the action is pleasurable.[5] It does not follow that the minor premise is itself false. One might think that the passions focus the weak person's attention upon a true minor premise, but in so doing they impel him to conclude under a false major premise. The weak person is so overcome by his passions that he cannot concentrate upon the truth that "This action is adultery," so that he considers only, "This action is pleasurable," and thereby concludes under the false major premise.

I wish to argue otherwise. The error lies with the minor premise itself, as Aquinas's focus on this premise suggests. If the passions in fact provide a false major premise, then it seems that this role of the passions-rather than the role of fixating the mind upon the minor premise-would be the primary cause of the sin of passion. Aquinas should have focused his attention upon this cause rather than dwelling upon the other, secondary role of the passions, or at the very least he should have given them equal attention. As it is, he barely mentions in passing that the passions have some role in furnishing the major premise. It seems

[4] Davidson, "How Is Weakness of Will Possible?", 35-36.

[5] See, for instance, *De Malo*, q. 3, a. 9, ad 7; *STh* I-II, q. 77, a. 2.

plausible, then, that Aquinas thinks that the primary error in the sin of weakness lies with the minor premise. [6]

On the face of it, unfortunately, it is difficult to see how the minor premise could be false, unless by "pleasurable" we mean "pleasurable to human nature" and not merely to the senses.[7] This reading, however, would not so much make the minor premise false as it would make the syllogism invalid by equivocation. I wish to argue, rather, that the major premise means what it says, that the pleasures of the senses should be pursued. Nevertheless, I wish to argue, similar to Davidson, that this major premise has a true meaning, and it is this meaning that first enters the mind of the weak person. Aquinas himself acknowledges that pleasures of the senses, considered as such, do not oppose reason. [8]

> Sensible and bodily goods, considered in their species, are not opposed to reason; rather, they serve reason, as an instrument that reason uses to attain its own end. They are opposed to reason chiefly insofar as the sensitive appetite tends into them apart from the measure of reason. [9]

The error of the passions, then, somehow lies in the minor premise, in the statement, "This action is pleasurable." Before we can see how this is so, we must come to recognize that the

[6] Denis J.M. Bradley ("Thomas Aquinas on Weakness of Will," in *Weakness of Will from Plato to the Present,* ed. Tobias Hoffmann [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008], 82-114) affirms that for Aquinas the error of weakness always concerns the minor premise. Bonnie Kent ("Transitory Vice: Thomas Aquinas on Incontinence," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 27 [1989]: 199-223) asks whether the error of weakness lies in the major pemise or in the minor. She seeks to show that, in opposition to Aristotle, Aquinas thinks that the incontinent err in the judgment of the universal, although she acknowledges that Aquinas emphasizes the error in the particular. Kent implies that the error of the major premise is the same as that made in a sin of malice, the difference being that it is held temporarily by the weak person. I think Kent is wrong on this point, but the nature of malice is beyond the scope of this paper. Bradley ("Thomas Aquinas on Weakness of Will," 95) notes that Aquinas's weak person does not adopt the universal of the intemperate person.

[7] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 7.5.1148b15-20.

[8] Daniel Westberg *(Right Practical Reason: Aristotle, Action, and Prudence in Aquinas* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994]), notes that acting for pleasure is not irrational (ibid., 207), and it is sometimes good to use the major premise of the passions (ibid., 208).

[9] *STh* II-II, q. 141, a. 3: "Nam bona sensibilia et corporalia, secundum suam speciem considerata, non repugnant rationi, sed magis serviunt ei, sicut instrumenta quibus ratio utitur ad consecutionem proprii finis. Repugnant autem ei praecipue secundum quod appetitus sensitivus in ea tendit non secundum modum rationis." Translations are my own.

differences between Davidson and Aquinas are far less significant than Davidson supposes.

B) The Multifaceted judgment of Reason

Davidson's criticism, it seems, is wide of the mark. He supposes that Aquinas's judgment of reason is one-sided, a claim that Aquinas himself would surely find odd. Aquinas's judgment of reason corresponds best, it seems, with Davidson's comparative judgment, with his all-things-considered judgment. When discussing weakness, Aquinas's example does seem rather one-sided, for he presents reason as considering only one aspect of the action, namely, that it is adultery. But reason can and certainly does consider multiple aspects of an action, both good and bad.

In *De Malo,* Aquinas suggest that reason considers various good and bad features of an action, even saying that an action can be good for giving pleasure. When the will is moved according to reason, however, Aquinas says that it is moved according to the condition that has greater weight. In other words, the judgment of reason is not one-sided; rather, it is a judgment of what aspects of an act are most important.

> If some good thing is not found to be good according to every particular detail that can be considered, then it will not move [the will] necessarily even with respect to the determination of the act, for someone can will its opposite, even while thinking about it, because it is better or more fitting according to another particular consideration, just as that which is good for health might not be good for pleasure. It may happen in three ways that the will is inclined to that which offers more from one aspect than from another. First, insofar as one aspect has greater weight, and then the will is moved according to reason, for example, when a man prefers that which is useful for health insofar as it is useful to the will.[10]

[10] *De Malo,* q. 6: "Si autem sit tale bonum quod non inveniatur esse bonum secundum omnia particularia quae considerari possunt, non ex necessitate movebit etiam quantum ad determinationem actus; poterit enim aliquis velle eius oppositum, etiam de eo cogitans, quia forte est bonum vel conveniens secundum aliquod aliud particulare consideratum, sicut quod est bonum sanitati, non est bonum delectationi, et sic de aliis. Et quod voluntas feratur in id quod sibi offertur magis secundum hanc particularem conditionem quam secundum aliam, potest contingere tripliciter. Uno quidem modo in quantum una praeponderat, et tune movetur voluntas secundum rationem; puta, cum homo praeeligit id quod est utile sanitati,

Furthermore, Aquinas says elsewhere that the prudent person considers all the relevant circumstances, judging how one consideration might be overshadowed by others.

> Since prudence concerns singular actions, in which many factors come together, it sometimes happens that something considered in itself might be good and fitting for the end, but from some additional feature it becomes evil or inappropriate for the end. When considered in itself, for instance, giving signs of love to someone seems to be an appropriate means of fostering love in his heart, but if he happens to be proud, or if he suspects flattery, then it will no longer be fitting for the end. Therefore, prudence demands careful consideration, involving a comparison between that which is ordered to the end and any additional aspects of an action. [11]

The judgment of reason, then, is not simply one-sided. It is a comprehensive judgment that best corresponds with Davidson's judgments of conscience.

III. THE MAJOR PREMISE

A) Prima Facie Judgments

In Davidson's eyes the very categorical nature of the premises poses a problem for an overall comparative judgment. We cannot combine the categorical statement "Adultery should be avoided," with the statement "Pleasure should be pursued," into the proposition "Adultery that is pleasurable should be avoided." After all, if the major premise is a universal categorical proposition, then all pleasure should be pursued; the premise can never be incorporated into a statement about some pleasure that should be avoided.

eo quod est utile voluntati."

[11] *STh* II-II, q. 49, a. 7: "Quia prudentia, sicut dictum est, est circa singularia operabilia, in quibus multa concurrunt, contingit aliquid secundum se consideratum esse bonum et conveniens fini, quod tamen ex aliquibus concurrentibus redditur vel malum vel non opportunum ad finem. Sicut ostendere signa amoris alicui, secundum se consideratum, videtur esse conveniens ad alliciendum eius animum ad amorem, sed si contingat in animo illius superbia vel suspicio adulationis, non erit hoc conveniens ad finem. Et ideo necessaria est circumspectio ad prudentiam, ut scilicet homo id quod ordinatur in finem comparet etiam cum his quae circumstant."

Davidson gets around this difficulty by making his major premises *prima facie* statements rather than categorical statements. [12]

THE MAJOR OF REASON
Prima facie, if an action is adultery, it should be avoided.

THE MAJOR OF THE PASSIONS
Prima facie, if an action is pleasurable, it should be pursued.

These premises can both be true, for they do not lead to contradictory conclusions but rather to the following compatible conclusions:

THE CONCLUSION OF REASON
Prima facie, insofar as this action is adultery, it should be avoided.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE PASSIONS
Prima facie, insofar as this action is pleasurable, it should be pursued.

Will or conscience, then, can combine the evidence of reason and of the passions, both of which provide true premises, leading to the following all-things-considered major premise:

THE PREMISE OF CONSCIENCE
Prima facie, insofar as an action is adultery and pleasurable and [other relevant considerations], it should be avoided.

The problem with the weak-willed person, on Davidson's view, is that he uses the partial evidence of the passions rather than the more comprehensive evidence of conscience.

Aquinas, it seems, cannot take Davidson's approach, since his major premises are categorical. But are they? I wish to suggest that Aquinas's major premises are similar to Davidson's *prima facie* propositions.

[12] Davidson, "How Is Weakness of Will Possible?", 38. My presentations of Davidson's propositions are greatly simplified. I have modified them to appear more like Aquinas's. Paul Grice and Judith Baker ("Davidson's 'Weakness of the Will'," in *Essays on Davidson: Actions and Events,* ed. Bruce Vermazen and Merrill B. Hintikka [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985], 27-49, at 38) substitute a simple positive statement for Davidson's comparative, and incur no objection from Davidson ("Davidson Responds: Intention and Action/Event and Cause," in Vermazen and Hintikka, eds., *Essays on Davidson,* 195-229).

B) Absolute Considerations

As the late G. E. M. Anscombe pointed out, only a madman would assent to a universal major premise of the form "All pleasure is to be pursued" or "All nutritional food should be eaten." [13] Neither of these precepts can be fulfilled, since there are many mutually exclusive pleasures, and many nutritional foods which could not be eaten simultaneously. Furthermore, the latter precept would lead someone to gorging to the point of death, which is clearly contrary to the goal of health that the person presumably would be pursuing. The universal precept to pursue pleasure is not followed even by the intemperate man; he is not apt to pursue pleasurable adultery, for instance, if it is likely to get him killed.

If the major premise of the passions is not universally quantified-if it does not read, *"All* pleasure is to be pursued"-then the conclusion does not follow with necessity. [14] Aquinas himself acknowledges that there is a gap between the universal judgment and the particular conclusion that falls under it. [15] This gap, says Aquinas, leaves an indeterminacy to the conclusion.

> The final decision or judgment of reason concerning what is to be done is in the realm of contingent things, which can be done by us. In such affairs, conclusions do not follow of necessity, with an absolute necessity, from necessary principles, but only from those that are necessary conditionally, for example, if he runs, then he moves. [16]

[13] G. E. M. Anscombe, *Intention,* 2d ed. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1963), 61.

[14] In *De Malo,* q. 6, Aquinas uses the quantifier "all," in "All pleasures should be pursued"; the quantifier is absent in the *Summa (STh* I-II, q. 77, a. 2, ad 4). Given Anscombe's arguments about the absurdity of the universally quantified major premise, and given other things that (we shall see) Aquinas says concerning the inquiry of deliberation, it seems fair to say that Aquinas would not intend the universal quantifier to be taken literally, for even the immoderate person does not pursue *all* pleasures available. He judges that some are to be avoided, perhaps because avoiding them will afford greater pleasures in the future.

[15] *STh* I, q. 83, a. 1; *STh* 1-11, q. 13, a. 6, ad 1-2.

[16] *STh* I-II, q. 13, a. 6, ad 2: "Ad secundum dicendum quod sententia sive iudicium rationis de rebus agendis est circa contingentia, quae a nobis fieri possunt, in quibus conclusiones non ex necessitate sequuntur ex principiis necessariis absoluta necessitate, sed necessariis solum ex conditione, ut, si currit, movetur."

Furthermore, Aquinas says that deliberation involves an inquiry. [17] Once a person has determined the end she intends to pursue, then she must inquire into the best means to achieve it. For example, when someone decides to pursue health, she still must determine how best to pursue it. She considers various possibilities, such as eating well, getting plenty of sleep, exercising, moving to Arizona, yoga, and so on. She then considers the advantages and disadvantages of these various means, and she finally decides which means she will pursue. Suppose she decides that she will eat well and exercise. Still, she has not yet settled upon some definite action. She has settled upon some means to attain health, but these means have now taken on the character of new ends. Now she must determine the means to these new ends, so new inquiries must begin.

For instance, the person might consider the various kinds of exercise in which she could engage. In her inquiry, she considers running, biking, swimming, and so on, not only in light of their ability to provide good exercise, but also in light of other relevant factors. Running might be eliminated, for instance, because she has bad knees, and she fears that running will only further exacerbate the problem. Running is fine as exercise, but it is inadequate in regard to the further end of health. Other considerations, wholly extraneous to health or exercise, might also come into play. For instance, membership fees for the nearby facilities with a swimming pool may be exorbitant, so she eliminates swimming on the basis of finances. On the other hand, perhaps biking has the added benefit that the bike trail is in a beautiful natural setting. Then again, running might have as a benefit that her close friend runs and the two could run together. [18]

Obviously, exercise is not the only factor that comes into her deliberations. There is no simple syllogism of the sort:

[17] *STh* I-II, q. 14, a. 1.

[18] An example of reasoning involving the weighing of benefits and evils is found in *STh* II-II, q. 125, a. 1.

Exercise is to be pursued.
This action is exercise.
∴ This action is to be pursued.

The fact that a certain action is exercise is but one consideration, albeit an essential consideration, in its favor. Aquinas notes that a single action can be intended for many purposes:

A person can intend many things at the same time, as is plain from the fact that a man prefers one thing to another because it is better than the other. One thing can be better than another because, amongst other things, it is helpful for achieving many goals; therefore, one thing can be preferred to another from the fact that it achieves many things. [19]

The means to exercise (what particular kind of exercise will be pursued) will be determined in part by factors independent of its contribution to the end of exercise or even to the further end of health.

Deliberation involves a twofold process. [20] We begin with some end or goal and we seek to discover some means to achieve this goal. After we have discovered various means, we then investigate these means, seeing how they relate to other goals, especially to the ultimate end; we seek to determine whether the means are "possible" given our other commitments and goals, including our goal of choosing from amongst conflicting means that which seems better than the others. [21] As Aquinas puts it, we seek to bring the means back to some end in which the will can rest.

When the will traces the object of deliberation back to an end in which it can rest entirely, then it adheres determinately onto that object, but if it traces the object

[19] *STh* 1-11, q. 12, a. 3: "Simul homo potest plura intendere. Quod patet ex hoc, quod homo unum alteri praeeligit, quia melius est altero, inter alias autem conditiones quibus aliquid est melius altero, una est quod ad plura valet, uncle potest aliquid praeeligi alteri, ex hoc quod ad plura valet."

[20] William A. Wallace *(The Role of Demonstration in Moral Theology: A Study of Methodology in St. Thomas Aquinas* [Washington, DC: The Thomist Press, 1962], 84-89) explains these resolutive and compositive steps of practical reasoning.

[21] See *STh* I-II, q. 14, a. 5, ad 3.

back to an end in which the will does not rest entirely, then it wavers between options. [22]

For Aquinas, then, (1) the universal major premise does not lead necessarily to the particular conclusion; (2) deliberation involves an inquiry into a variety of means; and (3) the means are evaluated according to a variety of attributes, including the diverse goals they may achieve. Clearly, then, deliberation does not look like a simple series of categorical propositions.

It remains to be seen whether Aquinas's major premises would look something like Davidson's *prima facie* propositions. Would Aquinas want to say that the person reasons as follows: "Given that swimming is expensive, *prima facie* it should be avoided"; "Given that biking is in a beautiful setting, *prima facie* it should be pursued"; and so on? Aquinas, of course, does not speak in terms of *prima facie* good or *prima facie* bad, but he does say,

> Every particular good thing may be considered under the aspect of being good and under the aspect of the lack of good, which has the notion of evil, and in this respect everything may be considered as worthy of choice or as something to be avoided. [23]

Though Aquinas does not use the term *"prima facie,"* he might well say, "Insofar as (or in the respect that) biking takes extra time, it should be avoided"; or "In the respect that biking is in a beautiful setting, it should be chosen." Since Davidson himself uses the terminology "in a certain respect" and "insofar as" to express *prima facie* judgments, [24] it seems plausible that the two thinkers are expressing the same or similar ideas. "In-some-respect" propositions share two important features with *prima facie* propositions: (1) they do not lead necessarily to the con-

[22] III *Sent.,* d. 17, q. 1, a. 2, qcla. l: "Quando voluntas reducit aliquid consiliabile in finem in quo totaliter quiescit, sententialiter acceptat illud; si autem reducat in finem in quo non totaliter quiescit, trepidat inter utrumque."

[23] *STh* I-II, q. 13, a. 6. "Et rursum in omnibus particularibus bonis potest considerare rationem boni alicuius, et defectum alicuius boni, quod habet rationem mali, et secundum hoc, potest unumquodque huiusmodi bonorum apprehendere ut eligibile, vel fugibile."

[24] Donald Davidson, "Intention," in Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events,* 84-102, at 98.

dusion and (2) diverse "in-some-respect" propositions may be combined into larger considerations.

These two features can be found in another way that Aquinas speaks of looking at practical information. He distinguishes between willing something in consideration, or absolutely, and willing it actually, as it exists here and now. For instance, he says that a merchant would not want, considered in itself, to throw his cargo overboard, but given the circumstance that he is in a storm and that saving the ship requires jettisoning the cargo, he does will to throw his cargo overboard.[25] Jettisoning the cargo can be considered in two ways, in itself and insofar as it saves the ship. Considered in itself, the merchant wishes to avoid it; considered insofar as it saves the ship, he pursues it. The "considered-in-itself" judgment, then, appears to be *prima facie.* It does not lead to a necessary categorical conclusion. At best it leads to the *prima facie* conclusion, "Insofar as this is cargo, it should not be thrown overboard." From other evidence, however, another conclusion can be reached, namely, "Insofar as this is a dangerous weight, it should be thrown overboard." The merchant wishes to retain his cargo, just considered in itself, but this desire does not automatically translate into a will actually to retain his cargo.

All of the elements of *prima facie* propositions, then, are found within Aquinas, only waiting to be flushed out into a fuller account of practical reasoning. In the next section, we can see how diverse considerations might be combined into more complex considered-in-itself major premises.

C) ComparativeJudgments

There is no reason to suppose that Aquinas thinks the major premise of reason must always be a universally quantified negative precept, a requirement that would unrealistically restrict the instances of weakness (or of practical reasoning in general).[26]

[25] *STh* I-II, q. 6, a. 6.

[26] Even when it should in fact be a universally quantified negative precept, as in "No adultery is to be pursued," it does not follow that the incontinent person perceives it that way. Aquinas says, "Not every means is such that the end cannot be attained without it, and even

Someone might give himself the precept "Unhealthy foods should be avoided," yet consider that some actual unhealthy foods should be pursued, insofar as they have other good traits. Perhaps one's host has served the unhealthy food and it would be rude not to eat it. In other words the precept is more precisely worded, "Considered in itself, unhealthy foods should be avoided."

I have suggested that the judgment of reason is comprehensive, including evidence against eating the food as well as evidence that favors eating the food. It considers that the food is unhealthy but also that eating the food would be polite. Perhaps it could also consider, in favor of eating, that the food is pleasurable. The judgment of reason, then, which is also the judgment of conscience, would look something like this:

REASON (OR CONSCIENCE)
Considered in itself, eating food that is unhealthy, pleasurable, polite and [other relevant factors] is to be pursued.
This action is an act of eating food that is unhealthy, polite, pleasurable ....
∴ This action is to be pursued.

The major premise of reason might consider many factors, while yet remaining a judgment "in consideration." Phrased as a considered-in-itself judgment it would look something like this: "Considered in itself, an action that is a and b and c ... should be avoided (or pursued)." Such a judgment begins to look much like Davidson's all-things-considered judgment: a *prima facie* judgment that evaluates many factors, perhaps all the relevant aspects of an action.

The upshot of this discussion is that Davidson's criticism against Aquinas is unfounded. Aquinas can allow for conflicting claims for and against an action, all of which are true, and he can combine them into a single judgment, for the major premise of his practical syllogism is not universally quantified but is an absolute

when it is necessary for the end, it is not always considered in that respect" ("quia non omne quod est ad finem, tale est ut sine eo finis haberi non possit; aut, si tale sit, non semper sub tali ratione consideratur" [*STh* 1-11, q. 13, a. 6, ad 1]) The incontinent person may not consider the act of adultery as *necessarily* opposed to the end he is pursuing, even though it in fact is so opposed.

judgment-a" considered-in-itself" judgment-so that it serves the role of Davidson's *prima facie* premises. While Aquinas does not explicitly spell out how this might be done in an example of practical reasoning, nevertheless, all of the elements of such reasoning are present within his thought.

IV. THE MINOR PREMISE

A) All-Out Judgments

Davidson would rightly object to one aspect of my presentation, namely, that I present the conclusions as categorical.[27] Given the premises indicated, the conclusion of each syllogism should be, like the major premise, an absolute consideration. The judgment of the passions, for instance, should appear as follows:

REASON (OR CONSCIENCE)
Considered in itself, eating food that is unhealthy, pleasurable, polite and [other relevant factors] is to be pursued
This action is an act of eating food that is unhealthy, polite, pleasurable ....
∴ Considered as an act of eating food that is unhealthy, pleasurable, polite and [other relevant factors], this action is to be pursued.

Such a conditional judgment, notes Davidson, will hardly move someone to act. We choose actions, not actions under a consideration. We can *want* things considered abstractly; we can *choose* only what is actual.

Aristotle observes that we can want immortality, but we cannot intend or choose it, because choice concerns only what is possible. It is not that we want what is impossible, considered as impossible, by kind of conditional velleity, such as, "if it were possible, then I would want it."[28] Rather, we want immortality not

[27] Davidson, "How Is Weakness of Will Possible?", 37.

[28] See *STh* I-II, q. 13, a. 5, ad 1; *De Malo*, q. 16, a. 3, ad 9. "Impossible" in these contexts seems to be taken quite loosely, referring to things that are literally possible but not possible to will, given one's other commitments. Sometimes Aquinas uses the term *velleitas* to refer to any will for something considered in itself, without adding the conditional aspect; see *STh* I,

insofar as it is impossible but as it is abstracted from its possibility or impossibility. We can consider immortality apart from its possibility or impossibility, although as it actually exists it must be possible or impossible. Similarly, we can want immortality considered apart from its possibility or impossibility, but it must be chosen as it actually exists, and therefore it can never be chosen, since it is impossible.

The major premise of reason, as so far presented, is an absolute judgment, abstracting from many conditions of an action. As such, it can generate wanting but never choosing. The conclusion reached is also an absolute consideration, so that it can generate wanting but not action. The conclusion of a practical syllogism must not abstract from the conditions of an action; it must be a conclusion of what actually is. It cannot be an absolute judgment; it must be categorical.

Davidson notes this inability of *prima facie* premises to generate categorical conclusions, so he posits a fourth judgment, beyond the three judgments mentioned above, which he calls an "all-out" or *sans phrase* judgment. [29] It judges not that an action should be done or avoided insofar as it has some attribute or other; rather, it judges that an action should be done *tout court*, categorically and without qualification. Davidson provides no explanation of how this judgment is reached. He compares it to probability judgments. [30] We somehow move from "given that the barometer is falling, it will probably rain tonight" to the judgment, "it will probably rain tonight." But no simple syllogism or formula gets us from one to the other. Similarly, the weak person moves from the *prima facie* judgment "Given that this action is polite, it should be pursued," to the all-out judgment, "This action should be pursued." The only medium that Davidson offers to get from the *prima facie* premise to the all-out conclusion is the "principle of continence" which recommends, with no logical necessity, that we follow our all-things-considered

q. 19, a. 6, ad 1.

[29] Davidson, "How Is Weakness of Will Possible?", 40; idem, "Davidson Responds," 197.

[30] Davidson, "How Is Weakness of Will Possible?", 37-38.

judgment. The weak person, of course, does not use the principle of continence, and yet reaches an all-out conclusion.

As Daniel Westberg has noted, in Aquinas's account, an agent must not only deliberate before a choice (indeed, deliberation is not always necessary); he must also pass judgment that this action, here and now, is to be done.[31] We have so far examined inquiry or deliberation, in which an agent considers what aspects of actions are worthwhile pursuing and what aspects are not. This inquiry considers actions in themselves, that is, it operates in the mode of prima facie judgments. Before an agent moves to action, however, he must pass judgment upon what actually is to be done. He must, as Davidson says, reach an all-out judgment.

But how can the agent reach such a categorical conclusion from the *prima facie* premises provided in deliberation? What vehicle can move him from a *prima facie* premise to an all-out conclusion? An obvious candidate presents itself: the minor premise. If it is to play this role, however, then the minor premise must be more than it first appears. We have seen that the major premise is not usually a simple universal categorical proposition, but rather an absolute judgment. Likewise, we will discover that the minor premise must be more than Aquinas's simplified examples suggest.

B) Negative judgments

We can consider an act of eating unhealthy food just as such, abstracting from whether it is pleasant or polite or anything else. What if it existed that way? What if there were an action that was just an act of eating unhealthy foods and nothing else? It would be undesirable *tout court.* We could reach a categorical conclusion that it should be avoided. Of course, no such action exists. Nevertheless, in order to proceed from wanting to acting, it seems that we must consider the action in this light. We must judge that it is an act of eating unhealthy food and nothing else. We must judge not that it is to be avoided insofar as it is unhealthy; rather,

[31] Westberg, *Right Practical Reason,* 164-83.

we must judge that it is to be avoided as it actually is. If it actually is unhealthy, and nothing else besides, then it should in all ways be avoided. The practical syllogism would look like this:

Insofar as an action is eating unhealthy food, it should be avoided.
This is an action of eating unhealthy food and nothing else.
∴ This action should be avoided.

The absolute character of the conclusion is dropped on account of the "and nothing else" clause that is added in the minor premise. In effect, this clause designates that the action actually exists after the manner it is considered in the major premise, namely, apart from additional considerations. By adding the "and nothing else" clause, the minor premise allows us to reach an all-out conclusion.

Unfortunately, the minor premise is absurd. No real concrete action is simply an act of eating unhealthy food and nothing else. Invariably, it will be an action of eating something pleasurable or something distasteful, an action of eating at an appropriate time or at an inappropriate time, and so on.

The more considerations we place in the major premise, however, the more likely the minor premise becomes. Consider the following argument of conscience.

REASON (OR CONSCIENCE)
Considered in itself, eating food that is unhealthy, pleasurable, polite, ... is to be pursued.
This is an act of eating food that is unhealthy, pleasurable, polite ... and nothing else.
∴ This action is to be pursued.

The minor premise still falls short of truth, but it approaches closer to the truth. The more things that fall within consideration, the fewer things are excluded from consideration by the "and nothing else" clause.

No quantity of considerations, of course, will ever make the minor premise true, for there will always be more information one could add concerning the action as it actually exists. It is an

act of eating something green, it is an act of eating something circular, and so on. Nevertheless, at a certain point the minor premise approaches what might be called practicable truth, that is, it includes everything worthy of practical consideration. That the action involves eating something green or circular is not (usually) something that bears upon whether it should be pursued or avoided. These considerations are practically irrelevant. The minor premise, then, might be rewritten as follows: This is an act of eating food that is unhealthy, pleasurable, polite ... and (practically) nothing else. "Practically" does not mean "almost," as it sometimes does colloquially. It means either that an aspect or feature has no practical bearing at all or that it has minor significance that will not modify the judgment.

Aquinas provides no such account of "and nothing else" minor premises, but his in-consideration propositions, as opposed to Davidson's *prima facie* propositions, lend themselves to this sort of minor premise. If the major premise is an abstraction from many conditions of an action, then when the minor premise excludes these conditions-that is, when it considers an action precisely without these conditions-an all-out conclusion follows. The abstraction of the major premise disappears because the minor premise affirms the abstraction as practicably true, as applying to the way things really are, as applying to the world in which the person must now act. We do not choose action-types but concrete actions. Therefore, there must always be a gap between a universal abstract major premise and the concrete actions we must perform. This gap can be bridged only by affirming that the concrete action realizes the abstract type. But since the abstract type can change (for example, from being worthy of pursuit to being worthy of avoidance) with additional considerations, it follows that the gap can be bridged only by denying anything further in the concrete action. The principles of deliberation found within Aquinas require some such negative minor premise.

C) The Role of the Passions and Choice

We now have a *prima facie* major premise, a true minor premise, and an all-out conclusion. But how do we reach the minor premise, that is, how do we determine that the action has no other features of practical importance? It is impossible to reach such a particular negative proposition conclusively.[32] No doubt experience tells us what sorts of things are likely to be practically relevant and what are not; no doubt experience tells us when we have likely exhausted the relevant features of an action.

To move from such impressions to intellectual belief, Aquinas tells us, requires the intervention of the will.

> Sometimes the intellect cannot be determined to one side of a contradiction, not immediately through the definitions of the terms, as with first principles, nor in virtue of the principles, as with the conclusions of demonstrations. Then it can be determined to one side of the contradiction by the will, which chooses to assent to one side on account of something sufficient to move the will but not sufficient to move the intellect, for example, because it seems good or fitting to assent to this side.[33]

In short, we must choose to believe that the action is nothing else of practical importance.[34] The choice may be reasonable, grounded upon evidence and experience, but it is a choice nonetheless. It is a determination to cease deliberating and to begin

[32] Except when the major premise concerns the avoidance of something intrinsically evil. In the case of adultery, for instance, nothing more need be considered. Whatever additional considerations are added, the action should still be avoided, for nothing can possibly direct the action to the end. See *STh* I-II, q. 13, a. 6, ad 1.

[33] *De Verit.*, q. 14, a. 1. "Quandoque vero intellectus non potest determinari ad alteram partem contradictionis neque statim per ipsas definitiones terminorum, sicut in principiis, nee etiam virtute principiorum, sicut est in conclusionibus demonstrationis; determinatur autem per voluntatem, quae eligit assentire uni parti determinate et praecise propter aliquid, quod est sufficiens ad movendum voluntatem, non autem ad movendum intellectum, utpote quia videtur bonum vel conveniens huic parti assentire." See also *STh* II-II, q. 2, a. 1, ad 3.

[34] Bonnie Kent wishes to downplay the role of the will, and therefore of choice, in sins of weakness. She goes so far as to suggest ("Aquinas and Weakness," 84) that weakness need not involve even consent to the passions. Her example, however, shows only that one does not choose to reject reason; one does choose, however, to consent to the passions without the guide of reason-that is, the "and nothing else" excludes certain considerations even if it does not formally reject them.

acting. Sometimes it is a choice that itself requires deliberation: we examine whether we have considered all the evidence. Sometimes it is a choice without deliberation, for Aquinas says that actions carried out in a habitual or standard way do not require deliberation. [35] To avoid an infinite regress, presumably all such choices must rest upon something reached without deliberation.

We have, then, filled in some details of Davidson's logical gap between the *prima facie* major premise and the all-out conclusion. We have precisely located the gap: it lies in the judgment that the action has nothing further of practical importance. We have also determined how the gap is bridged: ultimately, through a choice of the will. But that choice itself follows upon no logical necessity.

Aquinas seems to think, and scientific evidence backs him up, that this choice relies heavily upon the emotions, for the senses, and the corresponding sensible appetite, bear upon particular details. [36] Antonio Damasio's patient "Elliott," whose brain damage prevented him from feeling key emotions, was able to conjure up options and reason through choice scenarios but he could not apply this reasoning to actual choices. [37] He could give reasons for and against various actions, but he could rarely make a balanced final judgment. A similar patient considered the pros and cons of two alternate appointment dates for half an hour, without reaching a conclusion. [38] Damasio thinks that emotions help pick out those features of actions that are relevant to a decision, and they keep these features in mind. [39] In other words, emotions provide the minor premise, "this action is A and B . . . " where A and B represent features of an action relevant to choice. Those whose emotions are severely impaired might be able to provide the *prima facie* major premise, but they cannot reach the

[35] *STh* I-II, q. 14, a. 4.

[36] See *STh* I-II, q. 77, a. 2; *De Malo,* q. 3, a. 9, ad 7.

[37] Antonio R. Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Putnam, 1994), 49.

[38] Ibid., 193.

[39] Ibid., 174-75.

all-out judgment, for they miss the appropriate minor premise, the premise that provides the particular judgment.

If the lack of emotions prevents this particular judgment, then it seems reasonable that strength of emotion might force this particular judgment, or at least push strongly toward one particular judgment over another.[40] The man who is sorely tempted by his passions is faced with two major premises:

THE MAJOR OF CONSCIENCE	THE MAJOR OF THE PASSIONS
Considered in itself, an action that is adultery, pleasurable, ... should be avoided.	Considered in itself, an action that is pleasurable should be pursued.

He also has two minor premises available to him:

THE MINOR OF CONSCIENCE	THE MINOR OF THE PASSIONS
This action is adultery, pleasurable, . . . and (practically) nothing else.	This action is pleasurable and (practically) nothing else.

This minor premise is reached ultimately through choice, but a choice heavily influenced by the passions. Under the sway of the passions, then, the weak person thinks that this action is pleasurable and likely nothing else. He must yet choose. If he chooses to consider no further, then he concludes with the argument of the passions, reaching the all-out judgment that this action should be pursued. And so he pursues.

D) The Error of the Minor Premise

The above account finds confirmation in Aquinas's insistence that the weak person errs in the particular. We can now see how the premise "this action is pleasurable" might be false. The action is certainly pleasurable, but it is much more besides; much more

[40] For a consideration of the role of the passions within Aquinas see Paul Gondreau, "The Passions and the Moral Life: Appreciating the Originality of Aquinas," *The Thomist* 71 (2007): 419-50; for a consideration of the manner in which reason and the emotions interact within virtue see Giuseppe Butera, "On Reason's Control of the Passions in Aquinas's Theory of Temperance," *Mediaeval Studies* 68 (2006): 133-60.

of practical import must be considered. In short, the "and nothing else" phrase belies the minor premise. The choice to act without further deliberation, without considering the rule of reason, impeaches the weak person's reasoning. In his desire to attain the goal of pleasure he has endorsed a false minor premise.

This failure to posit the true minor premise is precisely what marks the weak person. Her desire for pleasure is such that she wants to choose now, and she does not want to bother thinking about other aspects of the action.[41] She is, Aquinas says, like the carpenter who makes a cut without his straight edge: he is to blame for the resulting crooked cut precisely because he should have used his ruler.[42] Similarly, the weak person chooses an action without her straight edge, that is, without the judgment of reason. She is to blame for the consequent evil action because she should have thought about her action more; she should have realized that there were more things worth considering. She acts under a kind of voluntary blindness-judging that the action is nothing more than pleasurable-and so she is to blame for her evil action.[43] In this respect, Aquinas's weak person is much like Davidson's, who acts based upon a limited subset of the evidence available.[44]

The sin of weakness, then, is much like a sin of ignorance concerning some particular. The hunter who shoots at a movement in the bushes, not taking the time to investigate whether the cause of the movement is a deer or a human being, sins through a failure to posit a correct minor premise. He argues, "Shoot at an animal; this is an animal; shoot at this." In fact,

[41] I use pleasure as the prime example, but what is said applies equally to anger (retributions), fear (dangers), and so on.

[42] *De Malo*, q. 1, a. 3.

[43] Aquinas's sin of weakness, then, does not include what Daniel Guevara calls "aggressive akrasia," in which one chooses with clear-headed understanding that one should not choose it (Daniel Guevara, "The Will as Practical Reason and the Problem of Akrasia," *The Review of Metaphysics* 62 [2009): 525-50). Guevara better describes malice than weakness, for the person who sins from malice sins clearheadedly. Perhaps the contemporary usage of "weakness" includes such actions. If so, then we need not fault Aquinas's account of weakness; we need recognize only a different usage of terminology. We might argue whether Aquinas's usage or Guevara's is more appropriate to the reality.

[44] Davidson, "How Is Weakness of Will Possible?", 40.

however, he is ignorant of the minor, or at least not sufficiently aware of the minor, perhaps because he previously failed to check for the presence of human beings. When he posits the minor premise, he abandons the rule of reason at the particular level. He fails sufficiently to investigate the nature of this particular action. Reason must determine whether this action here and now is ordered to the proper end, not whether some abstract type is ordered to the end. By failing to investigate, he fails to order this particular action to the end; he fails to apply the order to the end-found in the major premise-to the particular action.

The hunter is unlike the one who sins from passion, however, in that the hunter does not have the correct premise ("this is an animal" or "this is a man") available even in habit. In contrast, he who commits fornication from passion does know, in habit, that "This woman is not my wife," so he knows that "This action is fornication." Indeed, he may have thought it a moment previously.[45] Both in the sin of ignorance of the particular and in the sin of passion the person decides to act without the rule of reason, for he judges that the action is such and nothing else, including whatever else reason might find worthy of consideration. The two differ in that the one who sins from weakness has the rule of reason ready to hand-that is, he is at least habitually aware of what further information reason must consider.[46] In the sin of ignorance, on the other hand, the rule of reason is not so readily available. The person is ignorant and he must investigate to discover the needed truth.

[45] Kent ("Transitory Vice," 221-22) considers this a plausible interpretation of the manner in which the weak person fails to use the syllogism of reason.

[46] Does the "impulsive" or "impetuous" incontinent (as opposed to the "weak" incontinent) person have the knowledge in habit? He certainly does not actually consider it in any deliberations (see *STh* II-II, q. 156, a. 1). Nevertheless, the information is something that he could think upon, without investigation, if he chose to do so; otherwise, he would sin from ignorance. The sinner, then, can either have the knowledge in habit or not. If not, then he sins in ignorance. If in habit, then either (1) he considers it in act but does not stick to this consideration, so that at the moment of choice it is no longer in act, or (2) he never even takes the time to consider it in act but rushes headlong into the choice with no deliberation. This latter is impulsive incontinence. Bradley ("Aquinas on Weakness," 96) states that the impetuous incontinent ignores the facts but he is not ignorant of them.

V. THE STATUS OF THE MAJOR PREMISE

What of the major premise of the passions? Is it true, as Davidson suggests? Or is it false? I have already suggested that it is true in some sense. It can be incorporated into the syllogism of reason or of conscience-for instance, a person can reasonably include pleasure amongst the factors favoring pursuit of a proffered slice of cheese cake. Aquinas himself grants that pleasure can be one factor in favor of pursuing an action.

The weak person does not propose to himself, as a major premise, "Pleasurable action should be pursued as an ultimate end." This premise is false and he knows it. Nor does he propose "Pleasurable action should be pursued insofar as it is ordered to the ultimate end." It is precisely the order to the ultimate end that he fails to consider. Rather, he proposes "Pleasurable action should be pursued just considered as such." It is a goal worthy of pursuit, but not worthy of pursuit as an ultimate end. As such, before it can be fully endorsed, it must be traced back and ordered to the ultimate end. The weak person, however, chooses to set aside this order, this tracing back to the end. He wants to choose now, without bothering over such details. What happens when the will proceeds to choose before bringing the means back to the ultimate end? Aquinas gives an answer.

> The will as a certain kind of nature, as has been said, is moved to some object considered absolutely, so that if the object is not ordered by reason to some further end, then the will will adhere to that object absolutely, as if that were its end. On the other hand, if the object is ordered to some further end, then the will will not adhere to an object absolutely until the point it reaches the consideration of the end.[47]

In other words, if the will does not bring the means back to the ultimate end, then it settles upon the more immediate end as if that were the final end.

[47] III *Sent.*, d. 17, q. 1, a. 2, qlca. 1: "Voluntas autem ut natura movetur in aliquid, ut dictum est, absolute: unde si per rationem non ordinetur in aliquid aliud, acceptabit illud absolute, et erit illius tamquam finis; si autem ordinetur in finem, non acceptabit aliquid absolute, quousque perveniat ad considerationem finis, quod facit voluntas ut ratio."

Aquinas cannot mean that for every action we perform we must *actually* consider its order to the ultimate end. Common experience reveals that we rarely make such an explicit reference to the ultimate end. Furthermore, Aquinas himself acknowledges "habitual" or "virtual" orders to an end: through some prior act of ordering, a person retains the order to the end without at the moment thinking about it.

Someone need not always be thinking about the ultimate end in all that he desires and does, but the virtue of the first intention, which refers to the ultimate end, remains in any desire for anything even if he is not now actually thinking upon the ultimate end. Similarly, someone walking upon a road need not always think upon his destination at every step.[48]

Someone who deliberates about exerc1smg for the sake of health, then, need not explicitly consider the fact that health is ordered to the ultimate end. Previously (perhaps long ago), he has recognized that health considered in itself is ordered to the ultimate end, and this previous recognition retains its power in further deliberations. At the moment, he desires health in itself, as a good in its own right. He does not desire health as an ultimate end, but as something good, as a certain kind of perfection. A person can desire goods in themselves, even abstracted from the relation to the end, because the will has a natural desire for any perfection of the person, such as the realization of any power.

A man naturally wills not only the object of the will but also those things which are fitting to other powers, for example, knowledge of the truth, which is fitting to the intellect, and to exist and to live and other such things, which concern

[48] *STh* 1-11, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3: "Ad tertium dicendum quod non oportet ut semper aliquis cogitet de ultimo fine, quandocumque aliquid appetit vel operatur, sed virtus primae intentionis, quae est respectu ultimi finis, manet in quolibet appetitu cuiuscumque rei, etiam si de ultimo fine actu non cogitetur. Sicut non oportet quad qui vadit per viam, in quolibet passu cogitet de fine." See also IV *Sent.,* d. 49, q. 1, a. 3, qlca. 4, ad 6. For habitual and virtual references to the end, see Thomas Osborne, "The Threefold Referral of Acts to the Ultimate End in Thomas Aquinas and His Commentators," *Angelicum* 85 (2008): 715-36.

natural well-being, all of which are included within the object of the will as certain particular goods. [49]

Pleasure itself is the realization of the sensitive appetite, so that the will can have a natural tendency even toward it.

These various goods, of course, are not desired as ultimate ends. They are desired with their own inherent goodness, for not every goodness is simply derivative upon an order to the end.

