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AQUINAS ON THE NATURAL DESIRE FOR THE VISION OF GOD: A RELECTURE OF *SUMMA CONTRA GENTILES* III, c. 25 *APRES* HENRI DE LUBAC

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Thomas ist ein schwieriger Denker, der sich im Licht verbirgt und niemals seinen ganzen Gedanken auf einmal sagt.[1]

Josef Pieper

JOSEF PIEPER'S apt observation has special pertinence when one approaches the interpretive as well as the speculative challenge of comprehending Aquinas's thought on the natural ire for the vision of God. This teaching was contested among interpreters of Thomas Aquinas long before Henri de Lubac contributed to the debate in 1946 with his influential and controversial study *Surnaturel.*[2]

William O'Connor, in an unjustly forgotten, instructive study from 1947, *The Eternal Quest: The Teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas on the Natural Desire for God,*[3] argued that since the days of the principal sixteenth-century commentators on Aquinas's thought on the natural desire for the vision of God, one can usefully distinguish between a tradition of minimizing and a

[1] "Thomas is a demanding thinker who so conceals himself in the light that he never reveals his complete thought at once without remainder."

[2] Henri de Lubac, *Sumaturel: Etudes historiques,* ed. and intro. by Michel Sales, S.J. (Paris: Desclee de Brouwer, 1991). On the background of the controversy that erupted shortly after the publication of *Sumaturel,* see Aidan Nichols, O.P., "Thomism and the Nouvelle Theologie," *The Thomist* 64 (2000), 1-19.

[3] New York and London: Longman, Green, and Co., 1947.

tradition of maximizing interpreters. These two tendencies of interpretation draw in differing ways upon two series of texts in the vast corpus of the angelic doctor. In the first series of texts, Aquinas understands the desire to know the essence of the First Cause as a natural desire; in the second series he holds that the desire to know the divine essence is supernatural. Both series of texts run from the early through the later works and Aquinas sees no need anywhere to reconcile them.[4]

O'Connor argues that the tradition of "minimizing" interpretations has its roots in the commentatorial work of the Italian Dominican theologian Thomas de Vio Cajetan (1469-1534) and of the Spanish Dominican theologian Dominicus Banez (1528-1604), while the tradition of "maximizing" interpretations emerges from the commentaries of the Italian Dominican theologian Sylvester of Ferrara (1474-1528) and the Spanish Dominican theologian Dominicus Soto (1494-15 60).[5] Cajetan and Banez strongly privilege the first series of texts and prefer to interpret the natural desire in terms of an "obediential potency," a nonrepugnance or even a suitability in the created spiritual nature for the vision of God as he is in himself. Sylvester of Ferrara and Soto, on the other hand, read Aquinas as teaching a genuine natural desire for the vision of God, although with the significant difference that Soto understands this desire primarily as a *"pondus naturae,"* a profound, innate natural impulse toward the vision of God as true human beatitude, while Sylvester of Ferrara takes the genuine desire to be not an innate, but an elicited desire that follows upon cognition.

All four interpreters of Aquinas react to the profound impact Duns Scotus had on this debate with his strict Augustinian insistence that God in his divine substance is the natural end of the human being. All human volitions, Scotus argues, are ordained

[4] O'Connor, *The Eternal Quest,* 7-23. For a complete listing of all the relevant passages in Aquinas's writings, see Jorge Laporta, *La destinee de la nature humaine selon Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1965), 147-61.

[5] O'Connor, *The Eternal Quest,* 24-39, 55-72. For a concise introduction to these eminent interpreters of Thomas Aquinas, see Romanus Cessario, O.P., *A Short History of Thomism* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005).

to the divine substance as to their ultimate end. Scotus's doctrine had such discursive weight that it inevitably impacted the subsequent interpretations of Aquinas's thought, especially in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when Scotism had become a veritable philosophical and theological school in its own right.[6] Hence, not only did the maximizing and the minimizing interpretations draw differently on two famous series of texts in the corpus of Thomas Aquinas; they also were the result of Thomist commentators *"post Scotum"* having to consider and respond in their speculative interpretations of Aquinas's doctrine to a subtle metaphysical and theological doctrine at variance with the *doctor angelicus.*[7]

It is possible to trace these interpretive traditions of Aquinas's thought through the course of the subsequent centuries, with Cajetan's reading gaining predominance in the Dominican neo-Thomist revival of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With the appearance of de Lubac's *Surnaturel* and the expanded sequels *The Mystery of the Supernatural*[8] and *Augustinianism and Modern Theology,*[9] the tradition of a maximizing interpretation of Aquinas along the lines of Soto found an unexpected but sustained renaissance. Put in a nutshell, de Lubac reads Aquinas's teaching as establishing that human nature tends in itself necessarily toward God, that is, toward the supernatural end. In *Surnaturel* he states his thesis-and with it his reading of Thomas Aquinas on this matter-in provocative brevity: "'Natural desire for the supernatural': most theologians who reject this formula, reject together with it the very doctrine of St. Thomas

[6] O'Conner, *The Eternal Quest,* 40-54.

[7] For a recent Scotist way of pointing out some of the significant differences, see Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[8] Henri de Lubac, S.J., *Le mystere du surnaturel* (Paris: F. Aubier, 1965) [= *The Mystery of the Supernatural,* trans. Rosemary Sheed, introd. David L. Schindler (New York: Crossroad, 1998)].

[9] Henri de Lubac, S.J., *Augustinianisme et theologie moderne* (Paris: F. Aubier, 1965) [= *Augustinianism and Modern Theology,* trans. Lancelot Sheppard, introd. Louis Dupre (New York: Crossroad, 2000)].

Aquinas." [10] His position has become a widely accepted view, if not a majority consensus, among contemporary theologians in the English-speaking world as to how Aquinas should best be understood on this difficult topic. [11]

When recently this consensus was challenged by Lawrence Feingold's substantive study *The Natural Desire to See God according to St. Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters*, [12] the response was one of considerable irritation. Such irritation in the English-speaking world is only explicable if one assumes that two earlier significant challenges or at least qualifications of this post-Lubacian consensus, advanced by French Dominicans and Thomist scholars, went largely unnoticed: first, the volume *Surnaturel: Une controverse au coeur du thomisme au XX: siecle;* [13] second, Georges Cottier, O.P., *Le desir de Dieu: Surles traces de saint Thomas.* [14] In light of these recent substantive contributions to the discussion it is hard to deny that de Lubac's intervention, while arguably unsettling in a possibly irreversible way a once dominant minimizing interpretation of Aquinas, turns out not to have been the last word on this matter. At the same time it is obvious that a renewed consideration of this intricate topic cannot simply go back behind de Lubac's intervention and give in to the temptation of pretending that *Surnaturel* and its sequels never had been written in the first place.

[10] "<Desir nature! du surnaturel>: la plupart des theologiens qui repoussent cette formule, repoussent avec elle la doctrine meme de saint Thomas d'Aquin" (De Lubac, *Sumaturel,* 431).

[11] For one characteristic representative, see Fergus Kerr, O.P., *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002) 134-61; idem, *Twenthieth Century Catholic Theologians: From Neo-Scholasticism to Nuptial Mysticism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 67-86.

[12] Rome: Apollinare Studi, 2001 (2d ed.: Naples, Fla.: Sapientia Press, 2010). For a beginning conversation around this important work, see the Book Symposium with contributions by Harm Goris, Reinhard Hutter, Steven A. Long, and Guy Mansini in *Nova et Vetera,* English edition 5 (2007): 67-198; and David Braine, "The Debate between Henri de Lubac and His Critics," *Nova et Vetera,* English edition 6 (2008): 543-90.

[13] Ed. Serge-Thomas Bonino, O.P., Actes du colloque organise par !'Institute Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin !es 26-27 mai 2000 a Toulouse (Toulouse: *Revue Thomiste,* 2001); translation published as *Sumaturel: A Controversy at the Heart of Twentieth-Century Thomistic Thought,* trans. Robert Williams, trans. rev. by Matthew Levering (Naples, Fla.: Sapientia Press, 2009) forthcoming in English translation with Sapientia Press, 2010).

[14] Paris: Editions parole et silence, 2002.

In this article I will attempt not to settle the matter, but to take a step "after Lubac" toward *a way of reading as one* the two sets of texts of Aquinas on the natural desire for the vision of God. In order to be manageable, such a reading of Aquinas has to be exemplary and paradigmatic and needs to be backed by an equally exemplary and paradigmatic engagement of de Lubac's central thesis. Therefore, the essay falls into two parts. In the first part, I will focus on book 3 of the *Summa contra Gentiles,* since in any maximalizing interpretation of Aquinas this book, and especially chapter 25, tends to play a pivotal role. Consequently, any rereading of Aquinas on the natural desire for the vision of God "after Lubac" will have to attend to Aquinas's exact use of the concept *"desiderium naturale"* in the context of his overall argument in book 3 of the *Summa contra Gentiles.*

In the second part of the essay, I will reconsider one of the most astute and nuanced early Thomist engagements of *Surnaturel.* While now largely forgotten, the constructive and critical analysis of *Surnaturel* by Marie-Joseph Le Guillou, O.P., encapsulates a promising Thomist reception of de Lubac's genuine concern as well as an apt critique of the excessive elements in de Lubac's reading of Aquinas. In short, there is still much to learn from Le Guillou's Thomist engagement of *Surnaturel,* an engagement as balanced as it is penetrating and astute.

I. *SUMMA CONTRA GENTILES* III, C. 25 IN ITS DISCURSIVE CONTEXT: A RELECTURE

Since all creatures, even those devoid of understanding, are ordered to God as to an ultimate end, all achieve this end to the extent that they participate somewhat in His likeness. Intellectual creatures attain it in a more special way, that is, through their proper operation of understanding Him. Hence, this must be the end of the intellectual creature, namely, to understand God.[15]

[15] Thomas Aquinas, *ScG* III, c. 25, 1. All citations from the *Summa contra Gentiles* are taken from the following edition, which offers an improved version of the Leonine text: Thomas von Aquin, *Summa contra Gentiles,* 5 vols. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1974 [2d ed., 2001]): book 1, ed. and trans. Karl Albert and Paulus Engelhardt with cooperation by Leo Diimpelmann; book 2, ed. and trans. Karl Albert and Paulus Engelhardt; books 3/1 and 3/2, ed. and trans. Karl Allgaier; book 4, ed. and trans.

Besides, a thing has the greatest desire for its ultimate end. Now, the human intellect has a greater desire, and love, and pleasure, in knowing divine matters than it has in the perfect knowledge of the lowest things, even though it can grasp but little concerning divine things. So, the ultimate end of man is to understand God, in some fashion. [16]

In the first part of the essay, I will argue that Aquinas's discourse in book 3 of the *Summa contra Gentiles,* as it pertains to our specific topic under discussion, is best understood as a metaphysical enquiry into the *ontological structure of created substance.* The emphasis of Aquinas's enquiry falls upon created substances, hence substance not absolutely considered, but considered under the perspective of creation, that is, as the contingent effect in relationship to its first and final cause, the Creator. At the same time, however, his analysis pertains primarily to the constitutive structure, that is, the respective nature of particular created substances-first and foremost among them the *substantia intellectualis.* Book 3 of the *Summa contra Gentiles,* hence, is to be understood as first and foremost an investigation into the principle of nature in its relative integrity and hence as properly accessible to metaphysical enquiry. [17] Consequently, while this primarily metaphysical enquiry is part and parcel of a wide-ranging consideration of divine providence, Aquinas is not concerned here with the concrete givens of the one obtaining order of providence in which angels [18] and humans *de*

Markus H. Worner. The English citations are taken from Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975): book 1, trans. with introd. and notes by Anton C. Pegis; book 2, trans. with intro. and notes by James F. Anderson; books 3/1and3/2, trans. with intro. and notes by Vernon}. Bourke; book 4, trans. with intro. and notes by Charles J. O'Neil. The English citations follow this edition in its practice of listing in sequence book, chapter, and chapter section, e.g., *ScG* I, c. 1, 1.

[16] *ScG* III, c. 25, 7.

[17] See Lawrence Dewan, O.P., "Nature as a Topic for Metaphysical Inquiry," in idem, *Form and Being: Studies in Thomistic Metaphysics* (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 205-28.