Sometimes that which is ordered to another, however, has in itself some character of goodness, even apart from the order to another, as sweet medicine has the character of the good of pleasure in addition to the good of bringing health. [50]

The "tracing back," then, need not go explicitly all the way back to the ultimate end. A person's deliberations can stop at something good in itself. His action is nevertheless ordered virtually to the ultimate end because of some prior recognition that this good, which he now desires merely considered in itself, is ordered to the ultimate end.

In what manner, then, does the weak person fail to trace his action back to the ultimate end? Two possibilities seem plausible. First, it may happen at least for pleasure-and perhaps for the satisfaction of the passions in general-that it cannot be ordered habitually to the ultimate end, even when it is considered in itself. This is because pleasure is an end and good insofar as it completes some other activity. [51] In order for pleasure to be ordered to the ultimate end, this presupposed activity on which pleasure focuses must itself be ordered to the end, a condition that is not built into pleasure just considered in itself. The major premise of the

[49] *STh* I-II, q. 10, a. 1: "Unde naturaliter homo vult non solum obiectum voluntatis, sed etiam alia quae conveniunt aliis potentiis, ut cognitionem veri, quae convenit intellectui; et esse et vivere et alia huiusmodi, quae respiciunt consistentiam naturalem; quae omnia comprehenduntur sub obiecto voluntatis, sicut quadam particularia bona."

[50] *STh* I-II, q. 20, a. 3: "Quandoque vero illud quodad aliud ordinatur, habetin se aliquam rationem boni, etiam praeter ordinem ad aliud bonum, sicut medicina saporosa habet rationem boni delectabilis, praeter hoc quod est sanativa."

[51] *STh* I-II, q. 33, a. 4.

passions (at least when it concerns pleasure), then, can have no habitual order to the end.

A second possibility bears upon what is more central to sins of weakness. In the final analysis, this concrete chosen action-and not some abstract action-must be traced back to the ultimate end. The ignorance (or ignoring) with which the weak person acts, however, prevents him from ordering his concrete action to the ultimate end. If we grant (contrary to what was said above) that pleasure in itself can be habitually ordered to the ultimate end, it does not follow that the weak person can order this concrete pleasurable action habitually to the end. As we have seen, with additional considerations what was ordered to the end-considered in itself-might lose this order in the concrete. For example, the act of eating a certain food might lose its order with the additional consideration that the action is rude.[52] Likewise, if a pleasurable action, considered in itself, is habitually ordered to the ultimate end, the additional consideration that the act is one of fornication would remove this order.

The weak person ignores such additional considerations, at least at the moment of choice. He judges that nothing further need be considered, that the action is nothing else of practical importance. Nevertheless, the weak person recognizes to some extent the inadequacy of his own deliberations. He knows that perhaps he should not have cut short his deliberations, that perhaps the action is more than he now considers. Even in the best of deliberations, of course, some such doubt remams, however slight.

Since the subject matters of prudence are the singular occurrences upon which human actions bear, the certainty of prudence cannot be of such a degree that it entirely removes doubt.[53]

[52] See *STh* II-II, q. 49, a. 7, quoted above. See also Steven J. Jensen, "When Evil Actions Become Good," *Nova et Vetera* (English Edition) 5 (2007): 747-64, in which the converse is argued, namely, that actions that lack the order, considered in itself, can become ordered in some concrete situations.

[53] *STh* II-II, q. 47, a. 9, ad 2: "Quia vero materiae prudentiae sunt singularia contingentia, circa quae sunt operationes humanae, non potest certitudo prudentiae tanta esse quod omnino sollicitudo tollatur."

What vitiates the weak person's deliberations, however, is his lack of effort to remove the doubt insofar as it is possible, such that his doubt is no small matter. He is far from certain that this action is pleasurable *and nothing else,* and so he is far from certain that this action can indeed be traced back to the ultimate end. What he does know, which therefore stamps his motive or intention, is that the action is pleasurable. That it can be ordered to the ultimate end is uncertain. He therefore abandons tracing this concrete action back to the ultimate end for the sake of the pleasure that he knows now.

The error of the passions, which is an error in the particular, diverts the weak person's will from the ultimate end. His major premise provides him with a reason to pursue the pleasure; his lack of consideration in the concrete leaves this concrete action with an unknown relation to the ultimate end. Pursuing pleasure while having provided no order to the end, however, is to pursue pleasure without a relation to the end, which is to pursue pleasure as the only end.[54] The error of the minor premise sets up this pleasure as an end with no order to anything beyond itself. The weak person, with his will, is disposed to seek the good of reason. His sinful choice is both a choice for *this* pleasure and for pleasure with no further end. He does not sin from choice, from a prior will towards evil, but he does sin while choosing.[55] In the very choice to act without further consideration he sets aside his prior ultimate end and settles upon pleasure.

CONCLUSION

Davidson argues that Aquinas cannot allow for moral conflict, that is, for a consideration of both the pros and the cons of some course of action, because Aquinas's major premises are universal categorical statements. Worse yet, according to Davidson's

[54] Kent ("Aquinas and Weakness," 84) says that we can consent to act counter to reason simply by neglecting to consider reasons against an action.

[55] For the distinction between sinning from choice and sinning while choosing see *De Malo,* q. 3, a. 12, ad 5; *STh* 1-11, q. 78, a. 4, ad 3. Bonnie Kent has a detailed treatment of this point ("Transitory Vice," 207-10).

reading, the side of the passions rests upon a false major premise, so that one side of the argument is not even worth considering. We have seen, however, that Aquinas provides a simplified presentation of moral reasoning. It is clear that deliberation involves an inquiry that considers both the pros and cons; furthermore, pleasure itself can be one consideration that reason weighs in favor of an action. Aquinas's major premises are best portrayed not as universal categorical propositions but as absolute propositions, that is, as considerations of some thing in itself, abstracted from other details.

While such "in some respect" propositions allow for the reasonable consideration of both sides of a case, it is not immediately evident how they can lead to action. In order to act we must judge that an action should be pursued, not that it should be pursued in some respect. Davidson himself provides no clue of how to reach such all-out judgments from *prima facie* premises. Neither does Aquinas provide an explicit account, but his manner of expressing the absolute character of the major premises avoids the obscurity associated with the term *"prima facie,"* thereby leaving room for an account to fill the gap, an account drawn from his principles.

To consider something in itself means to consider it just as such, apart from other characteristics. Consequently, when the minor premise asserts not only that the action is pleasurable but also that the action is practically nothing else, an all-out conclusion follows. The passions lead reason to dwell upon such a minor premise. This premise, however, is false, since much more beyond pleasure needs to be considered to evaluate the action. In his hurry to make a choice, the weak person excludes from his minor premise considerations relevant to the end of reason. Of course, he is unaware {at the moment) of what details of the action he is omitting. Nevertheless, he is aware that he is failing to consider some aspects of the action, aspects that might remove the order to the end. He brushes aside reason in his eagerness to gain his pleasure.

Davidson's accusations against Aquinas, then, are unfounded. They apply only to the simplified forms of reasoning that Aquinas presents in his treatment of weakness. A broader examination of what he says concerning deliberation reveals a nuanced view that can readily address Davidson's concerns. On some points, Aquinas explicitly contradicts Davidson's reading: for instance, he states that reason considers all the various aspects of an action. On other points, Aquinas makes sufficient references to indicate that he holds positions more in line with Davidson's own view than with Davidson's portrayal of him. For instance, Aquinas's treatment of inquiry and the good or evil of actions considered in themselves reveals that his account of deliberation utilizes absolute considerations, which are something like *prima facie* judgments. Finally, on some points, Aquinas's account lends itself, perhaps even of necessity, to certain accommodations, so that, for instance, the absolute form of the major premise lends itself to the "and nothing else" formulation of the minor premise, which thereby closes the gap between *"prima facie"* judgments and "all-out" judgments. In short, Aquinas's account is more than able to address Davidson's concerns.

The Thomist 73 (2009): 381-98

CHRIST BRINGS FREEDOM FROM SIN AND DEATH: THE COMMENTARY OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS ON ROMANS 5:12-21

J. A. DI NOIA, O.P.

Secretary, Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments
Vatican City

ONE NIGHT EARLY IN 1274, a Dominican friar in Naples had a dream about St. Thomas. In the friar's dream, Aquinas is lecturing on the letters of St. Paul when suddenly there enters into the hall none other than the Apostle himself. After acknowledging him with a slight bow, St. Thomas inquires whether his exposition of the text accords with the meaning that St. Paul intended. The Apostle Paul replies approvingly that Aquinas is indeed teaching "what could be understood from his epistles in this life," but that there would come a time "when he would understand them according to their whole truth." [1] With that, the Apostle takes hold of Aquinas's *cappa* and draws him from the lecture hall.

Jean-Pierre Torrell sees in this dream not just a touching premonition of the passing of Thomas Aquinas into eternal life-for, as it happens, the news of the death of Aquinas reached Naples three days later-but also confirmation of his view that the final version of the commentary on Romans dates to a course of lectures given by Aquinas at Naples during 1272 and 1273. I do not intend to enter here into the controversy concerning the dating of Aquinas's Pauline commentaries, except to note that, for the purposes of this article, it is reasonable to assume that the

[1] Jean-Pierre Torrell, *St. Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1, *The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 253.

section of the Romans commentary under consideration here represents the mature teaching of Aquinas.

I take St. Paul's words of approval in this remarkable dream as an occasion to comment on the achievement of the Pauline commentaries of Aquinas, their scope, importance and influence. Indeed, as Otto Hermann Pesch commented years ago, "the thinking of the Apostle is omnipresent" in the theology of Aquinas.[2] In a real sense, St. Thomas regarded the Apostle as a fellow master of theology, "the professor among the Apostles."[3] He saw in the letters of Paul a systematic vision of the faith, and commented on them with meticulous attention and profound insight. Saint Thomas considered the Pauline corpus to constitute a complete treatise, in three parts, on the grace of Christ: (1) nine of the letters concerning this grace as it exists in the *mystical body* (Romans, 1and2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1and2 Thessalonians); (2) four letters concerning the grace of Christ as it exists in the *chief members* of the Church, namely, the prelates (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon), and (3) one letter-Hebrews-concerning the grace of Christ as it exists in the *head* of the body, Christ himself.[4]

It is worthy of note that, in the friar's dream, the Apostle qualifies his approval of Aquinas's exposition of his letters by saying "what could be understood ... in this life" is as yet partial in comparison to the fullness of truth that he would possess in the life to come. I shall keep this cautionary note in mind as I take up the difficult topic of original sin-a mystery of faith in the strictest sense-bedeviled in our time no less than in Aquinas's by many errors, confusions, and misunderstandings.

[2] Otto Hermann Pesch, "Paul as Professor of Theology: The Image of the Apostle in St. Thomas' Theology," *The Thomist* 38 (1974): 589

[3] Ibid., 585.

[4] Thomas Aquinas, *Super Epistolas S. Pauli Lectura,* ed. Raphael Cai (Rome: Marietti, 1953), pro!. (11). Parenthetical numbers in references to this work refer to paragraph numbers in the Marietti edition.

I. SAINT THOMAS'S COMMENTARY ON ROMANS 5: 12-21

In his commentaries on the letters of St. Paul, as in his other exegetical and theological works, Aquinas used the edition of the Vulgate edited at the University of Paris at the beginning of the thirteenth century. In this so-called *Biblia Parisiensis* or "Bible of the University of Paris," the order of the sacred books and the chapter divisions (and, later, verses) within them correspond to those of our own modern editions.[5] Thus Aquinas's outline of the structure of the section of the Letter to the Romans under consideration in this article corresponds roughly to that recognized by most commentators, who see it as part of the long "doctrinal section" of the letter that stretches from chapter 1, verse 16 through chapter 11, verse 36.[6] According to this common view, the argument of this section moves through three stages, showing in turn: first, that through the gospel the holiness of God is revealed as justifying the person of faith (1: 16-4:25); next, that the love of God assures the salvation of those justified by faith (5: 1-8 :39); and finally, that this plan of salvation does not contradict God's promises to Israel (9: 1-11:36). Once St. Paul has announced the second stage of his overall argument at the beginning of chapter 5, he moves on to discuss the threefold liberation that new life in Christ brings: freedom from sin and death (5: 12-21), freedom from self through union with Christ (chap. 6), and freedom from the law (chap. 7). The focus of our attention here is Aquinas's commentary on Romans 5: 12-21, which treats of the first element of the threefold liberation that Christ brings.

In accord with the common exegetical tradition, Aquinas states at the start of his commentary on this passage that St. Paul's theme in 5: 12-21 is that through Christ's grace we are freed from

[5] Wieslaw Dabrowski, "La dottrina sul peccato originale nei commenti di san Tommaso d'Aquino alle lettere di san Paolo Apostolo," *Angelicum* 83 (2006): 560n.

[6] Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Letter to the Romans," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary,* ed. R. E. Brown, J. A. Fitzmyer, and R. E. Murphy (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1990), 832.

the slavery of sin. Reflecting the logic of St. Paul's argument, Aquinas's exposition of these ten verses falls into two sections of two *lectiones* each: (1) *the history of sin* deals with, first (in 5: 12) the origin of sin and death and their entry into the world *(lectio* 3 [406-20]), and then (in 5: 13-14) the existence of sin and death even under the law *(lectio* 4 [421-29]); (2) *the history of grace* concerns how Christ removed sin, first (in 5:15-19), insofar as it entered the world through one man *(lectio* 5 [430-47]), and then (in 5:20-21) insofar as it proliferated after the coming of the law *(lectio* 6 [448-67]).

Wieslaw Dabrowski identifies the hermeneutical principle at work in the Pauline commentaries in two passages early in the Romans commentary where Aquinas calls Christ the "content of the Gospels" *("materiam evangelii")* and where he states that "the Son of God is deservedly called the subject matter of the Holy Scriptures" *("Convenienter autem Filius Dei materia Sanctarum Scripturarum esse dicitur").*[7] This principle lends to the commentaries a Christological and Christocentric character, even as they present "a rich doctrine of original sin."[8] This point is of critical importance for a correct reading of Aquinas's exposition of chapter 5 of Romans. Not just the sin of Adam but the grace of Christ as well are at the center of our attention: not just the history of sin, but all the more so the history of grace. We need to know what sin and death are in order to grasp what Christ's grace has won for us.

The mature skills of a *magister sacrae paginae* are fully on display in Aquinas's commentary on Romans 5: 12-21. A striking feature of the text of the commentary-something to which it will not be possible to do justice in this article-is the constant and ample reference to texts from everywhere in the Bible. The classic Christian understanding of the Bible as one, internally cross-referenced book, centered on Christ and the economy of salva-

[7] *In Rom.,* c. 1, lect. 2 (nn. 28-29) *(Lectures on the Letter to the Romans by St. Thomas Aquinas,* trans. Fabian Larcher, ed. Jeremy Holmes with the support of the Aquinas Center for Theological Renewal at Ave Maria University, Naples, Florida, 2008 [www.aquinas.avemaria.edu/Aquinas_on_Romans.pdf], 21).

[8] Dabrowski, "La dottrina sul peccato originale," 561.

tion, is at work here. A condition for such a comprehensive theological hermeneutics is, of course, a mastery of the content of the individual books of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation-precisely what was to be presupposed in a qualified "master of the sacred page." The unity and inner coherence of the Bible form the basis for the exegesis of each passage in what has lately come to be called a "canonical" interpretation. [9]

The theological hermeneutic at work in this commentary is not only comprehensive. It is also cumulative . Each passage and verse is to be read, not in an interpretive vacuum, but within the context of a tradition of reading, understanding, and teaching. A *magister sacrae paginae* like Aquinas is aware that he is not the first reader to have pondered the meaning of these verses. Thus, at crucial points in his commentary, one finds St. Thomas engaged with other key figures in the tradition of Pauline exegesis-principally, here, Ambrose and Augustine. [10] Especially where his interpretation seems to diverge from theirs, he is concerned to show the broad coherence they share with his reading-one which takes its place in a cumulative tradition of reading and interpretation which it both represents and seeks to enlarge and deepen.

The hermeneutics of Aquinas is properly *theological.* Here the doctrines of the Catholic faith function, we might say, rulishly. They guide the Catholic exegete, who reads these texts with the eyes of faith, to interpret the Sacred Scriptures in accord with the revelation they contain. Although a reading that is consistent with Catholic doctrine is important for the entire Bible, it is particularly significant in the rare instances where the official Magisterium has construed a passage authoritatively, as is the case with Romans 5: 12. The doctrine of the Church has been clear: "Revelation ... enunciates one essential point about original sin:

[9] Cf. Brevard S. Childs, *The Church's Guide for Reading Paul: The Canonical Shaping of the Pauline Corpus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Erdmanns, 2008), 1-27.

[10] Mark Johnson, "Augustine and Aquinas on Original Sin: Doctrine, Authority, and Pedagogy," in *Aquinas the Augustinian,* ed. M. Dauphinais, B. David, and M. Levering (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 145-58.

every man is heir to true sin just by being a member of the human race. This is the mystery."[11]

The genre of the commentary entails verse-by-verse exegesis rather than a systematic presentation of the theology of original sin. For the complete teaching of Aquinas on these topics, one would have to consult the parallel discussions in his other works.[12] Still, many of the key elements of the doctrine of original sin and our liberation from sin and death in Christ come up for discussion in Aquinas's commentary on Romans 5:12-21.

II. THE HISTORY OF SIN: THE ORIGIN OF SIN AND DEATH (ROM5:12)

The entirety of *lectio* 3 of chapter 5 is devoted to verse 12, in which St. Paul describes the entry of sin and death into the world: "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world and by sin death: and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned."[13]

After noting that, against the Pelagians, St. Augustine construed this verse to mean that sin entered the world not only by imitation (of actual sins, that is, according to the Pelagians) but also by propagation, Aquinas plunges directly into the difficulties that this doctrine poses. The first difficulty he raises is perhaps the most acute: "But it seems impossible that sin be passed from one person to another by carnal origin."[14] Sin is in the soul, and guilt must be voluntary: how can they be physically transmitted? As the exposition continues, more difficulties emerge. According to the Scriptures, Adam repented of his sin: if this is so, why didn't this repentance cancel out the inheritance of sin? Why have we not

[11] T. C. O'Brien, "Introduction and Appendices," in *St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, volume* 26 *(1a2ae.81-85): Original Sin* (New York: McGraw-Hill; London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1965), xxii.

[12] E.g., *Compendium Theologiae; Questiones disputatae De Malo; Summa contra Gentiles; Summa Theologiae.*

[13] "Propterea, sicut per unum hominem peccatum in hunc mundum intravit, et per peccatum mors: ita et in omnes homines mors pertransiit, in quo omnes peccaverunt" *(In Rom.,* c. 5, lect. 3, *titolo).* Translation in Larcher, trans., 208.

[14] *In Rom.,* c. 5, lect. 3 (n. 408) (Larcher, trans., 210).

inherited the effects of the other sins of our first parents? What is more, according to Genesis, Eve sinned before Adam: shouldn't Paul say that sin entered the world through a woman rather than through a man? Moreover, death is natural: how can Paul say that death is the consequence of sin when it is evident that all material things-anything that has a body-are perishable? If sin affects all the descendants of Adam, why doesn't it affect Christ who is said to be sinless? Finally, doesn't St. Paul contradict our faith that baptism removes sin?

Addressing these issues in turn, Aquinas begins with the seeming impossibility of the physical transmission of a spiritual property. Part of the answer lies in the receptivity of the body to the infusion of the soul, which is adapted to the body according to the principle that whatever is received exists in the mode of the receiver (n. 408). But if a defect is transmitted by a source that is in some way defective, this does not involve guilt on the part of the one who inherits the defect. "Therefore, it must be admitted that as actual sin is a person's sin, because it is committed through the will of the person sinning, so original sin is the sin of the nature committed through the source of human nature." [15] To explain how this might be the case, Aquinas offers the analogy of the body and its various members. If the hand is involved in a sin, the source of the guilt for the action lies principally in the will of the person who uses his hand to commit the sin and only derivatively in the hand itself. In a similar way, the disorder of human nature derives from the will of Adam who is the source of human nature, and this disorder carries with it "the notion of guilt in all who obtain that nature precisely as susceptible to guilt" (n. 410). Just as an actual sin extends to the various members by reason of the personal act of the one who commits it, so original sin extends to each human being by the natural act of generation.

By generation, therefore, human nature is passed on along with the defect it acquired from the sin of the first parent. According

[15] "Et ideo dicendum est, quod sicut peccatum actuale est peccatum personae, quia per voluntatem personae peccantis committitur, ita peccatum originale est peccatum naturae, quod per voluntatem principii humanae naturae commissum est" *(In Rom.,* c. 5, lect. 3 [409]). Translation in Larcher, trans., 211.

to Aquinas, this defect is nothing other than the lack of original justice, which was conferred by God upon the first parent not only as an individual person but also as the source of human nature. Original justice was to have been passed on to his progeny along with human nature. Instead, having lost it by his sin, the first parent could not pass on original justice. This defect has the aspect of guilt in his descendants in the way that the guilt of a person's members derives from the actual sin that he willfully commits.

Neither Adam's repentance for his first sin nor his subsequent actual sins-nor for that matter the sins of other men-can be passed on by generation because these are strictly personal acts. Only through the first sin could the good of nature, originally intended to be inheritable, be lost. What is more, Adam's repentance did not extend beyond him personally (n. 411). For this reason, St. Paul states that "sin," not "sins," entered the world through one man (n. 412). Even though Eve sinned before Adam, only through the sin of Adam-who was the source of human nature-could the resulting absence of original justice be transmitted to the human beings who followed (nn. 413-14).

Saint Paul's assertion that death entered the world through sin must be understood in the light of what has been said so far about the loss of original justice. Certainly, from the perspective of the structure of human nature as such, one could say that death is natural since, due to the presence of matter in its composition, the human body is perishable. But in the state of original justice, the human mind was ordered to God, the lower powers of the soul to the human mind, the body to the soul, and all external things to man. Ordered to the soul, the human body would receive life from it uninterruptedly, and would never be susceptible to harm on the part of any external agents. It was the plan of divine providence that "the rational soul, being incorruptible, deserved an incorruptible body" (n. 416). Divine power thus provided to the soul whatever was lacking in human nature to maintain the body incorrupt. With the loss of original justice, "after man's mind was turned from God through sin," he lost the ability to

control the lower powers and the body, as well as external things, and so became subject to death from within and to violence from without (ibid.).

Sin and death are indeed universal to human nature-lacking in original justice-as it has been passed on by Adam. But this is not true of Christ, whose bodily substance derived from Adam through the Blessed Virgin but in whose generation the active principle was not Adam but the Holy Spirit. We derive human nature from Adam, both in bodily substance and in his role as active principle in our generation. For this reason, we inherit the lack of original justice he passed on with human nature. But this is not true of Christ (n. 419).

Finally, to the question of the perdurance of the transmission of original sin after baptism, Aquinas responds that through baptism the mind is freed from sin, but not the flesh, and, since it is the flesh and not the mind that begets children, a man cannot transmit to his descendants the new life of Christ but only the old life of Adam (n. 420).

Ill. THE HISTORY OF SIN: THE EXISTENCE OF SIN AND DEATH UNDER THE LAW (ROM 5:13-14)

In *lectio* 4, Aquinas turns his attention to the relationship of sin and the law as St. Paul presents it in verses 13 and 14: "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin was not imputed, when the law was not. But death reigned from Adam unto Moses, even over those who did not sin after the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a figure of him who was to come."[16]

The theme of these verses, as Aquinas reads them, is that, although neither the natural law nor the Mosaic Law could remove sin or free us from death, they could nonetheless cause knowledge of sins not previously recognized (nn. 422-25). The original sin that is in the child even before the use of reason (in

[16] "Usque ad legem enim peccatum erat in mundo. Peccatum autem non imputabatur cum lex non esset. Sed regnavit mors ab Adam usque ad Moysen, etiam in eos qui non peccaverunt in similitudinem praevaricationis Adae, qui est forma futuri" *(In Rom.,* c. 5, lect. 4, *titolo).* Translation in Larcher, trans., 217.

this sense, *before* the natural law) is reckoned by God even though it is not imputed by men. Before the Law of Moses, actual sins not explicitly prohibited by the Law were not imputed because they were not recognized as sinful, while sins against the natural law were reckoned against those who violated the precepts of the natural law. Although sins were not imputed before the Law, death-both physical and spiritual (eternal damnation)-reigned or exercised power over men. Aquinas suggests that St. Paul is implying that we know that sin existed, though it was not imputed before the Law, because death reigned even over children who committed no actual sins (i.e., those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam).

Aquinas develops this point further in connection with an intriguing question to which St. Paul's language here and earlier gives rise (nn. 427-28). Having stated in the previous chapter that "where there is no law, there is no transgression" (4:15) and in this chapter that "through one man sin entered the world" (5:12), does not St. Paul seem to imply that, as it is a transgression of the divine law, sin entered the world not through one man but through the Law? According to Aquinas, the words "until the law sin was in the world" are introduced by St. Paul precisely to exclude this misreading. Both original and actual sin were in the world but it was not "imputed"-it was not recognized as something to be punished by God since the law did not exist. What St. Paul intends to convey is that original sin was in the world and that it entered through Adam. The fact that children and the just who did not sin mortally-who were, in other words, without personal sin-died nonetheless shows that Adam's sin had been spread to them by origin.

IV. THE HISTORY OF GRACE: CHRIST REMOVES THE SIN OF ADAM {ROM 5: 15-19)

Comparing the gift of Christ to the transgression of Adam, St. Paul turns from the history of sin to the history of grace when he states in verse 15: "But the gift is not like the trespass. For if many

died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the gift of grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many." [17] The efficacy of Christ's grace far exceeds that of Adam's sin (nn. 431-34). For sin is caused by the weakness of the human will, while grace flows from the immensity of the divine goodness. "The power of grace exceeds every sin" (n. 431). Even though Adam's sin brought death to many, God's grace extends not only to the remission of Adam's sin but also to the removal of actual sins and the bestowal of abundant blessings.

In verse 16, according to Aquinas, St. Paul continues the comparison between the grace of Christ and the sin of Adam by considering their effects: "And the gift is not like the effect of that one's man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. "[18] Christ's grace had a greater effect than Adam's sin (nn. 435-37). Because the grace of Christ entails a more powerful agency than the sin of Adam, it produces a greater effect. Adam's sin brought condemnation on all men, while Christ's grace extends not only to original sin but also to many actual sins and brings the complete cleansing of justification.

According to Aquinas's construal of this passage (nn. 438-40), St. Paul in verse 17 offers the first part of a twofold proof for the affirmation contained in the preceding verse: "If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of justice reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. "[19] The first premise of the first proof, according to Aquinas, is contained in the words, "If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man," as St. Paul has argued up to this point.

[17] "Sed non sicut delictum ita et donum. Si enim unius delicto multi mortui sunt, multo magis gratia Dei et donum in gratia unius hominis Iesu Christi in plures abundavit" *(In Rom.,* c. 5, lect. 5, *titolo).* Translation in Larcher, trans., 223.

[18] "Et non sicut per unum peccatum, ita et donum; nam iudicium quidem ex uno in condemnationem, gratia autem ex multis delictis in iustificationem" *(In Rom.,* c. 5, lect. 5, *titolo).* Translation in Larcher, trans., 223.

[19] "In enim unius delicto mors regnavit per unum, multo magis abundantian gratiae et donationis et iustitiae accipientes in vita regnabunt per unum Iesum Christum"(Jn *Rom.,* c. 5, lect. 6, *titolo).* Translation in Larcher, trans., 223.

The words, "those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of justice," express the minor premise. Explaining that the remission of sins cannot be won by any merits of ours but is due only to the grace of Christ, Aquinas refers to Romans 11:6: "If it is from works, it is no longer by grace." The conclusion of this first argument, fittingly introduced by the term *"igitur,"* comes in verse 18: "Therefore as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's justice leads to acquittal and life for all men." [20]

But this conclusion seems to be false, according to Aquinas, because, although all men do in fact die as a result of the sin of Adam, not all men are justified by Christ (nn. 443-44). The point of the argument, however, is to affirm that all men *who are justified* receive justification through Christ. One could say that this justification is capable of justifying all men, but de facto it reaches only those who have faith in Christ. "As no one dies except through Adam's sin, so no one is justified except through Christ's righteousness, and this is brought about by faith in him" (n. 444)-including those who lived before as well as those who lived after the resurrection.

According to Aquinas, St. Paul then states the second proof in verse 19: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made just." [21] The argument appeals to the similarity between cause and effect: just as Adam's *disobedience-unrighteous* in character-made men unrighteous, so Christ's *obedience-righteous* in character-made them righteous (n. 445). Pride is the beginning of all sin (Sir 10:13), but the first step of pride consists in an unwillingness to be subject to God's precepts, which pertains to disobedience. Thus, "man's first sin seems to have been disobedience, not as far as the outward action was concerned but in regard to the inner

[20] "Igitur, sicut per unius delictum in omnes horniness in condemnationem, sic et per unius iustitiam in omnes homines in iustificationem vitae" *(In Rom.,* c. 5, lect. 5, *titolo).* Translation in Larcher, trans., 223.

[21] "Sicut enim per inobedientiam unius hominis peccatores constituti sunt multi, ita et per unius obeditionem iusti constituentur multi" *(In Rom.* c. 5, lect. 5, *titolo).* Translation in Larcher, trans., 223.

movement of pride, by which he wills to go against the divine command" (n. 446). Christ's obedience, on the other hand, consisted in his acceptance of death for the sake of our salvation in accord with the Father's command.

V. THE HISTORY OF GRACE: THE ABUNDANCE OF THE GRACE OF CHRIST (ROM 5:20-21)

Saint Thomas devotes *lectio* 6 to the final verses of chapter 5: "Now the law entered in secretly that sin might abound. And where sin abounded, grace super-abounded, that as sin has reigned unto death, so grace might reign by justice unto life everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord."[22]

Saint Paul's language in verse 20 creates a difficult problem, as Aquinas notes at the start. It seems to suggest that the purpose of the law was to make sin increase. Aquinas summarizes the solutions to this difficulty provided by a Gloss, whose overall force is to suggest that the law was not the cause but more properly the occasion of the multiplication of sin (nn. 452-60). Experience shows that what the law forbids is desired all the more. There are various psychological reasons for this. Things that are forbidden engage a greater level of energy than things that are easy to attain. Emotions and desires that are repressed for fear of punishment tend to build up when there is no outlet for them. We often don't bother about seeking things that we can have for the taking, but, when it comes our way, we jump at the opportunity to have what is forbidden. In the end, law seems more to exacerbate than to allay concupiscent desire. Contrary to the will of the legislator, human law-which cannot confer the grace of diminishing concupiscence-causes sin to multiply. It is true that the giving of the law caused sin to multiply in some people, but for those who love virtue, by the help of grace, the prohibitions of the law brought them to the perfection of virtue.

[22] "Lex autem subintravit ut abundaret delictum. Ubi autem abundavit delictum, superabundavit gratia; ut sicut reganvit peccatum in mortem, ita et gratia regent per iustitiam in vitam aeternam per Iesum Christum Dominum nostrum" *(In Rom.,* c. 5, lect. 6, *titolo).* Translation in Larcher, trans., 231.

Aquinas adds his own explanation of the meaning of verse 20 by distinguishing five senses of "law," each supported by a biblical citation. According to scriptural usage, the term can designate (1) the entire Old Testament, (2) the five books of Moses, (3) the precepts of the Decalogue, (4) the entire content of the ceremonial precepts of the law, or (5) a particular ceremonial precept. Aquinas suggests that, in this section of Romans, St. Paul uses the term "law" in a general way, referring to "the total doctrine of the Mosaic Law" (n. 461). Given that the entire Mosaic Law includes the ceremonial precepts-which prescribe rites that did not give man the grace to fulfill the moral precepts or control concupiscence-it can be said that the law at least could not *reduce* sin and thus could be said to have increased it (n. 462). In this connection, the end of the law must be taken into account, as well as the different types of persons to whom it is directed: to the recalcitrant type of person, the moral precepts were enjoined by threats of punishment and the ceremonial precepts to prevent them from the worship of idols; to ordinary people, the law had a pedagogical function-the moral precepts advancing them toward justice and the ceremonial precepts restraining them in divine worship; for the perfect, the ceremonial precepts were given as a sign and the moral precepts as a consolation (n. 463).

That sin abounded under the law placed no obstacle in the way of God's plan for the salvation of the Jews and for the whole human race. Saint Paul declares that where sin abounded, grace super-abounded. Aquinas gives two reasons for this. The first is that, just as a serious illness requires strong medicine, so an abundant grace is needed to heal an abundance of sin. The second reason is that, while some sinners despair at the enormity of their sins, others, with the help of grace, are humbled by them and thus obtain a more abundant grace (nn. 465-66). So it is that, just as sin attained complete dominion over men and led them to physical and spiritual death, the grace of God reigns in us through justice, and all this through the giver of grace, Jesus Christ our Lord (n. 467).

VI. THE LASTING THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE COMMENTARY ON ROMANS 5:12-21

We may note some of the salient features of Aquinas's mature theology of original sin. We know from divine revelation *that,* but not *how,* sin passes to all of Adam's progeny. The doctrine itself neither proposes nor depends on a theory of transmission. The most fundamental elements of the Christian faith are in play here. God's intention in creating human persons was to make them participants in the divine life and to share the communion of Trinitarian life with them. For this reason, according to Aquinas, the first human beings were created in grace. Only from divine revelation itself do we know that the first human beings momentously turned away from this invitation to share in divine life, and, further, that their doing so had inescapable consequences for the human race which could only be undone by Christ. According to Catholic doctrine, just by virtue of being part of the human race, all human beings are born in a state of sin-a state that is thus said to be acquired not by *imitation* but by *propagation.*[23]

We are all aware of the considerable intellectual difficulties this doctrine poses. "[O]f all the religious teachings I know," writes the Evangelical author Alan Jacobs in a recent book on original sin, "none-not even the belief that some people are eternally damned-generates as much hostility as the Christian doctrine we call 'original sin.'"[24] As we have seen, Aquinas would concur with what Jacobs sees as the fundamental problem: even if one accepts that there was such a thing as a "first sin," how could this act influence or cause subsequent sinful acts by human beings who come after the so-called "first parents"? Moreover, how could all their "progeny" be culpable or guilty of this first sin? How can someone be guilty prior to any personal choice or moral action?

[23] Cf. Rudi te Velde, "Evil, Sin and Death: Thomas Aquinas on Original Sin," in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas,* ed. R. Van Nieuwenhove and J. Wawrykow (South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 143-66.

[24] Alan Jacobs, *Original Sin: A Cultural History* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), viii.

It does not help to suggest, as G. K. Chesterton famously remarked, that, of all Christian doctrines, this the only one that can be demonstrated by empirical evidence.[25] The doctrine of original sin is not the conclusion of observation and reflection on the presence of moral evil in the world. The most compelling *empirical* explanation for this undeniable feature of the human landscape is simply that people commit personal sins. There is no need to appeal to a theory of inherited sin. In fact, the doctrine of original sin is a *datum* of revelation. We learn about the peril of our state-the radical alienation from God which is the human condition-and our need for Christ the Savior only through the witness of the Sacred Scriptures and constant Tradition.[26]

These premises are fundamental to Aquinas's presentation. His method is to address the ways in which this doctrine can be made intelligible and can be shown to follow "the pattern of nature." As Aquinas says, "Where authority is wanting we should shape our opinions to the pattern of nature" *(STh* I, q. 101, a. 1).

Aquinas's approach points the way to the resolution of many of the difficulties the doctrine has posed over the centuries.[27] The history of theological reflection on this topic makes for fascinating reading. A series of articles helps us to track the twentieth-century developments,[28] and thus supplement Henri Rondet's generally reliable account.[29]

Two critically significant elements in Aquinas's theology of original sin address some of the most vexing issues that have arisen in recent writing: (1) his insistence that the first personal

[25] Cited in ibid., x.

[26] Cf. Andre-Marie Dubarle, *Le Nche Originel: Ecriture et Tradition* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1999).

[27] M.-M. Labourdette, 1953. *La peche originel et les origines de l'homme* (Paris: Alsatia, 1953); J.-H. Nicolas, "L'origine du ma!," in idem, *Synthese dogmatique: Complement* (Fribourg, 1993), 371-96.

[28] James L. Connor, "Original Sin: Contemporary Approaches," *Theological Studies* 29 (1968): 215-40; Brian McDermott, "The Theology of Original Sin: Recent Developments," *Theological Studies* 38 (1977): 478-512; Stephen J. Duffy, "Our Hearts of Darkness: Original Sin Revisited," *Theological Studies* 49 (1988): 597-622; Kevin McMahon, "Christology and Original Sin," *The Thomist* 66 (2002): 201-29.

[29] Henri Rondet, *Original Sin: The Patristic and Theological Background,* trans. Cajetan Finegan (New York: Alba House, 1972)

sin of Adam was not merely the transgression of an arbitrary command, but an interior disobedience rooted in pride, that could be rectified only by the perfect obedience of the Son; and (2) his understanding of original sin in us as a lack of original justice-a lack of facility in choosing the good, not a fatal inclination to evil. Thus he locates the doctrine of original sin within the context of the factors that affect moral action.[30] These crucial elements, as we have seen, feature in his commentary on Roman 5:12-21 as well as in his other mature works.[31]

We have seen that Aquinas touches on many of the most neuralgic points in the doctrine of original sin, but some issues he did not consider explicitly. The most serious new objections come on the one hand from modern biblical interpretation,[32] and on the other hand from evolutionary theory[33] and sociobiology.[34] Both sets of issues in a sense concern the historicity of the first parents and their first sin-something that Aquinas not only assumed, but took to be fundamental to the Catholic doctrine of the economy of salvation. It has become commonplace to construe modern biblical criticism as entailing the view that the account of the first sin in Genesis is a myth that conveys a universal truth[35] rather than, with classical exegesis, an historical narrative that conveys factual truths. While it is clear that we cannot regard Genesis as strict history, we must nonetheless regard it-as did Aquinas and

[30] Cf. Terence W. Irwin, *The Development of Ethics: A Historical and Critical Study,* vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 635-38.

[31] For a brief overview, see Joseph Wawrykow, "Original Sin," in *The Westminster Handbook to Thomas Aquinas* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 103-4.

[32] Cf. Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).

[33] Cf. J.-M. Maldame, "Que peut-on dire du peche originel ala lumiere des connaissances actuelles sur l'origine de l'humanite: Peche originel, peche d'Adam et peche du mond," *Bulletin de litterature ecclesiastique* 97 (1996): 3-27; Jerry D. Korsmeyer, *Evolution and Eden: Balancing Original Sin and Contemporary Science* (New York: Paulist Press, 1998); Daryl P. Domning and Monica K. Hellwig, *Original Selfishness: Original Sin and Evil in the Light of Evolution* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

[34] Cf. Patricia A. Williams, *Doing without Adam and Eve: Sociobiology and Original Sin* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001).

[35] See, for example, Leon R. Kass, *The Beginning of Wisdom: Reading Genesis* (New York: Free Press, 2003); and, in a different way, Elaine Pagels, *Adam, Eve and the Serpent* (New York: Random House, 1988).

all traditional exegetes and theologians-as a symbolic rendering of what really happened, utilizing mythic elements in a kind of history-like or "realistic narrative," [36] or "the history of the first human beings in the manner of traditional narratives. "[37]

The approach of Aquinas in addressing difficulties of this kind, in stark contrast to much Enlightenment thinking, teaches us to take our methodological orientation from the criterion of intelligibility rather than the criterion of reasonableness. His is a theology that does not put God to the test, as it were calling him to the bar of human reason, but rather one that acknowledges the limits of human rationality and the unlimited character of the intelligibility of divine truth and the divine plan in which it is manifested. It is in this light that Aquinas offers his explanation of our membership in the human race as a way of understanding, in line with Catholic doctrine, how original sin could be said to have been transmitted-how sin and death entered the world through one man-and how, "as sin reigned unto death, so also grace might reign by justice unto life everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord." While the criterion of reasonableness allows only what makes sense to us, the criterion of intelligibility draws the human mind into the fullness of divine truth. No wonder, then, that in the friar's dream, after approving of St. Thomas's teaching "what could be understood from his epistles in this life," St. Paul should remind him that there would come a time "when he would understand them according to their whole truth."

[36] Hans W. Frei, *Theology and Narrative: Selected Essays,* ed. George Hunsinger and William C. Placher (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 142-43.

[37] Benedict Ashley, *Theologies of the Body* (Braintree, Mass.: The Pope John XXIII Center, 1985), 373.

The Thomist 73 (2009): 399-435

ALBERT THE GREAT AND THE ARISTOTELIAN REFORM OF THE PLATONIC METHOD OF DIVISION

MICHAEL W. TKACZ

Gonzaga University
Spokane, Washington

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING a summary of the rules for employing the method of division in the study of animals, the medieval naturalist Albert the Great issues a caution to the zoological researcher. The zoologist, he says, must beware of "introducing forms existing apart from matter, as did Plato, for the forms of animals and their parts all exist in matter and are brought forth from the potentiality of matter."[1] This is a reference to the *error Platonis* discussed by Albert in several of his Aristotelian commentaries.[2]

The error in question arises out of the Platonic understanding of the subject of natural science as being the eternal subsistent forms rather than the form of the substantial material individual. The notion that the true generative principles of material beings are to be found in antecedent formal being of quantitative dimensionality which, in turn, is founded on even more abstract metaphysical principles is a notion that Albert rejects as "wholly

[1] "Et adhuc cavendum est, ne tales inducantur formae quae in materia non sunt, sicut fecit Plato, quoniam formae animalium et membrorum eorum omnes sunt in materia existentes et de potentia materiae eductae" (Albertus Magnus, *De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 4 [ed. Hermann Stadler in *Beitriige zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters* (Munster: Aschendorff, 1916-20), 15:797.15-18]).