[18] In the subsequent discussion the existence of angels is simply assumed. A philosophical defense of their existence obviously falls outside the range of this essay. There seems to me to exist not the slightest need to "de-mythologize" the biblical witness to superior subsistent intelligences, even if for most contemporaries superior intelligences without bodies fall into the category of science-fiction movies or New-Age phantasies. Such pervasive contemporary

facto exist. Any attempt to read particular statements or conclusions from Aquinas's precisely delimited metaphysical argumentation here as *prima facie* theological claims about the obtaining order of providence as it coincides with the economy of salvation can only obfuscate the status of the conclusions reached. In short, as will be shown, the *desiderium naturale visionis Dei* as considered in book 3 of the *Summa contra Gentiles* belongs to the principle of nature in its relative integrity as it pertains to the metaphysical constitution of the *intellectus.*

By insisting upon the fundamentally metaphysical nature of the discourse undertaken here, I do not intend to resurrect the outdated thesis that the *Summa contra Gentiles* represents Aquinas's "philosophical *summa."* Far from it-though, as often, there may be a grain of truth in even such a misguided characterization. Indeed, as Jean-Pierre Torrell expresses the current consensus on the matter, "the *Summa contra Gentiles* is indeed a theological work"-and adopting a rendition fashionable in some contemporary academic circles, I might want to add, "all the way down." [19] However, it is obvious beyond dispute and hence in all likelihood significant for its particular purpose that the organization and mode of discourse of the *Summa contra*

inability to consider angels-and, alas, very widespread among Christians *pace* the recent New-Age rediscovery of "angels" as a quasi-personalistic transcendence at the expense of God-displays not only a disconcerting lack of theological imagination but metaphysical acumen as well. The present enquiry presupposes Aquinas's argumentation in *ScG* II, cc. 46ff., and *STh* I, qq. 99ff., and, more importantly, the Church's unequivocal affirmation that the existence of angels pertains to the Christian faith. The theologically inclined reader might want to consult, next to the indispensable *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (nn. 327-30; 350), Lateran Council IV, c. 1, *De fide catholica* (DS 800); Vatican I, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Filius,* c. 1 (DS 3002); and Pope Paul VI, *Sollemnis professio fidei,* 8 *(AAS* 60 [1968]: 436), known in English as "Credo of the People of God: Solemn Profession of Faith" (30 June 1968). The philosophically interested reader should consult Mortimer J. Adler, *The Angels and Us* (New York: MacMillan, 1982), as well as Benedict Ashley, O.P., "The Existence of Created Pure Spirits,' in *The Ashley Reader: Redeeming Reason* (Naples, Fla.: Sapientia Press, 2006), 47-59.

[19] Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., *Saint Thomas Aquinas,* vol. 1, *The Person and His Work,* trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996) 114. Cf. the whole of chapter 6 (pp. 96-116), and the brief remarks in Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., *Aquinas's Summa: Background, Structure, and Reception,* trans. Benedict M. Guevin, O.S.B. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 8f.

Gentiles is markedly different from that of the later *Summa Theologiae*. In the *Summa contra Gentiles* we find a stronger separation than in the *Summa Theologiae* between a primarily metaphysical enquiry (in books 1through3), an enquiry in which Aquinas seems to engage head-on the Graeco-Islamic intellectual culture and especially Islamic Aristotelianism-hence an enquiry intelligible and pertinent equally to a broad range of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian theologians and philosophers of Aquinas's day and age-and on the other hand, a properly Christian theological discourse, based on revelation (in book 4). However, a strict and clean separation between these two parts is not possible.[20] Elements of the one are clearly present in the other. The metaphysical enquiry in books 1 through 3 often takes a particular route due to matters that concern the truth of faith;[21] moreover, the theological discourse in book 4 consistently draws upon metaphysical argumentation in order to refute objections raised by unbelievers against revealed truth.

[20] It is for this very reason that Michel Corbin, in his massive study *Le chemin de la theologie chez Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Beauchesnes, 1974) on the development of Aquinas's theological thought, assigns the *Summa contra Gentiles* an "intermediary" location between the ingenious, but still youthful *Scriptum* on Lombard's *Sentences* and the mature and masterful *Summa Theologiae*. Corbin comes to this assessment because he takes the conception of theology as the science of faith, as *sacra doctrina*, to be the perfect end point of an increasingly maturing spectrum, on which the *Summa contra Gentiles* also must find its place. Why does Corbin see the *Summa contra Gentiles* as falling short of the conceptual perfection of the *Summa Theologiae?* Because he finds a tension between *Summa contra Gentiles* I-III, attending to truths of faith accessible to reason, and *Summa contra Gentiles* IV, attending to truths of faith unaccessible to reason, he discerns a less-than-perfect integration of the philosophical enquiry into the overarching theological task and hence regards it as a stage beneath the perfect mode of integration to be found in the *Summa Theologiae*. While Corbin's thesis is complex and argued in great detail {pp. 491-692!), it seems to depend too much on the governing assumption that Aquinas was aiming at one single overarching goal, namely, that of fully integrating philosophical inquiry into an overall theological task of which the *Summa Theologiae* represents the stage of perfection. Hence, I agree with Rudi te Velde when he avers, "I see no reason why the *Contra Gentiles* should not be approached as a work in its own right, with an intention different from the *Summa theologiae* and an intelligible structure adapted to that intention" ("Natural Reason in the *Summa contra Gentiles,"* in Brian Davies, ed., *Thomas Aquinas: Contemporary Philosophical Perspectives* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002], 117-40, at 119).

[21] See e.g., *ScG* II, c. 46, 1.

Aquinas's foreword to book 4, therefore, merits a close reading. Here I can give only a brief adumbration of the aspects most pertinent to our discussion. First, Aquinas opens the specific discourse of book 4 with a succinct summary of the topic that preoccupies us in these pages:

> The human intellect, to which it is connatural to derive its knowledge from sensible things, is not able through itself to reach the vision of the divine substance in itself, which is above all sensible things and, indeed, improportionately above all other things. Yet, because man's perfect good is that he somehow know God, lest such a noble creature might seem to be created to no purpose, as being unable to reach its own end, there is given to man a certain way through which he can rise to the knowledge of God: so that, since the perfections of things descend in a certain order from the highest summit of things-God-man may progress in the knowledge of God by beginning with lower things and gradually ascending. *(ScG* IV, c. 1, 1)[22]

Second, Aquinas sketches two paths of metaphysical contemplation by way of which the human intellect may rise to the knowledge of God: one by a descent of perfections from God, the other by beginning with lower things and gradually ascending to the first cause. However, despite the intellectual rigor required and the insights gained on these different, but ultimately complementary, paths of metaphysical enquiry, Aquinas emphasizes that "because of the weakness of the intellect, we are not able to know perfectly even the ways [of metaphysical enquiry] themselves" (ScG IV, c. 1, 3).[23] And if that were not enough of a blow against the confidence of the all-too-routinized metaphysician, Aquinas adds only shortly afterwards, "and because that source [of these imperfectly known ways of enquiry]

[22] *ScG* IV, c. 1: "Intellectus humanus, a rebus sensibilibus connaturaliter sibi scientiam capiens, ad intuendam divinam substantiam in seipsa, quae super omnia sensibilia, immo super omnia alia entia improportionabiliter elevatur, pertingere per seipsum non valet. Sed quia perfectum hominis bonum est ut quoquo modo Deum cognoscat, ne tam nobilis creatura omnino in vanum esse videretur, velut finem proprium attingere non valens, datur homini quaedam via per quam in Dei cognitionem ascendere possit: ut scilicet, quia omnes rerum perfectiones quodam ordine a summo rerum vertice Deo descendunt, ipse, ab inferioribus incipiens et gradatim ascendens, in Dei cognitionem proficiat."

[23] "Per has igitur vias intellectus noster in Dei cognitionem ascendere potest, sed, propter debilitatem intellectus nostri, nee ipsas vias perfecte cognoscere possumus."

transcends the above-mentioned ways beyond proportion, even if we knew the ways themselves perfectly we would yet not have within our grasp a perfect knowledge of the source" (ScG IV, c. 1, 3).[24] In short, as Rudi te Velde rightly emphasizes, "[i]t is characteristic of the *Contra Gentiles* that natural reason, in its search for truth, is constantly reminded of its human point of departure."[25]

It no longer comes as a surprise that Aquinas characterizes the knowledge of God to be reached by these ways of metaphysical enquiry as feeble *(debilis cognitio).* We would gravely misunderstand Aquinas, however, if we were to take the license to brush aside this feeble knowledge of God gained in books 1 through 3 in a quasi-Barthian fashion as at best irrelevant, outdated rubble (or worse, dangerously misleading natural theology), and expect Aquinas to announce a "new beginning" with book 4, a "post-metaphysical" theology solely based on revelation's grammar as unfolded in the biblical narrative. On the contrary, feeble knowledge is not ignorance, error, or delusion, but still knowledge. And indeed, for Aquinas the feeble knowledge gained by way of the intellectual labors of the first three books is the indispensable precondition for a comprehensive actuation of the *intellectus fidei* as well as for an effective defense of faith's truth against its philosophical detractors.[26] For Aquinas,

[24] "Quod quia sine proportione excedit vias praedictas, etiam si vias ipsas cognosceremus perfecte, nondum tamen perfecta principii cognitio nobis adesset."

[25] Te Velde, "Natural Reason in the *Summa contra Gentiles,"* 120.

[26] Consider the last remark in *ScG* IV, c. 10, 15 regarding those who would argue by way of reason against the possibility of a divine generation: "[B]ecause truth is strong in itself and is overcome by no attack, it must be our intention to show that the truth of faith cannot be overcome by reason." ("[Q]uia veritas in seipsa fortis est et nulla impugnatione convellitur, oportet intendere ad ostendendum quod veritas fidei ratione superari non possit.") The emphasis lies here on "the truth that the Catholic faith *professes,"* as te Velde rightly emphasizes. ("Natural Reason in the *Summa contra Gentiles,"* 121). He stresses at another point that "Aquinas proposes to show, to his fellow believers, that the Catholic claim to truth can in fact be understood and self-consciously affirmed, against the numerous alternative claims, as a reasonable claim to truth" (ibid., 122). "It seems to me that Aquinas's immediate aim is not to prove the validity of the Catholic claim before others *(infideles)*. •.. On the contrary, the office is needed because of the threatening effect the various errors have on the Christian consciousness of truth. Natural reason, according to its historical reality in Greco-Islamic philosophy, calls the Christian perception of truth into question. In this sense, the

the perfection of wisdom entails both, in the proper distinction and in the right order: wisdom gained by way of human enquiry, an operation essential to an embodied intellect, and wisdom gained gratuitously by way of revelation, a wisdom infinitely surpassing all human knowledge. Only if we remember that the perfection of wisdom is the unifying source and goal of the *Summa contra Gentiles* are we able to appreciate the subtle synthesis between the predominantly metaphysical enquiry of books 1 through 3 and the primarily theological discourse of book 4. Te Velde captures Aquinas's intention accurately when he states: "It is Aquinas's declared intention to assume the task of someone wise *(officium sapientis).* With this 'office,' Aquinas creates something new, an intellectual point of view that is formally different from theology as well as philosophy. "[27]

A) Wisdom

Aquinas pursues the *officium sapientis* by way of the overarching and integrating vision of an order of wisdom. Thomas Hibbs, in his important work *Dialectic and Narrative in Aquinas,* offers the following felicitous characterization of Aquinas's project as he summarizes the achievement of the first book of the *Summa contra Gentiles:*

> Wisdom is a way of life, replete with joy, that satisfies all human longing, unites man to God in friendship, and warrants the name of blessed. The first book is itself an enactment of that life of wisdom, an enactment that culminates in a recognition of the pursuit of wisdom as a participation in the exemplary cause of the whole, a sharing in the life of that first and highest cause whose contemplation is the goal of philosophy. The previous arguments on behalf of God's desire to communicate his goodness to creatures provide grounds for an unexplained and audacious assertion of the prologue: the life of wisdom establishes friendship between us and God.[28]

Contra Gentiles seems to me comparable to Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed"* (ibid., 123).

[27] Te Velde, "Natural Reason in the *Summa contra Gentiles,"* 121.

[28] Thomas S. Hibbs, *Dialectic and Narrative in Aquinas: An Interpretation of the "Summa Contra Gentiles"* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 62. Hibbs continues by stating: "Still, the dominant mode of discourse in the first book is *via negativa,* a mode that accentuates the gap between the human pursuit of wisdom and the divine possession of it (I,

Later, in book 3, Aquinas will show how the wise person imitates God in the perfection of wisdom achieved by way of contemplating God's goodness. Hence, unsurprisingly, the whole of the *Summa contra Gentiles* is structured according to an order of wisdom: the first book treats the perfection of the divine nature, the second book the perfection of the divine power, and the third the perfect authority and dignity insofar as God is the end of all things and executes his government over all of them-in short, as perfect as God is in being and causing, so he is perfect in the ruling of all things, especially in the ruling of the intellectual creatures, angels and humans. Saint Thomas regards this threefold consideration as accessible to natural reason as it rises up in metaphysical contemplation toward God. However, while throughout the *Summa contra Gentiles* he insists on the validity of this contemplation by way of metaphysical inquiry as belonging to the proper domain of natural reason, he emphasizes with equal insistence the incomplete character of the knowledge thus gained, an imperfection deriving first of all structurally from the weakness of the human intellect, the lowest in the order of spirits. It is for this reason that he finally considers in book 4 a perfection surpassing all other perfections, the perfection of God's goodness. For God offers humanity a path by way of which human beings are elevated to a perfect knowledge of him, the unmediated vision of God that effectively unites human beings to him such that they become "partakers of the divine nature" *(divinae consortes*

102). As Thomas puts it, 'false and earthly felicity' is nothing but a 'certain shadow' *(quandam umbram)* of divine blessedness" (ibid.). Hibbs here seems to suggest that the human pursuit of wisdom does fall into the category of "false and earthly felicity." Such a claim-with too narrowly Augustinian a thrust, if I may say-seems to be dubious. For in *ScG* I, c. 102, Aquinas lists as instantiations of such "false and earthly felicity" only pleasure, riches, power, honor, and fame. These are all forms of felicity refuted in *ScG* III, cc. 27-32. It is important to note that the philosopher's *admiratio,* the metaphysical contemplation of the first cause, which is the term of philosophical wisdom, is not contained in either of these lists. Hence, while clearly not identical with the participation in God's own beatitude and therefore a less than perfect felicity, this philosophical wisdom seems to amount to something considerably more than "false and earthly felicity," namely, the fragile realization of that kind of imperfect albeit genuine felicity that results from contemplating God, the first cause, by way of his created *effects-via causalitatis, via negativa, via eminentiae.*

naturae [2 Pet 1:4]). And so we find in book 4 the treatment of the revealed mysteries that lie by definition outside the range of the kind of contemplation by way of metaphysical enquiry to which natural reason is able to rise, and that are solely the object of faith. [29]

Throughout the following reading of the *Summa contra Gentiles* it should be kept in mind that the whole argument Aquinas advances in book 3 is (a) part of a consideration of divine providence-God's perfect dominion-(b) in the context of a structural-metaphysical analysis that (c) demonstrates that, and displays in which way precisely, God is the end and good of all things.

B) God's Being and Participated Being

The axiomatic beginning of such a metaphysical demonstration is, as always with Aquinas, the consideration of God's being:

> That there is one First Being, possessing the full perfection of the whole of being, and that we call Him God, has been shown in the preceding Books. From the abundance of His perfection, He endows all existing things with being, so that He is fully established not only as the First Being but also as the original source of all existing things. Moreover, He has granted being to other things, not by a necessity of His nature but according to the choice of His will. *(ScG* III, c. 1,1)[30]

Contrary to those who would want to claim that "creator" is an intrinsic characteristic of God-echoes of a Neoplatonic notion of emanationism (reverberating not incidentally in the Origenist

[29] It is in book 4 that Aquinas most explicitly inquires into the concrete path that carries with it the promise of leading to the partaking in divine wisdom, a fullness of possession never to be attained by the human pursuit of wisdom. However, even in book 4, for displaying the logical possibility of these mysteries and for their defense against objection and error, metaphysical contemplation and argumentation is still of paramount importance.

[30] "Unum esse primum entium, totius esse perfectionem plenam possidens, quod Deum dicimus, in superioribus est ostensum, qui ex sui perfectionis abundantia omnibus existentibus esse largitur, ut non solum primum entium, sed et principium omnium esse comprobetur. Esse autem aliis tribuit non necessitate naturae, sed secundum suae arbitrium voluntatis."

tradition) [31]-because as essentially self-diffusive *summum bonum* God ineluctably emanates an inexhaustible surplus of participated being, Aquinas holds rightly that creation, that is, the totality of partipated being, is a surpassingly gratuitous act of the divine will.[32] God is not captive to some intrinsic aspect of his essence, the infinite act of being itself, but remains in his essence transcendently free, such that even if there were an eternal creation, it would still subsist as contingent relation to God, a relation originating from the divine will.

This relation constitutes the internal structure as well as the overarching purpose of creation:

> Now, each of the things produced through the will of an agent is directed to an end by the agent. For the proper object of the will is the good and the end. As a result, things which proceed from will must be directed to some end. Moreover, each thing achieves its ultimate end through its own action which

[31] See Sergius Bulgakow, *The Bride of the Lamb,* trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002) for a subtle defense of such a notion: "God is both God in Himself and the Creator, with a completely equal necessity and freedom of His being. In other words, God cannot fail to be the Creator, just as the Creator cannot fail to be God. The plan of the world's creation is as co-eternal to God as is His own being in the Divine Sophia. In *this* sense (but only in this sense), God cannot do without the world, and the world is necessary for God's very being. And to this extent the world must be included in God's being in a certain sense. (But by no means does this inclusion signify the crude pantheistic identification of God and the world, according to which God is the world and the world is God)" (45f.). While the fundamental difference between Bulgakov's account and pantheism might readily be granted, attentive readers of his undoubtedly brilliant speculation, noting his characterization of the Scholastic differentiation between God *in se* and God as creator as "utterly alien to Scripture," will nevertheless be unable to dismiss the all-too-strong impression that they might be witnessing the wedding feast of Origenist intuition with Schellingian speculative daring-a phenomenon hardly more scriptural than is Scholastic conceptual precision.

[32] Rudi te Velde, in his important study *Aquinas on God: The "Divine Science" of the "Summa Theologiae"* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2006) puts the matter succinctly: "Against the Neoplatonic doctrine of necessary emanation, Aquinas argues that the infinite essence of the first cause cannot express itself with natural necessity in any finite creature. Creation cannot be a matter of divine natural self-expression. God produces the universe of creatures according to the manner in which He wills them to exist, distinct from his own manner of existence" (176).

must be directed to the end by Him Who gives things the principles through which they act. *(ScG* III, c. 1,2)[33]

While the principle of an all-encompassing teleology must strike many a contemporary reader as utterly counterintuitive and outright strange, Aquinas calmly enunciates it as one of the first metaphysical principles of creation as an order of participated being brought about as the result of the will of a transcendent, infinitely intelligent first cause. Everything that is (i.e., that has participated being) is directed to an end. As Georges Cottier puts it quite succinctly: "The universality of the final cause, without which any action were to remain inexplicable, is a principal given of reality."[34] Based on the universal teleology established in the first chapter of book 3, Aquinas unfolds in the subsequent sixty-two chapters what is entailed in understanding God as the end of all things: if God has created everything because of his will, there must be an ultimate end to what God has willed; but the only possible ultimate end is God himself. The perfection of every participated being-being an effect of the First Cause-is achieved by reaching its ultimate end, which is nothing but its proper return to its source. In the second book of the *Summa contra Gentiles,* where Aquinas considers creation, he lays the groundwork for this all-encompassing teleology:

An effect is most perfect when it returns to its source; thus, the circle is the most perfect of all figures, and circular motions the most perfect of all motions, because in their case a return is made to the starting point. It is therefore necessary that creatures return to their principle in order that the universe of creatures may attain its ultimate perfection. Now, each and every creature

[33] "Eorum autem quae per voluntatem producuntur agentis, unumquodque ab agente in finem aliquem ordinatur: bonum enim et finis est obiectum proprium voluntatis, uncle necesse est ut quae ex voluntate procedunt, ad finem aliquem ordinentur. Finem autem ultimum unaquaeque res per suam consequitur actionem, quam oportet in finem dirigi ab eo qui principia rebus dedit per quae agunt."

[34] Georges Cottier, *Le desir de Dieu: Surles traces de saint Thomas* (Paris: Editions parole et silence, 2002), 190.

returns to its source so far as it bears a likeness to its source, according to its being and its nature, wherein it enjoys a certain perfection. *(ScG* II, c. 46, 2)[35]

C) Primary and Secondary Per(ection

As soon as Aquinas has established the overarching teleology of participated being, he reintroduces a crucial distinction: the primary perfection of every created being by virtue of its nature and the secondary perfection of every created being by virtue of its operation. While distinct, the perfections are inherently related to each other. Every being, in virtue of its nature, is intrinsically oriented toward its proper operations. Aquinas puts the matter most succinctly in the discussion of divine providence: "Each thing appears to exist for the sake of its operation; indeed, operation is the ultimate perfection of a thing" *(ScG* III, c. 113, 1).[36] A longer and more important instantiation of this distinction is to be found in the second book of the *Summa contra Gentiles-with* immediate implications for the opening argument of book 3:

A thing's second perfection ... constitutes an addition to its first perfection. Now, just as the act of being and the nature of a thing are considered as belonging to its first perfection, so operation is referred to its second perfection. Hence, the complete perfection of the universe required the existence of some creatures which return to God not only as regards likeness of nature, but also by their action. And such a return to God cannot be made except by the act of the intellect and will, because God Himself has no other operation in His own regard than these. The greatest perfection of the universe therefore demanded the existence of some intellectual creatures. *(ScG* II, c. 46, 3)[37]

[35] "Tune enim effectus maxime perfectus est quando in suum redit principium: uncle et circulus inter omnes figuras, et motus circularis inter omnes motus, est maxime perfectus, quia in eis ad principium reditur. Ad hoc igitur quod universum creaturarum ultimam perfectionem consequatur, oportetcreaturas ad suum redire principium. Redeunt autem ad suum principium singulae et omnes creaturae inquantum sui principii similitudinem gerunt secundum suum esse et suam naturam, in quibus quandam perfectionem habent."

[36] "Omnis enim res propter suam operationem esse videtur: operatio enim est ultima perfectio rei."

[37] "Perfectio secunda in rebus addit supra primam. Sicut autem esse et natura rei consideratur secundum primam perfectionem, ita operatio secundum perfectionem secundam. Oportuit igitur, ad consummatam universi perfectionem, esse aliquas creaturas quae in Deum redirent non solum secundum naturae similitudinem, sed etiam per operationem. Quae

We can see this distinction at play in the following, easily overlooked section at the beginning of book 3, which is central to all that follows. Aquinas emphasizes that as God is perfect in being and causing, so he is also in ruling. The result of this rule is, however, diverse:

> [T]he result of this rule is manifested differently in different beings, depending on the diversity of their natures. For some beings so exist as God's products that, possessing understanding, they bear His likeness and reflect His image. Consequently, they are not only ruled but are also rulers of themselves, inasmuch as their own actions are directed to a fitting end. If these beings submit to the divine rule in their own ruling, then by virtue of the divine rule they are admitted to the achievement of their ultimate end; but, if they proceed otherwise in their own ruling, they are rejected. *(ScG* III, c. 1, 4)[38]

Aquinas posits a direct relationship for beings possessing understanding (i.e., angels and humans) between submitting to the divine rule and achieving one's ultimate end. Concerning the manner of this rule, he states, "as regards those intellectual beings who are led by Him to their ultimate end, which is Himself, the Psalmist uses this expression: 'For the Lord will not cast off His people"' *(ScG* III, c. 1, 8).[39]

Aquinas establishes here three claims of paramount importance: (1) God is the infallible agent of that rule by virtue of which intellectual beings can achieve their ultimate end. (2) Whatever is constitutive of intellectual beings (i.e., inherent to their primary perfection, their nature) is not in and of itself efficacious in achieving their final end, for intellectual beings are,

quidem non potest esse nisi per actum intellectus et voluntatis: quia nee ipse Deus aliter erga seipsum operationem habet. Oportuit igitur, ad perfectionem optimam universi, esse aliquas creaturas intellectuales."