[2] This important theme is found throughout Albert's Aristotelian commentaries, but the most direct references are found in the commentaries on the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics.* For references, see James A. Weisheipl, "Albertus Magnus and the Oxford Platonists," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 32 (1958): 124-39.

false."[3] Further, Albert contends that such a conception of the sensible subject makes research in the natural sciences impossible.[4] This reference to the *error Platonis* in the context of a discussion of the method of division suggests that Albert understood Aristotelian division as distinct from and a reform of the original Platonic method.

In the last twenty years, the method of division has received increased attention from Aristotle scholars, especially insofar as it throws light on the zoological treatises and their methodology.[5] An important aspect of this scholarship has been the focus on Aristotle's rejection of dichotomous division as apparently practiced in the Academy and his development of a new method of division better suited to scientific research. Aristotle scholars rightly associate this revision with the abandonment of the Platonic theory of subsistent forms and the concern to understand substantial individuals in terms of their natural causes. Thus, recent attention to Aristotelian division is associated with the growing body of literature on Aristotle's natural science, especially his zoology. Much less attention has been given to the crucial role played by Albert the Great in the reform of Platonic division. His thirteenth-century commentaries on Aristotle's

[3] "Cavendus autem his est error Platonis, qui dixit naturalia fundari in mathematicis et mathematica in divinis, sicut tertia causa fundatur in secunda et secunda fundatur in primaria, et ideo dixit mathematica principia esse naturalium, quod omnino falsum est" (Albertus Magnus, *Metaphysica* l, tr. 1, c. 1 [Albertus Magnus, *Opera Omnia,* editio Coloniensis (Munster: Aschendorff, 1951-), 16/1:2.31-35]).

[4] Albertus Magnus, *De principiis motus processivi,* tr. 1, c. 1 (ed. Colon. 12:49.21-31). See also idem, *Posteriora analytica* l, tr. 5, c. 6 (Albertus Magnus, *Opera Omnia,* ed. Auguste Borgnet [Paris: Vives, 1890-99], 2:140a-b); and idem, *Physica* 1, tr. 1, c. 5 (ed. Colon. 4/1:8-9).

[5] See, for example, D. M. Balme, "Aristotle's Use of Division and Differentiae," in *Philosophical Issues in Aristotle's Biology,* ed. Allan Gotthelf and James G. Lennox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 69-89; James G. Lennox, *Aristotle's Philosophy of Biology: Studies in the Origins of Life Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), esp. 7-38 and 98-109; *Aristotle's De partibus animalium I and De generatione animalium I,* trans. D. M. Balme (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), esp. notes on 101-19; Marguerite Deslauriers, "Plato and Aristotle on Division and Definition," *Ancient Philosophy* 10 (1990): 203-19; Michael Ferejohn, *The Origins of Aristotelian Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); A. Falcon, "Aristotle's Rules of Division in the *Topics,*" *Ancient Philosophy* 16 (1996): 377-87.

works, especially the zoological treatises, provide the first important treatment of the function of Aristotelian division in scientific research since the early Peripatos. [6] Given that Albert is the first scholar after Theophrastus to carry out a scientific research program along Aristotelian lines, his treatment of division is of significant historical importance. [7]

Albert's Aristotelian commentaries contain two extensive discussions of the method of division. [8] The first is in his paraphrastic commentary on the *Topics*, where he treats division in the context of a general discussion of the dialectical syllogism. Here he recognizes that, unlike Plato, Aristotle ontologically distinguished between genus, differentia, species, property, and accidents of various types, thereby establishing a new approach to defining the natural subject through division. Albert's second treatment of division, in his commentary on the *Parts of Animals*, provides a more detailed set of rules for avoiding accidental division. Here he insists on continuous differentiation to preserve the unity of definition and clearly distinguishes the improper dichotomous division of the Platonists from the polychotomous

[6] Before Albert, Aristotelian division was treated in connection with the *Topics* and little attention was given to the zoological books. See Niels J. Green-Pedersen, *The Tradition of the Topics in the Middle Ages: The Commentaries on Aristotle's and Boethius' Topics* (Munich-Vienna: Philosophia Verlag, 1984); and Eleonore Stump, *Boethius' De Topicis Differentiis* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978). On the relationship of this tradition to the textbook tradition stemming from Boethius, see the comments of Eleonore Stump in her "Dialectic," in *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages*, ed. David L. Wagner (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1986), 125-46. On the neo-Platonic assimilation of Aristotelian division, see the discussion of A. C. Lloyd in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A.H. Armstrong (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), esp. 319-22.

[7] See James G. Lennox, "The Disappearance of Aristotle's Biology: A Hellenistic Mystery," in Lennox, *Aristotle's Philosophy of Biology*, 110-25, esp. 123-24; and Michael W. Tkacz, "Albert the Great and the Revival of Aristotle's Zoological Research Program," *Vivarium* 45 (2007), 30-68.

[8] In addition to his treatment of division in his Aristotelian commentaries, Albert also commented on Boethius' *De divisione* (ed. Paul von Loe [Bonn: Hanstein, 1913]) and on Prophyry's account of genus, species, and differentia in his *De praedicabilibus* (Borgnet, ed., 1:1-148). In neither of these works does Albert discuss directly the Aristotelian reform of Platonic division. He does, however, treat some topics corresponding to certain parts of his discussion in his *Topica* and *De animalibus*, such as the difficulties resulting from accidental and privative division.

division of Aristotle. Albert argues that zoological research can advance only if divisions are made by a plurality of differentiae simultaneously instead of one at a time. Both of these discussions are part of a larger methodological exposition of scientific demonstration and constitute a contribution to the development of scientific method that has hitherto received little attention. [9]

The task of the present study is to set out the evidence establishing Albert's clear understanding of the details of Aristotle's reform of Platonic division. Albert's treatment of division is part of his recovery of the Aristotelian theory of substantial form and its distinction from the Platonic notion of ontologically subsistent form. Given this, it will be useful to begin with Albert's summary account of Platonic division as a method of formal definition in the context of the general Aristotelian account of the purpose of division given in the *Topics.* This will provide the background for a study of Albert's more detailed analysis of division as a research methodology, found in his *De animalibus.* After setting out Albert's critique of the Platonic method of dichotomous division, this study will proceed to itemize Albert's rules for proper division as a reliable method of scientific discovery and definition. The itemization of these rules will show that Albert clearly understood Aristotelian division as a reform of the Platonic method. It will also draw attention to an important respect in which Albert's treatment of Aristotelian science anticipates recent developments in Aristotle studies.

I.PLATONIC DIVISION AND THE REFORMS OF THE *TOPICA*

In commenting on the first book of Aristotle's *Parts of Animals,* Albert gives a brief description of the Platonic method of division.

[9] For general discussion and references see Benedict M. Ashley, "St. Albert and the Nature of Natural Science," in *Albertus Magnus and the Sciences: Commemorative Essays 1980,* ed. James A. Weisheipl (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1980), 73-102; William A. Wallace, "The Scientific Methodology of St. Albert the Great," *inAlbertus Magnus Doctor Universalis 1280(1980,* ed. GerbertMeyer and Albert Zimmermann (Mainz: Matthias-Griinewald Verlag, 1980), 385-407; Michael W. Tkacz, "Albert the Great on Logic, Knowledge, and Science," in *The Universal Doctor: Albertus Magnus and His Contributions to Theology, Philosophy, and the Sciences,* ed. Irven M. Resnick (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2009), 1-48.

The Platonists aim, says Albert, at defining a species of animal through a division of a series of kinds *(per divisionem generum).* Such a process is intended to result in the collation of the final forms *(finales formae)* that, taken together, constitute the definition of the animal species.[10] Albert goes on to explain that this conception of definition is grounded in the Platonic conception of form. The Platonists, he notes, hold that

> every form is common and has differences, therefore form always remains common unless something is appropriating it. What appropriates a form, however, is not something of that form and, thus, the form will remain common in itself. Many things, however, that are under that commonality are not separated except by differences. Therefore, it remains the case, according to the Platonists, that each form is divided into differences and, accordingly, no form will be ultimate.[11]

Albert realized that Platonic definition is not a matter of specifying the defining form,[12] but rather dividing until a series of appropriating forms is given such that, when taken together, the definition is provided. Each form retains its universality in itself, yet each can combine with other equally universal forms to constitute a species. For example, animal can be divided into blooded and bloodless, notes Albert, but the resulting form blooded animal can itself be divided by further differences. With respect to the form animal, being blooded is appropriated-that is, being blooded is a way of being an animal. Yet, being blooded is itself a form and so universal. Moreover, being blooded may

[10] " --- quia hie non intendimus, nisi utrum finales formae animalium per divisionem generum accipi possint, sicut dixerunt Platonici" *(De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 [Stadler, ed., 15:784.26-28]).

[11] " --- dicentes omnem formam esse communem et habere differentias, ideo quod forma semper remanet communis, nisi sit aliquid earn approprians: quod autem appropriat earn, non est aliquid formae, et sic de se semper erit communis: multa autem quae sunt sub illo communi, non separantur, nisi per differentias: et sic relinquitur omnem formam secundum istos [Platonicos] in differentias dividi, et nulla secundum hoc erit ultima" *(De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 [Stadler, ed., 15:784.28-35]).

[12] See *Quaestiones de animalibus* Il, q. 7 (ed. Colon. 12:221) where Albert responds to a series of objections to the claim that the final *differentia* is convertible with the species.

appropriate other forms: say, being terrestrial or being quadruped. [13]

This description is consistent with the dialectical method presented in the *Phaedrus*, *Sophist*, and *Politicus*. [14] In these texts, Plato provides a method by which a general kind is dichotomously divided into differing forms and these into further forms until the object of definition is reached. Then the divisions are collated, showing the forms in which the definiendum participates, or as Albert puts it, is appropriated. Having decided, in a rough way, that man is a sort of animal, for example, one can use the method of division to refine the definition in such a way that it becomes clear why it makes sense. Animal is divided into footed and footless, footed animal is divided into biped and quadruped, biped into winged and wingless. The resulting series of divisions, when collated, is seen to be coextensive with the definiendum man. Thus, man is seen to be wingless bipedal animal in virtue of the way in which his form combines with the *per se* independent forms of animal, footed, biped, and wingless. [15]

Implicit in such a procedure is the lack of any clear distinction between essential nature and adventitious attributes. Each division is treated in the same way without any ontological distinction or priority. The result is a method of defining an object that must include all the divisions, and not just the last, for latter divisions do not necessarily imply the former. [16] One must define man as wingless, bipedal, animal and not just as wingless, because wingless does not necessarily presuppose biped. In short, the Platonic method of division does not rely on the categorical distinctions of genus, difference, species, and attribute later made by the Aristotelians.

[13] "Quoniam si dividatur animal in habens sanguinem et in carens sanguine, in habente sanguinem erunt ulteriores differentiae, quoniam habere sanguinem est quaedam forma et differentia substantialis non appropriata" (De *animalibus* II, tr. 2, c. 1 [Stadler, ed., 15:784.35-38]).

[14] For references and discussion, see Balme, "Aristotle's Use of Division and Differentiae," 69-71.

[15] Albert discusses other examples of this method in *Posteriora analytica* 2, tr. 2, c. 3 (Borgnet, ed., 2:170b-174a); and 2, tr. 4, c. 5 (Borgnet, ed., 2:215b-22la).

[16] *Quaestiones de animalibus* 11, q. 7, obj. 1 (ed. Colon., 12:221.6-12).

Albert's paraphrastic commentary on the *Topics* provides an Aristotelian treatment of these distinctions in the context of a general discussion of the predicate-types *(praedicata):* accident, genus, property, and definition. The purpose of division remains definition, as it was for the Platonists, but now its use depends on exact distinctions of these predicate-types and a recognition of their ontological relationship to the five predicables *(praedicabilia)* of genus, species, difference, property, and accident, and to the ten categories *(praedicamenta).* Because the subject of study is first substance which exists as individual and not as a subject existing in more abstract subjects, the predicables genus, differentia, and species take on a rather different ontological significance than they had for the Platonists. The predicate-types are now the means by which the essential being of a subject is distinguished from its adventitious attributes and its basic nature from its particular characteristics. The method by which these means are employed is a reformed method of division capable of dialectically displaying these ontological relationships.

That this is a major theme of the *Topics* is already clear from Albert's introduction to his commentary, which comprises the two opening chapters of the work. The first chapter is Albert's own preface where he discusses in a general manner the subject of the work and the ways in which it can be studied as both a science and a practical art.[17] He identifies the subject as the dialectical syllogism--that is, the form of reasoning that proceeds from the probable in the search of the unknown from the known.[18] Dialectics, he adds, can be considered in two ways: it can be studied as a theoretical or teaching science *(dialecticadocens)* or

[17] *Topica* l, Proaemium Alberti (Borgnet, ed., 2:233a-235b). For a discussion of Albert's two proaemia and a general outline of his commentary see William A. Wallace, "Albert the Great's Inventive Logic: His Exposition of the *Topics* of Aristotle," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 70 (1996): 11-39.

[18] "Cujus [libri *Topicorum]* quidem materia et subjectum est syllogismus topicus sive dialecticus.... Et ideo quamvis syllogismus dialecticus in se et in usu hujus scientiae subjectum sit de quo probantur passiones: tantum probabile est" *(Topica* l, Proaeminum Alberti [Borgnet, ed., 2:234a]).

as an applied science put to use *(dialectica utens).*[19] It is only in the second introductory chapter, where Albert provides another preface based on the opening lines of Aristotle's text, that he indicates the central role the method of division will play in dialectics.[20] In an explanatory aside to his paraphrase of Aristotle, Albert notes that the *Topics* sets forth a method that will allow the scientific investigator to reason from probables about any problem that arises concerning what is properly predicated of the subject of his investigation. He goes on to explain that by "any problem" he is referring generically to any question about inherence *(inesse),* such as inhering as an accident, or as a genus, or as a property, or as a definition. An investigator who is proficient in reasoning about the way being inheres according to these predicate-types will be able to reason about "any problem concerning inherence that can be shown from probables."[21] The reason for this is that inhering as a differentia is reducible to a genus and inhering as a likeness is reducible to definition. This is the case despite the fact that the species under investigation cannot be reduced to inherence as a predicate nor to a subject in which the predicate exists, because the subject is primary substance which is individual.[22]

For Albert, then, the method of division is central to the study of dialectics, for it is the method by which the subject under study comes to be known through predication. He recognizes that, as David Balme puts it, the *Topics* "have been rightly said to consist

[19] "est autem memoria tenendum (quod alibi dictum est) quod scientia dialectica sive de syllogismo dialectico, et est docens, et est utens; eo quod per doctrinam acceptum est" *(Topica* 1, Proaemium Alberti [Borgnet, ed., 2:235a]).

[20] *Topical,* Proaemium operis (Borgnet, ed., 2:235b-237b).

[21] "Et dicitur *de omni problemate* in genere, quoniam omne problema, vel est problema de inesse, sicut quod est inesse ut accidens, vel inesse ut genus, vel inesse ut proprium, vel inesse ut diffinitio: et quando idonei sumus ad artem syllogizare ad ilia quatuor, sumus potentes syllogizare omne problema, quod ex probabilibus potest ostendi inesse" *(Topica* l, Proaemium operis [Borgnet, ed., 2:236a]).

[22] "Quia inesse ut differentia reducitur ad genus, et inesse ut idem reducitur ad diffinitionem. Species autem quae est subjectum non reducitur ad inesse, et ad subjectum cui insit; quia prima substantia quae est individuum" *(Topical,* Proaemium operis [Borgnet, ed., 2:236a]).

largely of rules for the control of *diairesis*."[23] The subject of any scientific investigation is the universal kind which exists only as substantial individual. Such a subject comes to be known through a grasp of how the various predicate-types inhere in the individual, and this comes to be known through the method of division. The theoretical foundation underlying the use of division is set out by Albert in books 2 through 7, where he treats of each of the predicate-types individually.[24] Throughout he makes clear that the purpose of dividing a genus by differentiae into species is to define the substantial individual by clearly designating its essential kind and distinguishing this from its accidents.

One example from this long treatment of predicate-types will suffice to indicate the nature of Albert's discussion. In book 4 he investigates the predicate-type genus, making it clear from the outset that the point of identifying predicate-types is dialectically to examine and confirm as probable claims about what the subject is. Thus, he remarks that genus is not typically discussed for its own sake, but is considered primarily as part of a process of definition.[25] Whereas genus is subsistent form for the Platonist, however, it is here reserved for the general kind, which can be predicated of an individual. It is said of an individual in order to identify its type so that the process of explaining the individual's nature has a place to begin. In itself, then, a genus is a kind that collects under it different species, and a species is one of the kind collected.[26] This sets the stage for the remainder of the discussion in which genera are first established as distinct predicate-types from properties, are then considered with respect to various subject matters, and are finally related to species and differentiae. The result is a form of definition that dialectially indicates what the subject is by showing how genus inheres in it--that is, by showing how its form is of this kind.

[23] Balme, "Aristotle's Use of Division and Differentiae," 71.

[24] For an outline see Wallace, "Albert the Great's Inventive Logic," 29-35.

[25] "quod genus requiritur ad bonitatem proprii, et proprium propter modum praedicandi conversim, immediatius est elementum diffinitionis" *(Topica* 4, c. 1 [Borgnet, ed., 2:355a]).

[26] "Genus autem est quod de pluribus differentibus specie in eo quod quid est praedicatur" *(Topica* I, c. 4 [Borgnet, ed., 2:255b]).

While Albert does provide some examples in his treatment of the various predicate-types throughout his *Topica,* his account remains mostly at a rather theoretical level. This is true even of his discussion of the *dialectica utens* in book 8, where his purpose is to explain how dialectical reasoning with respect to the predicate-types is to be applied in research.[27] There he considers how questions are raised in an investigation, how answers are to be formulated, and what impediments to clarity may be encountered.[28] Yet despite these many prescriptions, this text does not contain Albert's most straightforward account of Aristotelian division both as an alternative to Platonic dichotomy and as an applied scientific methodology. Rather, it is in book 11 of his massive *De animalibus* that he turns his attention to the considerations intended to guide the researcher in the technique of division. Being in that text directly concerned with the use of division in zoological research, he sets out a series of detailed rules in a way that most clearly shows his understanding of the Aristotelian reform of the Platonic method.

II. CRITIQUE OF DICHOTOMY IN *DE ANIMALIBUS*

Albert opens his treatment of zoological division[29] with a detailed critique of the Platonic method of dichotomous division.

[27] It is telling that, in order to provide a clear and provocative example of the application of Albert's topical logic, Wallace must append to his outline of Albert's commentary an example drawn from Albert's *De animalibus;* see Wallace, "Albert the Great's Inventive Logic," 37-39.

[28] *Topica* 8, tr. 1-2 (Borgnet, ed., 2:491-519).

[29] *De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 (Stadler, ed., 15:780-89) where Albert generally follows Aristotle's *De partibus animalium* 1 (beginning at 1.2.642b5) with some digressions and additions. On the background, sources, and content of Albert's text, see the introductory material in the English translation of Kenneth F. Kitchell, Jr., and lrven M. Resnick, *Albertus Magnus On Animals: A Medieval Summa Zoologica* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999). For an analysis of Aristotle's text, see the commentary of D. M. Balme in *Aristotle's De partibus animalium I and De Generatione Animalium I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972); Balme's analysis is summarized as a series of eight rules in idem, "Aristotle's Use of Division and Differentiae," 74-78. Albert's critique of dichotomy, set out here in detail, is summarized in the context of Albert's general account of scientific method in Tkacz, "Albert the Great and the Revival of Aristotle's Zoological Research Program," 55-56.

Like Aristotle, he is concerned to show the limitations of this method before turning to a positive statement of the rules for proper dividing. He begins by showing that dichotomy produces only one final differentia and argues that this restricts the usefulness of dichotomy as a means for defining animal species. This is followed by two further critical discussions: the first showing that dichotomy splits natural kinds and the second arguing that dichotomy cannot make proper use of privative differentiae.

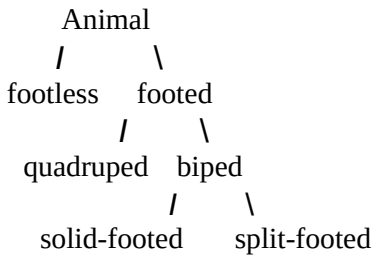
Certain philosophers, says Albert, divide an animal kind into two.[30] They intend the single differentia that produces these two differentiations to be the means by which the final forms characterizing two distinct species come to be defined. On the one hand, this is not a problem, for one can validly divide through the affirmation and negation of an attribute. On the other hand, "it is impossible" because such a division does not allow for the genus to be determined in other ways.[31] It is clear that what Albert has in mind here is not that dichotomy or dividing into two is impossible, but rather that it is not possible to understand the observed individual animal by simply dividing its kind dichotomously. In fact, he immediately goes on to remind the reader that the point of division is to arrive at a definition that is convertible with the observed species. In a progressive series of divisions, the final one is definitive, the remainder being superfluous in that the more specific differentiae imply the more

[30] Following Aristotle, Albert refers to dichotomous division as "dividing the genus through two differentiae" *(dividere genus per duas differentias).* Here the differentiae are the two *infimae species* into which the genus is divided by a single differentia, as when the genus aquatic bird is divided into web-footed and non-web-footed. As this can be confusing, I generally follow Balme in characterizing dichotomy as single-differentia division.

[31] "Quidam enim homines inter philosophos quamlibet rem sive speciem accipientes sive genus animalium, dividunt genus illud per duas differentias et volunt quod illae duae differentiae ab eis dicuntur esse ultimae duae formae duarum specierum specificarum, et hoc non est grave per unum modum dividendo per affirmationem et negationem, per alium autem modum est impossibile, quoniam non potest aliter terminari potestas generis" (De *animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 [Stadler, ed., 15:780.21-28]).

general.[32] Single-differentia division like this will always be either inadequate or invalid--that is, it will fail to include sufficient characteristics to be truly convertible with the species or it will do so only through accidental or false division.[33]

Albert provides his own expanded version of Aristotle's rather cryptic example. Were one to attempt a definition of human being through a division of animal into biped and nonbiped or into split-footed or solid-footed, one would not arrive in either case with a differentia convertible with the species. At best, one would have arrived at a particular property which, while true of the species, fails to properly define it.[34] Even if one were to "collect together" the successive divisions split-footed, biped, and



footed animal the species is not clearly designated, for the final differentia, split-footed, does not indicate completely and essentially what a human being is. Indeed, the problem is the same if the final differentia is biped. This procedure could only work if

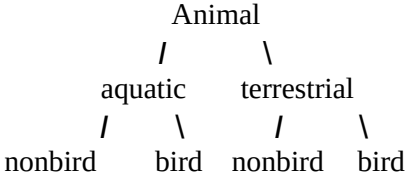
[32] "Constar enim, quod quarumdam rerum quae sunt species specificae, ultima differentia est una tantum, et haec est convertibilis, sicut probatur in septimo primae philosophiae: et quaecumque aliae assignantur differentiae, sunt superfluitates in plus existentes quam ipsa species constituta per differentias: et tales superfluitates sunt, quibus non indigetur ad specierum constitutionem" (De *animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 [Stadler, ed., 15:780.28-34]). See also Albertus Magnus, *Metaphysica* 7, tr. 4, c. 3 (ed. Colon., 16/2:370-72) and *Quaestiones de animalibus* 1l, q. 7 (ed. Colon., 12:221).

[33] See *De animalibus* 1l, tr. 2, c. 1 (Stadler, ed., 15:781.8-26). Albert returns to the problem of accidental division later in his commentary (Stadler, ed., 15:787.25f.).

[34] "Amplius omne proprium manat de genere accidentium: id autem quod de natura est accidentis, non potest esse finis et forma substantiae animalium et membrorum ipsorum" ("Further, all properties flow from the genus of accidents; that which possesses the nature of an accident, however, cannot be the end and form of the substance of animals and their parts") (De *animalibus* 1l, tr. 2, c. 1 [Stadler, ed., 15:781.24-26]).

each successive differentiation implies-or as Albert put it, contains as covered or hidden *(coopertae et occultae)* within it-all the relevant previous differentiae. This is because a species is known through the observed individual and the differentia is concealed in the species as what is prior is understood in what is posterior *(sicut prius intelligitur in suo posteriori).*[35] Yet, split-footed does not imply biped, nor does biped imply split-footed. In any case, valid dichotomy provides only one series of divisions that must end with a single differentia and this is not enough to identify the species under study.[36]

Another problem with dichotomy is that it attempts to define a species in terms of a genus that is naturally divided in such a way that the species will fall under both sub-genera.[37] If, for example, animal is divided into terrestrial and aquatic and this division is used to determine dichotomously what a bird is, the definition will fail. This is because bird is determined as both



terrestrial animal and aquatic animal and the definition of bird cannot be constituted by one of these descriptions alone. Here, notes Albert, the final differentiae are analogous in form yet differ in being *(secundum esse),* resulting in an equivocal definition.[38]

[35] *De animalibus* 1l, tr. 2, c. 1 (Stadler, ed., 780.34-781.7).

[36] Modern Aristotle scholars disagree about how to understand Aristotle's example. Balme suggests two alternative divisions of footed animal into split-footed and footed animal into biped. Lennox, on the other hand, suggests that, after the initial division of animal into footless/footed, footed is divided into polyped/biped and biped into solid-footed/split-footed. See Balme, *De partibus animalium I,* 106-7; and James G. Lennox, *Aristotle On the Parts of Animals I-N* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 153-54. Albert's somewhat expanded version of the example is more consistent with Lennox's reading of Aristotle.

[37] *De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 (Stadler, ed., 15:781.27-782.16).

[38] "non est conveniens dividere modus quoscumque avium et ponere per divisionem quasdam in cursu uno sive in una formae convenientia, et quasdam in alia, sicut si diceremus, quod avium alia est aquosa et alia agrestis, quoniam hoc commune quod est avis, si secundum

Given that the point of dichotomy is to understand a species by showing how its genus is successively determined, the division is false, for bird cannot be finally determined as terrestrial *secundum esse*, if there are aquatic birds as well.

Dichotomy is not a useful means to attaining the definition of a species for, as Albert puts it, "generally, in no differentiae at all will there be complete univocity according to each genus" and therefore one who attempts to use equivocal division "to learn the natural forms which are the ultimate ends errs and acts idly."[39] If one is dividing animal dichotomously, then one cannot differentiate both aquatic/woodland animals and multiped/nonmultiped animals. This is because multiped will show up under both aquatic animal and woodland animal, denying the previous dichotomous division which established the distinction of water-dwellers and forest-dwellers. By splitting natural kinds, then, dichotomy results in inconsistent divisions. Further, dichotomy is useless for designating how species are *secundum esse*. Given that multipeds are sometimes aquatic and sometimes forest-dwellers, the species multiped has been artificially split and, therefore, does not clearly indicate how things exist in nature.[40]

Albert goes on to suggest that this difficulty shows that privative or negative differentiae will sometimes have to be used.[41] Yet, again, there will be a problem with dichotomy. Following Aristotle, he discusses three difficulties connected with privation: (1) privations cannot serve as genera, (2) privations cannot serve as species, and (3) division of privations never results in a form.

esse accipiatur, non erit unius rationis in dicta divisione" *(De animalibus* Il, tr. 2, c. 1 [Stadler, ed., 15:781.37-782.2]).

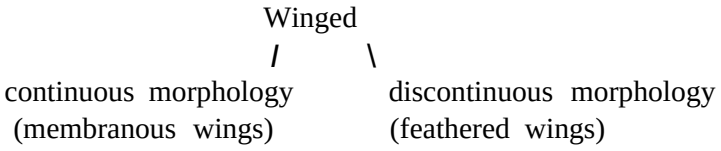
[39] "Et, ut universaliter dicatur, in nullis omnino differentiis erit omnino et secundum omne genus univocum ... tune manifestum quod qui per divisionem formas naturales quae sunt ultimi fines nititur accipere, errat et otiatur" *(De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 [Stadler, ed., 15:782.11-12, 14-16]).

[40] "Adhuc autem hoc idem ostenditur etiam ex parte dividentium differentiarum, quoniam diviso animali multipede secundum genus in animal aquosum et in animal silvestre quaedam inveniuntur multipedia quae sunt ordinata cum utrisque, quoniam sunt aliquando aquosa et aliquando silvestria" *(De animalibus* Il, tr. 2, c. 1 [Stadler, ed., 15:782.17-21]).

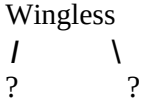
[41] "Oportet igitur, quod si differentia dividens bene distinguat, quod haec accipiantur per privationem separantem ab utraque differentiarum priorum" *(De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 [Stadler, ed., 15:782.22-24]).

Albert's overlapping discussion of these three points makes it clear that the basic problem with the use of privations in dichotomy is that "it will be difficult to determine [on the basis of such divisions] the specific forms of animals that are their final causes."[42] In other words, dichotomous division of or into privations will not result in definitions that will be useful in producing a scientific explanation of the subject.

The point of dichotomously dividing a genus is to define the species in terms of its inclusion in the genus. If the genus is a privation, however, such as wingless or footless, this cannot be usefully divided. There are many kinds of animals that are wingless, yet there are not many ways of lacking wings--there is simply the lack of wings. In other words, lacking wings cannot function in definition by division as does being winged. For example, the genus winged can be divided by the differentia of morphological continuity of wing-surface:



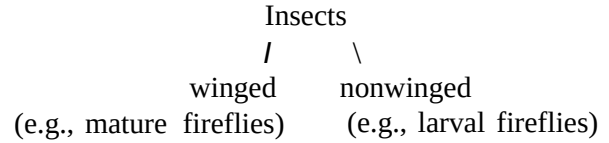
Being wingless, however, has no specifications. Dividing wingless into serpents, fish, quadrupedic mammals, etc. will not do, for these are not so much ways of being wingless as they are ways of



[42] "et ideo difficile erit sic accipere formas proprias animalium, quae sunt causae finales ipsorum" (De *animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 [Stadler, ed., 15:783.29-31]). The reference to final cause here concerns demonstrative explanation through the assignment of causes *(assignatio causarum)* for which division, as part of a general theoretical description *(narratio)*, is the preparation; see *Quaestiones de animalibus* 11, q. 2 (ed. Colon., 12:218-19). On causal demonstration through final cause see William A. Wallace, "Albertus Magnus on Suppositional Necessity in the Natural Sciences," in *Albertus Magnus and the Sciences*, 103-28. On the relation of division to final cause demonstration see Tkacz, "Albert the Great and the Revival of Aristotle's Zoological Research Program," 42-66.

being animal. Moreover, the result of the division is not dichotomous, for there are so many ways of being wingless that they outnumber any strict distinction into two.[43]

Parallel problems arise from the attempt dichotomously to divide a genus by a differentia that results in a privative. Dichotomous division into an affirmative species and a corresponding negative species will be useless, for the privative species cannot be further divided. Any attempt to divide a genus, such as animal, into possessing and lacking a certain characteristic, such as footed/footless or feathered/featherless, will result in so many subspecies that the purpose of dichotomy is defeated. Further, at least some such divisions will be invalid. If, for example, one attempts a division of the genus insect into winged and nonwinged, this will fail as definition through dichotomy because the same species may show up under both specifications, the difference being not in species, but in maturity.[44]



Whether applied to a genus or a species, the use of privations in dichotomy fails to result in a form that is defined by the division. This is generally the case because there is no form of non-P. Insofar as non-P is said to be in a subject, there is only the form of the subject which is non-P. As Albert puts it, "a privation constitutes nothing" *(privatio autem nihil constituit)* whereas any "differentia is constitutive of something" *(est etiam alicuius constitutiva differentia).* Footlessness in animals, for example, is

[43] The division of winged is *atDeanimalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 (Stadler, ed., 15:783.8-11) and the point about dividing privations is made at the same place (Stadler, ed., 15:782.32-783.3) with respect to footless *(non habere pedes)* and featherless *(non habere plumas).*

[44] See *De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 (Stadler, ed., 15:783.18-28) where Albert also gives Aristotle's other example of ants who fly during their swarming phase after hatching. In this passage, Albert correctly notes that the actual differentia in such cases is not by a privation, but by age *(aetate).* This is an example of dividing by the "more and the less" discussed below.

neither a form that can be divided into species, nor a form that is of a certain kind. Thus, it cannot serve as a differentia in dichotomous division, because a privation "establishes nothing from itself" *(privatiode se nihil ponit).*[45] Privations, Albert points out, are indivisible and, consequently, equivalent to individuals. Clearly, then, they cannot be genera or species, for they cannot be common; as they themselves are not forms, they cannot be divided into forms.[46] This means that definition cannot result from the attempt dichotomously to divide a privative genus nor from a division yielding a privative ultimate species.[47]

Clearly, Albert understood and articulated Aristotle's critique of Platonic division, realizing that dichotomy fails to provide a method of scientific definition that can function in an actual research program.[48] The purpose of the Platonic method of division is to define the subject under study in terms of its appropriated forms. Definition is supposedly achieved when the series of species dichotomously specified is collated to show the order of appropriation or formal participation. Albert understood why Aristotle held the purpose of this procedure to be frustrated by its dichotomous nature. While it is possible validly to divide a genus dichotomously, as through an affirmation and negation of a property, such division is too radically incomplete to function

[45] *De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 (Stadler, ed., 15:784.13-26).

[46] "tune privatio quae non est forma aliqua, non habebit differentias et species sive formas. Sed cum differentia sit causa divisionis, erit id quod per privationem accipitur non habens differentiam et indivisibile, quod autem tale est, aequivalet individuo: ergo privativae differentiae sunt individuae, eo quod individua non dividuntur, et nulla privativarum differentiarum est communis, sicut diximus" (De *animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 [Stadler, ed., 15:784.39-785.5]).

[47] Albert also argues in *De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 (Stadler, ed., 15:786.7-10) that the natural species discovered through a process of division are forms grasped in their material components *(acceptae fonnae sunt in materiis suis)* as appropriated through being that is in the material *(per esse quad est in materia sunt appropriata).* This, he points out, makes it impossible that either the species or the genus is a privation.

[48] This is reinforced in the summary of Albert's critique given in a digression at *De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 4 (Stadler, ed., 15:796.20-797.14) to which he immediately adds his warning to the zoological researcher that dichotomous division results in the introduction of immaterial forms *(fonnae quae in materia non sunt),* after the manner of Plato *(sicut fecit Plato),* into what ought to be scientific explanation in terms of the formal determination of material potentialities.

as definition. Dichotomous division provides only one series of divisions which must end with a single differentia, yet the resulting ultimate species cannot be convertible with the species being defined. At best, the investigator will have revealed one particular generically related series of properties of the species. This, however, is insufficient for true definition. Albert also argued that any attempt to make dichotomy a means of complete definition will result in invalid divisions, adding some clarifying details to Aristotle's critical account. To the extent that dichotomy splits natural kinds, it is incapable of dialectically displaying the *esse* of a species in terms of its genus, as the species fall under opposing genera. Dichotomy is also incapable of accommodating privations. Genera cannot be privations because privations are indivisible and species cannot be privations because privations are not forms. Yet definition must sometimes involve contrary forms and, therefore, division must be able to make use of privations in some way. Consequently, Platonic dichotomy will either be useless or invalid, defeating the purpose of division as a method of scientific definition.

III. RULES FOR DIVISION IN *DE ANIMALIBUS*

Following his critique of Platonic dichotomy, Albert sets out four rules for dividing according to the Aristotelian method. [49] The first three of these rules are aimed at avoiding the accidental divisions of the dichotomists. The fourth rule sets out the technique of polychotomous division used by Aristotle as the alternative to Platonic dichotomy. Taken together, these four rules provide a method by which a definition may be reached through the application of multiple differentiae to a genus together. Because it is strictly normative, Albert states the fourth rule in prescriptive terms. The first three, however, are stated partly in prescriptive terms and partly in negative terms following upon Albert's critique of the Platonic method. Emphasizing the

[49] Albert's rules for division, set out and analyzed here in detail, are summarized in the context of his general treatment of scientific method in Tkacz, "Albert the Great and the Revival of Aristotle's Zoological Research Program," 56-60.

nature of these rules as guides for actual research, all four rules may be stated in an entirely prescriptive manner as follows:

Rule I: Every differentia dividing a genus must be essential to the species being defined.

Rule II: Every division of a genus must be by proper opposites.

Rule III: Every functional differentia dividing a genus must be the effect of the essential nature of the genus.

Rule IV: All differentiae relevant to defining the species must be applied to the genus together.

The application of these rules in the process of defining a species through division can make use of dichotomy. Unlike in the Platonic method, however, the dichotomies are not a single series of subordinated divisions resulting in an ultimate species that is "gathered" or "read back" into its successively more universal genera to achieve definition. Rather, the Aristotelian method involves a series of nonaccidental divisions that are laterally coordinated to produce definition of a species. The divisions are set side-by-side in such a way that the researcher recognizes from the outset that multiple differentiae apply to a genus together.

A) Rule I: Every differentia dividing a genus must be essential to the species being defined

Given that the goal of division is the revelation of the essential nature of the definiendum, the researcher cannot be content with accidental differentiae. Such differentiae do not disclose what is essential to the subject as substantial form. Albert makes it clear by example [50] that even a proper accident will not do, for it will direct attention away from the necessary and essential *ratio* of the definiendum. A certain species of octopus, for example, can be

[50] Albert does not give a zoological example at *De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 (Stadler, ed., 15:786.15-18), simply providing Aristotle's mathematical example (given at *De partibus animalium* 1.3.643a27-30) of attempting to define "triangle" by the differentia of having angles equal to two right angles.

identified by its possession of a single longitudinal arrangement of suckers on each tentacle. Yet this cannot constitute its morphological definition, for it is a proper accident consequent upon the narrowness of the tentacle which is the true defining differentia. [51] The solution is to divide every genus by differentiae that are in the essence of the definiendum.

This rule highlights the importance of two aspects of a proper method of division. First, division as a method of definition cannot simply be a grouping of similars in the absence of an analysis of the grounds for the similarity. This is one of the problems with Platonic division, which fails to distinguish between categories of form. Proper division is always aimed at revealing the substantial form of the subject.[52] Second, Aristotelian division must be understood in the context of scientific explanation through the demonstration of causes. The way in which the researcher knows what is essential and what is properly accidental is in terms of what is causally fundamental to the definiendum. [53] The purpose of division is to provide rigorous definitions in preparation for causal demonstration, and division will only be able to function this way if the differentiae are causally relevant to the *esse* of the definiendum.

B) Rule II: Every division of a genus must be by proper opposites.

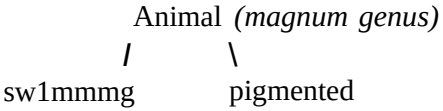
The *infimae species* of a genus will always be opposed *secundum esse.* This is why it is necessary, when defining through

[51] Balme suggests this example in *Aristotle's De partibus animalium I,* 114, based on Aristotle's discussion at 4.9.685bl5, discussed by Albert at *De animalibus* 14, tr. 1, c. 4 (Stadler, ed., 15:1010).

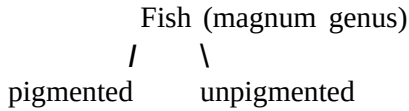
[52] See *De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 (Stadler, ed., 15:787.13-15) where Albert says that the zoological subject is best understood when the conjunction of the genus with the differentia constitutes the whatness of the animal *(quia ilia genera coniuncta cum differentiis sunt quidditas animalium formalis).* See also Balme's remark on how this conception of division differs from Plato's(" Aristotle's Use of Division and Differentiae," 75).

[53] Aristotle scholars disagree on how essential and accidental differentiae are to be distinguished. Some hold that it is on the basis of a sort of intuition arising out of experience; others hold that it is on the basis of causal consequence. For references, see Lennox, *Aristotle on the Parts of Animals,* 161. Albert holds the latter view; see *Posterioraanalytica* 2, tr. 2, c. 10 (Borgnet, ed., 2:188a-190b).

division, to divide by true opposites, such as pigmented/unpigmented or straight/curved. [54] Should the researcher shift the *fundamentum divisionis,* invalid cross-division will result, as when one attempts to divide the *magnum genus* "animal" in a way that produces nonopposed species. Dividing animals into swimming



and pigmented is invalid because, while both are ways of being animal, they are not properly opposed. The problem here is that the *fundamentum divisionis* has been shifted from means of locomotion to coloration. Consequently, the species belong to differing categories and are not properly opposed in the same category. [55] Invalid cross-division results, for there may be animals that are pigmented and that swim. The proper method is to



divide a more specific *magnum genus,* such as fish, into properly opposed species by applying a single differentia to the genus to produce species in the same category of opposition. [56]

[54] "quod fiat divisio per contraria, sicut contraria sunt albedo et nigredo, et rectitudo et curvitas" *(De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 [Stadler, ed., 15:786.21-22]).

[55] Although Albert says at *De animalibus* 11, tr. 2. c. 1 (Stadler, ed., 15:786.19-20) that dividing by opposite forms is dividing by contraries *(oppositae formae sint contrariae),* his examples make it clear that he understands Aristotle's notion of opposition in a broad sense to include any sort of opposites within the same category of attribution. Thus, Albert does not hold that valid division is limited to strict logical contraries, but would accept, for example, blue and yellow as properly opposed because they are opposed ways of being colored. For a discussion of Aristotle's notion of opposition, see Lennox, *Aristotle on the Parts of Animals,* 163.

[16] The example here is borrowed from Aristotle *(De part. animal.* 1.3.643a33-34); Albert does not give an example of.the division of a *magnum genus* in his discussion atDe *animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 (Stadler, ed., 15:786.19-31).

Albert points out that the failure to maintain a stable *fundamentum divisionis* throughout a division results, not only in invalid divisions, but in unintelligible definitions. Among his concerns here is to allow division of genera according to quantitative differentiae and this requires that the same measurable characteristic be divided into properly opposed quantities. This is why he points out that the researcher must not divide a genus into a certain weight and a certain dimensionality as these are not opposed in the same category of quantity. Rather, a genus must be divided into different measures of a characteristic in the same mode.[57] In his commentary on book 1 of Aristotle's *History of Animals,* Albert notes that often morphological diversity is a matter of greater or lesser magnitude of a characteristic found within a certain genus.[58] The rule that one must divide by proper opposites would insure that such quantitative differentiae would mark off truly opposed species. For example, in the *magnum genus* "bird," degree of beakedness distinguishes species on the basis of length of beak, such as the long beak characteristic of the stork and the short beak characteristic of the parrot.[59]

C) Rule IIJ: Every behavioral differentia dividing a genus must be the effect of the essential nature of the genus.