[38] "Huius vero regiminis effectus in diversis apparet diversimode, secundum differentiam naturarum. Quaedam namque sic a Deo producta sunt ut, intellectum habentia, eius similitudinem gerant et imaginem repraesentent: unde et ipsa non solum sunt directa, sed et seipsa dirigentia secundum proprias actiones in debitum finem. Quae si in sua directione divino subdantur regimini, ad ultimum finem consequendum ex divino regimine admittuntur: repelluntur autem si secus in sua directione processerint."

[39] "Et quidem quantum ad intellectualia, quae, eius regimen sequentia, ab ipso consequuntur ultimum finem, qui est ipse: et ideo <licit, *Quia non repel/et Dominus plebem* ***suam."***

as the rest of created beings, fallible. It is their secondary perfection, operation, which itself is in need of divine help, that leads them to their ultimate end. (3) Intellectual beings can resist the divine rule and guidance and hence miss their ultimate end (as permitted by God).

D)Agency

In chapter 3, Aquinas lays out the broad metaphysical contours of what is constitutive of an "agent" that "intends" and "acts." It is important to take note that throughout book 3 the notions of "agent," "intending," and "acting" do not denote at all the kind of "rational agent" and the kind of "intelligible actions"[40] that name the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem* of the will's exercise *(usus)* under the intellect's rule *(imperium).* The latter is indeed the principal context in which we are used to encounter the notions of "agency," "intention,"[41] and "moral act."[42] However, in book 3 of the *Summa contra Gentiles* these notions have a broader, analogical application. They denote various aspects entailed in the fundamental principle of secondary perfection executed by every participated being, which is operation properly advancing its perfection toward the ultimate end. As W. Norris Clarke aptly put it, "Action is the primary bond of similarity between different kinds of being and thus is the ontological ground justifying the application of the same analogous term to them."[43] Everything that achieves its secondary perfection by way of its operation "intends" and "acts" in the broadest sense, be it inanimate as fire is, animate as trees or birds are, or intelligent as humans or angels are. Aquinas thus argues

[40] See Alasdair Macintyre, "The Intelligibility of Action," in J. Margolis, M. Krausz, and R.M. Burian, eds., *Rationality, Relativism, and Human Sciences* (Dordtrecht: Nijhoff, 1986), 63-80.

[41] On intention see the classic treatment by G. E. M. Anscombe, *Intention,* 2d ed. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1963).

[42] For a recent, astute introduction into this complex topic in Thomas Aquinas, see Steven A. Long, *The Teleological Grammar of the Moral Act* (Naples, Fla.: Sapientia Press, 2007).

[43] W. Norris Clarke, S.J., *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 47.

that in acting every agent intends an end, and that the ultimate end is that beyond which the agent seeks nothing else.

For every agent the principle of its action is either its nature or its intellect.

[T]he end is that in which the appetitive inclination of an agent or mover, and of the thing moved, finds its rest. Now, the essential meaning of the good is that it provides a terminus for appetite, since "the good is that which all desire." Therefore, every action and motion are for the sake of a good. *(ScG* III, c. 3, 3)[44]

Two things are especially noteworthy here. First, Aquinas can use the term "agent" analogically because God is the first and foremost agent, who brings about creation. And since every effect has a certain similarity to its cause, creation indeed imitates its first cause in the most important respect: agency. Moreover, since God as perfect agent acts for an ultimate end, which necessarily can be nothing else but God, and since, from the perspective of creation, God's efficient and final causality ultimately coincide, the final cause's "pull" constitutes the ultimate end which every creature's operation "intends" by way of its action. Finally, since God is perfectly and infinitely in act, *actus purus (ScG* I, c. 16, 5),[45] created substances, in virtue of their participated being, imitate the first cause by being "in act" as well. However, their being "in act" not only imitates the first cause's agency. Rather, because the first cause and the final cause are identical, the final causality of the *actus purus* is the reason why all participated beings desire *(appetunt)* as their proper good their own perfection and thereby the final cause as the ultimate good. As Cottier aptly puts it:

Under the attraction of God, ultimate end and *summum bonum*, created being tends, in the measure according to which it is possible for it, toward a maximum of actualized being. This is indeed a dynamic vision. It arises from the doctrine

[44] "Finis est in quo quiescit appetitus agentis vel moventis, et eius quod movetur. Hoc autem est de ratione boni, ut terminet appetitum: nam 'bonum' est 'quod omnia appetunt' [Eth. I 1]. Omnis ergo actio et motus est propter bonum."

[45] "Primum igitur agens, quod Deus est, nullam habet potentiam admixtam, sed est actus purus."

of act, of which St. Thomas makes good all the implications, especially in light of the metaphysics of the final cause.[46]

In short, we find in Aquinas's use of "agent" an analogical attribution *secundum prius et posterius,* based on a participation by imperfect similitude:[47] "[A] created thing tends toward the divine likeness through its operation" *(ScG* III, c. 21, 2).[48] Only the first transcendent cause of the universe is agent in the full and proper sense. Every participated being-being an effect of the first cause's agency-reaches its own proper perfection in someway imitating the first cause's agency; consequently, every participated being, properly, albeit analogically, is predicated as an "agent" that "intends" and "acts."[49]

Second, Aquinas's metaphysical analysis pertains to the whole range of participated being, encompassing every created substance, from ants to angels and from humus to humans. The end is that in which the agent's *appetitus* comes to a rest. That end

[46] Cottier, *Le desir de Dieu,* 192.

[47] Bernard Montagnes, O.P., *The Doctrine of the Analogy of Being according to Thomas Aquinas,* trans. E. M. Macierowski, rev. Pol Vandervelde, ed. with revisions Andrew Tallon (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2004), 39: "[P]articipation establishes a relation of formal causality between beings and God and that analogy conveys at the conceptual level the unity of order by reference to a primary instance that the analogates imitate and whose likeness they bear. A formulation of Aquinas summarizes this doctrine: *'omne ens quantumcumque imperfectum a primo ente exemplariter deducitur'* [Sent. II, d. 3, q. 2, a. 3, ad 2]. There is a community of analogy between beings and God because creatures imitate God as best as they can." However, Clarke rightly emphasizes in addition that things themselves are not analogous. Rather, in the analogy of attribution (the relation of causal participation of many different analogates to a common source) "the analogous term (thought and word) gives linguistic expression to an objective *metaphysical structure of participation:* many real beings possessing in various limited ways a common attribute, received from a common source, which possesses the same attribute in unlimited fullness" (Clarke, *The One and the Many,* 56).

[48] "Tendit enim in divinam similitudinem res creata per suam operationem."

[49] In *Aquinas on God,* te Velde offers a succinct characterization of the "analogical agent" in Aquinas's thought: "[T]he analogical agent concerns a type of causality in which the effect falls short with respect to the perfection of its cause. In this case the effect receives merely a diminished and remote likeness of its cause-a likeness which cannot be reduced to a specific or even generic identity, but which is merely according to a certain analogy.... Analogy, as it is used here, is clearly of a Neoplatonic origin; it is intrinsically connected with the idea of a causal hierarchy, with the notion of participation, and with the 'descent' of the effect from the cause. Analogy is meant to designate the intelligible connection between cause and effect" (110).

constitutes the good of the agent in light of which it "acts." And "good" is that-here Aquinas simply regards Aristotle's famous definition as expressing the normative philosophical consensus- "which all things desire."[50] Hence "appetite" *(appetitus)* and "good" *(bonum)* must also be understood in the widest analogical sense. Consequently, on the level of metaphysical analysis and in this analogical sense of agency, any premature projection onto the text of the alternatives between an unelicited, innate, and unconditional desire versus an elicited, conditional desire is clearly out of place at this point. While the metaphysical inquiry pertains to the primary perfection (nature) as well as to the secondary perfection (operation), it remains an inquiry into the ontological structure, the principle of nature in its relative integrity. For the analysis and demonstration pertain exclusively to the formal constitution of every created being seeking its perfection in its proper good, that good which terminates its appetite because the secondary perfection has been achieved. The sole criterion St. Thomas mentions is the creature's specific capacity *(quantum in se est)* to be moved to its proper perfection:

> [I]f anything lacks a proper perfection, it is moved toward it, in so far as lies within its capacity *[quantum in se est],* but if it possess it the thing rests in it. Therefore, the end of each thing is its perfection. (ScG III, c. 16, 3)[51]

As we shall see soon, the defining referent for the *"quantum in se est,"* that is, the specific capacity of angels as well as humans, is the *intellectus.*

E) God: The Final End of All Things

Let us return to the overarching teleology Aquinas unfolds in the opening chapters of book 3. In chapters 17-25, Aquinas elaborates more extensively how God is to be understood as the

[50] *ScG* III, c. 16: "[S]ic enim philosophi diffiniunt bonum, *quad omnia appetunt."* Aquinas cites here from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.1.1094a 2.

[51] "Unumquodque autem, se perfectione propria careat, in ipsam movetur, quantum in se est: si vero earn habeat, in ipsa quiescit. Finis igitur uniuscuiusque rei est eius perfectio."

end of physical as well as intellectual beings. As I have already emphasized, his metaphysical-structural argument encompasses all creatures (separate substances [i.e., angels], humans, animals, inanimate things). All things are ordered in at least three respects to one ultimate end that is God: (1) by way of the substantial act of being, (2) by way of everything that pertains to a thing's perfection, and (3) by way of the thing's proper operation.

Having established in chapter 17 that God is the end of all things, in chapter 18 Aquinas specifies how precisely this is the case. One could very well assume that God is the end of all things in the sense of an ideal, or in the sense of being something produced, or in the sense of something being added to God, or in the sense of something being obtained for God. It is not hard to recognize in these rejected positions an uncannily perceptive anticipation of the emasculated modern simulacra of teleology as one can encounter them in Kant, Hegel, and process philosophy. In chapter 13 of book 1 of the *Summa contra Gentiles-a* chapter worth meditating on at length-Aquinas refutes the premodern precursors of these positions on the basis of the proofs of God's existence as well as God's categorical transcendence in relationship to participated being. It is, however, only in chapters 17 and 18 of book 3 that Aquinas argues that God is simultaneously first agent and ultimate end. For our particular concern, the most relevant argument is the last one proffered in chapter 18:

> Moreover, the effect must tend toward the end in the same way that the agent works for the end. Now, God, Who is the first agent of all things, does not act in such a way that something is attained by His action, but in such a way that something is enriched by His action. For He is not in potency to the possibility of obtaining something; rather, He is in perfect act simply, and as a result He is a source of enrichment. So, things are not ordered to God as to an end *for which* something may be obtained, but rather so that they may attain Himself from Himself, according to their measure *[sed ut ab ipso ipsummet suo modo consequantur],* since He is their end. *(ScG* III, c. 18, 5)[52]

[52] "Oportet quod eo modo effectus tendat in finem quo agens propter finem agit. Deus autem qui est primum agens omnium rerum, non sic agit quasi sua actione aliquid acquirat, sed quasi sua actione aliquid largiatur: quia non est in potentia ut aliquid acquirere possit, sed

Since God is in perfect act, nothing can enrich or improve or contribute to his perfection as final end. On the contrary, things are ordered solely to him as their final end so that everything may obtain God from God *"suo modo."* This small but decisive qualifier *"suo modo"* is a crucial anticipation of the role that the *intellectus* plays in obtaining God from God. Yet what can the creature-as creature and without ceasing to be creature-obtain from God but the *divina bonitas,* God's own very goodness according to the measure of the creature's specific nature?

F) Being-Similar to God

In chapter 19 Aquinas introduces the Platonic concept of "similitude." It is, Aquinas argues, in virtue of created things *(res creatae)* attaining divine goodness that they are made like unto God. And because everything tends toward God in order to obtain God's goodness, it follows that the ultimate end of all things is to become like God. Again we turn to the argument most relevant for our particular concern. It builds upon the general principle *"omne agens agit sibi simile"* ("every agent produces its like"). In consequence of this universal metaphysical principle, all created things must be understood as images-in the broadest analogical sense of similitude-of the first agent. Their similitude obtains in virtue of their primary perfection-they exist as participated beings-and especially in virtue of their secondary perfection, by way of which they are ordered to God in order to obtain divine goodness and hence attain to the divine likeness according to their measure. We must note at this point again that the concept of *"similitudo"* is an analogical concept, for similitude is realized according to diverse modalities, which Aquinas considers eventually in chapter 22.

In chapters 20 and 21 Aquinas analyzes in detail the likeness arising from the secondary perfection, operation:

solum in actu perfecto, ex quo potest elargiri. Res igitur non ordinantur in Deum sicut in finem cui aliquid acquiratur, sed ut ab ipso ipsummet suo modo consequantur, cum ipsemet sit finis."