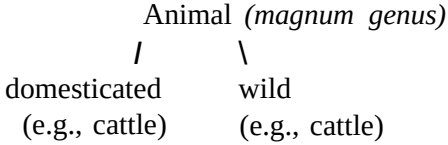
Some animals are capable of changing their behaviors within a given behavioral mode. Bird locomotion, for example, is sometimes by flying and sometimes by walking. When this is the case, dividing by such behavioral differentiae may result in false

[57] See *De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 (Stadler, ed., 15:786.26-28) where Albert uses the terms "weight" *(pondus)* and "measure" *(mensura);* it is clear that by the latter he has in mind some measure of dimensionality. Albert later discusses quantitative definition of forms "according to the more and the less" *(secundum magis et minus)* at *De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 2 (Stadler, ed., 15:789.15-790.16).

[58] "et tune diversitas sive discrepantia partium est aliquando penes augmentum et diminutionem membrorum, quae sumitur non quidem in a una specie animalis, sub in uno genere communi" *(Deanimalibus* 1, tr. 1, c. 2 [Stadler, ed., 15:9.1-5]).

[59] "Quaedam autem habentium pycam [sive rostrum] habent earn longam sicut ciconia: et quaedam habent brevem valde sicut psytacus" *(De animalibus* I, tr. 1, c. 2 [Stadler, ed., 15:9.22-24]).

divisions. Were the researcher to attempt to divide the genus ants into species by the behavioral differentia of flying, false division would result because the difference between flying and nonflying ants is not a difference of substantial form, but of stage of life.[60] Likewise, some animals are capable of being domesticated, yet one cannot divide an animal genus into wild and domesticated without misleadingly splitting the genus with respect to the substantial form of the animal in question. Following Aristotle,



Albert points out that cattle and various other animals that live wild in India are domesticated in other parts of the world.[61] The difference here is not in the substantial form of the animal, but simply its general manner of life. Dividing by domesticity, then, is to divide by behaviors common to many kinds and this may result in accidental division.[62]

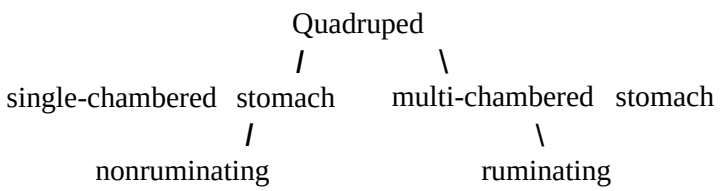
Generally, a distinction must be made between those behaviors and bodily operations that result from the substantial being of the animal and those that are merely superficial. This is why division of a genus by a behavioral differentia must be limited to those behaviors that are proper to the *esse* of the animal, as walking is

[60] "et in tali divisione nihil prohibet aliquando idem genus animalis cadere sub utraque differentiarum dividentium. Diximus enim superius formicam etnoctilucam esse et gressibilem et volatilem secundum diversum tempus aetatis" (De *animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 [Stadler, ed., 15:786.34-38]).

[61] "quoniam in terra Indiae silvestres sunt proci et caprae et oves et omnes modi animalium domesticorum et sunt communis et univoci nominis domestica et silvestria" (De *animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 [Stadler, ed., 15:787.3-6]).

[62] Following Aristotle, Albert uses the term "operations common to the soul and to the body" *(operationes communes animae et corporis)* to indicate common operations of animal bodies and common operations of animal souls at *De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 {Stadler, ed., 15:786.32f). Given the examples, the former seems to refer to bodily operations of many species of animals that have the same or similar morphologies and the latter refers to behaviors (walking, feeding, etc.) common to many animals as whole organisms. On various recent interpretations of Aristotle's text, see Balme, "Aristotle's Use of Division and Differentiae," 76 n. 6.

to quadrupeds or flying is to birds. Albert reminds his readers that the definition of an animal cannot be learned from the species, but from the genus. This is because it is the genus conjoined to the differentia that constitutes the substantial form of the species.[63] Division of the genus "large quadruped" into domesticated and wild does not produce an understanding of domesticated behavior, whereas division of the same genus according to complexity of stomach morphology does produce understanding of ruminant behavior.[64] The latter division is correct because the



behavior known through the division belongs to the genus as the proper effect of its formal nature.

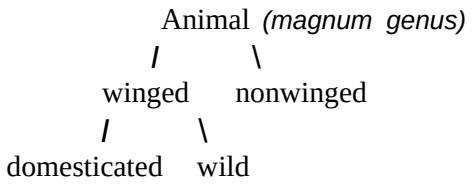
D) Rule N: All differentiae relevant to defining the species must be applied to the genus together.

In the attempt to provide sufficient differentiae to define a species, dichotomists add a new attribute at each stage of division. By collecting all the differentiae applied at each stage, then, the dichotomist supposes that a definition is established. This procedure, Albert points out, will always fail because the differentiae will at some stage be discontinuous *(sine continuatione).* Division of the *magnum genus* "animal," for example, into winged and nonwinged and of winged into domesticated and wild fails in this way. Even if being domesticated can be an *infima species* of some genus, it is not an immediate specification of winged, but of

[63] At *De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 (Stadler, ed., 15:787.10-24) Albert says that the genus joined to the differentia is the formal quiddity *(quidditas fonnalis)* of the animal.

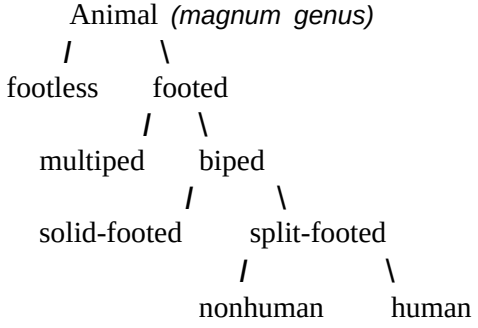
[64] The example is taken from *De animalibus* 12, tr. 3, c. 7 (Stadler, ed., 15:891.36-41) where Albert uses the differentia of dental rather than digestive morphology to mark off rumination.

something prior to being winged--namely, being animal.[65] Domestication is not a



kind of wingedness and, therefore, the unity of the definition is lost. Such contrived divisions fail to show that the ultimate differentia is a determination in the species of what belongs to the genus.[66]

Even if one were somehow able to avoid the problem of discontinuous division, dichotomy must always produce a single ultimate differentia and this will be inadequate as definition. The inadequacy is not remedied by collecting all the differentiae up to the *maximum genus* and placing them into the definition. Human being, for example, cannot be defined by reading back through a division of animal into continuous specifications of footness.



[65] "sicut si dicamus, quod animalium quoddam est alatum, et quoddam album, et quoddam nigrum, et quoddam domesticum. Domesticum enim et album etiamsi concedantur esse differentiae, non sunt differentiae alati immediatae, sed erunt differentiae alicuius prioris quod est ante alatum" *(De animalibus* ll, tr. 2, c. 1 [Stadler, ed., 15:787.31-36]).

[66] In addition to describing this use of dichotomy discussed by Aristotle *(De part. animal.* 1.3.643b9) as "discontinuous" *(sine continuatione),* Albert also calls it "artless" *(sine arte* and *inartificialt)* at *De animalibus* ll, tr. 2, c. 1 (Stadler, ed., 15:787.25-40).

This definition of human being as split-footed, bipedal animal avoids discontinuous division, yet it fails properly to define because of insufficient or inessential differentiae. No natural entity is so simple that a single succession of dichotomies will define it. Yet this is precisely how dichotomy must proceed, if it is to be valid and continuous. [67] If, therefore, the method of division is to yield rigorous and useful scientific definitions, an alternative method is needed.

The solution to the problems posed by discontinuous and incomplete division is the Aristotelian method of polychotomous division. The researcher must apply all the relevant differentiae to the genus together. This is accomplished by making a series of coordinated divisions that divide a genus with continuous differentiae. The differentiae are applied to the genus simultaneously and the resulting *infimae species* are laterally collated to provide a definiendum that is understood in terms of the genus. No individual kind can be discovered through a division that marks it off by just one differentia alone. What a kind is essentially *(per se)* can only be indicated by taking all the relevant differentiae together. [68] This cannot be done by a single succession of dichotomies, because the ultimate differentia alone

[67] Albert gives this example atDe *animalibus* 1l, tr. 2, c.1 (Stadler, ed., 15:788.37-789.3), where he says that every dichotomous division must end with a final species "because if one will divide man, ... man falls only into one differentia and not into many" ("quoniam si quis diviserit hominem, ... homo non incidit nisi in differentiam unam et non in plures"). He cannot here intend a division of the genus "human being," because he immediately follows *diviserit hominem* with "who is constituted through the final or otherwise most specific species" ("qui constituitur per ultimam aut aliam speciem specialissimam"). He must have in mind a definition of human being that is attained by "collecting" all the differentiae that resulted in the final form of human being. This reading is also supported by Albert's own comment immediately following this passage (Stadler, ed., 15:789.4-8; see note 70 below).

[68] "quod impossibile quod aliquod singularium per se inveniatur sine altero dividentium: omnia enim, quae sunt in communitate generis cadunt sub altero dividentium: sicut quidam homines fingendo opinati sunt, quod impossibile unam solam per se differentiam inveniri in rebus singularibus ... sub unumquodque incidere in multis differentiis" ("It is impossible that any specific individual kind be discovered without other dividing differentiae, for everything in the commonality of the genus falls under other dividing differentiae. It is impossible that, as certain men have imagined, only a single differentia be discovered by itself in individual things ... rather, each individual falls under many differentiae") *(De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 [Stadler, ed., 15:787.40-788.6]).

must be convertible with the definiendum. [69] This is why, Albert points out, "immediately opposing differentiae, which may be attributed to the same division, ought not to be differentiae of one and the same thing," while many differentiae attributed to multiple divisions can be of one and the same thing. [70]

Albert argues that, in actual research practice, [71] the use of division as a method of discovery does not begin with a simple *maximum genus*, such as "animal." Rather, the researcher begins with observed individuals commonly grouped together as *magna genera* and for which there is an accepted common nomenclature such as "fish" or "bird. ,,n Each of these genera will be recognized by a collection of common attributes of the genus and each genus will be divided according to the way in which the attributes appear in the various species that fall under the genus. Birds, for example, are recognized as winged, biped, beaked, etc. The various species of bird, then, are defined by the way in which each

[69] "sed propter naturam diffinitionis quae est ostendens rei quiditatem convertibilem cum ipsa, accidit quod differentia ultima solum est differentia quae convertitur" *(De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 1 [Stadler, ed., 15:788.25-27]); see also *Quaestiones de animalibus* 11, q. 7 (ed. Colon., 12:221).

[70] "Declaratum est igitur, quod multae differentiae immediate oppositae non debent esse differentiae unius et eiusdem rei, quae uni et eidem divisioni sint attributae, quia illae sunt immediate oppositae, sed ultima differentia debet esse tantum una. Plures autem quae pluribus divisionibus attribuuntur, unius et eisudem rei esse possunt" *(De animalibus* 11, tr.2, c. 1 [Stadler, ed., 15:789.4-9]).

[71] That Albert intends his account to be a guide to actual research is indicated by the titles of the two chapters (beginning at Stadler, ed., 15:789.15) following the one containing his critique of dichotomy. The first of these chapters raises the question whether the researcher is to begin from universal genera ("Utrum incipiendum sit ab universalibus an a particularibus?") and the second indicates how the researcher is to proceed from the definitions given through divisions to causal explanation ("De quibus causae physicae sunt inquirendae et qualiter"). At the very end of these texts (Stadler, ed., 15:796.12-16), Albert remarks that the whole treatment of division has been discussed for the sake of a scientific procedure that ought to be used in coming to know the nature of animals ("et scientia qua uti debemus in cognoscendo naturans animalium").

[72] "Dubitabit autem aliquis, quare duo genera animalium, scilicet animal aquosum quod est piscis, et animal volatile quod est avis, non comprehenduntur nomine uno. Isti enim modi animalium et alii quorum accidentia sunt contraria, recte etiam nomine dividuntur" ("Someone will wonder why two kinds of animals, namely aquatic animal (fish) and flying animal (bird), are not brought together under one name. These kinds of animals and others that have contrary accidents are rightly divided by name") *(De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 2 [Stadler, ed., 15:789.15-19]).

of these attributes differ according to "the more and the less." All birds are winged, but not in the same way. Some have shorter, broader wings whereas others have longer, narrower wings, and these are among the differentiations that mark off the various species.[73]

Quantitative differentiae that divide according to the more and the less *(secundum magis et minus)* are possible because there exist morphological and functional conformities among the subjects of scientific research. Where the conformity is absolute, there is identity of kind signified by a univocal name. Often, however, such conformities are proportional *(convenientia proportionis}7*[74] and this makes possible a division of a univocally identified genus into distinct species. The univocal name of the genus, with all the properties associated with it, is carried down to each of the species, which differ from each other only in the degree to which the property exists in the variants. Thus, Albert remarks, the species differ in a measurable way while remaining of the same generic kind. Their proportionality is with respect to one genus *(sunt convenientia in proportione ad unum)* and this is why the generic name is applied to the species as well. Knowing the proper generic identification of bird as winged biped, for example, the researcher can also apply the univocal name "bird" to each of the species of bird distinguished according to the

[73] "Verbi gratia inter avem et avem quae sunt unius et eiusdem generis, est differentia quae est secundum magis et minus in eadem natura, quoniam utraque est alata, sed una est magis alata quae est longioris alae, et alia est minus alata quae est alae brevioris" (De *animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 2 [Stadler, ed., 15:789.28-32]).

[74] Kitchell and Resnick translate this term as "proportional agreement"; see *Albertus Magnus On Animals,* 885 n. 76. It is clear from Albert's use of this and similar terms *(similitudo proportionalis, proportionantur ad unum, proportionalitas ad idem,* etc.) that he intends proportionality primarily in the category of quantity. In this he is following Aristotle; see James G. Lennox, "Aristotle on Genera, Species, and the More and the Less," *Journal of the History of Biology* 13 (1980): 321-46. This does not rule out a qualitative proportional agreement between animal genera with respect to analogous features such as feathers in birds and scales in fish (Stadler, ed., 15:789.34-790.2) or human bone and fish spine (Stadler, ed., 15:791.38-792.2). Albert notes that in such cases the agreement is functional *(secundum principium virtutis et operationis)* rather than morphological *(secundum formam).*

degree of wingedness (possessing wings of differing length, shape, etc.).[75]

Now, it will be clear to the researcher from observation and common nomenclature that the generic name will apply, not only with respect to the possession of a certain property in varying degrees, but also with respect to other properties as well. Birds are winged, but they are also footed, and the various kinds of birds will be distinguished by the varying degrees of footedness--such as degrees of continuousness (webbing) of foot or degrees of curvature in pedial digit. These cannot be shown through the same division marking off species through differentiae of wing-length, but must be shown through different divisions. Thus, the common wood duck is distinguished from other birds not only by the length and shape of wing but also by its webbed feet, its distinctive markings in the sexes, length and shape of tail feathers, etc. Each of these specific determinations is made in a separate division and the divisions laterally collated (set side by side) providing a logically structured and rigorous definition. In using division to determine the nature of animals, Albert notes, bodily characteristics of magnitude of size, degree of hardness, degree of surface roughness, and similar accidents ought all to be considered together, for in all of these generic characteristics animals will agree according to the more and the less.[76]

IV. THE USE OF DIVISION IN *DE AVIBUS*

Most of Albert's massive *De animalibus* is devoted to paraphrastic commentary on Aristotle's zoological treatises. The final five books, however, record the results of zoological research

[75] This example is based on *De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 2 (Stadler, ed., 15:791.7-12): "Ita etiam loquendo de ave non est loquendum de quolibet modo avium, sed de avis natura in communi: hoc enim genus, quod est avis, habet modos specierum qui sunt individui secundum formam, licet dividantur secundum materiam: et de talibus individuis speciebus est nobis loquendum, sicut est passer et grus et aliae avium species specialissimae."

[76] "Sic igitur accipienda sunt communiter accidentia corporalia animalium in magnitudine et parvitate et mollitie et duritie et lenitate et asperitate et aliis accidentibus sibi similibus: et in omnibus hiis consideranda sunt universalia, secundum quod magis et minus conveniunt animalibus" *(De animalibus* 11, tr. 2, c. 2 [Stadler, ed., 15:792.3-7]).

beyond that of Aristotle. Like Aristotle in his *Historia animalium,* Albert here includes zoological descriptions based on his personal observations and studies as well as those of others.[77] A brief look at some of these researches, those devoted to birds, will illustrate how Albert understood Aristotle's reform of the method of division to apply to actual scientific investigation. Albert recorded morphological and functional descriptions of some 114 species of bird.[78] While some are rather brief, many are quite detailed and are clearly based on close empirical study. This is especially evident in his treatment of birds of prey, most notably his work on falcons.[79] As in modern ornithological treatises, Albert's descriptions are set out in a continuous narrative form suitable for reference, rather than as a record of the actual stages of research by which the information contained in the narrative was attained.[80] Nonetheless, the divisions upon which these descriptions are based can be reconstructed.

Albert prefaces his study of avian life with some general methodological remarks that indicate the dependence of his morphological and functional descriptions on the method of division. He begins by reminding the reader that every scientific investigation proceeds from the general to the particular. He will, therefore, first describe birds according to what belongs to the whole genus and only then consider what belongs to the various

[77] For a general description of these books and of Albert's personal animal studies, see Kitchell and Resnick, *Albertus Magnus On Animals,* 22-42 and the introduction and notes to Albert the Great, *Man and the Beasts: De animalibus (Books 22-26),* trans. James J. Scanlan (Binghamton, N.Y.: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1987). On Albert's sources, see Pauline Aiken, "The Animal History of Albertus Magnus and Thomas of Cantimpre," *Speculum* 22 (1947): 205-25; and Miguel de Asua, "El *De animalibus* de Alberto Magno y la organizaci6n de! discurso sobre los animales en el siglo XIII," *Patristica et Mediaevalia* 15 (1994): 3-26.

[78] *De avibus* comprises the whole of *De animalibus* 23 (Stadler, ed., 16:1430-1514).

[79] These ornithological descriptions of birds of prey represent Albert's most extended avian studies. Drawing on his own observations as well as the work of numerous experts, Albert treats several genera of raptorial birds including eagles, hawks, and falcons. About half of *De avibus* is given over to a separate treatise on falcons in twenty-four chapters (Stadler, ed., 16:1453-93). For a general description and Albert's sources, see Robin S. Oggins, "Albertus Magnus on Falcons and Hawks," in *Albertus Magnus and the Sciences,* 441-62.

[80] For Albert's account of scientific narration *(narratio)* and its relationship to scientific explanation *(demonstratio)* see the references given in note 42 above.

species.[81] This is a reference to his earlier insistance, following Aristotle, that the researcher must initially establish the genera to be divided according to accepted nomenclature. The science of birds, just as the science of any other subject-genus, begins with the articulation of those observed morphological characteristics that are commonly gathered together under one generic designation. These are then divided according to the proportion in which they exist in the variant species.[82] Albert goes on to explain that in his *De avibus* he will treat the divisions according to the common names of the species listed alphabetically in the manner of a traditional bestiary. He admits that this is not the proper philosophical method and that he is using this order for pedagogical purposes alone.[83] Such a method, then, does not explicitly show the divisions made in the process of discovery and definition upon which the descriptions are based. This is because the descriptions are being here offered not as a record of research activity, but as an authoritative presentation of what is known of the subject-genus both in general and in its variant kinds.[84] It is clear, however, that the morphological and functional elements given in the descriptions that follow have been identified and organized through the application of a series of careful divisions, for Albert frequently refers to these elements as generic or as specifying differentiae.[85]

[81] "In hoc libro specialiter de natura avium agendum est, et quia omnis physica consideratio de communibus ad particularia descendit, ideo primo in communi de avium dicendum est natura, et postea secundum ordinem alfabeti Latini nominatim aves secundum suas species et modos exprimantur" (De *animalibus* 23 [Stadler, ed., 16:1430.1-6]).

[82] See notes 73 and 74 above.

[83] "Licet enim hie modus non omnino sit phylosophicus eo quod in ipso multotiens idem repetitur, idcirco quod unum et idem multis convenit avibus, tamen ad facilitatem operatur doctrinae, et hunc modum multi tenuerunt philosophorum" (De *animalibus* 23 [Stadler, ed., 16:1430.6-9]).

[84] In the preface to his commentary on the *Historia animalium,* Albert indicates that this is Aristotle's procedure as well; see *De animalibus* l, tr. 1, c. 1 (Stadler, ed., 15:4.21-34).

[85] These opening words of *De avibus* (De *animalibus* 23 [Stadler, ed., 16:1430-33]) indicate that, while Albert drew his information from many sources, his own presentation of it is organized with the requirements of Aristotelian division in mind. For this reason, the divisions implicitly or explicitly given in the text will be referred to Albert on the understanding that, in some cases, Albert may have appropriated them from his sources.

After articulating what is true of birds throughout their entire genus *(secundum totum genus suum),* Albert proceeds to list each species according to its common name.[86] For each, he typically begins by providing a general description showing how the generic elements of bird morphology or behavior characteristically exist in the species. He then proceeds to describe the various ways in which the morphology or behavior differs in the various sub-species according to the more and the less. Usually, he will characterize the sub-species by more than one morphological or behavioral property, showing that he has arrived at the definition of the sub-species by multiple divisions. His treatment of the goshawk, for example, contains a discussion of the way this subspecies differs from other species of hawk, not only in terms of physical morphology, but also according to the number of eggs it lays, its manner of flight, and its typical prey.[87]

A general idea of how Albert uses division to define and organize his knowledge of a particular bird species is evident in the structure of his *De falconibus.* This section of the text begins with four chapters on the characteristics that define falcons as a genus.[88] Each of these-physical morphology, coloration, characteristic behavior, and characteristic call-is a specification of generic bird attributes set out at the beginning of *De avibus.* Following this, Albert adds thirteen chapters that describe the nineteen species of falcon according to the way in which generic falcon characteristics differ in degree from one type of falcon to another.[89] A careful reading of these ornithological descriptions in light of the rules of division set out in book 11 reveals that the differentiation of the species on the basis of these differing characteristics cannot be the result of dichotomous division. The only way that Albert could discover the multiple differentiae that

[86] See Stadler, ed., 16:1430-33; the remainder of book 23 is devoted to particular descriptions according species arranged alphabetically by common name.

[87] *De animalibus* 23 (Stadler, ed., 16:1438-39); see also Oggins, "Albertus Mangus on Falcons and Hawks," 446-47.

[88] *De falconibus,* cc. 1-4 (Stadler, ed., 16:1453-56).

[89] *De falconibus,* cc. 5-16, 24 (Stadler, ed., 16:1457-71, 1492-93); to these ornithological descriptions Albert adds seven chapters (cc. 17-23) on the training, feeding, and veterinary care of falcons (beginning at Stadler, ed., 16:1471).

distinguish each falcon type is through a series of divisions applied to the genus "falcon" all at once. The peregrine falcon, for example, is distinguished from the other noble species of falcon, not only on the basis of overall size, but also with regard to length, slenderness of proportion, size and shape of breast, as well as other factors. Each of these specific characteristics are discovered through a separate division that places peregrines in a class relative to the other species. A division according to overall size places the peregrine midway between the larger saker, gerfalcon, and mountain species and the smaller gibbous falcon. At the same time, the peregrine differs from the saker in being shorter in length and from the mountain falcon in having a smaller, less-rounded breast.[90]

Albert uses a similar procedure in distinguishing a species, such as falcon, from other birds that form a genus on the basis of some generally recognized common factor, such as diet, mode of feeding, or way of life. This is an important application of division in an Aristotelian science that allows various nonarbitrary accounts of precisely what is contained in the subject-genus of the science. Generally, avian science is distinguished from other sciences by those differentiae that define the *magnum genus* "bird" in such a way that this genus is divisible into species and subspecies corresponding to common nomenclature. Yet, other common factors that can be used to differentiate the *magnum genus* yield species that, in one way, constitute a specific type in a certain limited respect, but, in another way, do not constitute a type differentiated in enough ways to constitute a commonly named species. An example is the genus "bird of prey" which is marked off from the *magnum genus* "bird" primarily by mode of feeding and way of life (carnivorous and hunting). This is not a commonly named genus of bird in the way that hawk, eagle, and falcon are, but it does organize the subject-genus of avian science according to a useful distinction that allows further differentiation into morphologically defined species. Thus, among birds that

[90] *De falconibus,* c. 8 (Stadler, ed., 16:1461-63); see also cc. 7 and 9 (Stadler, ed., 16:1460-61, 1463).

make their living from hunting prey, Albert morphologically distinguishes hawks, eagles, and falcons according to overall size, appearance, and wing-structure. Hawks are distinguished from eagles by, among other things, a wing that is more pointed than that of the eagle, but less pointed than that of the falcon. By morphologically defining types of birds of prey, such a division makes possible further divisions into the various subspecies of the kinds of hunting birds.[91]

All of these divisions follow the four rules Albert sets out in book 11. A division of the genus "bird of prey" into the various raptorial species, for example, must be through differentiae that are nonaccidental and properly opposed. All birds, including birds of prey, are by nature winged. To divide according to wing structure, then, provides species that are essentially alike in form. The possession of markedly pointed wings in a bird of prey is not an accidental similarity of falcons, but essential to being a falcon as opposed to being some other type of raptorial bird. Moreover, morphological distinctions according to degree of pointedness in wing structure are properly opposed, for the *fundamentum divisionis* (wing-pointedness) remains the same across the divisions and one degree of it excludes another. Albert avoids dividing the genus "bird of prey" by behavioral differentiae that would result in invalid definition. That the genus can be divided into trained and untrained does not yield scientific description of the falcon, for the same distinction applies to other birds of prey as well. Finally, the division of the genus into species of raptorial birds does not depend on a single dichotomous division of pointed-winged/unpointed-wing, but division according to degree of pointedness which admits of a range. These degree-divisions are laterally collated to discover the various types of birds of prey distinguishable according to wing-structure. While degree of wing-pointedness is fundamental to the definition of falcon and other raptorial birds, other differences are found as well. Thus, divisions of the genus according to degree of overall physical size

[91] For references, see Oggins, "Albertus Magnus on Falcons and Hawks," 447£.

and length of tail feathers are set beside the division according to wing-pointedness to arrive at the definition of the species.

CONCLUSION

The logical method of division, common to the early medieval textbook tradition deriving from Cicero and Boethius, found a revised articulation in the work of Albert. Possessing new translations of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* and *Topics,* Albert was able to treat division as part of a larger method of scientific investigation. It is Albert's historic role in the revival of the early Peripatetic research projects in the natural sciences, especially in the life sciences, that prompted his detailed studies of division as a method of scientific discovery and definition. These studies reveal that Albert understood Aristotle's method of division as a reform of the Platonic method as well as the necessity of that reform for the scientific investigation of nature. Albert clearly articulated the Aristotelian critique of dichotomous division as well as the proper rules for valid and useful definition through genera and differentiae. He also realized that the Aristotelian reform of division was grounded in a notion of natural form quite distinct from the Platonic conception of subsistent abstract form. He was careful to distinguish himself from his Platonically inclined contemporaries, for whom the new natural science of Aristotle was metaphysically grounded in the formal abstraction of mathematical principles.[92] Realizing that such a Platonic conception of natural form fails to provide an adequate foundation for research in the life sciences, Albert sought a distinctively Aristotelian method of scientific definition. This he discovered in the reform of Platonic division and he was concerned systematically to describe and apply a valid form of nonaccidental division capable of producing rigorous and complete scientific descriptions of observed phenomena.

[92] For the identification of these contemporaries, see Weisheipl, "Albertus Magnus and the Oxford Platonists," 124-39; for a discussion of the metaphysical foundations of natural science, see Benedict M. Ashley, "Albertus Magnus on Aristotle's Metaphysics, I, tract l," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 70 (1996): 137-55.

Albert's treatment of division anticipates recent developments in Aristotle studies that associate the reform of the method with the interpretation of the zoological works as methodological applications of the *Posterior Analytics* and *Topics.* Like many recent scholars, Albert did not consider these logical works to provide a highly formalized deductive methodology quite distinct from the nondeductive and varying methods of the zoological treatises. Rather, he understood Aristotle's zoological studies as exhibiting precisely that two-staged methodology of theoretical description and causal demonstration described in these logical works.[93] The predemonstrative methods of the *Topics* aimed at dialectically organizing the data derived from observation use division to provide the descriptions contained in such scientific works as the *History of Animals.* These rigorously produced descriptions provide the materials from which explanatory demonstrations of the sort found in the *Parts of Animals* and the *Generation of Animals* are constructed. Albert's treatment of Aristotelian division as well as his application of the method to his own zoological studies indicates that he recognized that Aristotle's logical works articulate the methodology actually used in scientific research.

Albert's treatment of Aristotelian division anticipates recent Aristotle studies in another way as well. The recent discovery of the elements of Aristotle's reform of Platonic division has prompted scholars to a more accurate appreciation of the nature and role of the zoological descriptions of the *History of Animals.* Long considered Aristotle's attempt at zoological systematics, this work has recently been reinterpreted as a nontaxonomical collection of morphological and functional descriptions of animals produced by the application of Aristotelian division.[94] Albert understood Aristotle's classification of animals in the same way,

[93] Concerning the modern debate on this issue see Gotthelf and Lennox, eds., *Philosophical Issues in Aristotle's Biology,* 65-198.

[94] This was first argued at length by Pierre Pellegrin, *Aristotle's Classification of Animals,* trans. Anthony Preus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); see also Balme, "Aristotle's Use of Division and Differentiae," 80-85; and Lennox, *Aristotle's Philosophy of Biology,* 7-71.

for he makes no reference to systematics in his commentaries and makes no attempt at systematic taxonomy in his own zoological studies. It is evident in Albert's account of division given here that the notions of genus and species refer to the same ontological relationship at each level they are used. Species are always forms of genera and are arrived at by the specification of a differentia. Genera are not necessarily continuous and may be of widely differing types. Further, division into species is not always exhaustive, but is only carried out to some limited extent relative to a specific explanatory purpose. For Albert, as for Aristotle, the method of division is not aimed at a general taxonomy of animal kinds. Rather, the function of division is scientific discovery and definition for the purpose of causal explanation. [95]

Albert's insistance that zoological researchers must avoid explaining natural substances in terms of forms that do not exist in matter and derive from material potentialities was born of his discovery of the sharp contrast of the Platonic and Aristotelian conceptions of form. The significance of this discovery concerns not only the proper interpretation of Aristotle's science, but the possibility of continued and future scientific research as well. Crucially important to this possibility is the clear distinction between the Platonic and Aristotelian methods of division and the development of proper rules of division capable of producing the definitions necessary for causal explanation of natural substances. After some 1500 years of neglect, Albert revived and extended specific Aristotelian research programs in which the method of division played a central role in scientific discovery. In light of this, Albert's treatment of division occupies a significant place in the history of the development of scientific method.

[95] For a brief account of Albert's place in the history of interpretation of Atistotle's *History of Animals* as zoological systematics, see Michael W. Tkacz, "Albert the Great and the Interpretation of Aristotle's *Historia animalium*," *Proceedings of the PMR Conference* 18 (1993-94): 217-27.

The Thomist 73 (2009): 437-54

THE ECCLESIOLOGY OF THE RAVENNA AGREED STATEMENT: ANALYSIS AND CORRECTION

ANSGAR SANTOGROSSI, O.S.B.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary
Denton, Nebraska

IN OCTOBER 2007 the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church published "Ecclesiological and Canonical Consequences of the Sacramental Nature of the Church: Ecclesial Communion, Conciliarity and Authority." The document has been greeted with much satisfaction insofar as Orthodox agree with Catholics that the bishop of Rome is the first of the "patriarchs" in the universal Church. Moreover, in comparison with previous documents which strongly if not exclusively emphasized the Church as *sacramental* communion (in baptism, Eucharist, and episcopal ordination), the Ravenna statement gives a higher profile to the necessity of *canonical* legitimacy in the episcopate. One may hope for future agreement on the nature and consequences of the primacy of the bishop of Rome in the universal Church.

However, the Ravenna statement also opines that there cannot be an ecumenical council in the strict sense as long as the Churches are divided. This assertion is both problematic and a consequence of unresolved theological tensions that characterize the document as a whole. The present article will examine these tensions and suggest that they arise from deeply rooted presuppositions in recent ecclesiology that need to be re-examined in light of the integral Tradition of the Church.

I

Noticeable in the Ravenna statement is a tendency to conceive the Church's being and nature as sacramental in such a way that baptism, "apostolic succession" understood as episcopal ordination, and Eucharistic celebration suffice to make "the Church" be. The consequence of this sacramental sufficiency is language that views "canonical" structures as only "expressions" of the mystery of *koinonia.* The overall tone of the document is set in the following passage:

> On the basis of these common affirmations of our faith, we must now draw the ecclesiological and canonical consequences which flow from the sacramental nature of the Church. Since the Eucharist, in the light of the Trinitarian mystery, constitutes the criterion of ecclesial life as a whole, how do institutional structures visibly reflect the mystery of this *koinonia?* Since the one and holy Church is realised both in each local Church celebrating the Eucharist and at the same time in the *koinonia* of all the Churches, how does the life of the Churches manifest this sacramental structure? Unity and multiplicity, the relationship between the one Church and the many local Churches, that constitutive relationship of the Church, also poses the question of the relationship between the authority inherent in every ecclesial institution and the conciliarity which flows from the mystery of the Church as communion. [1]

To say only that "institutional structures" must "reflect" the communion of the Church tends to superpose "institution" over "communion," such that the Church would exist essentially as communion, while relations of hierarchical subordination would be accidental, no matter how normal or desirable.

Despite the diffusion of statements in modern theology such as "The Church is a communion before it is an institution," such a theory does not do justice to authentic Christian life in the Church. Communion in the mystery of Christ necessarily includes subordination to his visible representatives, the successors of the apostles, and not only in the time of liturgical celebration. For a Catholic, there is no licit sacramental communion without

[1] "Ecclesiological and Canonical Consequences of the Sacramental Nature of the Church," par. 3-4 of the Ravenna statement, available in English on the Vatican website (www.vatican.va), under the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, "Dialogo con le Chiese Ortodosse di tradizione bizantina."

hierarchical communion with the pope; the communion of the Church is essentially hierarchical and canonical as well as sacramental. The Ravenna statement seems to defend the contrary when it says that authority is an aspect of every ecclesial "institution," while conciliarity is said to derive from the Church as communion. The Catholic would ask, isn't the authority instituted by Christ, the once visible and now invisible head of the Church, also an invisible reality accepted in faith?

A certain separation of sacramentality/mystery from hierarchy/jurisdiction that characterizes contemporary ecclesiology is based on a dubious metaphysics of ecclesial being that has become an unconscious thought pattern during the last fifty years, reflecting the massive influence of the nineteenth-century Tiibingen school and some twentieth-century Orthodox theologians. Although the leading theologian of the Tiibingen school, Johann Adam Mohler, went through two distinct phases in his work, such that his *Symbolik* corrects certain aspects of his *Die Einheit der Kirche,* it is the perspectives of *Die Einheit der Kirche* that have come to be simplified into an unconscious dominant paradigm in mainstream Catholic ecclesiology.[2] In the name of a return to biblical and patristic thought, supposed to have been largely obliterated in the post-Tridentine period, the Church is sometimes said to *be* communion, rather than a multitude of spiritual subjects *in* hierarchical and spiritual communion. By the careless use of metaphorical language no longer recognized as metaphorical, communion thereby loses its being of quality, and through the force of the grammatical substantive comes to be treated as if it were a mysterious substance, nature, or essence.

[2] For a summary of Mahler's ecclesiology see Michael J. Himes, *Ongoing Incarnation: Johann Adam Mohler and the Beginnings of Modern Ecclesiology* (New York: Crossroad, 1997). Christopher Ruddy, *The Local Church: Tillard and the Future of Catholic Ecclesiology,* (New York: Crossroad, 2006) summarizes Mohler and other equally influential theologians as well (see 1-46). For critical analysis of the role of Romantic social philosophy in modern ecclesiology, see Benoit-Dominique de la Soujeole, *Le sacrement de la communion: Essai d'ecclesiologie fondamentale* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires; Paris: Cerf, 1998), passim. The classic study by Edmond *Vermei1,]ean-Adam Mohler et /'ecole catholique de Tubingue (1850-1914): Etude sur la theologie romantique en Wurtemberg et /es origines germaniques du modernisme* (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1913) may be one-sided in its presentation of Mohler, but it is well documented and still cited today.

The paradoxical result is that the multitude of persons ordered by sacramental signs and hierarchical relations, who as such *are* the Church, is imagined as the locus of the entity "the Church."

Problematic understandings of ecclesial communion are sometimes derived from personalist-existentialist Trinitarian theologies. These tend to reduce incomprehensible divine being to interpersonal "communion," which in turn becomes the inner "essence" of the Church. The result is an obscuring not only of the categorial distinctions of created being, but also of the very distinction of God and creature. Insofar as traditional ontological categories are retained, it is also affirmed that since the unity of the Church is the unity of the Trinity where the persons are substantially one and equal, there can be no subordination of local Churches; that the local Church is not a part of the universal Church but each local Church is a realization of "the Church." As "realizations" of Church but not parts of the whole Church, each Church is wholly Church as each divine person is wholly God. [3]

In reality, the patristic passages usually quoted in this context do not support such an understanding of "Church." For example, when St. Cyprian in *De oratione dominica* 23 referred to the Church as a people united in the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, he was speaking in a paraenetic context of forgiveness, peace, and concord as required by the Lord's Prayer. Likewise, although the passage from St. Basil *(On the Holy Spirit* 45) that the Ravenna statement cites as support for the equality of local Churches does imply the nonsubordination of the persons in their ontological perfection, nothing indicates that Basil would have attributed the same type of unity to local Churches as to divine persons. Nevertheless, this is precisely how readers trained in communion ecclesiology might read the following commentary, found in the Ravenna statement:

[3] The overuse of the Trinity to understand the Church was criticized by Joseph Ratzinger, although for a different reason: "Above all, though, I am decidedly against the increasingly fashionable trend of applying the trinitarian mystery directly to the Church. It does not work. We would end up believing in three Gods," in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 221 (21 September 2000), 51, cited in Maximilian Heinrich Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger: Life in the Church and Living Theology. Fundamentals of Ecclesiology with Reference to "Lumen Gentium,"* trans. Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 474 n. 214.

Conciliarity reflects the Trinitarian mystery and finds therein its ultimate foundation. The three persons of the Holy Trinity are "enumerated," as St Basil the Great says *(On the Holy Spirit,* 45), without the designation as "second" or "third" person implying any diminution or subordination. Similarly, there also exists an order *(taxis)* among local Churches, which however does not imply inequality in their ecclesial nature. [4]

It is difficult to see how this passage leaves any possibility for the divinely willed subordination of all local Churches to the Church presided over by Peter's successor.

In summary, the image of the Church as a mysterious divine entity wholly "realized" in each local Church, which thereby fails to be considered as a "part" of the universal Church, owes more to nineteenth- and twentieth-century philosophies of organicism and *Gemeinschaft* than to the Fathers of the Church. [5] In the following lines, I summarize these philosophies against their historical background-in broad strokes which, admittedly, could be nuanced-in order to show how they produce an unhealthy tension between "communion" and authority m modern ecclesiology.

The ancient city subsumed economy, culture, and religion under an authority seen as divinely established-in modern terms, there was no distinction between *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft.* Christendom introduced the supernatural power of the Church

[4] "Ecclesiological and Canonical Consequences of the Sacramental Nature of the Church," par. 5.

[5] Something analogous can be found in the "revival" of Trinitarian theology which is prominent in various "communion ecclesiologies." Contrary to a common assumption, Lewis Ayres finds that in the Fathers "we never find descriptions of the divine unity that take as their point of departure the psychological inter-communion of three distinct people ..... Where we do see the analogy of three rational beings used it is noticeable both that the terminology used of the individual persons is not defined by reference to a distinct psychological content and that the persons are always described as having an essential and metaphysical unity through the indivisibility of *phusis" (Nicaea and Its Legacy* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004], 292). Nevertheless it has become common "to assume a mode of discourse that speaks *as if* the persons functioned in this way [distinct psychologies]," and this in turn "enables the drawing of parallels between the nature of God as Triune and the relational nature of the Church and human community" (ibid., 409). In various authors, polemics against Greek ontology and the projecting of existentialist personalism onto the Cappadocian Fathers become all the more misleading when synthesized with Romantic notions of the Church as **"organic."**

over man in his transcendent dimension, thus allowing the political power to be seen as distinct and ordered to earthly peace as its proximate end. Nevertheless Christendom everywhere saw the political power as God-given and meant consciously to serve man's eternal salvation in indirect ways as its remote end, insofar as historical circumstances and the capacities of the majority allowed. This was publically manifested and accepted by all, in the liturgical coronation of rulers and in myriad other ways. The liberal revolutions ruptured the ordering of earthly justice and prosperity to man's eternal end, effectively privatizing religion and setting up the modern state, founded on the consensus of individuals seeking mutually to secure their lives, property, and freedom. Idealist and Romantic thought in turn accepted modern political society as a given, eventually calling it *Gesellschaft,* but wanted to cultivate *Gemeinschaft,* that is, human beings somehow one in spiritual communion and not reducible to a sum of individuals contracting to found a coercive power for the sake of self-defense and property. Law and power came to be associated exclusively with *Gesellschaft,* while spiritual communion was the realm of natural and organic unity in freedom. Thus, instead of retrieving and enriching the classical Christian philosophy of society which saw human beings integrated through relations of subordination and authority in view of the true human and common good, relations which had constituted societies from a multitude of families and institutions, Romantic philosophies tended to posit a false opposition between the juridical and the spiritual-personal, a dichotomy conceived in reaction to liberalism and alien to both premodern life and the history of the Church. They concluded to a quasi-collective spirit that would somehow constitute the essence of a given organic society. And instead of *deepening* their understanding of hierarchical relations (the juridical element) and integrating them with the mission of the Holy Spirit and supernatural grace (the spiritual and personal element) as Pius XII and Charles Journet would do in their teaching on the Mystical Body, theologians influenced by Romanticism tended to imagine the Church as an "organic"

entity, collective life or spirit, to which hierarchical relations would accrue more or less as excrescences.

When "the Church" is thus conceived as a mysterious and even divine quasi-substance or nature located in a given multitude of baptized persons with a bishop, there can and often does result a denial that the local Church is a part of the universal Church, insofar as each local Church is seen as a locus for the quasi-substantial nature "Church." And with the denial of the part-whole relationship between local Churches and the universal Church, which Catholic faith sees represented in the papacy and the episcopal body in hierarchical communion with him, it becomes impossible to find ecumenical agreement on the nature of the papacy and hierarchical communion in general.

Furthermore, the contemporary reluctance to recognize hierarchical subordination of particular Churches to the whole extends to all levels of the Church. The Ravenna statement perhaps shows traces of this tendency in certain formulations that blur the doctrinal authority of the magisterium, at least by omission. For example, paragraph 6 presents Trinitarian ecclesial communion in Romantic fashion, namely, as "organic" without any mention of the head, organ of doctrinal and disciplinary direction of the body. When paragraphs 7 and 8 attribute "authority" to both the baptized lay believer and the bishop, it is not clear how their "authority" and "responsibility" are to be distinguished, and it is nowhere stated that in its analogically primary sense "authority" can only be attributed to the hierarchy. Although obedience to the bishop is clearly presented as essential to the communion of the Church, there does not seem to be any place for authentic magisterium, that is to say, the magisterium as proximate rule, criterion, or touchstone of faith, for the *sensus fidelium* is defined without mention of the faithful knowing the truth under the guidance of the magisterium (as the Second Vatican Council has it).

The reality of authority is blurred in these same paragraphs when the exercise of authority in a council is said to depend on the criterion of communion itself. While this is true insofar as no exercise of authority may damage faith and charity, the

presentation in the Ravenna statement is one-sided, insofar as the exercise of apostolic authority by the hierarchy charged with teaching the baptized in the power of Christ is a constitutive element of communion itself. After the promulgation of the gospel was completed by the apostolic Church, there is no faith in the full and ordinary sense of the term if the gospel is not received directly or indirectly from the authentic magisterium. [6] As it stands, paragraphs 7 and 8 can be interpreted to mean that communion and authority are distinct realities in such a way that communion ontologically precedes authority and judges it.

I now proceed to show how this unresolved tension between communion and authority as these are understood by the Ravenna agreed statement manifests itself in its treatment of ecumenical councils.

II

The Ravenna statement seems to ground the authority of regional and ecumenical councils in the communion between the participating Churches. This communion consists in each Church's being the Church catholic in a certain place, in the one Eucharist celebrated by each and all of them, and in episcopal ordination which must be conferred in each Church by bishops from other Churches who ordain in the name of the whole episcopal body. There are possibilities for agreement present in this statement, but I would argue that Orthodox theology would reject such possibilities-and indeed does so in another passage of the document.

A Catholic theologian could first point out that on the one hand the Ravenna statement actually implies the subordination of each particular Church to the universal Church, insofar as the ordaining bishops *must* act in the name of the whole episcopate of which the pope is the *protos.* An ordaining bishop could not act

[6] "But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach? And how can they preach unless they are sent? ... Thus faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Rom 10:14-15, 17); "He who hears you hears me" (Luke 10:16).

in the name of the whole episcopate if the whole episcopate in the person of its head were to oppose the ordination, as sometimes happens. This constitutes an initial basis for the Catholic doctrine according to which the pope's primacy of jurisdiction implies that every bishop receives his canonical mission from God through the at least tacit consent of the pope, or through his implicit and general consent to all local order arising in communion of faith with him and not against his will. This ensures the unity of all the Churches. [7] Orthodox theology stands opposed to all this, in part because of its conviction that the bishop of Rome, although *protos* among the "patriarchs," cannot determine anything without the

[7] Our formulations here allow us to understand theologically how various Churches grew up during the first millennium with a real dependence on the pope, even though he was not explicitly establishing dioceses and appointing bishops. These Churches would not be Churches, then or now, without the *sine qua non* of their not being opposed to his will. As a precedent or at least a parallel for this, we can cite St. Paul's solicitude for all the Churches founded by him; this implied a juridical presence in absence, with a certain amount of only implied and presumed, yet real consent for, canonical order; see 1Cor1:1-5; 2 Cor 2:10-11; and Col 2:5. An important magisterial confirmation of the doctrine on the origin of episcopal jurisdiction is from Pius XII, *Mystici corporis* 42: "What we have thus far said of the Universal Church must be understood also of the individual Christian communities, whether Oriental or Latin, which go to make up the one Catholic Church. For they too are ruled by Jesus Christ through the voice of their respective Bishops. Consequently, Bishops must be considered as the more illustrious members of the Universal Church, for they are united by a very special bond to the divine Head of the whole Body and so are rightly called 'principal parts of the members of the Lord;' moreover, as far as his own diocese is concerned, each one as a true Shepherd feeds the flock entrusted to him and rules it in the name of Christ. Yet in exercising this office they are not altogether independent, but are subordinate to the lawful authority of the Roman Pontiff, although enjoying the ordinary power of jurisdiction *which they receive directly from the same Supreme Pontiff*' (emphasis added). For the organic development of this doctrine from its seeds in the Fathers, see Dinus Staffa, "De collegiali episcopatus ratione," *Divinitas* 8 (1964), fasc. 1, pp. 3-61. See also Alfons M. Stickler, "De potestatis sacrae natura et origine," *Periodica* 71 (1986), fasc. 1, pp. 65-91 on the distinction between power of order and power of jurisdiction which lies behind the teaching of Pius XII, other Roman pontiffs, and St. Thomas. The approach based on the *tria munera,* at the heart of Vatican II's doctrine on the episcopate, can be harmonized with the earlier teaching if the *munera* of magisterium and rule given by consecration are understood as an aptitude to receive from God the graces of state necessary for teaching and commanding well, as well as an aptitude to receive jurisdiction from the pope, necessary for the bishop to act with authority.

consent of all.[8] And this in turn may be due to seeing each particular Church as a consubstantial realization of Church, such that a particular Church is not subordinate even to the bishop of Rome, who represents the whole Church in his person.

In another passage, the Ravenna statement says that the communion of all the Churches in the true faith, in space and in time, is guaranteed if bishops in each Church succeed each other according to "the canons." Here too the document associates "communion" closely with the canonical dimension, and seems to base the authority of the canons themselves on the unanimous consent of a council of bishops who recognize the first among them. Were this principle to be applied at the universal level, the result would again be similar to the Catholic understanding of the episcopal college with and under the pope, in its magisterial and disciplinary dimensions. But here two problems also appear: (1) it is stated that there can be no ecumenical council in the strict sense while Catholic and Orthodox Churches are divided, and (2) the document attributes the authority of ecumenical councils to the truth of their content in a way that allows for debate among the faithful in the process of their reception. I will examine these two problems and suggest remedies for both; they seem to be consequences of the ecclesiological presuppositions summarized above, and so a different and more traditional ecclesiological approach seems necessary.

III

The Ravenna statement asserts that if not all the Churches come to a council, then there can be no ecumenical council in the strict sense of the term. This flows logically from the attribution of "being Church" to every local Church insofar as the latter is considered to be "Church" *tout court* and only with difficulty

[8] The Orthodox apply canon 34 of the Apostolic Constitutions to the universal level, but even on its own regional level, the directive that the *protos* not determine anything without the "sense" of the others may only signify the others' counsel rather than their consent. This has been recognized by a communion ecclesiologist, Ernest J. Skublics, in "The Church in the Third Millenium in the Light of our Shared Ecclesiology," *Anglican Theological Review* 79 n. 1 (1997): 65.

acknowledged to be truly a part of the universal Church. There is a presupposition here, which seems to consist in the following implicit reasoning: since particular Churches unable or unwilling to come to a council are nevertheless Church, it is the Church itself that is not represented in this council, and thus such a council cannot be ecumenical.

A Catholic could make a distinction that would allow him to say that during a schism there cannot be an ecumenical council in the strict sense: in such circumstances it can be said that a council convoked by the pope is formally ecumenical but not materially ecumenical. It would not be materially ecumenical because every bishop surrounded by baptized faithful is like proper "matter" for the form of hierarchical communion with the pope, such that during a schism the Church of Christ, and by extension an ecumenical council, is lacking a material and potential part of its body while it remains outside communion. But given that the Catholic Church in communion around the See of Peter is the Church of Christ, a council convoked by the pope is formally ecumenical: it represents the whole Church of Christ, insofar as it is an extraordinary actuation of the universal magisterium composed of all bishops in communion with the head of the episcopal college.

The ordinary and universal magisterium, to which a bishop belongs not merely by episcopal consecration but also by hierarchical communion with the visible head, belongs to the Church's divine constitution, which cannot be lost any more than its unity can be lost. To say that on account of schism there cannot be an ecumenical council in the strict sense is to say that the college of bishops no longer exists in the strict sense, which is to say that the Church no longer exists in the strict sense. Since these assertions are false, Florence, Trent, Vatican I, and Vatican II were indeed formally ecumenical (and Florence was also materially ecumenical). [9]

[9] The idea that the Greek delegation at Florence co-defined *Filioque* and papal primacy only in exchange for Western military aid against the Turks can still be heard, but is highly exaggerated. See the standard work of J.K. Gill, *The Council of Florence* (Cambridge, 1959), which shows Greek bishops making a conscious doctrinal decision after study and debate.

A distinction between formal and material ecumemc1ty of councils would flow from a similar distinction which has been widely taught in Catholic ecclesiology between formal and merely material apostolic succession. In this schema, validly ordained Orthodox bishops who succeed to an historic see without the pope having named someone else are considered to be in apostolic succession, but only materially. Their rejection of papal authority deprives them of an essential element of apostolic succession, namely, that ordinary jurisdiction which cannot be held over the mystical body of Christ by someone who is separated from the unity of the body. [10]

Retrieving the material-formal distinction and applying it to "particular Church" would allow Catholic ecumenism to recognize the ecclesial elements present in the Orthodox Churches while remaining in continuity with the Church's own Tradition as taught consistently by the popes, most notably since the Middle Ages and by Leo XIII and Pius XII. In much Catholic reflection today on "particular Church" there seems to be a difficulty. On the one hand, the Orthodox particular Churches are said to be wounded in their very being as particular Churches insofar as Petrine communion is intrinsic and not extrinsic to being a particular Church. But on the other hand, the Orthodox Churches are called "true particular Churches," in contrast with the Reformation communions. [11] If Petrine communion is intrinsic to particular Churches, and some particular Churches lack this communion, how can the "wound" not be mortal? In other words, how can the Churches in question be "true" particular

[10] Cf. Leo XIII: "From this it must be clearly understood that Bishops are deprived of the right and power of ruling, if they deliberately secede from Peter and his successors; because, by this secession, they are separated from the foundation on which the whole edifice must rest. They are therefore outside the *edifice* itself; and for this very reason they are separated from the *fold,* whose leader is the Chief Pastor; they are exiled from the *Kingdom,* the keys of which were given by Christ to Peter alone" *(Satis cognitum* 15). Authors in ecclesiology and fundamental theology who distinguished merely material from formal apostolic succession include: Zubizarreta, Van Noort, Mazzella, Palmieri (De *Romano Pontifice),* Salaverri, and Billot.

[11] See the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Communionis notio* (On Certain Aspects of the Church as Communion), 17.

Churches if they lack an intrinsic and not merely an extrinsic element?

One way to understand the phrase "true particular Churches" would be to say that, in contrast with the Reformation communities, the presence of valid bishops surrounded by baptized faithful makes Orthodox Churches images of the universal Church.[12] They are in this sense true particular Churches, in contrast to communities that lack validly ordained bishops. Having bishops whose episcopal character makes them apt to be heads of a portion of Christ's flock, they are images of the universal Church whose visible head is the Vicar of Christ the invisible head. They are proper "matter" for being particular Churches within the Catholic Church. All that is lacking to these groups of the baptized with bishops is the form of doctrinal and hierarchical communion with the pope. They would once again be Churches within the one Church if their bishops were to enter into hierarchical communion with the pope. But as long as Petrine communion is lacking, they are true particular Churches in an analogical sense: disposed matter *for* or *of* a particular Catholic Church.[13]

As mentioned at the end of part II above, the Ravenna statement's tendency to horizontalism in questions of faith and the authentic magisterium is clearest when it says that decisions of an

[12] "Episcopi autem singuli visibile principium et fundamentum sunt unitatis in suis Ecclesiis particularibus, ad imaginem Ecclesiae universalis formatis" ("And the individual bishops are the principle and foundation of unity in their particular Churches, which are formed after the image of the universal Church") *(Lumen Gentium* 23 [my translation]).

[13] Archbishop Velasio De Paolis, Secretary of the Apostolic Signatura, calls them Churches in an analogical and improper sense: "[L]'affermazione 'Chiese particolari' per le chiese ortodosse ha un valore soltanto analogico, non proprio ..... Le comunita ortodosse con a capo ii vescovo possono chiamarsi vere chiese particolari, ma in senso improprio. Sono chiese perche hanno ii sacerdozio e l'Eucaristia; in senso improprio, perche in esse non c'e la reciproca immanenza, in quanto non hanno la piena comunione" ("The affirmation 'particular Churches' for the Orthodox Churches has only an analogous value, not a proper value.... The Orthodox communities headed by a bishop can be called true particular Churches, but in an improper sense. They are Churches because they have the priesthood and the Eucharist; in an improper sense, because in them there is not reciprocal immanence, insofar as they do not have full communion") ("Chiesa di Cristo, Chiesa cattolica, Chiesa particolari, Comunira ecclesiali," unpublished conference given at the colloquium of the Faculty of Canon Law of the Pontifical Gregorian University [Brescia, 2004], 23, 26 [my translation]).

ecumenical council are subject to discernment and debate in the process of reception. If "decisions" includes definitions of faith, then it is unclear how this statement is compatible with faith in the infallibility of the authentic magisterium when it intends to define and hand on the truth of revelation. A Christian cannot consider authentic definitions of faith as subject to discernment: they are of themselves criteria of discernment. When the document says bishops in council are "bearers of and give voice to the faith of" their Churches (par. 38), it says the inverse of a passage in St. John Damascene:

> [Y]ou enrolled me among the children of your holy and spotless Church .... You let me graze in green pastures, refreshing me with the waters of orthodox teaching at the hands of your shepherds. You pastured these shepherds, and now they in turn tend your chosen and special flock. Now you have called me, Lord, by the hand of your bishop to minister to your people.... And you, 0 Church, are a most excellent assembly, the noble summit of perfect purity, whose assistance comes from God. You in whom God lives, receive from us an exposition of the faith that is free from error, to strengthen the Church, just as our Fathers handed it down to us.[14]

The Ravenna statement is consistent in its own very different approach: as its metaphysics of Church makes it difficult to see a local Church as a part of the Church subordinate to an ecumenical council or the pope, since each local Church is the realization of the Church as such, so the baptized lay faithful do not receive the faith from their pastors as from an infallible authority, since their communion is seen as a criterion for the exercise of authority. For many contemporary theologians whose language is perhaps echoed in the Ravenna statement, this criterion is a single consciousness of faith of the Church as a spiritual reality.

IV

I conclude with some suggestions for an approach based on the Tradition which would avoid the two problems identified in the Ravenna statement.

[14] John Damascene, *Exposition of the Faith,* c. 1 *(PG* 95:417-19).

Rather than beginning ecclesiology with the local Church conceived in a purely sacramental way, or with a metaphysically problematic notion of "mystery," it is the whole Church of Christ with its twofold hierarchy of (sacramental) order and jurisdiction that needs to be the object of study. The best of the Catholic ecclesiological "manuals" of the early- and mid-twentieth century, supported by the teaching of Popes Leo XIII, Pius XI, and Pius XII, integrate episcopal order and jurisdiction in a scriptural, patristic, and theological synthesis that shows how the Holy Spirit imparts the power to rule-that is, wills a bishop to rule-only on condition of the at least general and tacit consent of the pope, head of the episcopal college to whom obedience is due.

This obedience to the pope is not a purely Latin theologoumenon; a remarkable post-schism text from St. Symeon of Thessalonika accepts obedience to the pope in principle:

> Let [the Latins] only show that the pope perseveres in the faith of Peter ... and we acknowledge in him all the privileges of Peter, and we recognize him as the leader, as the head and supreme pontiff ..... [W]e will proclaim him truly apostolic and we will consider him the first of the pontiffs and we will obey him not only as Peter, but as if he were the Savior himself.[15]

It was in the context of this teaching common to the West and (in admittedly lesser degree) the East that Leo XIII pointed out in *Satis cognitum* that schismatic bishops do not have ordinary (temporally indefinite and habitual) jurisdiction. Canonists and theologians have long explained how such bishops can enjoy a "supplied" (punctual) jurisdiction from the general consent of the pope for each ministerial act necessary for the salvation of a soul in good faith. The theological and canonical principles summarized in this section would therefore allow the Church to recognize elements of truth and sanctification in the Orthodox Churches while continuing to maintain that only the Catholic Church, existing in and from the Churches in Petrine communion, is the Church of Christ endowed with formal and complete apostolic succession.

[15] *PG* 155: 120-21; and "Symeon de Thessalonique," *Dictionnaire de theologie catholique*, t. 14, col. 2976-84.

The distinction of formal apostolic succession from the merely material yet real succession in the post-schism Orthodox Churches would allow the pope today, as in the Middle Ages, to invite Orthodox bishops to an ecumenical council for dogmatic agreement and reunion, without implying that the council would not be formally ecumenical if some declined to attend or failed to agree to the definitions made.

The distinction also allows us to understand the varying phenomena of papal relations with schismatic Orthodox nations and their Churches through the centuries. For example, when popes recognized or appointed Catholic patriarchs over historic sees and provinces returning to or manifesting full communion, there was the implication that the Eastern Catholic Church in question would be the same Church as the pre-schism Church founded by an apostle or the first evangelizers. In the papal mind, it was the Catholic patriarch who would have ordinary jurisdiction over all the faithful of that tradition. In other times and places, there is no Catholic patriarch for an ancient Church, or he co-exists with an Orthodox counterpart normally referred to as a patriarch by the pope. How shall we understand the diverse phenomena?

Where there are simultaneous Eastern Catholic and corresponding Orthodox Churches, we could say that it is the Catholic patriarch who, with Petrine communion, possesses jurisdiction over all the baptized of that tradition and territory, that is, all those who actually or by right should belong to that historic Church. [16] His Orthodox counterpart is the object of the pope's *willingness,* that is, a tentative but not yet effective will,

[16] See Leo XIII, "Apostolic Letter on the Patriarchate of Alexandria of the Copts": "We ... from the plenitude of apostolic power restore the Catholic Patriarchate of Alexandria and establish it for the Copts..... To us it is most desired that the dissenting Copts look upon the Catholic Hierarchy in truth before God; that is to say the hierarchy which on account of communion with the Chair of Peter and his successors alone can legitimately restore the Church founded by Mark, and alone is heir of the entire memory, whatever has been faithfully handed on to the Alexandrian Patriarchate from those ancient forebears" *(Acta Sanctae Sedis* 28 [1895-96]: 257-60). Leo proceeded to nominate the Catholic Coptic patriarch. He did so only for the Copts, fully aware of the ancient schism between Alexandrian Greek Orthodox and the Copts, both claiming the chair of St. Mark, but the passage does illustrate the general point being made in this article.

canonically to assign him that portion of the faithful who do not yet recognize the Catholic patriarch, if that would facilitate their return to unity, or some as yet unspecified portion of the faithful after new elections and designations, once full communion shall (hopefully) be proclaimed. [17]

Where there is no Catholic patriarch, a schismatic patriarchal Church can be understood as an ancient canonical framework (object of an intention in the mind and will of the pope and the universal Church involving persons and territory) in which regularly elected bishops enjoy tacit papal approbation of the electors' choice. [18] As seen above, this choice provides *de facto* and material possession of a see linked with the apostles, but not actual jurisdiction in the sight of God, due to the obstacle of refusal of submission to the pope. Both where there is and where there is not a Catholic patriarch, the partial recognition of a schismatic patriarch by the pope does not effectively communicate jurisdiction, according to the teaching of Leo XIII and common doctrine. [19]

[17] See Pius IX, Letter "In Suprema Petri" (6 January 1848): "Listen, then, to our words, all of you in the Eastern and neighboring areas who ... by no means are in communion with the Holy Roman Church, and especially You who are consecrated to sacred functions among them or who preside over the rest because you are conspicuous by your superior ecclesiastical dignity.... [I]t is Our fixed resolve to take the same approach that Our Predecessors, both of more recent and earlier ages, often took towards the sacred Ministers, Priests, and Prelates who come back to Catholic Unity from those Nations: namely, to preserve their rank and dignity; and then to make use of their effort, no less than of the rest of the Eastern Catholic Clergy to protect and spread among their people the cult of the Catholic religion" (in James Likoudis, *Eastern Orthodoxy and the See of Peter: A Journey Towards Full Communion* [Waite Park, Minn.: POS Inc., 2006), 166, 169).

[18] See the beginning of n. 7 above. What I am pointing out here is a crucial reason for why Orthodox Churches can be considered "true particular Churches," in contrast with Reformation communities.

[19] I presuppose that the pope's being source of jurisdiction for bishops who are in communion with the Church is an aspect of his Pettine primacy; it is not limited to the West insofar as he used to be called "Patriach of the West." "Patriarch of the West" was shown to be a primarily honorific title by Adriano Garuti in *Il Papa Patriarca d'Occidente? Studio storico dottrinale,* (Bologna: Edizioni Francescane, 1990). Garuti also provided the historical elements that support the understanding that the true patriarchates in the Eastern Churches are of ecclesiastical and not divine origin and therefore dependent on tacit acceptance by the successor of Peter for their privileges.

Finally, the Ravenna statement does not mention the guidance of the magisterium when it presents the *sensus fidelium,* quoting St. John on the anointing of the faithful in this context. While the scriptural passage does indeed speak about supernatural and divine faith without referring to the external rule of faith which is the unanimous authentic magisterium of the apostles and their successors, it does not imply that faith does not need this external rule as a dimension of its formal object. When John says the faithful have no need for anyone to teach them, "anyone" refers to the heretics who claim to have something to teach, not to the apostles and their legitimate successors. Taking all the relevant scriptural passages into account, St. Thomas Aquinas's theology of faith shows how the instinct and habit of faith incline one to the First Truth manifested in Scripture as taught by the Church, over whom the pope enjoys universal jurisdiction and the authority to define articles of the Creed, an authority implicitly understood to be infallible. It is not the case that faith belongs to communion, and authority only to institution, as often implied by modern ecclesiologies; rather, the one light of faith which shines on God's revealed truth also identifies the authentic magisterium established by Christ to present it to us. In this way, the Church's believing the divine Word has a structure such that the authentic magisterium of the pastors headed by Peter's successor infallibly believes the Word by proclaiming it *in media ecclesiae,* while the lay faithful, anointed by the Spirit, believe it by repeating it from the lips of their pastors. In this way one voice of one Teacher is echoed by an ecclesial confession made audibly one through the one voice of Peter's successor, criterion of the Church's faith in her ordinary and extraordinary magisterium, and thereby principle and foundation of unity.

The Thomist 73 (2009): 455-96

AQUINAS ON HOW GOD CAUSES THE ACT OF SIN WITHOUT CAUSING SIN ITSELF

W. MATIHEWS GRANT

University of St. Thomas
St. Paul, Minnesota

SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS MAINTAINS that, although God is neither directly nor indirectly the cause of sin,[1] still God does cause the act of sin. Having demonstrated the existence of a single unmoved source of all motion and cause of all being apart from itself, and having identified this being with God, he notes that it simply follows that the act of sin, insofar as it is a movement and a being, has God as cause. Thus, when Aquinas asks "Whether the act of sin is from God?" he derives his answer as an inevitable consequence from his prior conclusions in natural theology:

> The act of sin is a movement of the free will. Now the will of God is the cause of every movement, as Augustine declares *(De Trin. iii.* 4, 9). Therefore, God's will is the cause of the act of sin.
>
> The act of sin is both a being and an act; and in both respects it is from God. Because every being, whatever the mode of its being, must be derived from the First Being, as Dionysius declares *(Div. Nam.* 5). Again every action is caused by something existing in act, since nothing produces an action save insofar as it is in act; and every being in act is reduced to the First Act, viz. God, as to its cause, Who is act by His Essence. Therefore, God is the cause of every action insofar as it is an action.[2]

[1] *STh* I-II, q. 79, a. 1.

[2] *STh* I-II, q. 79, a. 2, s.c. and corp. Translations from the *Summa Theologiae* are from St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Westminster, Md.: Christian Classics, 1981). Although in these passages Aquinas appeals to the authority of Augustine and Dionysius in support of the key premises, anyone familiar with

Within the context of Aquinas's overall metaphysics, consistency requires one to conclude that God causes the act of sin.[3]

A problem remains, however, regarding how God could cause the act of sin without causing sin itself. Aquinas attempts to solve this problem by arguing that a sin is not just an act, but an act with a defect, and that it is the defect that renders the act sinful. To cause a sin, therefore, one must cause both the act and the defect.[4] But, while the creature causes both,[5] God does not cause the defect, but only the act:

> God is the cause of every action, insofar as it is an action. But sin denotes a being and an action with a defect: and this defect is from a created cause, viz., the free will, as falling away from the order of the First Agent, viz., God. Consequently, this defect is not reduced to God as its cause, but to the free will. . . . Accordingly, God is the cause of the act of sin: and yet He is not the cause of sin, because He does not cause the act to have a defect.[6]

Although God causes the act of sin, he does not cause the sin itself, since he does not cause the defect that renders the act sinful. The cause of the sin itself, therefore, is the creature, who causes both the act and the defect.

In what follows, I explicate and defend Aquinas's solution by addressing two objections to which it may appear vulnerable. The objections will serve a heuristic purpose, enabling us better to understand Aquinas's solution by seeing how it escapes the objections. The first objection is set out as a dilemma, and resolved in section I; its resolution gives rise to a second objection, set out in section IL There I argue that the best-known

the *Prima Pars* knows that Aquinas thinks he has also established these premises through philosophical argument.

[3] For Aquinas, all creaturely acts proceed wholly from two causes, God the primary cause, and the creaturely secondary cause. See *ScG* III, cc. 67-70 and 88-89. In Aquinas's view, then, to say that God causes the act of sin in no way precludes the sinner's also being cause of the act. We can presume also that the kind of causality God exercises over creaturely acts includes efficient causality. A cause of motion or of a thing's existing is most obviously an efficient cause.

[4] We are speaking here, of course, about sins of commission. In sins of omission, the sin is not a defective act, but a failure to act.

[5] *STh* I-II, q. 75, a. 1.

[6] *STh* I-II, q. 79, a. 2.

defense of Aquinas's solution-that given by Jacques Maritain-fails as a response to the second objection. Nevertheless, I argue in section III that the second objection can be answered by attending to Thomistic principles for referring effects to causes. Not only can the objection be addressed on Aquinas's terms, but the principles for addressing it are intuitively and philosophically plausible.

My approach will be systematic, rather than historical, in that I will largely ignore questions of development across texts, and focus instead on showing that there is a viable, Thomistic solution to our problem, extractable from (or at least consistent with) Aquinas's corpus as a whole. There are two assumptions I will make in my defense of Aquinas's solution. The first is that evil is privation, the lack of perfection due to some subject, which subject, considered in itself, is good.[7] Aquinas's understanding of sinful acts clearly presupposes the privation account. The act of sin, *qua* being and act, is good; the defect that makes the act sinful is a privation, in particular, a lack of conformity to moral rule or order. As lacks or absences, evils do not have being or *esse*. Consequently, we do not have to say that God causes the defects simply in virtue of his being the cause of all *esse* apart from himself. To be sure, that privations lack *esse* does not by itself mean that God does not cause the defect in the act of sin. Privations still have causes,[8] and given that the defect is reducible to the creature as cause, we might wonder whether it is not also reducible to God. Still, presupposing the privation view does mean that the very reason that leads us to identify God as cause of the act of sin-that God causes all *esse* other than himself-will not by itself force us to identify God as cause of the defect that renders the act sinful.

[7] For a defense of the privation account, see Patrick Lee, "The Goodness of Creation, Evil, and Christian Teaching" *The Thomist* 64 (2000): 239-69. See also idem, "Evil as Such Is a Privation: A Reply to John Crosby," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 81 (2007): 469-88.

[8] Indeed, Aquinas says that every evil has some sort of cause. See *STh* I, q. 49, a. 1; *ScG* III, c. 13; *De Malo,* q. 1, a. 3.

The second point I will take for granted is that God's causing creaturely acts is consistent with intellectual creatures' being free in the sense required for moral responsibility. [9] This point would be denied by many contemporary philosophers of religion, but it seems clearly to represent Aquinas's own view. Indeed, his whole discussion of whether God can cause the act of sin without causing sin itself would make very little sense absent this presupposition. An act is not sinful if it is not one for which the agent is morally responsible. [10] Consequently, were God's causing a creature's act incompatible with that creature's being morally responsible for the act, then God's causing acts of sin would be impossible, and the problem of this article would never even arise. [11]

[9] Although I assume that free creaturely acts are caused by God, I take no stand in the debate among Thomists regarding precisely *how* God causes these acts. For a defense of the "traditional" or Banezian approach, see any of various works by Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.; and more recently, Steven A. Long, "Providence, liberte et Joi naturelle," *Revue Thomiste* 102 (2002): 355-406, republished in English as "Providence, Freedom, and Natural Law," *Nova et Vetera* (English edition) 4 (2006): 557-605; and Thomas M. Osborne, Jr., "Divine Providence: Thomist Premotion and Contemporary Philosophy of Religion," *Nova et Vetera* (English edition) 4 (2006): 607-32. For alternative approaches, see Bernard Lonergan, S.J., *Grace and Freedom* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971); and more recently, Brian J. Shanley, O.P. "Divine Causation and Human Freedom in Aquinas," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 72 (1997): 99-122. See also W. Matthews Grant, "Aquinas among Libertarians and Compatibilists: Breaking the Logic of Theological Determinism," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 75 (2001): 221-35. Lonergan and Shanley explicitly contrast their accounts, in certain ways, to the Banezian approach. While my approach in the article just cited probably also conflicts with the Banezian approach, it *may* not, depending on how the latter is understood.

[10] Throughout the paper I am using "sin" as roughly equivalent to Aquinas's *ma/um culpae.* Aquinas recognizes a broader sense of *peccatum* in which it extends to any action failing of the agent's appropriate end. See, for instance, *De Malo,* q. 2, a. 2. For a helpful discussion, see Josef Pieper, *The Concept of Sin,* trans. Edward T. Oakes (South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2001), 17-19.

[11] Although the focus of this paper is God's relation to sinful human acts, Aquinas's broader teaching on the will and its freedom should not be forgotten. Among the central claims of that teaching are the following: (1) that will is rational appetite or a power for inclining toward or desiring what reason judges to be good *(STh* I-II, q. 8, a. 1); (2) that therefore every choice, even sinful choice, is for the sake of something the agent judges to be good *(STh* I-II, q. 77, a. 2); (3) that every rational agent necessarily wills happiness, the universal good, which is good without qualification and satisfies desire completely *(STh* I-II, q. 10, a. 2); (4) that God alone lacks nothing in goodness and, hence, as constituting the

I. A FIRST OBJECTION

A) A First Objection and Aquinas·s Solution

According to Aquinas, God causes the act of sin, but only the sinner causes both the act and the defect that renders the act sinful. Thus, only the sinner, and not God, is cause of the sin. Our first objection takes the form of a dilemma:

(1) Either the sinner does something to make the act defective, or it is not the case that the sinner does something to make the act defective.
(2) If it is not the case that the sinner does something to make the act defective, then the defect cannot be causally reduced to the sinner.
(3) If, on the other hand, the sinner does do something to make the act defective, then, since this doing will be an action, it will be caused by God, thus making the defect causally reducible to both the sinner and God.
(4) Therefore, either the defect cannot be causally reduced to the sinner, or the defect will be causally reducible to both the sinner and God.

The dilemma poses a clear challenge to Aquinas's position, for the conclusion denies that the defect in an act of sin could be reducible to the sinner as its cause without also being reducible to God. Premise (1) is an unimpeachable, logical truth. So, in order to escape the dilemma, Aquinas will have to reject (2) or (3).

Rejecting (3) does not appear to be an especially promising means of escape. Aquinas is clearly committed to the position that, if the creature does something to make his act defective, that doing is caused by God, the first cause of all doings. One might be tempted to argue that God could cause the doing in virtue of which the sinner causes the defect without that defect's thereby being reduced to God's causality as well. Yet it seems more

universal good, is the only object the enjoyment of which realizes happiness for the rational creature (*STh* I-II, q. 2, a. 8); (5) that, if placed in the presence of God, the rational creature wills God necessarily, being unable to choose against him (*STh* I, q. 82, a. 2; I-II, q. 5, a. 4); (6) but, when confronted with any created object, reason can judge respects in which that object is good, and other respects in which the object lacks goodness, and on the basis of these opposing respects, the rational creature is able to choose for or against such objects (*STh* I-II, q. 13, a. 6); (7) that God not only constitutes the universal good capable of satisfying the will entirely, but he also gives the will its natural inclination toward this good, and consequently he alone can move the will without doing violence to it (*STh* I, q. 105, a. 4; I-II, q. 9, a. 6).

plausible to say that the cause of an act that causes a defect is likewise the cause of the defect. Indeed, Aquinas would appear to accept this last principle. When he asks whether God is the cause of evil, he answers in the affirmative with respect to what we might call privations of first act, that is, privations of some form or part required for the integrity of a thing. Privations such as these are at least often explicable in terms of one creature acting at the expense of another. That is, the activity of one creature has as a side effect the privation of some good in another, as when a lamb is deprived of bodily integrity on account of the action of a lion, or oxygen is deprived of its form through the activity of fire. In all such cases, God is the first cause of the creaturely activities that result in such privations, and thus Aquinas concludes that these privations are reducible to God.[12] By parity of reasoning, therefore, it looks as though Aquinas should also hold that the defect in the act of sin is reducible to God, if, indeed, the sinner does something to make the act defective and the sinner's doing has God as cause. In other words, it looks as though Aquinas's own principles commit him to the truth of (3).

It appears, then, that Aquinas's best hope of escaping the first objection is to reject premise (2) of the dilemma. Is it the case that the defect in a sinful act can be reduced to the sinner only if the sinner *does* something to make the act defective? As it turns out, Aquinas thinks not. Indeed, for Aquinas, the defect is introduced into the act of sin precisely because of what the sinner *doesn't* do. Herein lies what, for Maritain, is "one of the most original of [Aquinas's] philosophical discoveries."[13]

[12] See, for instance, *STh* I, q. 48, a. 5; and I, q. 49, aa. 1-2. As one can see from these passages, in cases where privations of first act are brought about through the action of a creature, Aquinas does not think that the creature or its action is a *per se* cause of the *malum*. The creature is aiming not at the privation of the victim, but rather at the bringing about of its own proper form or effect, from which the privation follows as a consequence. Nor in causing the creaturely action from which the privation results is God intending the privation. What God intends, instead, is the good of the order of the universe. Thus, both God and the creature are *per accidens*, rather than *per se*, causes of such privations.

[13] Jacques Maritain, *St. Thomas and the Problem of Evil* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1942), 23.

In addition to privations of first act, Aquinas distinguishes a second general category of evil: privations of second act. These privations consist in an absence of due operation or activity, which absence can occur either because a creature fails to perform an activity that it should, or because it performs an activity that is defective. While a substance's suffering a privation of first act is often explicable in terms of the activity of another substance, as when a lamb is deprived of limb and blood due to the activity of a lion, Aquinas tells us that privations of second act are caused by some defect in the agent:

> In action evil is caused by reason of the defect of some principle of action, either of the principal or instrumental agent; thus the defect in the movement of an animal may happen by reason of the weakness of the motive power, as in the case of children, or by reason only of the ineptitude of the instrument, as in the lame.[14]

We are now in a position to see how Aquinas rejects premise (2) of the dilemma. Since the defect in an act of sin is clearly a species of privation of second act, this defect will be caused by some prior defect in the sinful agent. But, as it turns out, this prior defect is a certain absence of action on the part of the sinner-not a doing, but rather a not-doing. Consequently, Aquinas can deny the claim that the defect in the act of sin is reduced to the sinner only if the sinner does something to introduce this defect. On the contrary, the defect in the act of sin is reduced to the sinner precisely in virtue of what the sinner *does not* do.

What, then, is this absence of action, or not-doing, that constitutes the defect in the sinner in virtue of which the defect in the act of sin is caused? Aquinas speaks of this not-doing variously as the sinner's not subjecting himself to *(non subiicit se),*[15] not attending to *(non attendere),*[16] not using *(non uti),*[17] not applying *(non adhibere),*[18] or his moving to act without actual consideration

[14] *Sfh* I, q. 49, a. 1. Cf. *ScG* III, c. 10; *De Malo,* q. 3, a. 1.
[15] *STh* I, q. 49, a. 1, ad 3.
[16] *De Malo,* q. 1, a. 3.
[17] Ibid.
[18] *STh* I-II, q. 75, a. 1, ad 3.

of *(sine actuali consideratione),*[19] his proper rule, the rule of reason and the divine law. Thus, according to Aquinas, "In voluntary things the defect of action comes from the will actually deficient in as much as it does not actually subject itself to its proper rule."[20] Again, "Non-use of the rule of reason and divine law is presupposed in the will before disordered choice."[21]

If Aquinas's teaching regarding what accounts for the defect in the act of sin proves defensible, then he can successfully escape the first objection by rejecting premise (2), since it will be possible to reduce the defect in the sinful act to the sinner on the basis of a not-doing, rather than a doing. In fact, it is not entirely clear how Aquinas's teaching is to be understood. The places where he discusses or refers to the teaching are few and relatively brief.[22] Within those texts, as we have seen, he employs diverse language to describe the absence of action at the root of sin, leading one to wonder, for example, whether "not considering" and "not using" the rule refer to one and the same type of not-doing, or whether they name different sorts of not-doings in terms of which the defect in the act of sin can be explained. Furthermore, how one interprets the not-doing at the root of sin may pivot on one's understanding of other issues in Aquinas's general action theory.[23]

One thing that is clear is that Aquinas thinks this not-doing, this defect in the sinner that gives rise to the defect in the act of sin, must satisfy the following four conditions.[24] First, this defect

[19] *De Malo,* q. 1, a. 3. See also *ScG* III, c. 10.

[20] *STh* I, q. 49, a. 1 ad. 3.

[21] *De Malo,* q. 1, a. 3. Translations of *De Malo* come from St. Thomas Aquinas, *On Evil,* trans. Jean Oesterle (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995).

[22] The primary locations for the teaching are *ScG* III, c. 10 and *De Malo,* q. 1, a. 3.

[23] For example, as we shall see below, whether or not one can choose a sinful act at the same instant one considers the rule against that act makes a difference in how we understand Aquinas's teaching.

[24] Thomists sometimes resist referring to the non-consideration or non-use of the rule as a "defect." This resistance has to do with the fact that "defect" may be thought to imply "privation," an implication that raises both textual and systematic concerns. With respect to the textual concern, Aquinas denies that the not-doing that causes the defect in the act of sin is a privation, whether of fault or punishment. (For the division of privation in rational creatures into fault and punishment, see *STh* I, q. 48, a. 5.) On the contrary, he says that the not-doing is a "pure negation" (see *De Malo,* q. 1, a. 3, ad 6 and 13). With respect to the

is a defect in the will rather than being in some other power.[25] This condition is especially worth noting since, as I will point out, the proximate or immediate cause of the defect in the act of sin is actually something missing in the sinner's reason, not in his will. Tracing this lack in the reason to a non-performance of the will is necessary to secure the sinner's responsibility for the defect in the act of sin. It is also fitting that the defect in the sinner that gives rise to the defect in the act of sin be located in the will rather than in the reason. For, although both will and intellect are

systematic concern, there is a problem with saying that the not-doing is a privation. For, as I will point out below in discussing the fourth condition, if the not-doing were a privation of fault, itself a sin, then it would merely push the question concerning the cause of the sin we first set out to explain a step back. We would now have a new and prior sin that needs explaining in order to account for the first sin, and presumably we would then have to explain this new sin by a yet prior sin, and so on. On the other hand, if the privation were a punishment, then the creaturely agent would not be morally responsible for the defect in the sinful act resulting from that punishment, unless perchance that punishment were the consequence of a prior sinful act for which the creature was responsible. But, of course, this scenario would, in a similar way, merely push back the question of what explains the defect in the act of sin we first set out to explain to the question of what explains the defect in the prior act of sin that caused the punishment that explained the defect in the first act of sin. Presumably, the defect in the prior act of sin would then have to be explained by a punishment caused by an even prior act of sin, whose defect was caused by an even earlier punishment caused by an even earlier act of sin, and so on. In short, unless the defect in an act of sin can be explained without reference to a prior fault or punishment in the sinner, an infinite regress of explanations would seem to lurk around the corner. We can see, then, why Thomists have sometimes resisted referring to the non-consideration or non-use of the rule as a "defect." Nevertheless, at key locations such as *ScG* III, c. 10 and *De Malo,* q. 1, a. 3, Aquinas explicitly calls this not-doing a defect. He even does so in passages such as *De Malo,* q. 1, a. 3, ad 13, a passage where he simultaneously denies that this not-doing is a privation: "The *defect* which is presupposed in the will before sin is neither a fault nor a punishment, but a pure negation" (emphasis added). Aquinas's referring to the not-doing as a "defect" is likely an attempt to harmonize his teaching on the cause of the defect in the act of sin with his more general teaching, cited above *(STh* I, q. 49, a. 1), that a defect in action is caused by a defect in some principle of action, either in the principal or in the instrumental agent. To effect this harmony, Aquinas seems willing to countenance a category of defect that is not privation, but pure negation. My explication will follow Aquinas's use. However, were one inclined to understand "defect" as implying "privation," one need not differ from Aquinas as regards the substance of his response to the first objection. Whether we call the not-doing a "defect" makes absolutely no difference to the success of Aquinas's strategy for answering that objection. All that matters is that this not-doing satisfies the four conditions I am about to discuss, that it explains why there is a defect in the act of sin, and that this explanation is in terms of a not-doing rather than a doing, enabling us to reject premise (2) of the dilemma.