So, if each thing tends toward a likeness of divine goodness as its end, and if each thing becomes like the divine goodness in respect of all the things that belong to its proper goodness, then the goodness of the thing consists not only in its mere being, but in all the things needed for its perfection, as we have shown. It is obvious, then, that things are ordered to God as an end, not merely according to their substantial act of being, but also according to those items which are added as pertinent to perfection, and even according to the proper operation which also belongs to the thing's perfection. (ScG III, c. 20, 8)[53]

Each thing tends toward being and act which is the same as tending to its perfection and goodness. It is important to realize that with chapter 21 Aquinas moves his consideration to the *order of operation.* However, also in this regard, he focuses his enquiry strictly upon the *ontological structure* of such operations as a particular nature actuates them.

In fact, a created thing tends toward the divine likeness through its operation. Now, through its operation, one thing becomes the cause of another. Therefore, in this way, also, do things tend toward the divine likeness, in that they are the causes of other things. (ScG III, c. 21, 2)[54]

The order of proper secondary causality itself reflects God's first causality: things by way of their operation bring forth other things and in that tend to divine likeness.

G) Intellect and Its Proper Appetite, the Will

In the midst of the seemingly seamless analogical range of predication of agency, Aquinas finally in chapter 22 attends to the diverse mediations under which this similitude comes about by

[53] "Si autem res quaelibet tendit in divinae bonitatis similitudinem sicut in finem; divinae autem bonitati assimilatur aliquid quantum ad omnia quae ad propriam pertinent bonitatem; bonitas autem rei non solum in esse suo consistit, sed in omnibus aliis quae ad suam perfectionem requiruntur, ut ostensum est: manifestum est quod res ordinantur in Deum sicut in finem non solum secundum esse substantiale, sed etiam secundum ea quae ei accidunt pertinentia ad perfectionem; et etiam secundum propriam operationem, quae etiam pertinet ad perfectionem rei."

[54] "Tendit enim in divinam similitudinem res creata per suam operationem. Per suam autem operationem una res fit causa alterius. Ergo in hoc etiam res intendunt divinam similitudinem, ut sint aliis causae."

way of diverse modes of agency. Again, note that we are not leaving the realm of an enquiry into the general ontological structure of such modalities. In this chapter, Aquinas finally introduces the far-reaching fundamental distinction between those agents whose secondary perfection comes about simply by way of their *natures* versus those agents whose secondary perfection comes about by way of their *intellect.* It is in natural agents alone that the end is determined by the ontological *appetitus.* For agents endowed with *intellectus,* on the contrary, the end is determined by the *ratio bani,* the intellect's consideration of the good by way of which the good becomes the object of the will. This distinction is most clearly stated in the following passage:

> One kind of operation pertains to a thing as the mover of another, as in the actions of heating and sawing. Another is the operation of a thing that is moved by another, as in the case of being heated or being sawed. Still another operation is the perfection of an actually existing agent which does not tend to produce a change in another thing. And these last differ, first of all, from passion and motion, and secondly from action transitively productive of change in exterior matter. Examples of operations in this third sense are understanding, sensing, and willing. Hence, it is clear that the things which are moved, or passively worked on only, without actively moving or doing anything, tend to the divine likeness by being perfected within themselves; while the things that actively make and move, by virtue of their character, tend toward the divine likeness by being the causes of others. Finally, the things that move as a result of being moved tend toward the divine likeness in both ways. *(ScG* III, c. 22, 2)[55]

Here Aquinas intimates the most decisive characteristic of human beings, their capability of intransitive operations, that is, operations that do not affect an external object: understanding, sensing, and willing. The first and the last kind of operation

[55] "Nam quaedam operatio est rei ut aliud moventis, sicut calefacere et secare. Quaedam vero est operatio rei ut ab alio motae, sicut calefieri et secari. Quaedam vero operatio est perfectio operantis actu existentis in aliud transmutandum non tendens: quorum primo differunt a passione et motu; secundo vero, ab actione transmutativa exterioris materiae. Huiusmodi autem operatio est sicut intelligere, sentire et velle. Uncle manifestum est quod ea quae moventur vel operantur tantum, sine hoc quod moveant vel faciant, tendunt in divinam similitudinem quantum ad hoc quod sint in seipsis perfecta; quae vero faciunt et movent, inquantum huiusmodi, tendunt in divinam similitudinem in hoc quod sint aliorum causae; quae vero per hoc quod moventur movent, intendunt divinam similitudinem quantum ad utrumque."

human beings share with angels, the second operation they share with animals, a fact that for Aquinas as for the whole classical Christian tradition clearly indicated the precise place of humanity in the hierarchy of being: the highest in the order of beings composite of form and matter and the lowest in the order of spiritual beings. And again, it is according to the formal metaphysical analysis and not under the aspect of the particular instantiation of an operation that Aquinas establishes tersely the relationship between intellect and will:

> [T]hings that know their end are always ordered to the good as an end, for the will, which is the *appetite for a foreknown end,* inclines toward something only if it has the rational character of a good, which is its object. (ScG III, c. 16, 4; emphasis added) [56]

It seems that for Aquinas knowing one's end is a precondition for any thing to be ordered to the good as its end. But did we not learn earlier that things deprived of any knowledge also "act" in view of an end, also tend toward their perfection, toward divine likeness? The possibility to hold both claims together is the very point of the doctrine of divine providence, the consideration of God's perfection as governor and ruler of what he brought into being and continues to hold in being:

> [I]t is also evident that every working of nature is the work of an intelligent substance, because an effect is more fundamentally attributed to the prime mover, which aims at the end, than to the instruments which have been directed by it. And because of this we find that the workings of nature proceed toward their end in an orderly way, as do the actions of a wise man. (ScG III, c. 24, 5)[57]

The whole universe is the product of an infinite, subsistent *intellectus* in act, and hence ordered to him as *finis ultimus* and *summum bonum.*

[56] "Sed ea quae cognoscunt finem, semper ordinantur in bonum sicut in finem: nam voluntas, quae est appetitus finis praecogniti, non tendit in aliquid nisi sub ratione boni, quod est eius obiectum."

[57] "Unde etiam patet quod quodlibet opus naturae est opus substantiae intelligentis: nam effectus principalius attribuitur primo moventi dirigenti in finem, quam instrumentis ab eo directis. Et propter hoc operationes naturae inveniuntur ordinate procedere ad finem, sicut operationes sapientis."

Hence, it becomes obvious that even things which lack knowledge can be made to work for an end, and to seek *[appetere]* the good by a natural appetite *[naturali appetitu],* and to seek the divine likeness and their own perfection. And there is no difference between saying one of these things or the other. For, by the fact that they tend to their own perfection they tend to the good, since a thing is good to the extent that it is perfect. Moreover, by virtue of tending to be good it tends to the divine likeness, for a thing is made like unto God in so far as it is good. *(ScG* III, c. 24, 6)[58]

It is of paramount importance that Aquinas states (a) that there is *no* difference between saying that everything seeks the good by way of an *appetitus naturalis,* saying that everything seeks divine likeness, and saying that everything seeks its own perfection; and (b) that everything tends to the divine likeness by virtue of tending to be good. Tending to the divine likeness is the fundamental ontological condition of every created substance.

What then is the difference in tending to divine likeness between, on the one hand, things devoid of knowledge and, on the other hand, intellectual beings? Consider the following argument of St. Thomas:

It is evident ... that the more perfect something is in its power, and the higher it is in the scale of goodness, the more does it have an appetite for a broader common good *[tanto appetitum boni communiorem habet],* and the more does it seek and become involved in the doing of good for beings far removed from itself. Indeed, imperfect beings tend only to the good proper to the individual, while perfect beings tend to the good of their species. But more perfect beings tend to the good of the genus, while God, Who is most perfect in goodness, tends toward the good of being as a whole. *(ScG* III, c. 24, 8)[59]

[58] "Planum igitur fit quod ea etiam quae cognitione carent, possunt operari propter finem; et appetere bonum naturali appetitu; et appetere divinam similitudinem; et propriam perfectionem. Non est autem differentia sive hoc sive illud dicatur. Nam per hoc quod tendunt in suam perfectionem, tendunt ad bonum: cum unumquodque in tantum bonum sit in quantum est perfectum. Secundum vero quod tendit ad hoc quod sit bonum, tendit in divinam similitudinem: Deo enim assimilatur aliquid inquantum bonum est."

[59] "Ex quo patet quod quanto aliquid est perfectioris virtutis, et eminentius in gradu bonitatis, tanto appetitum boni communiorem habet, et magis in distantibus a se bonum quaerit et operatur. Nam imperfecta ad solum bonum proprii individui tendunt; perfecta vero ad bonum speciei; perfectiora vero ad bonum generis; Deus autem, qui est perfectissimus in bonitate, ad bonum totius entis."

If the power in question is *intellectus,* it seems clear that the natural appetite for the *bonum communi* is categorically higher in angels and humans *qua* their ontological constitution than in any creature devoid of *intellectus.* Moreover, on the basis of what has been established so far, it seems equally clear that the good has become explicit-that is, known to the *intellectus* in order for it to become the *telos/end* of this agent's proper operation. Contrary to those beings whose perfection comes about simply by their nature and which hence are brought to perfection by en-telechy, the intellectual substance needs to understand its proper good in light of the *bonum communi* for it to become its proper end or, differently put, the end of its proper perfection. The will-that is, *the appetite for a foreknown end-can* incline only toward that which is presented by the intellect as a good. Only what the intellect presents-and *a fortiori* is able to present-as a good, does the will incline to.[60] In short, I can only be drawn by my rational appetite, the will, to a good that I first of all understand as a worthwhile end. In order to desire with my rational appetite, that is, in the way proper for me as an intellectual substance, the ultimate end-the end in which my perfection rests-I must understand enough of this ultimate end for it to become the overarching good for my rational appetite. But we are rushing ahead. Before we finally turn to the crucial chapter 25 of book 3 in the *Summa contra Gentiles,* we need to gain a somewhat better sense what Aquinas means by *"intellectus."* For it is as axiomatic for him as for all theologians of the patristic and medieval period-as it should be for contemporary theologians-that angels and humans share something extraordinary with God that separates them categorically from the rest of *creation-intellectus.*

[60] Aquinas understands intellect and will as two distinct yet mutually interrelated powers of the soul. The will, as efficient cause, moves the intellect, while the intellect, as final cause, moves the will: that is, the will wills the intellect to understand, while the intellect's understanding offers the will those goods toward which the will then inclines.

H) Intellectus

It might seem-and indeed be-preposterous, in a brief excursus-to attempt an incipient clarification of *intellectus* in Aquinas's thought. Because *intellectus* is utterly central to, if not constitutive of, his metaphysics, we need to limit ourselves to what is most crucial for our present consideration without, however, doing grave injustice to the utter profundity of the vision entailed. [61] Hence, this quite preliminary adumbration of *intellectus* in Aquinas takes as its delimiting parameters two fundamental insights. On the one end stands Aquinas's insight into the peculiar way the human *intellectus* operates. Because the differentiating characteristic of *intellectus* in the case of human beings is the condition of its essential embodiment, human beings have to advance in knowledge discursively by way of enquiry and discovery. On the other end stands Aquinas's insight, rather difficult for us to grasp, that in a certain respect *intellectus* pertains to and encompasses everything that is. But we are rushing ahead. Let us turn to the first of the two parameters.

In order not to get stuck immediately in the dead-end of merely lexical variations, we shall simply take note of the fact that when considering the human mind, Aquinas is comfortable with the use of various terms to intend the same thing: *mens, ratio,* and *intellectus.* In the *sed contra* of question 79, article 8 of the *Prima Pars,* after quoting from Augustine's literal commentary on Genesis, he states tersely: "Reason, intellect, and mind are one power." [62] In the body of the article, however, he distinguishes between two fundamentally different aspects in the one power of the human mind, two aspects that do not simply reflect a lexical variation, but that indeed represent a substantive differentiation

[61] For two remarkably profound attempts to probe the depths of Aquinas's thought on "intellectus," see Gustav Siewerth, *Thomismus als Identitiitssystem,* 2"d ed. (Frankfurt: Schulte-Bulmke, 1961), and Ferdinand *Ulrich,HomoAbyssus: Das Wagnis der Seinsfrage,* with an introduction by Martin Bieler, 2d ed. (Freiburg: Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln, 1998).

[62] "Ratio ... et intellectus et mens sunt una potentia" (ST I, q. 79, a. 8 sed contra). The citation from Augustine's *De genesi ad litteram* is to be found in book 3, chapter 20: "Illud quo homo irrationabilibus animalibus antecellit, est ratio, vel mens, vel intelligentia, vel si quo alio vocabulo commodius appellatur" (PL 34, 292).

in the constitution of one single power: "[T]o understand is simply to apprehend intelleiible truth: and to reason is to advance from one thing understood to another, so as to know an intelligible truth. "[63] The difference between these two aspects of the one power is indeed crucial for a proper understanding of how, according to Aquinas, human knowing comes about. The latter aspect is the one that seems intrinsically obvious: Human reasoning is discursive, that is, it advances from one thing to another in order to arrive at the knowledge of intelligible truth. Human reasoning proceeds in the medium of time. The Latin verb *discurrere* denotes this mental movement-discourse as the mind's journey of enquiry and discovery. Aquinas uses for it the technical term *ratiocinari,* reasoning. Why does the human intellect operate this way? Human beings *qua* their embodiment do not receive intelligible truth by way of a perfect, immediate intuition, but by way of what is proper to their essential embodiment, that is, by way of the senses. I must hasten to add, however-lest Aquinas be mistakenly identified as a proto-Lockean epistemologist-that according to Aquinas, in virtue of the rational soul being the substantial form of the human body, *intellectus* subsists in the human being antecedent to any sense-impressions. As form, *intellectus* activates the principal operation of understanding *(intellectus agens),* in-forming the mind by abstracting the forms from the senses' deliverance and thus realizing (reducing from potency to act) specific knowledge *(intellectus possibilis)* that in turn forms the basis for the reasoning process.[64] The principal operation of understanding itself *(intellectus agens),* however, subsists as a *habitus* of the human soul, as an inventive capacity intrinsic to its nature. It is, to be precise, the *habitus* of all first

[63] "Intelligere enim est simpliciter veritatem intelligibilem apprehendere. Ratiocinari autem est procedere de uno intellecto ad aliud, ad veritatem intelligibilem cognoscendam" *(STh* I, q. 79, a. 8).

[64] For a detailed account of Aristotelian-Thomist epistemology, see Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge,* translated from the fourth French edition under the supervision of Gerald B. Phelan (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), 110-35; and more recently the very useful and clear summary in Benedict M. Ashley, O.P., *The Way toward Wisdom: An Interdisciplinary and Intercultural Introduction to Metaphysics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 101-14.

principles of knowledge, whether theoretical or practical principles, implicitly known in and of themselves, indemonstrable yet indispensable for any discursive knowledge. The source that keeps the *intellectus qua* form unceasingly in act is none but God: "Divina substantia est . . . totius intellectualis cognitionis principium" ("The divine substance is the ... principle of all intellectual cognition" *[ScG* III, c. 54]). Human understanding is thus always gifted with the intuitive knowledge of first principles-certain things simply understood. From those principles the human being in the process of reasoning must discursively move forward by way of enquiry and discovery, and then in turn analyze these findings scientifically by way of a return to the first principles.

By contrast, angels, as subsistent intellects or separate substances, "who, according to their nature, possess perfect knowledge of intelligible truth, have no need to advance from one thing to another; but apprehend the truth simply and without mental discussion."[65] Aquinas puts the similarity and difference between angelic intuitive understanding and human discursive reasoning the following way: "Reasoning . . . is compared to understanding, as movement is to rest, or acquisition to possession; of which one belongs to the perfect, the other to the imperfect."[66]

Are we to conclude from this relationship between movement and rest, between the imperfect and the perfect, that since God is universally perfect (as Aquinas argues in *ScG* I, c. 29), *intellectus* must first and foremost be identical with God, the subsistent act of being. That this indeed is the case, Aquinas argues extensively in chapters 45 and 46 of the first part of the *Summa contra Gentiles,* and summarizes crisply in an important argument about "the supreme and perfect grade of life which is in the intellect, for the intellect reflects upon itself and the intellect can understand

[65] "Et ideo angeli, qui perfecte possident, secundum modum suae naturae, cognitionem intelligibilis veritatis, non habent necesse procedere de uno ad aliud; sed simpliciter et absque discursu veritatem rerum apprehendunt" *(STh* I, q. 79, a. 8).

[66] "Patet ergo quod ratiocinari comparatur ad intelligere sicut moveri ad quiescere, vel acquirere ad habere: quorum unum est perfecti, aliud autem imperfecti" (ibid.).

itself" *(ScG* IV, c. 11, 5).[67] So, if indeed the perfect grade of life rests in the *intellectus,* what would the ultimate perfection of life be? Here is Aquinas's answer:

> The ultimate perfection of life belongs to God, in whom understanding is not other than being, as has been shown *[ScG* I, c. 45]; accordingly, the intention understood in God must be the divine essence itself. Now, I mean by the "intention understood" what the intellect conceives in itself of the thing understood. *(ScG* IV, c. 11, 5-6)[68]

Now we are at the point where we can appreciate that "light" has been the predominant metaphor for *intellectus.* God, pure act at perfect rest, is fully transparent to himself in the single perfect act of comprehension: "in God, because He understands Himself, the intellect, the thing understood, and the intention understood are all identical" *(ScG* IV, c. 11, 7)[69]-light from light in light. As creatures, in proportion to our nature, we participate in this divine perfection. Hence, we are able by way of a faint analogical glimpse to surmise what the perfection of *intellectus* must be like, starting from the basic insight that *intellectus* is the power to apprehend intelligible truth. The perfection of *intellectus* must indeed be the identity of the act of understanding with the very act of being: "divinum intelligere est eius esse" ("God's understanding is his being").[70] And precisely this Aquinas establishes in book 1, chapter 45 of the *Summa contra Gentiles.* We recall Aquinas's argument "that the perfection of the universe required the existence of some intelligent creatures" *(ScG* II, c. 46).[71] For

[67] "Est igitur supremus et perfectus gradus vitae qui est secundum intellectum: nam intellectus in seipsum reflectitur, et seipsum intelligere potest."

[68] "Ultima igitur perfectio vitae competit Deo, in quo non est aliud intelligere et aliud esse, ut supra ostensum est, et ita oportet quod intentio intellecta in Deo sit ipsa divina essentia. Dico autem 'intentionem intellectam' id quod intellectus in seipso concipit de re intellecta."

[69] "Cum ergo in Deo sit idem esse et intelligere, intentio intellecta in ipso est ipse eius intellectus."

[70] This axiom is the point of departure for Gustav Siewerth's profound speculative essay, *Der Thomismus als Identitatssystem,* a work written with Hegel and Heidegger as primary points of reference for a discussion of Aquinas's work. While this might make a contemporary reception less likely, Siewerth's work has lost nothing of its relevance, this side of "analytic Thomism" and "ordinary language philosophy."

[71] "Quod oportuit ad perfectionem universi aliquas creaturas intellectuales esse."

only these are able to return to God by way of their very action, an action that resembles God's own being in act which is understanding.

If such a relationship indeed obtains between the divine perfection of *intellectus* and some created participation in this perfection, the two, divine *intellectus* and created *intellectus*, cannot be absolutely foreign to each other:

> The divine substance is not beyond the capacity of the created intellect in such a way that it is altogether foreign to it, as sound is from the object of vision, or as immaterial substance is from sense power; in fact, the divine substance is the first intelligible object and the principle of all intellectual cognition. But it is beyond the capacity of the created intellect, in the sense that it exceeds its power. *(ScG* III, c. 54, 8)[72]

Here we have reached the point of closest proximity in Aquinas's work to the deep Augustinian intuition that fuels Henri de Lubac's vision as well as his subtle polemic against most Thomism since the early sixteenth century. Let us give expression to this Augustinian intuition by way of a sentence from Augustine himself, from his treatise *De quantitate animae:* "Just as we must acknowledge that the human soul is not what God is, so is it to be set down that among all things that God has created nothing is nearer to God"; it is in fact equal to an angel.[73] If the human soul

[72] "Divina enim substantia non sic est extra facultatem creati intellectus quasi aliquid omnino extraneum ab ipso, sicut est sonus a visu, vel substantia immaterialis a sensu, nam divina substantia est primum intelligibile, et totius intellectualis cognitionis principium: sed est extra facultatem intellectus creati sicut excedens virtutem eius, sicut excellentia sensibilium sunt extra facultatem sensus."

[73] Saint Augustine, *De quantitate animae,* c. 34: "[I]ta praesumendum, nihil inter omnia quae creavit, Deo esse propinquius" (St. Augustine, *The Measure of the Soul,* trans. and notes by Francis E. Tourscher, O.S.A. [Philadelphia: The Peter Reilly Co.; London: Herder, 1933], 206). Regarding the similarity to the angel: "Si quid vero aliud est in rerum natura praeter ista quae sensibus nota sunt, et prorsus quae aliquod spatium loci obtinent, quibus omnibus praestantiorem animam humanam esse diximus: si quid ergo aliud est eorum quae Deus creavit, quiddam est deterius, quiddam par: deterius, ut anima pecoris; *par, ut angeli;* melius autem nihil" ("Whatever therefore is in the nature of things other than these realities that are known by the organs of sense, things which through and through occupy some dimension of space, than which we have said, the human soul is more excellent:-If there is any thing else, therefore, of things that God created, something is less excellent, something equal: less excellent, as the soul of the brute animal, *equal* [by reason of its spiritual substance] *as the*

is to be understood as equal to an angel, would this entail that the human being, similar to an intellectual substance, is *essentially* spirit? Here it is imperative to realize that Aquinas does not follow this admittedly attractive, albeit not unproblematic Augustinian inspiration. Rather, he develops his position by drawing upon and by deepening the *prima facie* obvious fact that human beings in respect to the essentially composite nature of their substance are not pure spirits. However, not being a pure spirit could still mean, as de Lubac arguably might press, that the intellectual soul is nevertheless what is *truly* human in the human being. Aquinas would not agree with such a qualified insistence either, for even in this modified form such a claim simply disregards the indispensable significance of human embodiment for an accurate grasp of human nature, of which the rational soul undoubtedly is the substantial form. It is the latter fact, human embodiment as integral to the nature of the human soul, that leads Aquinas to hold that the human being *essentially* is not only spirit. We find a striking argument for this position hidden away in the disputed questions *De Potentia.* The objection is posed that the real human being is the soul:

> The end of man is a perfect assimilation to God. Now seeing that God has no body, the soul without the body is more like God than when united to the body. Therefore in the state of final beatitude the soul will be without the body. *(De Pot.,* q. 5, a. 10, obj. 5)[74]

Aquinas responds:

> The soul is more like God when united to the body than when separated from it, because its nature is then more perfect. For a thing is like God forasmuch as it is perfect, although God's perfection is not of the same kind as a creature's. (Ibid., ad 5)[75]

angles [sic]; but nothing more noble [in created nature]" [208; emphasis added]).

[74] "[F]inis hominis est perfecta assimilatio ad Deum. Sed Deo, qui incorporeus est, magis assimilatur anima corpore absoluta, quam corpori unita. Ergo in illo statu finalis beatitudinis, animae absque corporis erunt."

[75] "[A]nima corpori unita plus assimilatur Deo quam a corpore separata, quia perfectius habet suam naturam. Intantum enim unumquodque Deo simile est, in quantum perfectum est; licet non sit unius modi perfectio Dei et perfectio creaturae."

Here, in this crucial claim-crucial for all that follows-we have Aquinas's insistence most clearly expressed: intrinsic to the *nature* of the human soul is to be the substantial form of the body. That is, the human soul is essentially ordered to the body such that its nature is perfected in its act of embodiment, of in-forming the body and thus realizing the human being. Hence, while able to subsist in separation from the body, in such a state the nature of the human soul is severely diminished. Not only is this one of Aquinas's strongest arguments for bodily resurrection, it is also one of the clearest reminders that the body is integral to the perfection of the nature of the human intellectual soul. Consequently, while the human *intellectus* is capable of self-knowledge, of grasping universals, and therefore ultimately *capax Dei*, human understanding, while antecedently enabled from within, arises concretely from without. "Without" is the body, the very way by which human beings are integrally part of the material world: "[T]he diversity of man's capacity to perform various acts of the soul arises from the diverse dispositions of the body." [76] By way of the body human beings "suffer" reality and are available to each other and to the world. Consequently, whatever is proportionate to the human intellect's nature in its proper perfection pertains to the intellectual soul as the substantial form of the body. To put it differently, the body does not diminish the perfection of the human soul's nature. It rather is its guarantor. For, as Aquinas puts it in his commentary on Aristotle's *On the Soul*, "The nobility of the soul corresponds to a good bodily constitution, because every form is proportioned to its matter" (II *De Anima*, lect. 19)[77] And here lies the profound difference in the constitution of human beings and angels: both are signified as *intellectualis creatura*, yet categorically different in the way the proper perfection of *intellectus* is realized in each.