[25] *STh* I, q. 49, a. 1, ad 3; *STh* I-II, q. 75, a. 1, ad 3; *De Malo,* q. 1, a. 3; *ScG* III, c. 10.

principles of action,[26] the will, as an appetitive faculty, takes primacy over the intellect as a principle of action, since all action is for the sake of an end desired by appetite.[27]

The second condition is that the defect in the sinner be voluntary, not just in the sense of being of the will, but in the sense that it is something with respect to which the sinner has control.[28] Were the defect that gives rise to the defect in the act of sin not something the sinner could have avoided, then the sinner would not be responsible for the defective character of the sinful act that results. By characterizing the defect in the sinner as a not-doing, Aquinas not only locates the defect in the will, the chief principle of doing, but also highlights the character of the defect as voluntary, since although the sinner does not in fact consider the rule, he could have.

The third condition required of the defect that gives rise to the defect in the act of sin is that it be in some relevant sense prior to the defect in the sinful act.[29] Were the defect not prior, it could not serve as an explanation or cause of the defect in the act of sin. The fourth condition is that this prior defect not itself be sinful, not even a sin of omission.[30] If the not-doing were a sin, this would merely push the question concerning the cause of sin a step back, for then the non-consideration or non-use of the rule would constitute a new sin that needs explaining. If we had to explain this new sin by appeal to yet a prior sinful non-consideration, we would be headed for an infinite regress in our attempt to account for the defective character of the first sin we set out to explain. Aquinas, therefore, insists that the non-consideration of the rule, though voluntary, is not itself a sin.

[26] *STh* I-II, q. 75, a. 2.

[27] *STh* I, q. 83, a. 3. For some discussion of this point, see Lawrence Dewan, O.P., "St. Thomas, James Keenan, and the Will," in idem, *Wisdom, Law, and Virtue: Essays in Thomistic Ethics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 157, 160-61.

[28] *ScG* III, c. 10; *De Malo,* q. 1, a. 3.

[29] *STh* I, q. 49, a. 1; *ScG* III, c. 10; *De Malo,* q. 1, a. 3.

[30] *STh* I, q. 49, a. 1, ad 3; *STh* 1-11, q. 75, a. 1, ad 3; *ScG* III, c. 10; *De Malo,* q. 1, a. 3, corp. and ad 6 and 13.

B) Two Ways of Understanding Aquinas on the Non-Consideration or Non-Use of the Rule

Having specified the conditions that must be satisfied by the non-consideration, or non-use, of the rule if it is to be the defect that explains the defect in the act of sin, we will shortly be in a position to discuss two ways in which Aquinas's teaching might be understood. As a preface to this discussion, however, it will be helpful to return to the remark above, that the proximate or immediate cause of the defect in the act of sin is actually something missing in the reason, rather than the will.[31] As is well known, although Aquinas holds that choice is substantially an act of the will, he also holds that each choice is for an object as presented to the will by reason. Every choice is made according to some order of reason. Thus, even though reason does not move the will with respect to its exercise, its choosing or not-choosing, nevertheless by providing the object and order according to which a choice is made, it does move the will in the manner of a formal principle, supplying the species for that choice.[32] For every sinful choice, therefore, the proximate cause or explanation of the defect in that choice will be something lacking in the reason that provides the order according to which the choice is made. Something will be missing from that order of reason with the consequence that there will be a privation in the act elected under that order.

The foregoing can be made more concrete by recalling that, for Aquinas, choosing has a syllogistic structure. Choice, or at least the judgment from which choice follows, is understood by Aquinas to be the conclusion of a practical syllogism, a conclusion

[31] See, for instance, Patrick Lee, "The Relation between Intellect and Will in Free Choice according to Aquinas and Scotus," *The Thomist* 49 (1985): 337: "The direct cause of the lack of order in the free choice … is a lack in the reason, namely, the lack of consideration of the rule of right reason or of divine law." See also David M. Gallagher, "Free Choice and Free Judgment in Thomas Aquinas," *Archiv fur Geschichteder Philosophie*76 (1994): 259: "The defect of the will comes from the fact that there is a defect in reason." For Aquinas, see *STh* 1-11, q. 75, a. 2, ad 1; and 1-11, q. 77, a. 2. In the latter Aquinas tells us that, "the will would never tend to evil unless there were ignorance or error in the reason."

[32] *STh* 1-11, q. 9, a. 1; and 1-11, q. 13, a. 1; *De Malo*, q. 6.

drawn from a general, major premise about what is desirable, or what ought (or ought not) to be done, together with a minor premise that frames the act chosen as an instance of the general type referred to in the major. On this analysis, my choice to take a walk this morning was a conclusion drawn from the major premise "Would that I take some exercise," or alternatively, "I ought to take some exercise," and the minor, "To walk this morning would be to take some exercise." The premises of the syllogism constitute at least a portion of the content of reason's deliberation prior to choice, a deliberation that terminates the instant a choice is drawn as a conclusion from these premises.[33]

Since my present concern involves sinful choice, I will take a sinful choice as an example. Suppose I choose to lie for the sake of averting embarrassment. Such a choice is drawn from the following premises, which premises also constitute the order of reason according to which the choice is made:

[33] For Aquinas's understanding of choice in terms of the practical syllogism, see *STh* I-II, q. 13, a. 3; *STh* I-II, q. 76, a. 1; and *De Malo*, q. 3, a. 9, ad 7. For some general discussion, see Daniel Westberg, *Right Practical Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 149-64, 204-13; and Kevin L. Flannery, S.J., *Acts amid Precepts: The Aristotelian Logical Structure of Thomas Aquinas's Moral Theory* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 3-14. Precisely how Aquinas understands the relationship between choice and the conclusion of a practical syllogism is a difficult question. In some texts, choice and the conclusion are identified (see *STh* I, q. 86, a. 1, ad 2). In others, the conclusion is identified with a judgment of reason that is followed by choice (see *STh* I-II, q. 13, a. 1, ad 2; I-II, q. 13, a. 3). In still others, Aquinas says that the conclusion is a judgment, choice, or operation, not making it clear whether he is listing various options for identifying the conclusion of the syllogism, or whether he takes these terms to refer coextensively to the conclusion (see *STh* I-II, q. 76, a. 1). Among contemporary readers of Aquinas, there is no consensus on whether the conclusion of a practical syllogism is a choice itself, or a judgment from which choice follows. Flannery (*Acts amid Precepts*, 11), presumably speaking for Aquinas as well as for Aristotle, identifies the conclusion with an action or choice. Mclnerny sees the conclusion as a judgment of reason that guides choice and from which choice follows. See Ralph Mclnerny, *Aquinas on Human Action* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992), 230. Westberg (*Right Practical Reason*, 151) would appear to hold that the conclusion is at once a judgment of reason and a choice. I make no attempt to adjudicate this debate. For the purposes of explaining the defect in the act of sin, it does not matter which of these ways we understand the relationship between choice and the conclusion of the practical syllogism. For our purposes, what matters is that the practical syllogism contains the order of reason under which a choice is made. I will typically speak of choice as the conclusion of a practical syllogism, but the substance of the explanation would be the same if, *mutatis mutandis*, we identified the conclusion with a judgment of reason from which choice follows.

(A) Would that I avert embarrassment.
(B) Telling this lie will avert embarrassment.

My choice to lie is, of course, largely explained by my desire to avert embarrassment coupled with my recognition that lying will help me avert it. Yet the defect that renders my act sinful, its lack of conformity to moral rule, is explicable by the fact that the order of reason according to which I make this choice has something important missing, namely, the precept against lying. Consider the alternative pair of premises:

(C) No lie is to be told.
(D) The act I am contemplating is a lie.

(C) is the precept against lying and (D) the judgment that the act in question constitutes a lie. To choose under this order of reason is to choose to refrain from lying. Since one cannot choose to lie and to refrain from lying at the same instant, any choice to lie will be made under an order of reason other than that given by (C) and (D). Speaking more generally, any choice of a sinful act will be made under an order of reason that does not include the precept against that act. Thus, in every sinful act, the defect in the act, the act's lack of conformity to moral rule, can be explained by the fact that the moral rule was missing from the order of reason according to which the choice of the act was made. The proximate cause of the defect in the act of sin, therefore, is something missing in the order of reason that specifies the act.

With these preliminaries behind us, we are now in a position to consider the aforementioned two ways of understanding the non-consideration or non-use of the rule. On a first way of understanding the teaching, the fact that the rule was missing from the order of reason according to which the sinful choice was made can be explained by the sinner's not actually considering or attending to the relevant precept at the moment of choice.[34] This

[34] To be actually considering the rule means to be actually thinking about it, to actually have it before one's mind's eye. One can, of course, consider something in different ways or under different aspects, a point that may be relevant to the evaluation of certain interpretations of Aquinas's teaching. See note 42.

not attending can consist in a failure to think about the rule at all prior to choice, or it can consist in thinking about the rule, but then turning one's thoughts away from the rule and toward what makes the act attractive at some time before the choice is made.[35] To return to the example above, I may never think about (C) and (D), or I may, prior to choosing, abandon my thought of (C) and (D) in order to focus on (A) and (B). Either way, the defect in my act of lying can be explained by the fact that I was not actually considering the rule at the time of choosing. Thus, I did not have in mind the rule from which I might have chosen to refrain from lying, and the rule was missing from the order of reason specifying my choice.[36] On this first interpretation, the reason the

[35] Aquinas sometimes explains reason's not considering the rule as due to distraction by sense appetite. See, for example, *STh* I-II, q. 75, a. 2 ad 1.

[36] Maritain would appear to favor this interpretation, at least in his last major treatment of the issue. See Jacques Maritain, *God and the Permission of Evil,* trans. Joseph W. Evans (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1966), 51-54. For others who expound Aquinas's teaching along these lines, see Lawrence Dewan, O.P., "St. Thomas and the First Cause of Moral Evil," in his idem, *Wisdom, Law and Virtue,* 195-96; Michael D. Torre, "The Sin of Man and the Love of God," in *Jacques Maritain: The Man and His Metaphysics,* ed. John F. X. Knasas (Mishawaka, Ind.: American Maritain Association, 1988), 207-8; and Desmond Fitzgerald, "Without Me You Can Do Nothing„" in Knasas, ed., *Jacques Maritain: The Man and his Metaphysics,* 232. From the fact that these authors have expounded Aquinas's teaching along the lines of our first interpretation, it does not follow that they would not approve of the second interpretation as a complement to the first. In at least one location, however, Maritain would appear to think the second interpretation impossible. See Maritain, *God and the Permission of Evil,* 44-45.

As Aquinas notes *(STh* I-II, q. 76, a. 1; *De Malo,* q. 3, aa. 6 and 9), knowledge of a universal negative precept can be applied in choosing to refrain from a particular act only if one recognizes that the act in question falls under the universal. To choose to refrain from a particular lie, therefore, one needs to be *actually* considering both (C) and (D). If the sinner knows (C) habitually, but is not actually considering (C) at the moment he chooses, this type of non-consideration clearly accords with our first interpretation of Aquinas's teaching. What, then, about a scenario on which, at the moment he chooses, the sinner is actually considering (C), but not (D)? Such a scenario, I suspect, is uncommon. Why, after all, at the very instant of sinful choice, would one be *actually thinking* of the precept against lying if one were not actually thinking of the act in question in such a way that the precept bears on it? In the course of this paper, I will simplify matters by assuming that if the sinner is actually considering the rule [such as (C)], he is also actually considering that the act being contemplated is of a type that falls under the rule [as in (D)]. Nevertheless, were there a case in which the sinner considers the rule, but not that the act in question falls wider the rule, one could still explain the defect in the act of sin, along the lines of our first interpretation, in terms of the sinner's not having in mind what is required for choosing to refrain from the sin. The only difference

choice is made according to an order of reason lacking the rule is that the creature does not have the rule in mind at the moment of choice.

On a second interpretation, by contrast, the creature can have multiple orders of reason in mind at the time of choice, including the one that contains the rule. Thus, at the instant of choice, I might be thinking on the orders represented by both (A) and (B), and (C) and (D). It is within my power to choose under, and thus assent to, either of these orders. If my choice is made under the latter, then the will has applied (used, subjected itself to) the rule. If my choice is made under the former, then the will has not subjected itself to the rule, and a defective act results, which defect in the act can be explained by the fact that the rule was missing from the order under which the choice was made.[37]

C) The Plausibility of Aquinas's Solution

Is Aquinas's teaching on either of these interpretations plausible? Objections could be raised against both versions of the account. It seems, however, that Aquinas's account on the whole can be defended.

would be that, instead of not considering the rule at the moment of choice, the sinner would not be considering the particular proposition that identifies the act being contemplated as of the type to which the rule applies. Once again, going forward, I will simplify matters by assuming that "to consider the rule at the moment of choice" means "to consider both the rule and that the act in question falls under the rule."

[37] Lee ("The Relationship between Intellect and Will," 334-36) and Gallagher ("Free Choice and Free Judgment," 276-77) would appear to allow that an agent can choose while having multiple orders of reason in mind. This would appear also to be Aquinas's position, at least in *De Malo,* q. 6: "If a good be of such a nature that it is not found to be good according to all aspects that can be considered, the will will not move of necessity even in regard to the determination of the act, for a person will be able to will its opposite, even while cogitating about it, since perhaps it is good or fitting according to some other particular consideration." Note that neither Lee, nor Gallagher, nor Aquinas, in the passages just cited, go so far as to say that an agent can act against the *moral rule* while considering it. Thus, the passages here cited cannot be read as clear endorsements of the second interpretation. Note, also, that the two interpretations of Aquinas's account do not necessarily exclude one another. It may be that the defect in the act of sin is sometimes explained along the lines of the first interpretation, and sometimes along the lines of the second.

To consider an initial objection that goes against both versions, one might argue that either version works only on the supposition that the defect in every sinful act is a lack of conformity to some rule. But, it might be insisted, not every sinful act is sinful because it belongs to an act-type or species, such as lying, that falls under negative precept. Some actions are wrong, not because they violate a rule or precept, but because of other factors, such as unsuitable circumstances or bad motives, that vitiate the act. If not every sinful act is defective because of its lack of conformity to moral rule, then we will not be able to explain the defect in every sinful act by virtue of the sinner's non-consideration, or non-use, of the rule.

In response to this objection, one may say that, while it can certainly be granted that not every sinful act is wrong through belonging to an act-type (such as lying, adultery, murder, etc.) that falls under negative precept, it remains the case that the defect in every sinful act is a lack of conformity to moral rule or principle. Even if a sinful act is not wrong by its species or type, we can still state *why* the act is wrong, and to state *why* the act is wrong always involves reference to some moral rule, principle, or consideration that the act is violating. "Taking a walk," for instance, does not fall under negative precept. Yet, if the choice to take some particular walk is wrong, we can say *why* it is wrong. Perhaps it is wrong because in taking the walk the agent is shirking more important responsibilities, and it is wrong to perform an act when doing so involves such shirking. Or perhaps the act is wrong because it has an illicit motive, and it is wrong to act from an illicit motive. The point is that in stating *why* taking the walk is wrong, we have stated a moral rule to which the act does not conform. Note, further, that had the agent considered and chosen under this rule, he would have chosen to refrain from taking the bad walk. Thus, the defect in the sinful act of taking a walk can be explained by the sinner's not considering or not subjecting himself to the relevant moral rule. Whether or not, then, a sinful act is sinful by belonging to a type that falls under negative precept, it is still sinful by lacking conformity to some

moral principle. This objection, therefore, does not undermine Aquinas's explanation of the defect in the act of sin.

Turning to the first version of Aquinas's account, it seems that it clearly satisfies the four conditions laid out above. The sinner's non-consideration belongs to the will (condition 1) and is voluntary (condition 2), since it is within the will's power to direct the intellect, or use it, to consider the rule.[38] The non-consideration is prior to the defect in the act of sin (condition 3): it is temporally prior, since the will either never directs the intellect to consider the rule before choosing, or it ceases to direct the intellect to consider the rule at some instant before making the election;[39] it is explanatorily prior, since the non-consideration explains why the rule was absent from the mind at the moment of choice, and hence missing from the order of reason according to which the choice was made. Finally, the non-consideration of the rule is not itself a sin (condition 4), for it is not the simple not-considering of a negative precept that violates obligation, but only the trespassing of that precept by acting contrary to it.[40]

Some have objected to Aquinas's account, on this first understanding, that it proves untrue to our experience as agents. Desmond FitzGerald puts the objection well:

> The difficulty that has always bothered me … is that this theory implies that you cannot psychologically consider the moral rule you are breaking while you are choosing to break it. The defect or sin arises from the non-consideration of the rule at the moment of choosing to do something immoral. But common experience confirms our ability to look a moral principle in the face and defy it.[41]

[38] The will, Aquinas tells us, moves the intellect to the exercise of its act. See *STh* I-II, q. 9, a. 1; and I-II, q. 56, a. 3.

[39] It may seem odd to say that a not-doing "takes place" temporally prior to the occurrence of some actual event; not-doings don't really "take place" at all. Yet, talk of the temporal location of not-doings is not uncommon, and not-doings are frequently invoked as explanations of events that follow. "Why did he fail the exam?" "Because he didn't study beforehand." "Why did he miss the jump shot?" "Because before shooting, he didn't square up."

[40] As Aquinas puts it *(De Malo,* q. 3, a. 1): "The very fact of not actually giving heed to such a rule considered in itself is not evil, neither a fault nor a penalty because the soul is not bound nor is it always possible to actually give heed to a rule of this kind."

[41] FitzGerald, "Without Me You Can Do Nothing," 232.

We know from sad experience that we sometimes make sinful choices despite noting to ourselves prior to choosing that the choice in question is contrary to moral precept. Thus, a simple failure to think about the rule at all prior to choosing can hardly be the explanation for all sinful acts, even if it is the explanation for some. Yet, FitzGerald seems to think that adequacy to our experience demands not only that we be able to choose a sinful act after having considered the moral rule at some point prior to choice, but also that we be able to consider the rule and choose against it at the very same instant. Since, on the first interpretation, Aquinas's teaching explains the defect in the act of sin by our having ceased to think about the rule at the moment of choice, FitzGerald would judge the teaching, so interpreted, to be psychologically unrealistic.

Individuals will have to judge for themselves whether they have had the experience of choosing a sinful act at the *very same instant* they consider the precept against the act. It is, however, consistent with the first version of Aquinas's account that the sinner cease considering the rule just milliseconds before the sinful choice, and that he consider the rule again just milliseconds after. Since it is doubtful that one could distinguish the experience of a scenario like the one just suggested from the experience of choosing sinfully at the very same instant one considers the precept, it is likewise doubtful that experience shows Aquinas's teaching on the first interpretation to be inadequate. Certainly, this interpretation can accommodate the sinner's looking a moral principle in the face and defying it. The sinner can do just that by considering the moral principle and then abandoning that consideration to focus on, and swiftly choose for the sake of, that which makes the sinful act attractive.

Still, it must be admitted that the first version of the account provides an explanation for the defects in *all* acts of sin only on the supposition that it is not possible to choose a sinful act at the same instant one considers the precept against it. Suppose such a choice were possible. In that case, the defects in such acts would not be explicable, as the first version holds, in terms of the

sinner's having ceased to consider the rule at the moment of sinful election. Maritain, perhaps in an attempt to ward off this concern, denies that it is possible for one considering the moral rule simultaneously to choose against it.[42] Yet he offers no argument to support this claim; nor does he refer to any text that shows that Aquinas shares this supposition. An objector might protest that unless we can establish that it is impossible to choose sinfully at the very instant one considers the rule we have not shown that the first account provides an explanation for the defects in all possible acts of sin.

Moving to the second version of Aquinas's account, however, we notice that it is not even superficially vulnerable to the sort of objections raised against the first version. On the second version, the sinner might have the rule before his mind at the very instant he chooses against it. For instance, the sinner might simultaneously have before his mind the order represented by (C) and (D) and the order represented by (A) and (B). While cognizing the rule under the order of (C) and (D), he nevertheless chooses to lie, electing under the order of (A) and (B) instead. The defect in the act of sin is explicable by the fact that the sinner did not subject his will to, or use, the rule, but instead elected under an order of reason from which the rule was missing.

No one will be tempted to think that the second interpretation of Aquinas's account describes the situation of all sinful choices. We know that in many cases of sinful choice the sinner either never considers the rule or turns his attention away from the rule

[42] At least he does so at *God and the Pennission of Evil* (44-45). A charitable reading of Maritain's claim requires that we make at least two assumptions. First, we can assume Maritain is thinking of a case where a person is not only considering the moral rule, but also that the act being contemplated is of a type that falls under the rule (see n. 36). Second, as mentioned above (n. 34), a rule might be considered or thought of in different ways or under different aspects. The rule "A child ought never to be spanked" may appear in a popular child rearing manual, and thus considered by all who read the manual. But not all who read the manual will accept the rule, that is, believe that the rule is truly normative and binding on them. When Maritain says that it is impossible to choose against the moral rule while considering it, we can assume that by "considering it" he means *considering it as being nonnative and binding.* Without these assumptions Maritain's claim would be highly implausible. In the remainder of the discussion, therefore, I will interpret "considering the rule" in line with these assumptions.

prior to choosing. The second version, therefore, should not be viewed as a rival account purporting to explain the defects in all acts of sin. Rather, it should be viewed as complementing the first version. By offering an explanation in terms of the sinner's not using or not electing under the rule he is considering, the second version provides an account that works even if in some cases sinful choices are made at the very instant the sinner considers the rule.[43]

Does the second version satisfy the four conditions laid out by Aquinas? Although the proximate cause of the defect in the act of sin is the absence of the rule from the order of reason under which the sinner makes his choice, nevertheless, because it was within the sinner's power to elect under the order of reason that included the rule, this lack in the specifying reason ultimately redounds to the will and is voluntary. Conditions 1 and 2 are thereby satisfied.

Condition 4 demands that the not-doing that explains the defect in the act of sin not itself be a sin. Yet, it might be objected that, for example, not electing under the order represented by (C) and (D) is already sinful, and thus that condition 4 is not met on the second interpretation. On closer reflection, however, we can see that condition four is met. What would it be to use the rule, that is, to elect under an order such as (C) and (D), which includes the rule? To elect under (C) and (D) would be to make the choice *not to tell this lie* (the lie being contemplated). Yet, while it violates moral precept to tell a lie, and while electing under (C) and (D) would, at least at the instant in question, be to make the choice *not to tell this lie*, nevertheless, simply not making the choice *not to tell this lie* violates no moral precept. Again, I am morally obligated not to tell lies, and thus any lie constitutes a sin. But I am not under a similar obligation to draw as the conclusion of a practical syllogism the choice *not to tell this lie*. Thus, I do not sin simply by not making this choice, even though I do sin by

[43] Of course, if Maritain is correct that the sinner can't choose against the rule while considering it, then the second version will be impossible. But then, as we shall see below, neither will the second version be needed to escape the first objection.

lying, and even though by choosing not to tell the lie I would have avoided sinning.

Apart from Maritain's objection that it is simply not possible to act against the rule while considering it, the chief objection to the second version is that it violates condition 3. This condition holds that the not-doing that constitutes the defect that explains the defect in the act of sin must be *prior* to the defect in the act of sin. On the second interpretation the sinner does not fail to consider or cease to consider the rule before the sinful choice is made. On the contrary, the rule is before his mind at the very instant he makes the sinful election, and the not-doing is simply his failure to elect under the rule at that same instant. Thus, on the second interpretation, the not-doing that is supposed to explain the defect in the act of sin does not take place prior to the defective, sinful choice. But, in that case, it appears that condition 3 is left unsatisfied.

The answer to this objection is that, although on the second version the sinner's not-doing (his not using the rule, or not electing under the order that includes the rule) is not temporally prior to the sinful choice, it is nevertheless prior in the order of explanation. To see how it is prior in the order of explanation, we will have to wait until section III, which discusses in more detail the way in which not-doings can be explanatory. The discussion in section III will show that this chief objection to the second version can be answered.

Aquinas's solution to the problem of how God can cause the act of sin without causing the sin itself is to hold that, even though God causes the act of sin, he does not cause the defect that vitiates the act. Since the defect is reducible to the sinner alone, the sinner alone can be said to cause the sin. Thus far, I have focused on Aquinas's strategy for responding to the first main objection to this solution. This strategy involves rejecting premise (2) of the dilemma by arguing that the defect in the act of sin can be reducible to the sinner, not in virtue of anything the sinner does, but in virtue of what the sinner does not do, the sinner's non-consideration or non-use of the rule. In my view, Aquinas's strategy is successful.

As we have seen, there are two different versions of how the sinner's not-doing might be understood on Aquinas's account. Central to evaluating these versions is how we answer the question whether it is possible to make a sinful choice at the same instant one considers the rule against it. I do not know how to answer this question definitively, even for Aquinas.[44] Yet prescinding from this question, I have argued that both versions offer successful explanations of the defect in the act of sin.[45] Furthermore, the overall success of Aquinas's strategy would not appear to depend on how we answer the question. Let us suppose it is not possible to choose against the rule at the very instant one considers it. In that case, the second version of Aquinas's account turns out to be impossible, but at no great loss, since the first version will then be capable of explaining the defects in all acts of sin in terms of the sinner's not considering, or ceasing to consider, the rule before the sinful choice is made. Let us suppose, on the other hand, that it is possible to choose against the rule while considering it. In that case, the first version will not afford an explanation for the defects in *all* sinful acts. However, the second version will now be available to explain the defects in whatever acts of sin are chosen at the same instant the sinner considers the rule. It follows that however we answer the question whether it is possible to make a sinful choice while considering the rule

[44] Here let me address two attempts, on opposite sides, to answer the question definitively. On one side, it might be argued that what Aquinas says about sins of malice shows that he thinks a person can choose against the rule at the very instant he considers it. In passages such as *STh* 1-11, q. 78, a. 1, Aquinas says that one who sins through certain malice "chooses evil knowingly." Yet it is not obvious that choosing evil knowingly means a person is actually considering his knowledge at the very instant of sinful choice. Such passages, then, would not seem to provide a decisive answer to our question. On the other side, it might be argued that to consider the rule in the relevant way entails considering the act that violates the rule as "bad overall," that is, as bad in the final analysis or all things considered. But, since one cannot choose an act *sub ratione mali*, it is impossible to choose an act that one takes to be bad overall, bad in the last analysis. Thus it is impossible to choose against the rule while considering it in the relevant way. In response, even if we concede that one cannot choose an act one takes to be bad overall, I do not see the evidence that Aquinas takes "considering the rule" to mean or entail "taking the act that violates the rule to be bad overall." Thus, I do not find the argument compelling.

[45] The argument for the success of the second version will not be completed until section III, where it is explained how the second version satisfies condition 3.

against it, Aquinas will have an explanation of the defect in the act of sin in terms of the sinner's *not-doing*. For the purposes of responding to the first objection, therefore, there is no need to argue for a definitive answer to this question.

II. A SECOND OBJECTION AND CAUSING BY NOT-DOING

A) Causing by Not-Doing

If Aquinas's solution has been vindicated against the first objection, a new question emerges. If the defect in the act of sin is caused by the sinner in virtue of what the sinner does not do (his not considering, or not using, the rule), why isn't it also caused by God in virtue of what God does not do (God's not causing the sinner's act of consideration)? After all, Aquinas holds that, "If God moves the will to anything, it is incompatible with that supposition that the will be not moved thereto." [46] Thus, God's causing the creature's considering the rule is sufficient for, and hence guarantees, the creature's considering it.[47] Moreover, from Aquinas's teaching that every action must be caused by God, it follows that the creature considers the rule only if God causes the creature's considering it. But, then, God's *not* causing the creature's act of consideration is sufficient for, and guarantees, the creature's not considering the rule.

Given that God's causing guarantees the sinner's considering, and that God's not-causing guarantees the sinner's not-considering, then if the defect in the act of sin is caused by the sinner in virtue of the sinner's not-considering, does it not follow that it is also caused by God in virtue of God's not causing the sinner's consideration? [48]

[46] *STh* I-II, q. 10, a. 4, ad. 3.

[47] Here and on other occasions I simplify matters by speaking, along the lines of the first interpretation, of the sinner's not-doing as not considering the rule. The point applies equally well on the second interpretation where the sinner's not-doing is his not using, or not electing under, the rule.

[48] William Hasker raises a similar objection against Kathryn Tanner's attempt to reduce the defect in the act of sin to the sinner's non-attention to moral principle. See William Hasker, "God The Creator of Good and Evil?" in Thomas F. Tracy, ed., *The God Who Acts:*

The foregoing question constitutes a second objection to Aquinas's solution. This objection can be raised even if we grant his response to the first objection. Aquinas's response to the first objection depends on the claim that the defect in the act of sin can be causally reduced to the creature in virtue of what the creature does not do-that is, the creature's non-consideration, or non-use, of the rule. The second objection allows that the defect might be reducible to the creature in virtue of what the creature does not do, but maintains that the defect is just as reducible to God in virtue of what God does not do. Because God does not cause the creature's consideration or use of the rule, the defect in the act of sin is as causally reducible to God as it is to the sinner. In that case, however, Aquinas's solution fails. For, if God causes the defect as well as the act of sin, then, like the sinner, he causes the whole of the sin, the sin itself.

B) The Strategy of Maritain

In his three main treatments of God's perm1ss1on of sin,[49] Maritain takes it as axiomatic that "God is the absolutely universal first cause, on the motion of whom depends the action of the creature down to the least iota-even and especially the action of the free will."[50] On the other hand, he also takes as axiomatic that "God is absolutely not the cause of moral evil, neither directly nor indirectly," a teaching he lifts from Aquinas *(STh* 1-11, q. 79, a. 1).[51] Convinced that God is the cause of every action, Maritain will not attempt to account for man's unique responsibility for sin with reference to anything man does, for anything man does will

Philosophical and Theological Explorations (University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 143. Tanner's essay can be found in the same volume.

[49] Maritain, *God and the Permission of Evil;* idem, *St. Thomas and the Problem of Evil;* and Jacques Maritain, *Existence and the Existent,* trans. Lewis Galantiere and Gerald B. Phelan (Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1956), esp. 92-128. For a helpful study of the influences on Maritain's account, see Michael Torre, "Francisco Marin-Sola, OP, and the Origin of Jacques Maritain's Doctrine on God's Permission of Evil," *Nova et Vetera* (English edition) 4 (2006): 55-94.

[50] Maritain, *God and the Permission of Evil,* 13.

[51] Ibid., 6.

have God as its cause. Instead, Maritain enthusiastically advocates Aquinas's strategy of reducing the defect in the act of sin to the sinner in virtue of a not-doing, the sinner's non-consideration of the rule.

How, then, does Maritain respond to the second objection, that in virtue of God's not causing the sinner's act of consideration, God is as causally responsible for the defect as is the sinner? To the extent that Maritain has a response, it would seem to come in his concept of "shatterable" divine motion, a concept designed to relieve God of causal responsibility for sin's defect by stipulating that God gives the creature everything he needs to perform a good act, and to avoid a defective one.[52]

Maritain holds that, by a "shatterable" motion, God causes or moves the free agent to tend to a morally good act. If the creature fails to consider the rule, then the shatterable divine motion is "shattered" and a defective, sinful act is the result. If, on the other hand, the shatterable divine motion is not shattered by the creature's non-consideration, then that shatterable motion "fructifies" of itself into an "unshatterable" motion "under which the creature, freely and infallibly, will consider the rule in its very operation and will produce the good act to which it is moved by God."[53]

For our purposes, there are three points that need to be made concerning the fructification of shatterable motion into unshatterable motion. First, the condition of this fructification is the creature's not not-considering the rule (i.e., its not failing to consider it). Second, on the condition that the creature does not not-consider the rule, the shatterable motion frucitifies *of itself* into unshatterable motion "without having the need of being completed by the slightest actuation or determination coming

[52] For Maritain's account of "shatterable" motion, see ibid., 38-43; and Maritain, *Existence and the Existent,* 99-112. I say, "to the extent that Maritain has a respon.se," because Maritain does not explicitly formulate the objection I am considering. Nevertheless, his concept of shatterable divine motion appears to be motivated by a desire to ward off something like this objection.

[53] Maritain, *God and the Permission of Evil,* 39.

from the creature." [54] Finally, the unshatterable motion is simply God's infallibly moving the creature to a good act.[55]

It might seem that Maritain's teaching concerning shatterable motion allows for a response to the second objection. Because the shatterable motion given by God "fructifies of itself" into a good act, it may seem that in giving this motion God is doing and giving everything that needs to be done and given for a good act to be produced. And, if God is doing everything that needs to be done for a good act to be produced, and if a defective act results only because of what the sinner does not do, then it seems reasonable to say that the sinner alone, and not also God, is causally responsible for the act's defect.

On closer examination, however, Maritain's concept of shatterable motion does not provide the help we need. A necessary condition of the shatterable motion's fructifying into the good act is the creature's not not-considering the rule. But to not not-consider the rule is simply to consider it. And to consider the rule is an action, an action whose necessary and sufficient condition is God's causing the act of consideration. Thus, God has, in fact, not given everything needed to produce the good act, unless he also causes the creature's consideration of the rule. Hence, if he doesn't cause the creature's consideration of the rule, the question raised by the second objection still remains: If the defect in the act of sin is reducible to the sinner in virtue of what the sinner does not do, why isn't it also reducible to God in virtue of what God does not do?

Ill. NOT-DOINGS AND CAUSES

The sinner's not considering the rule implies God's not causing the sinner's act of consideration, and God's not causing the sinner's act of consideration implies the sinner's not considering. There is, then, never a not-considering on the part of the sinner without a corresponding not-causing on the part of God; nor is

[54] Ibid.

[55] Thus, Maritain identifies unshatterable motion with efficacious grace. See ibid.

there a not-causing on the part of God without a corresponding not-considering on the part of the sinner. How, then, can Aquinas claim that the defect in the act of sin is caused by the sinner in virtue of what the sinner does not do, but is not caused by God in virtue of what God does not do?

To respond to this objection we need some principled basis for reducing the defect to the sinner, but not to God. This basis will emerge when we ask the following question: Under what conditions does a substance's not performing some act constitute an explanation of something such that we can say that the substance causes the thing being explained in virtue of its non-performance? As it turns out, Aquinas offers a fairly precise answer to this question. Indeed, there are Thomistic principles for causally reducing an effect to a substance on the basis of that substance's not-doing. Not only are these principles plausible in their own right, but when applied to the problem at hand they enable us to see why the defect in the act of sin is reducible to the sinner, but not to God, in virtue of their respective not-doings.

Let us begin with a homely example. Suppose I have an aquarium into which I drop fish food every morning before leaving for work. Every day, the fish food is gone upon my return. Today, however, I arrive home to find the food still floating about the water's surface. The fish food's still-floating calls for an explanation. What explanation should we give?

Consider the following possibilities:

(1) The food is still floating because my goldfish didn't eat it.
(2) The food is still floating because the plants in my aquarium didn't eat it.
(3) The food is still floating because the water in my aquarium didn't dissolve it.

All three of these explanations purport to explain the fish food's still-floating in terms of the non-activity or non-operation of some substance. Furthermore, had any of these substances performed the activity in question, the fish food would no longer be floating. It would not be floating had my fish eaten it; but neither would it be floating had my plants eaten it, or had the water dissolved it. Yet, while the first of these explanations is perfectly reasonable-

indeed, it is the most obvious explanation of the fish food's still-floating-explanations (2) and (3) are absurd. The first explanation is reasonable because, given what fish are, we expect them to eat fish food in normal circumstances. Thus, the fish food's still-floating can be explained by the fish's not having done what we would expect it to do.[56] Explanations (2) and (3), by contrast, clearly do not explain the fish food's still-floating. Given what plants and water are, we have no reason to expect that in eight to ten hours they will eat or dissolve the fish food. These examples show that in some instances the non-operation of a substance is explanatory, but not in others.

The discussion of these examples can be recast with the help of Aquinas's views regarding natural inclinations.[57] According to Aquinas, in virtue of its species or nature, every substance has inclinations for certain ends, and to perform certain sorts of activities in suitable circumstances.[58] All activity is for the sake of some end to which the agent is naturally disposed or inclined, a point that holds true across all levels of being.[59] Thus, fire, an inanimate substance, has a tendency to give forth heat.[60] Non-rational animals intend that to which they are moved by the instincts proper to their various species.[61] Human beings have a natural appetite for happiness, intending other goods because reason perceives them as contributing to or constituting happiness.[62] For Aquinas, the proper or *per se* effects of a sub-

[56] We can also ask for an explanation of why the fish didn't eat the food. But that is to seek an explanation for a different *explanandum.* The original *explanandum* was not the fish's not acting as we would expect it to act, but rather the fish food's still-floating.

[57] For helpful discussions of the role played by inclination (and, also, by power) in Aquinas's account of agent causation, see Stephen L. Brock, *Action and Conduct: Thomas Aquinas and the Theory of Action* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998); and Michael Rota, "Causation," in *The Oxford Handbook of Thomas Aquinas,* ed. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump, forthcoming from Oxford University Press.

[58] See *De Verit.,* q. 22, a. 1. See also *STh* I, q. 14, a. 8, where Aquinas points out that form, which makes a substance to be what it is, constitutes a principle of action insofar as it confers on that substance an inclination to an effect.

[59] *STh* 1-11, q. 1, a. 2.

[60] *STh* I, q. 62, a. 2.

[61] STh1-11,q. 12, a. 5.

[62] *STh* I, q. 60, a. 2; I, q. 82, a. 1; 1-11, q. 10, a. 1; 1-11, q. 1, a. 6.

stance are precisely those to which it tends by its nature.[63] In this light, it is because goldfish have a natural tendency to eat fish food that we can explain the fish food's still-floating in terms of the fish's not-eating. Since plants and water do not have natural inclinations to activities that would have as a consequence the disappearance of the fish food, the non-activities of these substances do not explain the fish food's still-floating.

Aquinas's teaching on natural inclinations supplies the necessary presuppositions for the explanatory analysis offered with the foregoing examples.[64] Furthermore, Aquinas himself offers an account of the way in which a substance can cause an effect in virtue of a non-performance. Commenting on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, he agrees that one and the same thing can be the cause of contrary or opposite effects. That which when present is the cause of some particular effect, when absent is the cause of the contrary effect, as a ship's safety is caused by the presence of a pilot, whose absence causes the ship's loss.[65] This passage does not quite say that the pilot causes the ship's loss in virtue of a not-doing. The passage is, in fact, ambiguous as to whether the cause of the ship's loss is the pilot himself or the pilot's absence. Nevertheless, it is clear in the passage that Aquinas is talking about agent causes, causes that bring about their proper effects by acting. If the presence of an agent explains some effect and its absence explains the contrary effect, it is only because when present the agent operates and when absent the agent does not operate. Aquinas could just as easily have said that it is the not-doing of the pilot, his not steering the ship, that explains the ship's loss, or that the ship's loss is causally reducible to the pilot in virtue of his not-steering.

In fact, this is precisely what Aquinas says in what is perhaps his most explicit statement regarding causing by non-performance:

[63] See II *Phys.*, lect. 8 (Marietti ed., 214); and *STh* I, q. 49, a. 1.

[64] For examples taken from the sciences, see Stephen Makin, "Aquinas, Natural Tendencies, and Natural Kinds," *New Scholasticism* 63 (1989): 253-74.

[65] See V *Metaphys.*, lect. 2 (Marietti ed., 776).

> One thing proceeds from another in two ways. First, directly; in which sense something proceeds from another inasmuch as this other acts; for instance, heating from heat. Secondly, indirectly; in which sense something proceeds from another through this other not acting; thus the sinking of a ship is set down to the helmsman, from his having ceased to steer.[66]

Under what conditions does an effect proceed from, or get caused by, a substance in virtue of its not-doing? Aquinas continues:

> But we must take note that the cause of what follows from want of action is not always the agent as not acting; but only when the agent can and ought to act. For if the helmsman were unable to steer the ship or if the ship's helm be not entrusted to him, the sinking of the ship would not be set down to him.[67]

An agent causes some effect by not acting only when the agent *can* and *ought* to act. What do "can" and "ought" mean here?

With respect to the helmsman, and given the context of the *Prima Secundae,* it is natural to read "can" and "ought" as having a moral connotation. The helmsman "ought" to steer the ship just in case he is under some sort of obligation to do so, and the helmsman "can" steer the ship just in case he has whatever ability is required for him to be morally at fault if he does not. Nevertheless, we should not think Aquinas means to restrict the cases when an agent causes through not-doing to rational, moral agents. For starters, he introduces the discussion with the very general "One thing proceeds from another in two ways," and uses for his example of the first, direct way, the act of a natural agent, heat (he might better have said, "fire."). Both the introduction and this example would be odd if, without notifying us, he means to restrict the second, indirect way to agents of a rational nature. Furthermore, the conditions Aquinas states for when an agent causes by not acting can be satisfied by substances at all levels of being. No less than rational agents, inanimate substances, plants, and brute animals "can" and "ought" to perform certain operations.

Just as a substance, in virtue of its species, is inclined to certain ends, and to perform certain activities in suitable conditions, so

[66] *STh* 1-11, q. 6, a. 3.