[76] *De memoria*, lect. 1 (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentaries on Aristotle's "On Sense and What Is Sensed" and "On Memory and Recollection,"* trans. with intro. and notes by Kevin White and Edward M. Macierowski [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005], 185).

[77] "Ad bonam autem complexionem corporis sequitur nobilitas animae: quia omnis forma est proportionata suae materiae" (Marietti ed., #485)

I) Intelligere Deum-finis omnis intellectualis substantiae

Let us now turn to the crucial chapter 25, the heading of which is, "To understand God is the end of every intellectual substance" *("Quod intelligere Deum est finis omnts intellectualis substantiae").*

(1) It is of paramount importance to note the concept designating the particular kinds of agents under discussion here: *"intellectualis substantia"* or *"intellectualis creatura."* The context is that of a primarily metaphysical enquiry into the very structure of divine providence: the ordering of every created substance, proper to its nature, to God as its ultimate end. The overarching category under consideration in part 3 is created substances, and in chapter 25 Aquinas focuses on one particular and in some ways unique subset of created substances: the intellectual substances, angels and humans. Angels and humans, as just discussed, are unique in the universe in that they share something extraordinary with the Creator of the universe that separates them categorically from the rest of *creation-intellectus.* Hence, pertaining to the primary perfection, the perfection of nature, the metaphysical analysis of the last end does not differ for intellectual substances that subsist separately (i.e., as nonmaterial subsistent forms [angels]) and those that subsist as composites of form and matter (i.e., human beings). The conclusion to which Aquinas's eight arguments in chapter 25 converge is that for every intellectual substance, be it angel or human, the ultimate end is to understand God. We will, however, see later that it matters greatly for Aquinas that the gift of the intellect operates in fundamentally different ways for angels and for humans. And it is precisely this difference, in the order of secondary perfection (operation), we shall see, that matters for grasping the difference in the way the natural desire for the vision of God comes to play in angels and in humans.

Here is Aquinas's opening thesis:

> Since all creatures, even those devoid of understanding, are ordered to God as to an ultimate end, all achieve this end to the extent that they participate

somewhat in His likeness. Intellectual creatures attain it in a more special way, that is, through their proper operation of understanding Him. Hence, this must be the end of the intellectual creature, namely to understand God. *(ScG* III, c. 25, 1)[78]

In unfolding his argument, Aquinas reminds his readers first of one fundamental axiom of divine providence informing the very structure of participated beings: "[E]ach thing intends, as its ultimate end, to be united with God as closely as is possible for it" (ScG III, c. 25, 2).[79] As said above, material participated beings, which were primarily under consideration until this chapter, attain God by way of realizing their own proper perfection-which represents a distant similitude of the *summum bonum.* Now, quite obviously, the ultimate end each thing intends is achieved to a greater degree if something attains to God's very essence in some manner. The latter is accomplished when one knows something of the divine substance. For "knowing" or "understanding" is to attain the object itself, because "understanding is becoming the other intentionally in its property as other. "[80] By way of the concept-the object's form abstracted by the agent intellect-one comes to know the thing itself. Because of this very ontological structure of knowledge, it constitutes a more perfect form of union with God. For "understanding" does not proffer a distant and mediated similitude of the known to the knower. Rather, by way of knowledge, an immediate presence occurs of the known to the knower. Cottier, drawing on Sylvester of Ferrara's commentary on the *Summa contra Gentiles,* felicitously names the distinction Aquinas makes here as that between a *via assimilationis* and an infinitely superior *via cognitionis.*[81] "Therefore, an intellectual substance tends to divine

[78] "[C]um autem omnes creaturae, etiam intellectu carentes, ordinentur in Deum sicut in finem ultimum; ad hunc autem finem pertingunt omnia inquantum de similitudine eius aliquid participant: intellectuales creaturae aliquo specialiori modo ad ipsum pertingunt, scilicet per propriam operationem intelligendo ipsum. Unde oportet quod hoc sit finis intellectualis creaturae, scilicet intelligere Deum."

[79] "Intendit igitur unumquodque sicut ultimo fini Deo coniungi quanto magis sibi possibile est."

[8]° Cottier, *Le desir de Dieu,* 198.

[81] Ibid.

knowledge as an ultimate end" (ScG III, c. 25, 2).[82] The intellectual substance attains its ultimate end by way of knowledge. Why so and how so, exactly?

(2) In order to demonstrate how precisely the intellectual substance attains its ultimate end, Aquinas turns from a consideration of the order of being (ScG III, c. 25, 2) to a consideration of the order of operation (ScG III, c. 25, 3). As he had argued earlier, since the proper operation of every thing is its secondary perfection, proper operation is a genuine end for every created substance. And because the act of understanding *(intelligere)* is the proper operation of an intellectual substance, this act is its proper end. Since every operation is specified by its object, operations of *intelligere* are specified by their objects through which these operations are known, and the more perfect the object, the more perfect the operation. In other words, the perfection of the operation of *intelligere* depends completely on the perfection of the object understood. Consequently, to understand the most perfect intelligible object, God must be the most perfect thing in the genus of the operation of understanding; hence it is the ultimate end of that being whose proper operation is *intelligere.* Consequently-and utterly counterintuitive to the present pervasive preference for reductively materialist and quantitatively measurable forms of knowledge tending to ends of a more or less Epicurean kind-for Aquinas, the most imperfect knowledge of God is infinitely more valuable than the most comprehensive knowledge of comparatively imperfect things, be they quarks, genes, and galaxies, or combustion engines, computer chips, and cosmetic surgery. In short, Aquinas's evaluation reflects that mode of the human being as perfected by wisdom *(sapientia),* and hence characteristic of the *homo sapiens,* while the contemporary reductively materialist view is more reflective of what the ancients and, for that matter Aquinas too, would have described as the way of thinking characteristic of the *homo insipiens.* For "dixit insipiens in corde suo non est Deus [Vulgate]" ("The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God'" [Ps

[82] "Substantia igitur intellectualis tendit in divinam cognitionem sicut in ultimum finem."

13: 1 (RSV)]). And precisely because his metaphysical analysis remains properly restricted to the ontological structure, Aquinas does not refer in this place to the absolutely most perfect understanding of God, the *scientia Dei et beatorum* of questions 1 and 12 of the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae-which* is essentially supernatural-but only to the structurally or formally most perfect understanding of God that is entailed in the formal characteristics of the *substantia intellectualis.*

(3) Unsurprisingly, Aquinas focuses next on the structure of cognition and understanding, the process of *admiratio* that culminates in first philosophy or *scientia divina*, the natural theology that constitutes the acme of metaphysical enquiry (ScG III, c. 25, 6-9 and the preparation for 11).[83] And understanding elicited by cognition is indeed the sole and proper way by which intellectual substances-angels as well as humans-tend to God. Aquinas offers the following argument:

> [A] thing has the greatest desire for its ultimate end. Now, the human intellect has a greater desire, and love, and pleasure, in knowing divine matters than it has in the perfect knowledge of the lowest things, even though it can grasp but little concerning divine things. So, the ultimate end of man is to understand God, in some fashion *[quoquo modo].* (*ScG* III, c. 25, 7)[84]

[83] See Ralph Mcinerny, *Praeambula fidei: Thomism and the God of the Philosophers* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), for a compelling reconstruction of that metaphysical enquiry to which natural theology is the indispensable completion, and see Ashley, *The Way toward Wisdom*, for an outstanding, nuanced instantiation of such metaphysical enquiry of the *ens commune-of* which a consideration of the essence of the first cause is emphatically *not* an integral part (an essential difference between Thomist metaphysics on the on hand, and Scotist and Suarezian metaphysics on the other hand), but rather the goal of the metaphysical enquiry as such, a goal at best ever to be approximated. Aquinas not only never questioned the validity of such a metaphysical enquiry, he rather assumed and practiced it in the context of his overall theological project. Eclipsing this element of his thought might make Aquinas more palpable to the postmetaphysical presuppositions regnant among many contemporary theologians and philosophers, but will simply complicate and in the end prevent an accurate understanding of his complex integration of metaphysical enquiry into the superior wisdom of *sacra doctrina.*

[84] "Unumquodque maxime desiderat suum finem ultimum. Intellectus autem humanus magis desiderat, et amat, et delectatur in cognitione divinorum, quamvis modicum quidem de illis percipere possit, quam in perfecta cognitione quam habet de rebus infimis. Est igitur ultimus finis hominis intelligere quoquo modo Deum."

If read in isolation from its context, one could easily mistake this statement for an empirical observation from which Aquinas draws an inference. The discursive context of this argument, however, makes it plain that this is not the case. The opening sentence lays down a comprehensive metaphysical principle pertaining to every created thing. The subsequent sentence continues a strictly metaphysical analysis of the ontological structure of the intellect, as derived from the earlier analysis. It does not describe the *de facto* operation of the human being *sub conditione peccati*, nor for that matter *in statu iustitiae originalis* or *in statu gratiae,* but the relative principle of human nature and the ontological structure of the most perfect operation proper to it as an intellectual nature.

In knowing only a little of divine matters the human intellect comes to a greater perfection-that is, it realizes its own proper end-than knowing a lot about the material world. Hence this kind of knowledge, however fragmentary, is desired more, due to the nature of the intellect itself. However, we must note the decisive qualification *"quoquo modo"* at the end of the above quotation, for the argument itself delivers nothing regarding the question of the mode of this operation. The conclusion at this point is that the final end of the human is the knowledge of God, attained in whatever mode, even the most imperfect. We need to return to the qualification *"quoquo modo"* when we consider again the natural desire in detail. We have here, however, a first inkling that this qualification refers to the way the structure of the intellect is actualized in the very order of knowledge, the end of which is the *scientia divina* of first philosophy (metaphysics).

Here is Aquinas's argument in a nutshell. First comes the general principle: everything that is desirable for the sake of something else exists for something that is desirable in and of itself. Why so? Because, if the working of the appetite of nature *(appetitus naturae)* were to go on interminably, then the desire of nature *(desiderium naturae)* would be frustrated, for it is impossible to traverse infinity.

Now Aquinas applies this principle to the order of knowledge. The practical sciences as well as the arts (including what we would call engineering and technology) are not directed toward

knowledge, but toward operation, and hence they are means to an end, desired for the sake of something else. Only the speculative sciences are desirable in and of themselves, because their end is knowledge itself. Every human activity is ordered toward some other end with the exception of theoretical contemplation *(consideratio speculativa).* As all practical sciences and arts are ordered toward the theoretical ones, so are all human activities ordered toward the theoretical contemplation of the intellect *(ad speculationem intellectus).* And as all sciences and arts, ordered in such a way, have their end in that particular one which provides the ordering measure and rule for them *(praeceptiva et architectonica),* all the theoretical sciences relate in a similar way to metaphysics *(philosophia prima),* for the latter provides all the principles for the former. However,

> [t]his first philosophy is wholly ordered to the knowing of God, as its ultimate end; that is why it is also called *divine science.* So, divine knowledge is the ultimate end of every act of human knowledge and every operation. *(ScG* III, c. 25, 9)[85]

Here, we receive a first commentary on the qualification *"quoquo modo."* One way the knowledge of God is attained is by way of the operations of "first philosophy" which contemplates the first cause. The contemplation of the highest cause is the concrete terminus of the secondary perfection of the human intellect. This terminus is the condition for the possibility of a coherent architecture of the sciences and hence the order of human knowledge. Such a terminus and the structural possibility of attaining it is the condition for the desire of nature *(desiderium naturae)* to tend toward its fulfillment by way of the appetite of nature *(appetitus naturae),* realized most eminently in the will, the rational appetite as it moves the intellect to its proper good and hence perfection in contemplating the most excellent object, the first cause.