[67] Ibid.

also does it have natural powers for engaging in these activities. A substance "can" perform a particular act if it has the power to do so. Thus, fire has the power to burn wood, and eagles to fly. What is more, a substance, whether or not it is rational, "ought" to perform the activities to which it is naturally inclined. That is how it "should" behave, given its nature. Indeed, if it fails so to behave, then it falls short of its good. The good of a substance consists in its achieving the end(s) to which it is naturally ordered or disposed. In the case of a rational substance, achieving its end requires fulfilling its moral obligations, but for all substances it requires performing the actions needed to realize their ends.[68] The goldfish's not eating the fish food is not a *moral* failure. Nevertheless, by not so eating, the goldfish has failed to act as it ought, and fallen short of its good.[69]

We are now in a position to set out a Thomistic principle for causally reducing an effect to a substance on the basis of that substance's not-doing. Employing a broad sense of "ought," where a substance "ought" to perform those activities to which it is naturally inclined, and which are needed to realize the end(s) or good(s) to which it is naturally (or supernaturally) ordered, I propose the following:

Effect *e* is caused by substance *S* in virtue of S's not ¢-ing if and only if
(a) S's ¢-ing would have insured or at least made it likely that *e* not occur, and
(b) S had the power *to* ¢, and
(c) *S* ought to have ¢-ed.

I have indicated what I mean by "ought" in condition (c). A complete defense of this principle would also need to specify the precise sort of power figuring in condition (b). One could say that the power to ¢ could be one, like the power to see, that a substance has in virtue of its species; or it could be a power, like

[68] See, for instance, *ScG* III, c. 140.

[69] The "moral ought," one might say, is really just a species of "ought" in the broad sense, whereby an agent ought to perform those activities to which it is naturally inclined, and which are needed to realize the end(s) or good(s) to which it is naturally (and, where applicable, supernaturally) ordered. To be under the specifically moral ought belongs to those substances that enjoy providence over themselves, substances able to know their end(s) and direct themselves to it (them). See *STh* I-II, q. 91, a. 2 corp. and ad 3.

the medical art, that has to be acquired.[70] The question becomes complicated, however, when we ask whether the relevant sort of power requires any of the following: (1) if the power be of the sort had by *S* in virtue of its species, that *S* be a *mature enough* member of the species to exercise the power; (2) that *S* be *perfect or healthy enough* to exercise the power, assuming the absence of impediments; (3) that, in the given circumstances, there be *no impediments* to the exercise of the power by *S*.[71] My tentative suggestion is that the relevant sort of power includes none of (1)-(3). Intuitively, it seems reasonable to explain the absence of rabbit births in the hutch by the male and female rabbits' not generating offspring together, given that rabbits by nature have the power and proclivity to generate. If the rabbits do not generate, that fact may be further explained by their being too young to generate, by their being in poor health, or by the presence of impediments. But these additional factors help explain the lack of rabbit births only because that lack is first explained by the rabbits' non-performance, which non-performance these additional factors explain. The example suggests that the sort of power needed by S in order for *S's* not <*jring* to explain *e* need not include (1)-(3), even though the absence of (1)-(3) may help explain why *S* fails to <*J*.[72]

[70] For Aquinas on arts as powers, see IX *Metaphys.*, lect. 3 (Marietti ed., 1796).

[71] Impediments are of two sorts: (a) positive obstacles to an agent's action, as the presence of moisture may prevent a match from igniting, and (b) the absence of external necessary conditions for an agent's action, as a match may be prevented from igniting because of an absence of oxygen.

[72] Stephen Brock has argued that, for Aquinas, a natural substance fails to produce its proper effect (the effect to which it is naturally inclined) only if it is impeded (Stephen Brock, "Causality and Necessity in Thomas Aquinas," *Quaestio* 2 [2002], 217-40). Assuming Brock is correct, then if the power relevant to condition (b) included (3), no effect could be explained by the non-performance of a natural substance. Such a non-performance would always be due to an impediment, which means that the natural substance would never have the relevant sort of power. The point could be made more generally. It seems plausible that there will always (or almost always) be a natural explanation for why a natural substance fails to operate in accordance with its natural inclination. It may be that the substance's act is impeded. Perhaps the substance is unhealthy or defective. Perhaps the substance is not sufficiently mature. If, then, we say that the sort of power relevant to condition (b) of our principle is only had by a substance when there are no factors of the sort that would explain a natural substance's not operating in accordance with its inclination, then, assuming that the non-operation of natural substances can almost always be so explained, our principle would

B) Aquinas's Response to the Second Objection

Fortunately, the resolution to our second objection does not hinge on specifying the precise sort of power that figures in condition (b). Even if we leave condition (b) somewhat imprecise, the formulated principle is clear enough to show why the defect in the act of sin is reducible to the sinner, but not to God, in virtue of their respective not-doings.

Take, first, the sinner. As was made clear above (section I), had the sinner considered or used the rule, he would not have committed the defective, sinful act, and consequently the defect in the act of sin would not have occurred. Since the sinner's not-doing would have insured that the defect not occur, his non-performance clearly satisfies condition (a). Condition (b) is also satisfied. Again, as shown above, the sinner has it within his power to consider or use the rule. Though he does not, he could have. Finally, the sinner's not-considering or not-using satisfies condition (c). Just as a goldfish ought to engage in the sort of activities to which goldfish are naturally inclined, and just as failing to do so means falling short of the good for a goldfish, so, also, human beings ought to govern themselves by the moral rule, and need to do so in order to attain their end(s), whether natural or supernatural. Not considering the rule, or not electing under the order that includes the rule, is not by itself a sin. Nevertheless, when someone sins as a result of failing to consider or to elect under the rule, we rightly say that he ought to have governed himself. We expect human beings to consider and to abide by the rule, not because that is the statistical norm, but because it is the teleological norm. It is due to us by nature that we attend to and adhere to the moral law.[73]

result in almost no effects being explained by the not-doings of natural substances. But, this result seems an unhappy and counter-intuitive one, and, therefore, constitutes further grounds for thinking that requirements such as (1)-(3) should not be included in the power relevant to (b).

[73] The claim that when someone sins he ought to have considered, or elected under, the rule might seem to contradict the claim that not considering (or not electing under) the rule is not itself a sin. Yet, on reflection, there is no contradiction here. When someone lies, we do not ordinarily think he has committed two sins, the sin of lying and the separate sin of not

With the foregoing in mind, we can return to the objection left on the table from the end of section I. On the second way of understanding the sinner's not-doing, the sinner's not-electing under the order of reason that includes the rule does not take place temporally prior to the defective, sinful election. Yet Aquinas insists that the not-doing that explains the defect in the act of sin must be prior to that defect. One can now see that, on the second interpretation of Aquinas's teaching, the sinner's not electing under the rule is explanatorily, even if not temporally, prior. To use the earlier example, had the sinner, at the moment of choice, elected under the order represented by (C) and (D), rather than the order represented by (A) and (B), his choice would have been to refrain from lying, rather than to lie. His electing under the order that includes the rule, therefore, would have *insured* that the sinful act, and its defect, *not occur* (at least at that instant). But the sinner had the *power* to elect under the order that includes the rule, and, what is more, he *ought* to have elected under that order so as to avoid sin. His not electing under the order that includes the rule is therefore explanatorily prior to the defect in the act of sin, since, by the principle I have formulated, the sinner is the cause of the defect in virtue of his not electing under that order.

Does God's not causing the creature's act of considering, or electing under, the rule likewise satisfy our conditions for causing by not-doing? Here we reach the critical point in responding to the second objection. Clearly, God's not causing satisfies condition (a). Had God caused the creature's act of consideration, then there would have been no sinful act, and hence no defect in the act. Just as clearly, God's not causing satisfies condition (b).

considering (or not electing under) the precept against lying. Still, we agree that he ought to have considered and elected under the precept against lying, because, as a general matter, we think people ought to govern themselves by the moral law, something the person who lies hasn't done. Saying, then, that the liar ought to have considered and elected under the precept against lying-that is, that he ought to have chosen to refrain from the lie-in no way commits us to the claim that, in addition to the lie, he is guilty of the sin of not having chosen to refrain. As Aquinas puts it (De *Malo*, q. 1, a. 3): "The fault of the will does not consist in not actually giving heed to the rule of reason or divine law but in proceeding to choose without employing the rule or measure."

It was within God's power to cause the creature to consider, or elect under, the rule. The difference in the case of God and the sinner is that God's not causing does not satisfy condition (c). The sinner ought to have governed himself by the moral law, and hence he ought to have considered, and elected under, the rule, so as to avoid sin, and realize his good. But, for Aquinas, it is simply not the case that God ought to have caused the sinner's considering, or electing under, the rule.

Two reasons, not mutually exclusive, support this claim and appear consistent with points emphasized by Aquinas. The first is simply that God cannot fail to do what he ought, since he is subject to no rule distinct from himself, but is his own rule and measure.[74] Aquinas insists that whatever God does (or does not do) accords with his wisdom and justice.[75] Thus, when God does not perform some act, it cannot be the case that he ought to have performed it. In a passage where Aquinas has something very much like our second objection in mind, he argues as follows:

> For it happens that God does not give some the assistance whereby they may avoid sin, which assistance were He to give, they would not sin. But He does all this according to the order of His wisdom and justice, since He Himself is Wisdom and Justice: so that if someone sin it is not imputable to Him as though He were the cause of that sin; even as a pilot is not said to cause the wrecking of the ship, through not steering the ship, unless he cease to steer while able and bound to steer.[76]

Not giving help to avoid sin, and not causing the sinner's act of considering the rule, are not exactly the same thing.[77] Nevertheless, the passage strongly supports what I have suggested is

[74] See, for instance, *De Malo,* q. 1, a. 3, ad. 9.

[75] At *De Verit.,* q. 23, a. 6, Aquinas notes that the divine will and its correcmess are identical. God's will cannot fail to conform to his wisdom and justice for they are, in themselves, one and the same.

[76] *STh* I-II, q. 79, a. 1.

[77] "Assistance" to avoid sin could consist in divine acts other than causing the creature's act of considering the rule. Furthermore, such "assistance" might be construed as referring to something God gives in the order of grace. By contrast, God's causing an act of considering the rule, at least as such, does not necessarily pertain to the order of grace. Were there no order of grace, there would still be moral rules, and a person's act of considering those rules would still need God as first cause.

Aquinas's logic for denying that the defect in the act of sin is reducible to God in virtue of God's not causing the sinner's act of consideration. The analogy with the pilot makes it clear that God would not be the cause of sin unless he were *able* and *bound* to give the assistance. Clearly he was able; so it must be that he was not bound. And he was not bound because what God does necessarily accords with his wisdom and justice, indeed, necessarily accords with the Wisdom and Justice that God is. It follows that if God does not give the assistance, he was not bound to give it. It is not something he ought to have given. The same can be said for God's causing the creature's act of consideration. [78]

The second reason why it is not the case that God ought to cause the sinner's act of consideration concerns the very logic of "ought." It makes sense to say that a substance "ought" to perform certain activities only on the supposition that those activities are needed, either instrumentally or constitutively, for the substance to attain its end. Fire ought to burn wood, dogwoods ought to bloom, eagles ought to fly, and human beings ought to govern themselves by the moral rule-all because such creatures are ordered to these activities and need to perform them in order to achieve their respective goods. There is a gap, as it were, between the creature and its full perfection, a gap that must be traversed by action. But there is no such gap, and there are no such activities, in the case of God. God has the end and good in himself. [79] Thus, while the rational creature needs, in certain situations, to consider the rule in order to attain his end, [80] God

[711] I cannot here argue for the claims that there is no rule distinct from God to which God is subject, that God is his wisdom and justice, and that there is no distinction between God's will and its correctness. Clearly, these claims have implications for whether it could ever be the case that God ought to have done something he did not do. I note here only that Aquinas does not seem to be worried that these claims about God's essential justice are vulnerable to arguments by counterexample of the form: "(1) God didn't do X. (2) But an essentially just God would have done X. (3) Therefore, these claims are false." Aquinas, I take it, would say that the evidence of both reason and revelation should always give us more confidence in the truth of these claims than in our intuitions regarding the truth of particular propositions on the model of (2), where those propositions conflict with what God has actually done.

[79] See *STh* I, q. 6, a. 3; *STh* I-II, q. 3, a. 1, ad 1; *ScG* III, c. 37; *ScG* I, cc. 100-102.

[80] Here it is helpful to recall that law and rule are understood by Aquinas as directing human beings to their end, happiness. See *STh* I-II, q. 90, aa. 1-2.

need not cause the creature's act of consideration m order to attain his.[81]

We have, then, a Thomistic principle for causally reducing effects to substances in virtue of not-doings. Applying the principle, we see that the defect in the act of sin is reducible to the sinner, since the sinner's not considering, or not electing under, the rule satisfies all three conditions of the principle. By contrast, the defect is not reducible to God, because God's not causing the sinner's considering, or electing, does not satisfy condition (c). The principle is not *ad hoc-it* is not designed for the limited purpose of denying that God is the cause of sin. On the contrary, it has a very general applicability, and can be used to reduce effects to all genera of substances in virtue of not-doings. Moreover, the principle accords well with common sense, and is consistent with the sort of explanations we find ourselves giving in daily life. "Why is the mouse still in the basement?" "Because the poison didn't kill it, and the cat didn't catch it." "Why is the snow still in the driveway?" "Because my neighbor didn't shovel it. Doesn't he remember that he owes me from last time?" [82]

C) Some Final Objections to the Foregoing Solution

Before closing, I want to address two possible objections to the foregoing solution. The first objection is that, on the supposition that God does not cause the sinner's act of considering the rule, the sinner does not really have the power to consider the rule, after all. As we have seen, God's causing is a necessary condition

[81] Aquinas tells us that, absolutely speaking, God need not will anything other than himself. He gives as his reason that God's perfect goodness does not depend on God's willing anything apart from God. See *STh* I, q. 19, a. 3.

[82] Typically, if a non-rational substance (such as poison or a cat) has the power to perform a particular act, it will also be naturally inclined to perform that act. Thus, rarely will a natural substance's non-performance satisfy condition (b) without also satisfying condition (c) of the principle. In the case of rational substances, by contrast, a substance will often have the power to perform a particular act without it being the case that the substance ought to perform the act. Imagine if my neighbor did not owe me from last time. He would still have the power to shovel my driveway, but it would not be the case that he ought to shovel it. His not shoveling would satisfy condition (b), but not condition (c). Thus, his not shoveling would not explain the snow's still covering my driveway.

of the sinner's considering. But, then, it is not possible for the sinner to consider the rule if God does not cause the sinner's consideration. And so the objection continues: Not only would this mean that the sinner could not have avoided failing to consider the rule (a violation of the second condition for the sinner's not-doing discussed in section I), it would also mean that the sinner's not-considering fails to satisfy condition (b) of our principle for causing by non-performance: On the supposition that God does not cause the sinner's act of consideration, the sinner does not have the power to consider the rule, in which case the defect in the act of sin cannot be reduced to the sinner in virtue of his not-considering.

The response to this objection lies in the second assumption I articulated at the very beginning this article. The assumption is that God's causing our actions is consistent with the sort of freedom required for moral responsibility. The assumption is a fair one to hold in place for the purposes of this article, since the problem that I attempt to address-how God can cause the act of sin without causing sin itself-never even arises unless it is presupposed that God's causing our actions is consistent with our freedom. But since an agent is not free with respect to an act unless he has the power to perform that act, from this second assumption it follows that the sinner who fails to consider the rule had the requisite power to consider it, even though his considering it has as a necessary condition God's causing the act of consideration. Exactly *how* it can be said that the sinner retains the requisite power is a question for another article, an article devoted to reconciling human freedom with God's universal causality. Here, it is enough to note that the second assumption enables us to stipulate that the sinner had the requisite power to consider the rule, even in the case where God does not cause the sinner's considering.

The second objection to the foregoing solution is that the Thomistic principle regarding causing by not-doing conflicts with certain things Aquinas says when discussing God's ability to annihilate creatures. [83] Although Aquinas denies that God will, in

[83] The need to address this objection was brought to my attention by Michael Torre.

fact, annihilate any creatures, he maintains that it is possible for God to do so simply by ceasing to preserve them in being.[84] Moreover, in at least one location, Aquinas says that, by withdrawing his action from them, God would be the cause of creatures' being reduced to nothing.[85] Yet Aquinas denies that preserving creatures is something God ought or needs to do: He need no more preserve them than create them in the first place.[86] The upshot is that Aquinas gives an example in which an effect is said to be caused by an agent in virtue of its not-doing, even though the not-doing in question does not meet all the conditions laid out in our principle. Aquinas tells us that were God to annihilate creatures, he would be the cause of their non-existence in virtue of his not preserving them. His not preserving them satisfies condition (a) of the principle, since were he to preserve them the creatures would retain their existence. His not preserving them satisfies condition (b) of the principle, for he would have had the power to preserve them. His not preserving them does not, however, satisfy condition (c). As we have seen, Aquinas denies that preserving them is something God ought or needs to do. It looks, then, as if our principle falls short of consistency with at least one of Aquinas's examples of causing by not-doing.

There are two ways of responding to this objection. The first is to argue that Aquinas simply makes a mistake in saying that if God annihilated a creature he would be the cause of its not existing. This response points out that what Aquinas says here conflicts with what he says elsewhere (e.g., *STh* I-II, q. 6, a. 3; I-II, q. 79, a. 1). In those passages Aquinas is very clear that a substance causes in virtue of not performing some act *only if* it had the power to perform it and ought to have performed it. Since Aquinas denies that God ought, or is bound, to preserve creatures in being, he should also deny that God would be the cause of creatures' not existing in virtue of not preserving them. The first

[84] *STh* I, q. 104, aa. 3 and 4.

[85] *STh* I, q. 104, a. 3, ad 1: "Indirectly God can be the cause of things being reduced to non-existence, by withdrawing His action therefrom."

[86] *STh* I, q. 104, a. 3, ad 2.

response, in effect, gives preference to Aquinas's more formal statements on the conditions under which an agent causes by not doing, writing off the conflicting text regarding annihilation as a mere imprecision on Aquinas's part.

The second response, by contrast, takes the conflict to show that the conditions given in Aquinas's more formal statements are themselves imprecise, or at least incomplete. It then attempts to supplement those conditions, and our principle, in a way that accommodates what Aquinas says in his discussion of annihilation. The following is a possible revision of our principle, a revision that alters condition (c):

Effect *e* is caused by substance *S* in virtue of *S's* not ¢-ing if and only if
(a) *S's* ¢-ing would have insured or at least made it likely that *e* not occur, and
(b) *S* had the power to ¢, and
(c) Either (i) Sought to have ¢-ed, or (ii) prior to not ¢-ing, *S* was ¢-ing, and in so doing bringing about the negation of *e*.

On this revised version of the principle, God's not preserving creatures in existence could make God the cause of their not existing. Although God was not bound to preserve creatures (and hence his not doing so fails to satisfy [c]-[i]), he was preserving them before ceasing to do so,[87] and his preserving brought about their existing, the negation of their not-existing. Thus, God's not preserving creatures would satisfy condition (c)-(ii). Since it would also satisfy conditions (a) and (b), the revised principle accommodates the claim that, if he annihilated them, God would be the cause of creatures' not existing in virtue of his not preserving them.

The revised principle enjoys some intuitive plausibility.[88] Suppose my neighbor is under no obligation to remove snow from my driveway (he does not, for instance, owe me from last time). Nevertheless, suppose out of sheer generosity he always, or almost always, shovels for me. If I discover snow in my driveway at a

[87] See *STh* I, q. 13, a. 7 for the claim that, despite God's eternity, statements that predicate of God a relationship to creatures can be predicated of God temporally, as in, "God was preserving creatures before ceasing to do so."

[88] In addition to the following example, see Brock, *Action and Conduct,* 134.

time when my neighbor would have normally removed it, it is natural to answer the question, "Why is there snow in my driveway?" by "My neighbor didn't shovel it today." However, the answer is natural not because I think that my neighbor ought to have shoveled it, or had an obligation to shovel it. Rather, the answer is natural because he habitually removes the snow from my driveway, and his having done it with such regularity in the past led me to expect that he would continue to do it even now. [89]

There are, then, two ways, of responding to the objection raised by Aquinas's text on annihilation. [90] Both require us to say

[89] Which is more plausible, the original version of (c) or the revised version? The question turns on whether we should think that, in examples like that of my neighbor's not-shoveling, a substance causes some effect by not-doing, even if it is not the case that the substance ought to have performed the act, provided that the substance *has been* performing the act. Clearly, the fact that a substance has been performing a certain act gives rise psychologically to the expectation that it will continue to do so. But, such expectation is not a decisive sign that, in not performing the act, the substance causes the negation of the effect it normally brings about through the act, for what we are accustomed to expect does not always coincide with genuine causal connection. In stating that the revised version enjoys some intuitive plausibility, therefore, I do not intend to say that it is more plausible than the original version. I take no stand on that question here. My purpose is simply to show how one might develop the second of the two responses to the problem raised by Aquinas's text on annihilation.

[90] It must be admitted that the revised principle used in the second response had to be formulated carefully. It had to be formulated carefully in order to avoid the unhappy result that, at least on the first interpretation of the not-doing in virtue of which the sinner causes the defect in the act of sin, God is sometimes also the cause of that defect. Recall that on the first interpretation, the sinner is sometimes considering the rule before turning his attention away from it and choosing the sinful act. But that means that God was causing the sinner's consideration of the rule, and then ceased to cause it. One might, therefore, argue that God's not causing the sinner's act of consideration satisfies (c)-(ii) of the revised principle, for even though God is not bound to cause the sinner's act of consideration, *he was doing so prior to ceasing to cause it.* The revised principle I have suggested was formulated to avoid this unhappy result. Strictly speaking, God's not causing the sinner's act of considering the rule does not satisfy (c)-(ii). Even though the sinner's considering the rule entails that the sinner not choose the sinful act (and hence entails that there be no defect), what God's causing strictly brings about is the sinner's act of consideration, not the negation of the defect. In other words, what God is doing, the object of God's act, is causing a creaturely act of considering the rule, not bringing about the negation of a defect in an act of sin. Contrast this to what God is bringing about when he preserves the universe in being prior to hypothetically annihilating it. What God is bringing about here is the existence of the universe. But the existence of the universe is the negation of its non-existence, which is what Aquinas says God would be causing were he to cease preserving the universe in being. Thus, on the revised principle, we could say that God would be the cause of the universe's being reduced to nothing in virtue of his not preserving it. But we would not have to say that God is the cause of the defect in the

that, in one text or another, Aquinas has been imprecise or incomplete. Still, both responses preserve the core of what I have argued is Aquinas's principled grounds for thinking that the defect in the act of sin is reducible to the sinner, but not to God, m virtue of their respective not-doings. [91]

act of sin in cases where he ceased causing the sinner's act of consideration after having previously caused it.

[91] Thanks to Steven A. Long, Thomas M. Osborne, Jr., and Michael D. Torre, for their helpful feedback on previous drafts of this paper. Thanks also to the editors and referees from *The Thomist*, that is, to Rev. Joseph Torchia O.P., Gregory LaNave, Rev. Stephen L. Brock, and an anonymous referee, for their helpful feedback.

BOOK REVIEWS

Wisdom, Law and Virtue: Essays in Thomistic Ethics. By LAWRENCE DEWAN, O.P. New York: Fordham University Press, 2007. Pp. xvi+ 690. $85.00 (cloth). ISBN 978-0-8232-2796-9.

This is a collection of twenty-seven papers written by Lawrence Dewan over a span of more than three decades. Up to now many of them have been hard to come by and have not received anything like the attention they deserve, and so Fordham Press is to be thanked for issuing this volume. It includes a bibliography and a good index of names and subjects. Regrettably there is no index of texts of St. Thomas. Also regrettable is that the notes have all been sent to the back of the book. This may make the pages more pleasing to the eye, but besides the annoyance of having to go back and forth, there is the problem that the notes are substantial and sometimes very important, and this layout risks their being overlooked. But it is a solid and handsome production, and I found very few printing errors.

As for the content, the praise that I am inclined to lavish upon it might put some readers off. I shall try to keep sober.

The subtitle calls the papers "essays in Thomistic ethics." This is true, but the perspective taken throughout is that of the title's first word: wisdom. These are studies in St. Thomas's sapiential approach to ethical matters, his characteristic treatment of them in light of the "highest causes." The primary focus is the treatment's *metaphysical* dimension. This of course is understood to be at the service of the theological; as Dewan says in the Introduction written for the volume, "the presence of Christian revelation and its truth constitutes the all-enveloping context."

The essays form a surprisingly coherent whole, and Dewan has chosen to arrange them systematically, under six headings. The first five go from the general to the particular-the order that Thomas himself recommends in ethics. The last is a "Methodological Postscript."

The opening group of papers is called simply "Universal Considerations." In most of these the aim is to bring out some aspect of the metaphysical point of view and its controlling function in Thomas's ethical thought. Titles include "Wisdom and Human Life: The Natural and the Supernatural," "Wisdom as Foundational Ethical Theory," "St. Thomas, Metaphysics and Human Dignity" (an extended plea for *hylomorphism* as fundamental in establishing the human

person's dignity), "Truth and Happiness," and "Is Liberty the Criterion of Morals?" A passage from this last piece typifies Dewan's program: "I submit that one must move from freedom to its source in reason and from practical reason to contemplative reason if one is really to discover reason in all its amplitude as the source of 'ought' and 'ought not' for human action. It is the goal that is the principle of practical reason, and the goal is contemplation of the truth" (120).

Notice that the (ultimate) goal is not moral goodness itself. Dewan is emphatic about the fact that for Thomas the moral good is not man's highest good. It is not *reason's* highest good. "Ethics is of secondary importance. We must not let ourselves be caught in the spell of 'the sanctity of ethics.' In some ways, this is a sort of substitute for religion .... In the face of this, we must assert the primacy of contemplation and the role of ethics as in the service of contemplation. Ethics is essential, but it is not what is best" (57).

For the same reason, neither is the moral good what is most delightful (although it *is* delightful, *pace* Kant). In another paper in this group, "Is St. Thomas a Spiritual Hedonist?", Dewan carefully lays out Thomas's highly nuanced understanding of the relation between desire of the good and desire of pleasure or delight. One especially interesting result of this analysis is that the desire of happiness constitutes a condition of the very possibility of the highest moral good, charity. Charity's chief delight, of course, is not in its own inherent goodness, but in that of its chief object: the divine good, as it is in itself, in its own truth.

The second theme, with four papers, is "The Will and Its Act." The issues are classic: the distinction between intellect and will, the "primacy of intellect," the causes of free choice, the first cause of moral evil. Among the many studies of Thomas on these topics, I know of none equal to these in clarity, philosophical penetration, or even (as far as I can judge) sheer accuracy. Also exhibited here, more perhaps than anywhere else in this volume, is Dewan's extraordinary sensitivity to the theoretical significance of the differences (and constants) among Thomas's various handlings of a question over the course of his career.

Four papers on "Natural Law" comprise the next group. In these Dewan engages three very different interpreters of Thomas: John Finnis, Jacques Maritain (two papers), andJean Porter. The papers on Finnis and Maritain make the case for the presence of genuine "metaphysical light" - merely seminal, unscientific, but definitely "pertaining to wisdom," and even including a glimpse of the divine-at the very dawn of our vision of moral truth. The paper on Porter contains the book's only pages (eight) on sexual ethics. The relative brevity is somehow refreshing; and the reflections on Thomas's conception of *nature,* as it bears on this topic, are magisterial. They are offered here in answer to a "sympathetic modern critic" of Thomas on sex. In light of them, however, one must be struck by how weakly that conception often comes across even in many ofThomas's modern advocates. To see what I mean, one might read these pages and then look over the literature on the so-called "perverted-faculty argument." More generally, I am led to wonder whether sealing Thomas's ethics

off from his metaphysics (if only for "marketing purposes") can possibly avoid *denaturing* it.

"Legal Justice" is Dewan's heading for the fourth group. He might have subjoined, "Personal Dignity and the Common Good-Human and Divine." Is the dignity of persons compatible with the "primacy of the common good"? In the extreme case, is it compatible with community-inflicted *death* (capital punishment), or with self-inflicted death on *behalf* of the community? Thomas's affirmations of the person's dignity and of the common good's primacy are equally vigorous, and in the first essay Dewan traces them to a highly unified vision. The key consideration is a person's special *way* of being related to the common good (understood primarily as the good of the *universe).* The line of thinking comes strikingly to a head in the account of the primacy in *justice-natural* justice-of the love of God above oneself: the deity's status as "supreme personal existent" turns out to be quite inseparable from that of *supreme common good.* The second essay, again in discussion with John Finnis, insists on the primacy, in the human order, of *political* community, chiefly on account of its special role in fostering that decidedly personal "basic human good" which is *virtue* (moral *and* intellectual). Three pieces address the death issues. The third, "Suicide as a Belligerent Tactic," is in response to well-known recent events, with extended reflections on information drawn from media sources. Dewan judges that both in theory and in practice these issues cannot receive adequate treatment except in light of our relation to God.

Next come five papers on "Various Virtues." Here too, although the topics are fairly specific, the viewpoint remains firmly metaphysical. In Dewan's practice of it-as in Thomas's, surely-metaphysics is by no means confined to generalities, a "view from the clouds." In some way metaphysics gets *into* everything.

Three of these essays regard the virtue of religion. Since Thomas regards this virtue as the highest part of justice, and justice the highest moral virtue, Dewan judges the philosophy of religion to be the highest part of moral philosophy. Thus in the first paper, in which he outlines some basic elements in Thomas's philosophy of religion, his declared aim is to further Jacques Maritain's concern for "developing as far as possible an autonomous moral philosophy." Obviously this can hardly mean a moral philosophy developed in isolation from metaphysics (or from God). It means simply a moral philosophy whose principles are fully up and running. Of these, among the most important are the practical implications of our being *creatures.* An essay with the remarkable title "St Thomas and the Ontology of Prayer" shows the need for metaphysics in fully making sense of one of religion's chief acts.

Nowadays of course not all theologians are persuaded that there is much of a role for metaphysics even in the science of theology, let alone in religious practice. In a lovely essay in this group, "Philosophy and Spirituality," Dewan insists that "spirituality formation"-meaning simply religious formation, or formation in *holiness-has* "an essentially philosophical dimension." He even argues that "this is truer for Christians than it was for the Greeks who listened

to Aristotle" (363). As for the present situation, "A return to intense philosophical studies as a form of priestly education is necessary. Without it, what do we have? What we have is literary studies of sacred Scripture, under every sort of human theoretical light save the sapiential. This is a formula for confusion and spiritual disaster" (364). Along this line, in an essay on the relation between philosophy and faith, he raises provocative questions about current departmental distinctions, suggesting for instance that, in a way, knowledge of the Bible falls under the general category of "philosophical science" (391-92). This is not as odd as it might sound, since here Dewan is using the word "philosophical" to cover the whole range of "human theoretical lights": not only metaphysics, but also literary studies, history, etc. But the word is not intended merely to startle. His further point is that, in order to serve theology, these disciplines need to be unified and orchestrated, and this indeed is a job for philosophy.

The topic of the other essay in this group is still more particular: "St Thomas, Lying, and Venial Sin." Dewan however takes the occasion to sketch a beautiful panorama of Thomas's whole moral world, so as to locate lying within it. A helpful complement to this paper is to be found on pages 92-111 of the article by Dewan in *Nova et Vetera* (English edition) 6 (2008). There is a notion currently circulating that, for Thomas, to assert (to signify oneself as holding) what one does not in fact hold, or to deny what one does hold, is sometimes not at all wrong (even venially); in some versions, it is not even a "lie." Together these discussions *should* put that notion to rest.

The "Methodological Postscript" contains two essays. One is Dewan's well-known study, *'"Obiectum':* Notes on the Invention of a Word." In scope this far exceeds the *moral* object, but the intense discussion going on about that could benefit considerably from the light shed here on the very meaning (or rather, meanings) of "object."

Dewan does have a good deal to say about the moral object in the last piece, "St. Thomas and Moral Taxonomy." This is mainly an extended and very lucid gloss on a text that gives many readers (including the author of this review) no little trouble: question 18 of the *Prima Secundae,* on the good and the bad in human acts generally. A prefatory look at the first *quaestio* of the *Prima Secundae* sets a helpful context. At the end, in what to me is a striking move, and also a fitting conclusion for the entire volume, Dewan pans over to the last two articles of question 19, on the relation of the goodness of the human will to the will of God. He finds St. Thomas making "conformity with the will of God" to be the determinant of the *highest genus* of good human acts, that is, their *most universal and formal* genus. "The entire moral life of the good person is viewed as organized under this union with the will of God: 'doing the will of God' is the supreme name of every good act, in its kind (as regards moral species) or in its individual reality (as regards morally indifferent acts)" (477).

This is a book of exceptional value, I believe, in at least three ways. One, somewhat specialized, lies in its obvious bearing on the ongoing debate about the relation between metaphysics and ethics in Thomas. It seems to me that after

working through these studies, one must wonder how it is even possible to regard the metaphysics in Thomas's ethical writings as some sort of dispensable appendage. Perhaps the only answer is that discerning metaphysical influence takes a "metaphysical eye." Dewan has one, and the influence he sees is deep and pervasive. This is not to deny the *distinctness* of ethics. It has its own subject and principles, and hence its "autonomy." But it is not a self-starter, partly because of what we saw earlier: it is not its own last end. Its absolutely first principle, for Thomas, is the last end. (In some interpretations, however, even this is not too clear.) To be sure, the first principles that ethics supposes, being genuine firsts, must be indemonstrable, "self-evident." But ethics only *supposes* them. To determine, judge and defend them-to bring them fully into their own "evidence"-is a metaphysical exercise. *That* this is so for Thomas ought to be plain enough even from a glance at the first few lines of the *proemium* to his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics.* In this book Dewan puts on display *how* it is so.

These essays are certainly not just for specialists. Anyone wanting to understand Thomas's thought better will benefit immensely from them. It is not just that Dewan knows Thomas intimately and gets his meaning right. He has a way of capturing what is "happening" in the text, of "watching" Thomas philosophize and re-enacting the event, which is unusually instructive. As for the prose, it is always crystal clear, and as fresh as it is serene.

The book's chief virtue, however, is simply the perennial moral wisdom that it transmits. Dewan says, "I wish to stress the *lifelong* use of St. Thomas's *Summa theologiae secunda secundae.* Moral education, self-help in spirituality, requires that we make such a book, such a treatise on human living, a constant stimulus of our reflection" (363). Clearly he has done this very thing. The results have a power to stimulate all their own.

STEPHEN L. BROCK

Pontficial University of the Holy Cross
Rome, Italy

Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation: Reason and Revelation in the Seventeenth Century. By MARIA ROSA ANTOGNAZZA. Translated by GERALD PARKS. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007. Pp. 348 $60.00 (cloth). ISBN: 978-0-300-10074-7.

An all-too-common view of Leibniz is that of the meta physician who humored his more devout correspondents with an occasional, though disingenuous, bit of theologizing. How many times have we read that Leibniz was pulling the leg of his Jesuit interlocutor Bartholomew de Bosses when he compared his notion of

the *vinculum substantiale* with the Eucharist? Surely, a century's worth of rationalists have informed us, the man who invented the calculus would not-could not-have taken Christianity seriously.

Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation, a fully revised version of the author's *Trinita e Incarnazione: II rapporto tra filosofia e teologia rivelata nel pensiero di Leibniz,* should drive the final nail in the coffin of this tired old story. Hardly the textbook rationalist, Leibniz emerges in Antognazza's fine work as passionate defender of the Christian mysteries, a dexterous exponent of St. Augustine's account of Trinitarian vestiges in creation, and an able apologist for the perennial value of the terms 'substance', 'nature', and 'person' in Trinitarian theology. Moreover, Antognazza makes a fine case for rereading Leibniz's metaphysics in light of his commitment to revealed theology:

> Although theological in origin, these Trinitarian debates were interwoven with many philosophical problems, such as the relationship between reason and revelation, knowledge and faith; the issue of the limits of human understanding, of the degrees of knowledge, and of the epistemological status of belief; the question of the scope and validity of the principle of noncontradiction; the reflection on the role and meaning of analogy; the inquiry into the concepts of 'nature,' 'substance,' and 'person'; and the theory of relations (xiii).

Two conclusions emerge from Antognazza's survey of Leibniz's theological interests. On the one hand, she argues that Leibniz was "clearly convinced" that the doctrine of the Trinity could be cleared of the charge of contradiction; indeed, he repeatedly asserted that it should be accepted as revealed truth owing to the long established ecclesiastical tradition. On the other hand, Antognazza maintains that Leibniz endeavored to explain the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation in a way that was consistent with the main tenets of his philosophy, and-perhaps more importantly-to construct his metaphysics in a manner that was consistent with the main tenets of revealed theology. Indeed, Antognazza argues that Leibniz was remarkably consistent in his commitment to the norms of Christian orthodoxy, broadly considered, from the earliest stages of his career to his final writings. That Leibniz was serious about theology, and especially Trinitarian theology, she says, is "immediately obvious to anyone who reads Leibniz's work without the distorting lens of modern priorities" (5).

To drive this point home, Antognazza unearths a veritable trove of "minor" texts in which Leibniz addresses theological topics. She begins her study with the *Demonstrationum catholicarum conspectus,* an adventurous plan of "Catholic demonstrations" written by Leibniz when he was twenty-two years old. The *Conspectus* is eye-opening, to say the least; it has extensive, if never completed, plans for a wide range of Trinitarian and Christological positions, including a long discussion of the paternal *monarchia,* various arguments for the *filioque,* and an argument *ex convenientia* for why only the second divine person could have become incarnate. Using the *Conspectus* as her outline, Antognazza analyzes

Leibniz's anti-Socinian works in the first part of her study, which occupies the years 1663-71. Among the works she discusses are the *Defensio Trinitatis,* the *Refutatio objectionum Dan. Zwickeri contra Trinitatem et incarnationem Dei,* and a pile of forgotten manuscripts, including *De incarnatione Dei seu de unione hypostatica, De transsubstantiatione, De usu et necessitate demonstrationum immortalitatis animae,* and *De demonstratione possibilitatis mysteriorum eucharistiae.* In these youthful works-whose titles alone give a sense of the philosopher's preoccupations-we see Leibniz wrestling with whether the mysteries of the faith can be demonstrated, the relationship of faith and reason, and the cognitive value of faith. His approach to these issues is largely Augustinian, although elements of his mature metaphysics, such as the adoption of the Hobbesian notion of *conatus,* also make their appearance in these early works (cf. 41ff.).

The years 1672-92, to which Antognazza devotes the second part of her study, contain "the scattered pieces of a puzzle called the *Demonstrationes Catholicae"* (67). This work, a successor to the *Conspectus,* also remained unfinished, but individual fragments, such as the *Examen religionis christianae* (the so-called *Systema theologicum),* allowed Leibniz to launch new offensives against the various Averroists and Socinians who so irritated him. In these fragments, Leibniz offers a detailed account of the motives of credibility and the use to which Christians should put reason. His notions in this respect look perfectly innocuous; he argues that reason verifies the authenticity of the witnesses to revelation, especially in its historical and philological dimensions; that reason helps the Christian interpret Scripture; and, not surprisingly, that reason enables the Christian to defend revealed truths. He also starts to show a greater awareness of the Scholastic tradition, particularly Thomism, during this stage of his career. In a claim sure to be of interest to readers of *The Thomist,* Antognazza remarks that the line of reasoning adopted by Leibniz "takes its basic conception of the *analogia entis* from the Thomist school" (69). No doubt many will challenge this claim. It might be asked whether a Thomist conception of analogy is possible within a Leibnizian metaphysics, although Antognazza has already offered the reader such a strong rereading of Leibniz's philosophy at this point in the book-and one based on so many obscure and frankly shocking manuscripts-that one cannot assume to know too much about Leibniz's metaphysics any longer.

The third part of *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation* covers the years 1693-1705. Leibniz spent a good deal of these prime philosophical years following Trinitarian controversies in England. Although he was honest enough to point out that he had not read all of the men involved in these debates-they included such luminaries as John Locke, Ralph Cudworth, and. Richard Hooker-he was particularly interested in pointing out the flaws of the "Sociniens d'Angleterre," especially the anti-Trinitarian *provocateur* Stephen Nye, the mathematically-inclined neo-Arian William Freke, and the Deist John Toland. In these debates, too, Leibniz comes off as surprisingly conventional: he comes to the defense of Robert Bellarmine and evinces suspicion when lesser

British divines, such as William Sherlock and John Wallis, depart from traditional Trinitarian language. Always the devotee to methodological rigor, Leibniz even corrected Friedrich Simon Loffler, on his incorrect use of definitions, axioms, hypotheses, and postulates when his nephew entered the debate with William Freke. The last chapter of this section, the tenth of the book, is particularly noteworthy. In a careful study of *Leibniz'sAnnotatiunculae subitaneae ad Tolandi librum De christianismo mysteriis carente,* as well as his correspondence with Thomas Burnet, Antognazza shows how much of Leibniz's *Nouveaux essais* has its genesis in Edward Stillingfleet's *A Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity,* particularly its charge that Locke's epistemology endangered the mystery of the Trinity. While Leibniz exonerates Locke of the charge of guilt by association with John Toland, he still expresses his doubts about Locke's inclinations towards Socinianism, especially in his hypothesis of thinking matter (cf. 134).

The intellectual issues of Leibniz's final decade, which are taken up in the fourth and final part of Antognazza's work, have their beginning in the controversies that surrounded the *Dissertations historiques* of Mathurin Veyssieres de La Croze. These controversies widened the scope of the debates about Socinianism to include speculations about Islamic theology, the Kabbalah, and possible anticipations of the Trinity found in pre-Christian antiquity. Leibniz's longstanding interest in these debates also came full circle during these years, when he encountered an old antagonist from his early writings, the Socinian apologist Andreas Wissowatius. Antognazza provides a thoughtful analysis of Leibniz's annotations to his copy of Wissowatius's *Vernunfftige Religion* in the penultimate chapter of her book, which serves as Leibniz's final statements against those who would deny traditional Christian mysteries and also sets the stage for Antognazza's final synthesis. In her final chapter, she addresses the famous "Preliminary Discourse on the Conformity of Faith with Reason" which Leibniz prefixed to the *Theodicy.* After following Antognazza through so much diverse material, expertly led by the red thread of Leibniz's abiding interest in the Holy Trinity, passages that had once seemed to be mere allusions to the Trinity in his late masterpieces, or even concessions to his more pious readers, stand out as hermeneutic beacons that are crucial for the proper understanding of his metaphysics. The effect is surprising and, more importantly, convincing.

Antognazza is to be commended for synthesizing so much material for the reader. Her exposition of Trinitarian theology is generally sound, although she occasionally stumbles, and the reader must be exceptionally careful to follow her without error. She remarks, for example, that St. Anselm "seems to want to prove the absolute necessity of the Incarnation" in *Cur Deus Homo* (13). Although such language occasionally appears in modern Thomist polemics, it really cannot be taken that seriously. Anselm obviously did not use the term "necessary" in the way that St. Thomas Aquinas or Leibniz used it, and the reader should not take too much from this passage. Of course, Leibniz himself might have made the same mistake, but this is difficult to determine from Antognazza's brief summary of St. Anselm. Antognazza also seems to imply that

Scholastic commonplaces, such as the distinction between attributing terms to God *essentialiter* or *personaliter*, are the province of Protestant theology alone (71). While the distinction is in fact well-known among the Protestant Scholastics, it is not unique to them, and so one is left to wonder about Leibniz's sources. At the opening of the seventh chapter, too, it is not clear whether Leibniz rejects the *communicatio idiomatum* or rejects its Lutheran form (77). While Antognazza later remarks that Leibniz inclined to the interpretation of the *communicatio idiomatum* favored by Reformed theologians (86), the position she finally outlines (87) is a common teaching that Leibniz could easily have read in one of the Catholic treatises in his library, such as Dionysius Petavius's *Dogmata theologica.* Still I must stress that these are very, very minor flaws, and they concern exposition more than substance. They take nothing away from the immense contribution that *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation* makes to our understanding of Leibniz.

Antognazza's book also provides a wealth of enlightening and even humorous historical tidbits. Who would have expected Leibniz to appeal to the authority of the Fifth Lateran Council (1512-17) to dismiss contemporary Averroists (7)? Or who would have thought the placid and accommodating philosopher would have erupted so passionately when confronted with the anti-Trinitarian Daniel Zwicker, whom Leibniz called "arrogant," "inept," "childish," "redundant," and "barbarously stupid" (30)? In one of the more interesting developments of the book-at least to this reader-Leibniz comes off as an uncanny forerunner of many of our own ecumenical strategies. He almost seems like a postliberal Lutheran committed to working towards reconciliation from within his own confession, even as he criticizes foundational Lutheran positions such as *so/a scriptura* and "repeatedly stresses the authority of the church as the interpreter of the scriptures" (76). The great contribution of Antognazza's work, however, is its apt-and much needed-demolition of the old stereotype of Leibniz. Her wonderfully detailed portrait bears no resemblance to the stale rationalist found in Wolff, Kant, Rosmini, Russell, and the neo-Scholastic textbooks, and Leibniz appears all the better for her diligence. Still, if Leibniz emerges as a generally orthodox theologian, he does not appear to be a particularly brilliant one. But neither did he need to be. It is enough to know that the grand man of the seventeenth century was content to follow the tradition of the Church, and defend it against all comers.

TRENT POMPLUN

Loyola College in Maryland
Baltimore, Maryland

Ratzinger's Faith: The Theology of Pope Benedict XW. By TRACEY ROWLAND. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. Pp. 224. $24.95. ISBN 978-0-19-920740-4.

In this book, Tracey Rowland provides a thematic introduction to Joseph Ratzinger's theology. It complements Aidan Nichols's *The Thought of Pope Benedict* XW, which gives a chronological account of Ratzinger's work. In her first book, *Culture and the Thomist Tradition after Vatican II,* Rowland approached Thomism and Catholic theology from the perspective of Radical Orthodoxy and the *Ressourcement* theological tradition. She enriched this approach with special attention to political philosophy and culture. *InRatzinger's Faith,* she explores Ratzinger's thought in the same vein. The book is both intellectually sophisticated and yet aimed at the ordinary educated reader.

Before considering the details of her approach, it would be useful to note certain aspects of it which might be unusual to Catholics who are not familiar with the *Ressourcement* tradition or the more recent and primarily Anglican Radical Orthodoxy movement. *Ressourcement* scholars attempted to revive theology by returning to the Fathers. They were often critical of Scholastic theology but generally had some first-hand acquaintance with it. Joseph Ratzinger was connected with this movement and an associated later journal, *Communio.* More recent scholars in this tradition often uncritically accept the earlier *Ressourcement* scholars' claims and do not have a deep acquaintance with Scholastic theology. Rowland is influenced by this approach as well as that of the Radical Orthodoxy movement, which is an attempt to revive Christian theology in a postmodern perspective.

Sweeping remarks about Thomism and Scholasticism are common in this book. Rowland eventually finds herself forced to explain, "This book has not been written to annoy Rahnerians or other species of Thomists" (149). She frequently cites the anti-Scholastic Hans Urs von Balthasar, stating at one point that "It is popularly believed that the only other twentieth-century Catholic theologian who comes anywhere near von Balthasar's stature is Karl Rahner from the circle of Transcendental Thomists" (22).

Although Rowland is often critical of Thomists, she is not so critical of Thomas Aquinas. In this respect she falls squarely in the mainstream of twentieth-century Thomist attempts to separate Aquinas from the supposedly ahistorical Thomism of some Thomists. This fall-and-recovery model of Thomism has been commonplace for nearly a hundred years and was perhaps most distinctly held by existential Thomists such as Etienne Gilson. But Rowland's guides here are Henri de Lubac and two mainstays of Radical Orthodoxy, namely, John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock. Her comments on these figures may be misleading to a general audience. For instance, she states that Henri de Lubac's main theses are commonly accepted, whereas he never answered his critics and his historical accuracy is still hotly debated (20-21). Another instance may be when she states that Milbank and Pickstock's *Truth in Aquinas* is "how Ratzinger would prefer to read the Thomist tradition" (27). She

does not cite Ratzinger to support this claim. She does show sympathy for more recent "Biblical Thomists" and for the Thomist Servais Pinckaers's attempt to move moral theology away from an ethics of obligation towards a focus on the virtues. This sympathy might seem out of place since she regards Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange as a villain of preconciliar Thomism-even though he rejected casuistic approaches in his attempt to center moral theology around progress in the spiritual life, and focused especially on the virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The above remarks point to a recurring tendency in the book to describe Ratzinger's thought as a struggle against a variety of poorly defined movements. The bad movements include Scholasticism, Kantianism, moralism, andJansenism (141). Rowland gives very little information about the theses held by members of these movements or their justification of the theses. Even the positively portrayed movements are not described in enough detail. For instance, she states that Ratzinger has a strong preference "for Augustinian and Bonaventurian over Kantian epistemology" (46). I hope that she is correct, but it is hard to know, as this statement is not explained. The scattered remarks on Bonaventure can be puzzling. For instance, she approvingly cites a scholar who describes Ratzinger as holding the Bonaventurian view that "only the Gospel will save us, not philosophy, not science, and not scientific theology" (14). Has any respectable Catholic theologian held the alternative view? Garrigou-Lagrange was especially insistent on this supposedly "Bonaventurian" point.

Rowland's general approach is to move back and forth between what would widely be regarded as bedrock statements of the Catholic faith and Ratzinger's personal theological and religious opinions. This movement can be confusing because of the book's thematic approach. Periods and genres of text are mixed together. For instance, in the space of a few pages Rowland explains Ratzinger's thought with reference to an official Church document which he influenced, his early commentaries on Vatican II, and a late journalistic interview (94-99). She shows a masterful command of Ratzinger's texts but does not show his development from the young theologian of the 1950s, the expositor and later partial critic of Vatican II, and the more cautious theologian of the 1970s. The approach becomes more confusing when she cites Church documents such as *Dominus Jesus* in order to explain Ratzinger's own thought (96-99). She might give some readers the impression that document's emphasis on the centrality of Christ and the Catholic Church are merely Ratzinger's theological positions rather than articles of faith.

Each chapter is an informative discussion of how Ratzinger's writings relate to some of the central issues of the contemporary Catholic intellectual scene. The introduction and chapter 1 discuss Ratzinger's relationship to contemporary currents and are perhaps the least helpful. But they do give an indication of what a *Communio* scholar might see as progress in the movement from a preconciliar Scholastic approach to the less-disciplined variety of approaches in contemporary Catholic theology.

Chapter 2 focuses on Vatican H's *Gaudium et spes.* This chapter reflects themes in Rowland's earlier book, which was in large part a criticism of this document. Rowland shows that Ratzinger has consistently expressed similar reservations about its "Pelagian" characteristics (32-40). The document does not emphasize enough that there is a special Christian anthropology. She suggests that it presents an underlying and in her view problematic conception of nature and grace which resembles that of Garrigou-Lagrange. (37) Another interesting feature of this chapter is Rowland's explanation of how Ratzinger avoids Rahner's claim that just as the "Council" of Jerusalem marks the separation between Jewish and Gentile Christianity, so does Vatican II mark the separation between two kinds of Catholicism (30-32). It is surely odd that any theologian would wish to place one of many ecumenical councils alongside a gathering of the apostles which occurred while the deposit of faith had not yet been fully completed. Such a claim would have been strange at the time of Rahner's work, but it seems especially self-important from the perspective of a later generation. In general, Rowland does not clearly indicate those aspects of Ratzinger's thought which are common to a much larger group and those which are distinctive.

Chapter 3 discusses Ratzinger's treatment of revelation. This topic has special importance not only for its treatment by Vatican I and Vatican II, but also because of Ratzinger's early *habilitationsschrift* on Bonaventure, an early draft of which had a controversial and later deleted section on revelation. Rowland focuses on the documents of Vatican II and introduces a new villain: Francisco Suarez. She states that Suarez's account of revelation was replaced during Vatican II by an account which resembles that of Ratzinger.

Rowland's description of the differences between the positions of Suarez, the classical Thomists, and Ratzinger lacks lucidity, and it is therefore difficult to evaluate it. She connects the once-common notion that the articles of faith are propositional with Suarez's understanding of the order of assent and faith (48-49). She may be making the point that for some Jesuit Scholastics the same propositions which are held by faith can be judged credible even apart from faith. But her presentation is unclear. For centuries Thomists have consistently attacked the position that there is an acquired faith which is based on a judgment of credibility. Even for those of us who have little sympathy for such Jesuits on this point, Rowland may be constructing a straw man.

The title of chapter 4 is "Beyond Moralism: God is Love." Rowland states that Ratzinger and the *Communio* school more generally think that preconciliar moral theology was casuistic and harmful to faith. She makes interesting remarks about the importance of love for moral theology, and discusses Nietzsche's view of *agape* and *eros.* This discussion is connected with remarks about the evils of both Jansenism and Pelagianism. At points it is unclear what the different terms mean and consequently why they should be rejected. But there is a welcome remark on the importance of friendship with God in moral theology (83).

Chapter 5 is on ecclesiology. This chapter sheds light on a topic which received much less treatment in Scholastic theology than it does today. Rowland

argues that Ratzinger follows de Lubac and von Balthasar in their emphasis on a theology of communion, in contrast with a once-fashionable emphasis on the Church as the "people of God."

Chapter 6 is on "Modernity and the Politics of the West." Rowland is unusual among theologians in her competence and interest in political philosophy, and this chapter makes surprising and helpful claims about how Ratzinger's criticism of contemporary Western culture is rooted in an emphasis on the importance of tradition. Ratzinger has opposed the tendency to sever Christian theology from the Western emphasis on reason, which is influenced by ancient Greek culture. She thinks that Ratzinger's 2006 Regensburg address was an attempt to encourage Islam "to engage with the intellectual heritage of Greece" (121). She also returns to a theme which she addressed in chapter 2, which is that even politically there is no purely natural order which can be perfected apart from the supernatural order. There is no "unprejudiced" moral or even religious stance in which to stake political claims. She writes that, according to Ratzinger, "there is no such thing as a theologically neutral state which is the good which the liberal tradition claims to offer" (113).

Chapter 7 is on the development of the liturgy since Vatican IL This chapter discusses Ratzinger's criticisms of the "Lecarco-Bugnini inspired liturgical experiments of the last three decades" (141). She gives many references to Ratzinger's own texts in this context. Especially welcome is her discussion of Ratzinger's attempt to improve liturgical music (131-33).

The conclusion makes additional remarks about Ratzinger's overall religious viewpoint, but it also compares his thought with that of John Paul IL Rowland writes, "The papacy of Benedict should therefore be seen in a harmonious contrast with John Paul II's in certain respects, but also as one which is in unison with his predecessors on all the big issues" (154).

Rowland's book can seem in part to be an exposition of the author's own thinking along with Ratzinger rather than an exposition of Ratzinger's thought. Many movements and figures are dismissed in a perfunctory and even confusing way. Rowland displays no familiarity with many theologians whom she criticizes, especially the preconciliar Thomists. Various groups ("preconciliar Thomism," "moralism," "Augustinianism," et al.) are presented in too general and vague a manner. Nevertheless, this book provides valuable insight into how an influential contemporary theologian and-perhaps-other members of her circle view the development of contemporary Catholic theology and Ratzinger's role in it.

THOMAS M. OSBORNE, JR.

University of St. Thomas
Houston, Texas

"Work on Oneself": Wittgenstein's Philosophical Psychology. By FERGUS KERR, O.P. Arlington, Va.: The Institute of Psychological Sciences Press, 2008. Pp. 119. $19.95 (paper) ISBN: 978-0-9773103-1-9.

Fergus Kerr's *"Work on Oneself": Wittgenstein's Philosophical Psychology* is a peculiar addition to the already unwieldy-perhaps unseemly-number of existing introductions to the thought of Ludwig Wittgenstein. Based upon lectures "commissioned by a Catholic institution for students of clinical psychology," *Work on Oneself* is intended to be an "elementary introduction to Wittgenstein's philosophical reflections on psychology" with an "emphasis on Wittgenstein's religious background and the implications, arguably, for his philosophy" (8). Needless to say, most introductions to Wittgenstein are not designed for Catholic students of clinical psychology interested in his religious impulses and later philosophical psychology. Hence, in an obvious way, Kerr's work is justifiable, for it approaches Wittgenstein's work from a novel angle; indeed, a more curious target audience would be hard to imagine. Yet the work as a whole succeeds in more ways than that of filling a narrow niche; in fact, it succeeds almost in spite of its intended purpose.

Work on Oneself is a valuable and commendable introduction to the life and thought of Wittgenstein, but not because it really accomplishes what a reasonable reader would expect an "elementary introduction" to Wittgenstein's philosophical psychology to accomplish. The chapters do not build upon one another in a linear or chronological fashion, nor do they tightly cohere around the subject of "Wittgenstein's Philosophical Psychology," as the subtitle advertises. Instead, the book is more a series of biographical vignettes that, taken together, provide a sketch of Wittgenstein's life and philosophical journey, and the animating spirit behind both. Rather than a continuous and sustained argument, the chapters are, for the most part, collections of one- to three-page snapshots of episodes in Wittgenstein's life-usually his intersection with a cultural or intellectual movement or an influential person or work-and the philosophical insights or transformations to which they gave rise. (As an intellectual biography, the work is more philosophically rich and less damning than David Edmonds' and John Eidinow's *Wittgenstein's Poker* but more compact and less prone to hero worship than Ray Monk's *The Duty of Genius.)* By adopting this biographical-philosophical approach, Kerr effectively blurs the lines between biography and philosophy in order to show what Wittgenstein himself said, namely, that "work on philosophy ... is work on oneself."

Kerr's treatment of Wittgenstein and Catholicism is a case in point. Though Wittgenstein is not immediately recognized as a philosopher of religion, his extant writings contain numerous remarks on Christianity and Catholicism and reflections on major religious works such as James George Frazer's *Golden Bough* and William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience.* According to Maurice Drury, a friend of Wittgenstein's for over twenty years, Wittgenstein once confessed, "I am not a religious man but I cannot help seeing every problem from a religious point of view. I would like my work to be understood in this

way." Commentators have long had difficulty reconciling such serious reflections on religious issues and the use of religious language with the wider thought of Wittgenstein, the one-time inspiration for logical positivism and the Vienna Circle. Most have either ignored these remarks or written them off as peripheral, a regrettable hang-over from his early exposure to Catholicism or his youthful fascination with Schopenhauer.

In Kerr's view, however, a deep religious sensibility in general and a fascination with Catholicism in particular were principal motivators in Wittgenstein's personal and intellectual life. The biographical-philosophical sketches that collectively constitute the second chapter revolve around the thesis that the later Wittgenstein's holistic and pragmatic tendencies sprang from a "double event," namely, his "repudiating rationalism in Catholic apologetics and respecting the place of ritual and ceremony in human life" (52). By sketching brief episodes and encounters from Wittgenstein's life-from his reading of such figures as Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Barth to his death-bed request, made through Elizabeth Anscombe, that he speak with a priest-Kerr progressively makes his case that at least two of Wittgenstein's major insights were born out of his wrestling with specifically religious questions. His embracing of "holism" -the notion that a word or sentence is only meaningful within a larger context of a whole language and practice-and "pragmatism" -the insistence upon the priority of action and behavior to language and reason-arose, on Kerr's account, out of Wittgenstein's encounter with and subsequent rejection of the over-intellectualizing of religion. When the language of faith is taken out of the life of ritual and practice, the resulting "doctrine" denatures religion, turning it into something inert and listless, a kind of super- or pseudo-science, competing with physics and chemistry for its truth claims. "The symbolism of Christianity is wonderful beyond words," Wittgenstein declared in 1930, "but when people try to make a philosophical system out of it I find it disgusting."

It is not clear that Kerr succeeds in demonstrating that Wittgenstein's repudiation of certain approaches to religion and his own appreciation for ritual, symbolism, and Christian practice were, in fact, *the* driving forces behind his later philosophical positions. It could argued that his insights into religious language and practice were merely a paradigmatic application of more general conclusions acquired elsewhere in his life and thought. Due to the introductory nature of the book, Kerr's defense of his position does not extend to an attack on alternative hypotheses. But whatever the case, Kerr is to be commended for taking Wittgenstein's remarks regarding religion seriously and attempting to incorporate them in a substantial way into the larger body of his work. Even more particularly, Kerr is to be commended for offering a novel thesis regarding Wittgenstein without torturing any texts or consciously disregarding biographical or textual evidence. (By contrast, the novelty of the recent American deconstructionist read of Wittgenstein-which contends that the *Tractatus* is an ironic piece of nonsense with no metaphysical ambitions and that the later Wittgenstein never advanced philosophical theses but was consistently therapeutic in his approach to philosophical problems-comes at the expense of genuine exegesis.)

There is no slight of hand or misdirection with Kerr. He has an adroit command of Wittgenstein's published works and *Nachla/5,* the papers and manuscripts Wittgenstein left to his literary executors in 1951, as well as the secondary literature. In true Wittgensteinian fashion, he brings freshness to his subject matter merely by rearranging what all Wittgenstein scholars already know.

For instance, Kerr's take on Wittgenstein's philosophical psychology stays close to the conventional path but at times takes interesting and somewhat unorthodox, though textually and biographically grounded, detours. Kerr's Wittgenstein is highly suspicious of the human tendency to try to provide scientific or philosophical explanations for ordinary concepts such as "thinking," "believing," or "doubting." Because fields such as psychology and psychiatry have borrowed the quantitative and experimental methods of the hard sciences, people are tempted to believe that these fields will bring forth as much understanding about the human being as physics and chemistry have about the physical world. But the parallel is misleading. Psychology does not explain mental phenomena, in the sense that it reduces thinking, believing, or doubting to more basic phenomena or elements; rather, a psychology, such as Freud's, presents us with a certain mythology or way of looking at the world, which indeed throws new light on the subject but not by revealing any new entities or hidden realities. In the same vein, philosophers have been tempted to explain mental phenomena in terms of one of two grand theories, behaviorism or introspectivism. As a consequence of these theories, which are two sides of one philosophical coin, such questions as "How do I really know what is going on in my neighbor's mind?" have invariably arisen, but they, too, are the results of conceptual confusion, which can be revealed through an analysis of how we use language in relation to people other than ourselves.

In large part, then, Kerr sees Wittgenstein's role as many others have seen it, namely, as a debunker of pseudo-scientific and philosophical nonsense. But at the end of the day, the question arises, what is the point of all of this debunking? The currently fashionable read, somewhat supported by Wittgenstein's remarks, is that philosophical activity is undergone for the sake of reaching a state of "quietism," a term coined by John McDowell. No longer vexed by perplexing-because nonsensical-questions, the philosopher can attain inner peace, almost a return to his happy-go-lucky prephilosophical self, by learning to leave everything as it is. On the other hand, and more plausibly, Kerr's Wittgenstein is much more interested in *why* people are motivated to go beyond the limits of sense than he is to help people strip themselves of all philosophical longing. The philosophical urge to venture into the ineffable-for example, to "know" other minds "directly" or to acquire knowledge about which doubt is no longer possible-reveals something profound about the human being, something like a transcendental urge (in a Kantian sense) or even a yearning for the divine.

Though Kerr is more than adept at clearly explaining the flow of Wittgenstein's arguments and his overarching convictions or methods, the book does not proceed in a single direction, with previous chapters or subsections providing a foundation for later ones. In other words, in a conventional sense

the book does not hold together. But in Kerr's defense, it could be argued that a conventional introduction is hardly the way to introduce the thought of an unconventional thinker. Kerr's way of organizing his remarks about Wittgenstein seems to mirror Wittgenstein's way of organizing his own remarks. As Wittgenstein famously confesses in the Preface to *Philosophical Investigations*, "[M]y thoughts were soon crippled if I tried to force them on in any single direction against their natural inclination .... For [the very nature of the investigation] compels us to travel over a wide field of thought criss-cross in every direction. The philosophical remarks in this book are, as it were, a number of sketches of landscapes which were made in the course of these long and involved journeyings." Kerr's sketches of these sketches often have a similar criss-cross pattern over an equally wide field of thought. For instance, chapter 4 begins with a discussion of mental illness and consciousness, then touches on the question of the ontology of the person and its implications for life issues in ethics, then turns to the relationship between the mind and brain, then turns to solipsism and knowledge of other minds, and finishes with the reflections of four contemporary philosophers who have developed Wittgenstein's reflections on skepticism and other minds in new directions.

In the final analysis, of course, questions of style and structure are only pertinent in so far as they help to answer the greater question whether *Work on Oneself* is a worthy introduction, for Catholic clinical psychology students or even a more general audience. Readers interested in being able to reconstruct specific arguments from the body of Wittgenstein's work-for example the so-called "private language argument" of *Philosophical Investigations-would* be better served by some of the earlier introductions, such as Robert Fogelin's or Anthony Kenny's *Wittgenstein* or David Pears's *Ludwig Wittgenstein.* And those readers interested in reliving the typical two Wittgensteins narrative-the first, positivistic yet mystical Wittgenstein, deeply indebted to Russell and Frege, who gives way to the second, ordinary language/therapeutic Wittgenstein, with pragmatic and holistic leanings-will also be served better elsewhere. Kerr's work, of course, is concerned with the private language argument, Wittgenstein's pragmatic and holistic streaks, and the development of his thought, and he presents these topics with clarity and energy. But the strength of Kerr's work lies elsewhere.

Professors who teach Wittgenstein to undergraduates know that the hardest part of their endeavor is to explain not what Wittgenstein is saying but why he is saying it. Why these mundane observations about human language and behavior? "What we say will be easy," Wittgenstein once began a lecture in 1934, "but to know why we say it will be difficult." In four short chapters, *Work on Oneself* is able to communicate the spirit and principal motivators of Wittgenstein's later life and work much more effectively than larger volumes written with greater detail and analytic rigor. Ironically enough, Kerr's scattered approach conveys a uniform message: the nature of Wittgenstein's project was always something of a lived philosophical anthropology, a relentless grappling

with the mystery of what it is to be a human being and to live amongst other human beings.

ANDREW]. PEACH

Providence College
Providence, Rhode Island

Religion and the Rise of Modern Culture. By LOUIS DUPRE. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008. Pp. 128. $15.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-0-268-02594-6.

The Theological Origins of Modernity. By MICHAEL ALLEN GILLESPIE. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. Pp. 368. $35.00 (cloth). ISBN: 978-0-226-29345-5.

In his recent book *What Is Truth?* John Rist has a section called "Where the Hell Are We Now?". The two books under review here attempt, with very different degrees of success, to answer this question.

Anyone trying to answer Rist's robust questions would do well to consider what sort of an answer he is looking for and where he might find such an answer. Our enquirer would quickly see that he is looking for something more than an account of the "world in review for 200...", such as a group of sociologists, journalists, economists, theater critics and political commentators might produce. The enquirer might very well see that "the world in review" approach would be an essential element of any adequate answer to his question, but he would also have a sense that he will not understand the mass of material dealing with the contemporary situation without some sense of how things got to be the way they are now. The snapshot view of reality provided by "the world in review" leaves out the dynamic or developmental aspect of the situation he is trying to grasp, the situation that has led in the first place to his frustrated question" "where the hell are we now?".

Bur where will he find an account of this dynamic or developmental aspect of the situation? It would seem that a consultation with the historian would be in order. The present situation developed out of the past, he says to himself, and historians deal with the past. He quickly finds, however, that historians at least *ex professo* are not concerned with the whys and wherefores of what has happened, but with producing an accurate account of how things really happened. There are specializations within this broad description based on different bases: temporal, national, cultural, economic, of ideas, and so on; but they all seek to describe a past reality which is, as a reality, something given-no matter how difficult it may be to obtain an objective account of that reality.

It is perfectly legitimate to ask questions about the origins of modern culture or the makings of modernity, but they are not historical questions in the strict

sense. That is, such questions are second-order questions about the dynamic aspect or developmental direction at work within history, and a request for a theory or an explanation of why things have worked out the way they have. At the same time, while such questions may be legitimate, the answers themselves must constantly be viewed in the light of first-order historical knowledge. This means not only verifying that the answer is not obviously contradicted by history, but also engaging in a continuing effort to be as sensitive and discriminating as possible, to ensure we have not begun either to ignore or to rearrange the givens of historical knowledge in the interest of our explanation.

Louis Dupre's reflections on the development of history towards modernity are a model of careful scholarship and insight. His short book is a distillation and refinement of many years of careful research and serious writing on questions of the philosophy of religion and cultural history. The value of the present slim volume under review bears no proportion to the length of the book. This work carries with it the authority of what Hegel would have called the *labor of the concept.* Dupre's outlines of various problems and his descriptions of the positions of a wide range of thinkers have a distinction that is only achieved by a persevering and hands-on effort to wrestle with the matters dealt with, as well as a first-hand knowledge of the texts under discussion. Dupre understands in a real way what he has read and he knows what he is talking about.

The book can be viewed as an extended meditation on the consequences of the breakdown of the medieval synthesis of nature and grace. This breakdown occurred in the nominalistic theology of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when the term *supernatural* came to refer to a separate reality "and the theology of nature became detached from that of the supernatural order." This separation led to a naturalism that contributed to the later rise of atheism; the natural, as distinct from the supernatural, was viewed as an autonomous realm in which God became increasingly to be viewed as irrelevant. The consequences of the rise of modern science, and "the unqualified assertion of human freedom in the nineteenth century," are shown to have their place in the creation of a modernity in which religion seems to have become increasingly irrelevant.

In a way all this has become a familiar tale of the origins of modernity, but the telling of the tale in this case is particularly interesting and fresh. Here I will focus on three of the many of Dupre's discussions that deserve to be mentioned: his remarks on form, the transfer of the source of meaning from nature (and ultimately from God) to the human mind, and how the identification of God's creative act with efficient causality was the factor in modern thought that led immediately to contemporary atheism.

The origins of modernity are to be found, on Dupre's account, in fourteenth-century Italy where the concept of form began to acquire a new significance. In Plato's thought the notion of form is not merely, as it is sometimes presented, a theory about the nature of universals. It also implies the profound metaphysical principle that it belongs to the nature of the real "to *appear* and to do so in an orderly and intelligible way." Dupre drives straight for the heart of the matter and shows us the real importance of "the problem of universals." Behind all the rather uninspiring arguments as to the status of universals there is the more

fundamental question as to why it is important to bother with the question at all. It is important, Dupre shows us, because whether it is Plato or Aristotle who got the matter right as to where the universals in themselves are to be found they both taught that reality itself is ordered and intelligible because of the universal elements by which it is characterized.

Truth was to be discovered through an effort to detect the universal elements that characterize reality; but reality from one point of view seems to be both irreducibly particular and seriously disordered. Of course, Plato and Aristotle knew this but they thought this did not matter; or at least it did not matter very much. Aristotle, for example, held that poetry, like theoretical science, is "more philosophical and of graver import" than history, for the former is concerned with the pervasive and universal, and the latter is addressed to the special and the singular.

But what about history? What about "the special and the singular"? What about the Incarnation and the life of Christ? If we think that the life of Christ is in itself somehow important because it is real and true then this reality and truth somehow or other is to be found "in the special and the particular" and not because of the universal elements in Christ's life. The religious humanism that Francis initiated "blossomed into an artistic movement, in which, contrary to the Greek primacy of the universal, the highest spiritual meaning resided in the individual."

Aquinas and Scotus tried in different ways to maintain the Greek view while at the same time acknowledging the centrality of the Incarnation. The damage, however, had been done and Ockham brought the development away from concentration on the universal to the focussing of attention on the particular and to its conclusion "when he denied that universal-including all ancient *forms* in any way exist." This position is called *nominalism,* the view that regards universals or abstract concepts as mere names, without any corresponding realities.

This movement in its turn led to a new idea about the nature of truth; truth was no longer a discovery of the way things are, but a characteristic of human thinking. The combined movements of humanism and nominalism moved the pursuit for truth away from the universal and the conviction that truth was to be found in discovering these universal elements as they were found in reality. Both classical Greek thought and the Scholastics, in spite of major differences amongst themselves, held that thought was *intentional,* that is, very generally, that the mind is directed towards an object, and that truth is to be discovered in delineating the nature of this object. Once it was generally accepted that reality itself did not contain and display any of the necessary and universal aspects characteristic of truth, then universality and necessity had to be looked for somewhere else. This "somewhere else" was in the human mind. Truth, as Descartes explicitly taught, was to be identified with certainty, and certainty is something the mind possesses; it is not a characteristic of reality. "Rationality, which formerly had constituted the essence of the real, now became the exclusive attribute of the mind."

Descartes's position is usually called rationalism, but in this fundamental shift away from intentionality his position is shared by empiricists, logical positivists,

and linguistic analysts alike. In spite of the efforts of the German Idealists to recover some sort of objectivity beyond the constructions of the human mind, as well as their efforts to establish once again the viability of a notion of transcendence, it remains true that the mind-set of Descartes still characterizes the modern age. "Who would dare to say that today the desire for rationalist engineering under yet a different banner, such as the desire for the worldwide spreading of democracy upon reluctant nations, has vanished?"

Finally, we have Dupre's illuminating discussion of the reduction of causality to efficiency, and of creation to efficient causality. This development, he argues, was the factor in modernity that immediately led to atheism. For Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus, efficient causality is neither the only nor even the primary form of causality; there is also formal and final causality. In late medieval thought, divine causality became increasingly conceived as an external source. This coupled with the contention that a moving object possesses an inherent power of motion meant that God's creative act was required to get things started, but motion became less dependent on a continuous divine causality.

The application of this concept of causality to creation became acute with Descartes and Newton. God was required to bring the physical mechanism of the universe into being and to set it in motion; after that modern physics neither required nor permitted special divine intervention. The final steps towards atheism were the perception that the principle that the universe had a beginning was unproved, and the realization that Newton's principle of inertia had abrogated the assumption that rest had a natural priority over motion. Diderot summed up this development and its conclusion: "If motion might have been inherent in nature from the beginning and if matter be conceived as dynamic rather than inert, indeed, most likely endowed with a universal sensitivity, then over a long period of time nature could have arranged itself into an orderly cosmos. And possibly have been capable of producing intelligent life. D'Holbach, La Mettrie, and Helvetius took it upon themselves to draw the conclusions, and materialistic atheism was born" (51).

All in all, Dupre gives us a comprehensive, serene, and learned discussion of a variety of themes which can only deepen and enrich our understanding of the large complex of questions connected with the themes of modernity, culture, and religion. It is, of course, possible to disagree with particular discussions or even to ask questions about his stance on the relative importance he ascribes to different themes, but no one who reads this book with any care will fail to profit from this model of exposition and of great learning lightly worn.

Professor Gillespie's book *The Theological Origins of Modernity* is a book of a somewhat different kind for it is a tract on one theme; it is a tract that is developed with panache and a wide-ranging view. "Modernity," Gillespie tells us, "came into being as the result of a series of attempts to find a way out of the crisis engendered by the nominalist revolution." This in itself is a welcome breath of fresh air and promises a new take on the familiar outline of the origins of modernity that begins with Descartes and creeps along to Hume and Kant, and ends with Hegel who is said to have spawned both Fascism and Communism. On the other hand, there is much to be said for this familiar outline and if it is to be

overturned then not only careful argument, but evidence of first-hand knowledge of a wide range of texts will be required. The proof of Gillespie's thesis depends on a rigorous exposition of nominalism, and more generally a certain competence with Scholastic philosophy. It is not being over-scrupulous to ask for this because Gillespie wants to overthrow the usual picture of the development of modernism, and he cannot use the excitement engendered by his thesis to disregard what he might regard as picayune considerations of philosophical or historical accuracy. He has to show, that is, how his thesis really worked out in the lives and work of those he writes about, and that requires that he show his thesis has not skewered his historical sense.

This first-hand knowledge of the texts requires, especially when dealing with the development of ideas, a certain sympathy or understanding of the context within which the ideas developed. Gillespie's discussion certainly displays an acquaintance, at least by description, with a wide range of texts, but there is little evidence of a serious attempt to understand the Christian and historical context of the thinkers he discusses.

An example will illustrate the point. Gillespie writes that the assumption that Petrarch was devoutly Christian is "difficult to reconcile with his classicism." This may in fact be the case-it may indeed be difficult to reconcile Petrarch's Christianity and his classicism-but that does not say anything very much about whether or not Petrarch's Christianity was authentic or not. Petrarch may have been confused; he may have been clear-headed enough to understand that the task he had set for himself was one with many strands with the possibility of all sorts of false turnings, and infelicities of expression; or perhaps he had lived so long with the difficulties of honestly trying to understand and describe what he thought was true and important that he had lost sight, if he ever did see it, that his scholarly interests and his Christianity in fact required reconciliation.

However, Gillespie means that Petrarch's Christianity was suspect; and he says this because he has no understanding that one can be devoutly Christian and at the same time be aware that one is not in possession of all the answers. Furthermore, Gillespie's contention about Petrarch flies in the face of the consensus of scholarly work of the last fifty years. In Gillespie's favor, it is fair to say that intellectual breakthroughs are often the result of just such a refusal to go along with the generally accepted. On the other hand, to show Kristeller, Trinkhaus, and Foster to be wrong is a formidable undertaking, and it is one that Gillespie evidently thinks it unnecessary to undertake.

The differences in the interpretations of Petrarch's Christianity stem from the complexity of his own aims, a complexity he both shared and could be said to have bequeathed to the Catholic humanists. They had rediscovered the world of antiquity, but they were not simple-minded enough to conclude that they had to jettison the gospel merely because they had come to appreciate how alien to their own times it in fact was. It is somewhat ironical that Gillespie cites on several occasions that fine flower of Dominican scholarship, Kenelm Foster, O.P., but no where indicates that Foster's views about Petrarch's Christianity are diametrically opposed to his own. Antiquity became for the humanists, as Foster puts it, "a real period in time both distant and distinct from the middle ages,"

and Petrarch wanted to hold on to this new awareness as well as to understand it in the light of his faith.

A complex set of aims leaves the way open for a complex set of interpretations, and this is true of not only the weight to be given to the various aims, but also how those involved in trying to bring about the ends in question view their own subject matter. If this is the case, and I believe it to be so, then we should not be surprised that a creative genius like Petrarch was not altogether clear as to how his divergent interests were to be reconciled-if, indeed, he thought they had to be reconciled. What is clear is that for him there was no one dominant idea we can use as key to understand what he was "really" trying to do. It follows, as there was no main theme of Petrarch, that there is for us no criterion of relative importance when we come to discuss the various things in which he was interested. It is a bad mistake to take any one of his aims, such as the vindication of classical studies, or "the discovery of individuality," and claim that this was his real or dominant interest. The search for such a monochrome Petrarch betrays unwillingness to be patient before a complex situation, not to say the presence of an *idee fixe*. But to go on to maintain that whatever else he might have said about, most importantly, Christianity is of lesser importance is to prejudge the issue to such an extent as to doom the hope of any valid understanding of Petrarch's work. It falsifies any interpretation of his work because it imputes to him a clarity of a synthetic purpose which he did not have at the beginning, and which in fact he may never have had. One of the marks of Petrarch's genius is that he was unwilling to give up on any of the elements of the awareness of reality in the interests of a specious and monolithic clarity.

We have to accept the unwelcome truth that sometimes, perhaps often, there is no apparent reconciliation available to us, and we must try to hold on to all the elements of a given situation if we are to even begin to deal with it, much less to understand it. The sort of tensions this introduces into a man's intellectual life may be destructive because they lead to fence-sitting and an apparent incapacity to make up one's mind-a sort of intellectual dithering; on the other hand, the effort to hold on to unreconciled and apparently disparate elements of a situation may be the source of a deeper and more complex grasp of reality. I think such was the case with Petrarch.

The vindication of Gillespie's thesis depends on a re-evaluation of the origins and development of modernity and such a re-evaluation demands a first-hand reworking of the historical data. Gillespie's discussion of Petrarch is only one example of a failure to meet this requirement.

JONATHAN ROBINSON, CONG. 0RAT.

The Oratory
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

L'institution des sacrements dans le Commentaire des Sentences *de Saint Thomas.* By BERTRAND-MARIEPERRIN. Collection «Bibliotheque de la Revue thomiste», section «Etudes». Paris: Parole et Silence, 2008. Pp. 652. €38.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-2845736368.

The work under consideration is the publication of a dissertation in dogmatic theology composed at the l'Institut Saint Thomas d'Aquin de Toulouse (France). Its principal object is to study, in its initial origins and sources, the thought of Aquinas on the institution of the sacraments by Christ, as this thought was developed in the first speculative works of this medieval master. The choice of such a topic does not imply a restricted scope of study of St. Thomas, since the *Scriptum* is the work where his teachings on this subject are the most developed. Other sources, including the *Summa Theologiae,* offer less ample information on this subject, even if they develop his views in a way that is consistent with the early works (13).

The precise question of the institution of the sacraments by Christ is one of real importance, as it touches directly upon what is at stake in the treatment of other fundamental theological questions (the role of the Church with respect to the sacramental acts from which she draws her life, the place accorded to the Holy Spirit in the economy of the Incarnation, etc.). What is being considered here, then, is the nature of the relationship between the Savior and sacramental acts, and this relationship casts a decisive light upon the economy of salvation (12-13).

The book begins with a historical introduction to the work of St. Thomas. It focuses on the patristic background of his thinking, and the Scholastics (especially St. Albert the Great and St. Bonaventure) who wrote at the time of the *Scriptum* (16-50). This is helpful in situating Aquinas's original theological contribution while also exhibiting his doctrinal continuity with these others. The texts on the institution of the sacraments are then rapidly presented (52-68). The main body of the work is the analysis of these texts (69-555), which concludes with a theological synthesis.

On the level of the methodology, this study is extremely well done, with regard to both the analysis of the texts and the synthetic conclusions. It makes use first and foremost of the historical-critical method of the study of the texts of St. Thomas, which permits one to understand more precisely their exact meaning, in distinction from the theological problematics of later time periods. However, the presentation of synthetic perspectives on his teaching also casts a light upon contemporary theological questions.

The texts that are assembled for each sacrament in the analytical-historical section of the book are extremely interesting and deepen our understanding of St. Thomas's thought. Much more than in the *Summa Theologiae,* St. Thomas underscores here the importance of sacraments for the history of salvation. (See the valuable reflections on the necessity of sacraments through the course of various ages [104£.]). It is very helpful to read the later teaching of Aquinas with the help of these foundations that he poses in the *Sentences.*

The doctrinal synthesis presents in a very remarkable way the relationship between the sacraments and the redemptive Incarnation. The history of salvation is sacramental, and attains its perfection in the mystery of Christ. The sense of an evolution that leads to Christ (from the age of the natural law, through that of the Old Law) brings to light the progressive pedagogy of God which is also a developing anthropological teaching. The "power of excellence" of Christ is presented as strictly interrelated to the meritorious causality of Christ, that is to say, as being related to a quality of his humanity (577). This means (in principle) that the capacity to institute the sacraments could have been conferred to others than the Savior. This value placed upon the humanity of Christ is equally related to his instrumental dignity, even while this latter theme, although related to his merit, did not attain its full importance for Aquinas prior to the *Summa contra Gentiles.* In effect, once the power of excellence is taken into account, the place and the role of the Church are clearly identified by Aquinas (the Church determines the sacramental rites), this despite the fact that he lacked a wider knowledge of the historical variation of rites that we have now.

This book, by the precision of its analysis and by the clarity of its synthesis, permits a historical and theological reappropriation of a Thomistic doctrine of the sacraments. One also finds in it numerous basic elements for a deepened understanding of the sacramental economy of salvation. The importance of this work is far from being uniquely historical. The author has made a contribution of great quality to contemporary dogmatic theology. (Translated by Thomas Joseph White, O.P.)

BENOIT-DOMINIQUE DE LA SOUJEOLE, O.P.

University of Fribourg
Fribourg, Switzerland