However, as Aquinas reminds us *(ScG* III, c. 25, 10), the absolutely superior mover is not the will, but rather the intellect,

[85] "[I]psaque prima philosophia tota ordinatur ad Dei cognitionem sicut ad ultimum finem, uncle et 'scientia divina' nominatur [Met. I 2]. Est ergo cognitio divina finis ultimus omnis humanae cognitionis et operationis."

for the intellect moves the appetite by presenting it with its object. (It is only because embodied human thinking, also speculative contemplation, is discursive, and not intuitive, i.e., takes place by way of a discursive, temporal "procedere" that is vulnerable to exhaustion, distraction, and distortion, that the will is of importance in relationship to the intellect's proper operation.)

(4) There obtains a proper correspondence between the order of agents and movers and the order of ends, such that the end of the first agent and mover is the final end of all intermediate agents and movers. Aquinas applies this general metaphysical principle to the human intellect:

> [O]f all the parts of man, the intellect is found to be the superior mover, for the intellect moves the appetite, by presenting it with its object; then the intellectual appetite, that is the will, moves the sensory appetites, irascible and concupiscible, and that is why we do not obey concupiscence unless there be a command from the will; and finally the sense appetite, with the advent of consent from the will, now moves the body. Therefore, the end of the intellect is the end of all human actions. 'But the end and good of the intellect are the true' [Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI, 2 (1139a 27)]; consequently, the first truth is the ultimate end. So, the ultimate end of the whole man, and of all his operations and desires, is to know the first truth, which is God. *(ScG* III, c. 25, 10)[86]

Cognoscereprimum verum, to know the first truth, is the ultimate end of the human being and all his operations and desires *(omnium operationum et desiderium eius).*[87] Again, it is noteworthy that Aquinas makes reference only to all desires of the

[86] "Inter omnes autem hominis partes, intellectus invenitur superior motor: nam intellectus movet appetitum, proponendo ei suum obiectum; appetitus autem intellectivus, qui est voluntas, movet appetitus sensitivos, qui sunt irascibilis et concupiscibilis, unde et concupiscentiae non obedimus nisi voluntatis imperium adsit; appetitus autem sensitivus, adveniente consensu voluntatis imperium adsit; appetitus autem sensitivus, adveniente consensu voluntatis, movet iam corpus. Finis igitur intellectus est finis omnium actionum humanarum. Finis autem et bonum intellectus est verum [Eth. VI 2]: et per consequens ultimus finis primum verum. Est igitur ultimus finis totius hominis, et omnium operationum et desideriorum eius, cognoscere primum verum, quod est Deus."

[87] The point needs to be pressed that *ScG* III, 25, 10 and 25, 11 must be seen in their specific order. *ScG* III, 25, 10 is the superior end, but can only be reached by way of 25,11, because the human being is not an angel. At this point the specific constitution of the human soul as substantial form of the body and the way human knowledge comes about, needs to be taken fully into account. For such an account, see most recently Ashley, *The Way toward Wisdom,* 101-14.

human being in their ontological structure, converging to one final end, the knowledge of the first truth. One of these desires, the *desideriumcognoscendicausam,* stands at the core of the next argument: "Besides, there is naturally present in all men the desire to know the causes of whatever things are observed" *(ScG* III, 25, 11).[88]

A natural reaction of *"admiratio,"* wonder, gives rise to increasingly disciplined and methodologically reflective philosophical enquiry. This quest is a movement that receives its elan from a natural desire elicited by the encounter with something[89] and that finds its rest or terminus in the contemplation of the cause of that thing-by way of which contemplation the thing itself is more perfectly understood. In principle, but only rarely in fact, this quest does not stop until the first cause is reached. The natural desire to know the causes arises from the very ontological structure of the intellect itself, for it is precisely knowing the causes that is the operation that perfects the intellect. Aquinas extends this argument to the order of causes:

> [F]or each effect that he knows, man naturally desires to know the cause. Now, the human intellect knows universal being *[ens universale].* So, he naturally desires to know its cause, which is God alone, as we proved in Book Two. Now, a person has not attained his ultimate end until natural desire comes to rest. Therefore, for human happiness which is the ultimate end it is not enough to have merely any kind of intelligible knowledge; there must be divine knowledge, as an ultimate end, to terminate the natural desire. So, the ultimate end of man is the knowledge of God. *(ScG* III, c. 25, 12)[90]

[88] "Naturaliter inest omnibus hominibus desiderium cognoscendi causas eorum quae videntur."

[89] Ashley puts the matter as succinctly as one can in two sentences: "We must begin our knowledge of all being with *ens mobile,* sensible being, as the only 'Being' that we can sense and thus know intellectually. But from that starting point, by observing the order of the sciences we can widen our understanding of beings, even until our notion of 'Being' analogically includes all created being, and through that, as the work of God, we get some idea of God as First Cause" (Ashley, *The Way toward Wisdom,* 63).

[90] "Cuiuslibet effectus cogniti naturaliter homo scire causam desiderat. Intellectus autem humanus cognoscit ens universale. Desiderat igitur naturaliter cognoscere causam eius, quae solum Deus est, ut in Secundo probatum est. Non est autem aliquis assecutus finem ultimum quousque naturale desiderium quiescat. Non sufficit igitur ad felicitatem humanam, quae est ultimus finis, qualiscumque intelligibilis cognitio, nisi divina cognitio adsit, quae terminat naturale desiderium sicut ultimus finis. Est igitur ultimus finis hominis ipsa Dei cognitio."

Aquinas is not really arguing anything new here; rather, he is in a subtle way intensifying the previous arguments in an ascending line from the knowledge of the first truth to the knowledge of the first cause to the knowledge itself of God: *ipsa Dei cognitio.* Note however that *ipsa Dei cognitio,* the knowledge itself of God, is not to be confused with the knowledge of God himself, *cognitio Dei ipsius,* the latter being nothing but the beatific vision, the eternal participation of the blessed in the life of the Holy Trinity. The *ipsa Dei cognitio,* on the contrary, is the proper ultimate end of every created *intellectus,* the very knowledge of the essence of the first cause: "Omnis intellectus naturaliter desiderat divinae substantiae visionem" ("Every intellect naturally desires the vision of the divine substance" *[ScG* III, c. 57, 4]). However, for the created intellect a natural knowledge of the essence of the first cause independent from any created effects remains essentially unattainable. Hence the *felicitas* sought by way of metaphysical contemplation must necessarily remain incomplete. Nevertheless, it is the ontological structure of the created intellect in the first place that renders intelligible the ultimate significance of the Christian economy of salvation and its promise of perfect beatitude. Not only will the essence of God be known by the created intellect, but God will also make himself known to the intellect and thereby grant by way of friendship a created participation in his own triune life.

The natural desire to know the cause aims at *ipsa Dei cognitio* as its proper terminus. Again, we learn nothing here about the mode of this cognition. But then again, as in the earlier arguments the axiomatic assumption is that the *"desiderium naturale"* arises from the structure of the intellect itself in the encounter with the reality for which it is made. In other words, the *"desiderium naturale"* is not ontologically prior to the structure of the human intellect. Rather, it is its very entailment and arises simultaneously with the intellect's encounter with reality. An analysis of the precise modes of the intellect's operation in regard to the knowledge of God lies beyond the confines of chapter 25.

(5) Aquinas, however, prepares the transition to this inquiry by introducing the notion of happiness or felicity:

Now, the ultimate end of man, and of every intellectual substance, is called felicity or happiness, because this is what every intellectual substance desires as an ultimate end, and for its own sake alone. *(ScG* III, c. 25, 14)[91]

The chapter ends with the fascinating juxtaposition of the Evangelists Matthew and John on the one hand and Aristotle on the other:

And so, it is said in Matthew (5:8): "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God"; and John (17:3): "This is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God." *(ScG* III, c. 25, 15)[92]

With this view, the judgment of Aristotle is also in agreement, in the last Book of his *Ethics,* where he says that the ultimate felicity of man is "speculative, in accord with the contemplation of the best object of speculation" *[Nicomachean Ethics,* X, 7 (1177a 18)]. *(ScG* III, c. 25, 16)[93]

While the proper term for the end which Matthew and John have in view is beatitude, Aquinas nevertheless uses *"felicitas"* in order to correlate Aristotle, at least in a preliminary way, to the two Evangelists. The reason Aquinas prefers *felicitas* to *beatitudo* is arguably that he regards as a considerable part of his audience for the *Summa contra Gentiles* philosophers-that is, those who would agree with Aristotle, the Neoplatonic tradition and its Aristotelian commentaries, their reception in the Arabic tradition by Avicenna, Averroes, and others, and also with Maimonides, but would not accept the witness of the New Testament about the Son of God. Because of an explicitly assumed theological audience in the *Summa Theologiae,* Aquinas privileges there the term *"beatitudo."*

There is, however, a deeper reason why Aquinas correlates Aristotle's notion of the highest human felicity to the Christian notion of beatitude. He expresses this deeper reason at the

[91] "Ultimus autem finis hominis, et cuiuslibet intellectualis substantiae, *felicitas* sive *beatitudo* nominatur: hoc enim est quod omnis substantia intellectualis desiderat tanquam ultimum finem, et propter se tantum."

[92] "Hine est quod dicitur Matth. V: "Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt." Et loan. XVII: "Haec est vita aeterna, ut cognoscant te, Deum verum."

[93] "Huie etiam sententiae Aristoteles, in ultimo *Ethicorum* [c. 7], concordat, ubi ultimam hominis felicitatem <licit esse speculativam, quantum ad speculationem optimi speculabilis."

beginning of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, where he states that "in so far as a man gives himself to the pursuit of wisdom, so far does he even now have some share in true beatitude" (ScG I, c. 2, **1),**[94] and later more explicitly in the *Summa Theologiae*, where he avers that "the consideration of speculative sciences is a certain participation of true and perfect happiness *[beatitudo]."*[95] Te Velde interprets Aquinas's subtle reception of the Aristotelian *felicitas* succinctly:

> In Thomas' view the Aristotelian *felicitas* essentially retains an open and dynamic character as aiming at the perfect knowledge of the divine insofar as is possible through the speculative sciences.... The differentiation in happiness must ... not be understood in the sense of their representing two wholly different kinds of happiness. They are related to each other in terms of imperfect and perfect; the happiness of philosophical contemplation shows a certain likeness with true happiness; seen from a Christian standpoint philosophical happiness points beyond itself to a more perfect happiness, to an adequate fulfilment of what the philosophical search for wisdom is aiming at.[96]

Aquinas's oblique correlation (in ScG III, c. 25, **14)** of the acme of philosophical contemplation with the term of the Christian pilgrimage in the beatific vision is a telling reminder that in his metaphysical analysis of the ontological structure of the *intellectualis substantia* he is not interested in analyzing the concrete modes of elicitation, which differentiate the structurally one *desiderium naturale visionis Dei* de facto into two different desires-one elicited by way of creation's trace of the causes, leading philosophical *admiratio* to the contemplation of the first cause, with a *desiderium naturae* for happiness directed to the *"bonum communi";* the other elicited by way of sanctifying grace with a *desiderium gratiae* for heavenly glory. As soon as he has to address explicitly the question of the ultimate human perfection,

[94] "[I]nquantum homo sapientiae studium dat, intantum verae beatitudinis iam aliquam partem habet."

[95] *STh* I-II, q. 3, a. 6: "[C]onsideratio scientiarum speculativarum est quaedam participatio verae et perfectae beatitudinis." All citations from the *Summa Theologiae* are taken from Sancti Thomae de Aquino, *Summa Theologiae,* 3d ed. (Turin: Edizioni San Paolo, 1999); the English quotations are taken from the translation of the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Bros., 1947).

[96] Te *Velde,Aquinas on God,* 160.

he does not shy away from using the proper theological term for this specific perfection *(beatitudo*), nor does he shy away from pointing to the necessity of the divine help *(auxilium)* of grace in order for human beings to attain this ultimate perfection, as plainly expressed in the title of chapter 147 of book 3 of the *Summa contra Gentiles:* "Quod homo indiget divino auxilio ad beatitudinem consequendam" ("That the human being needs divine help to attain beatitude"). Here in chapter 25 of the same book, by contrast, Aquinas is principally concerned with the underlying ontological structure, the principle of nature in its own relative integrity. "Relative integrity" signifies here that human nature is not per se in act. Only particular human beings exist in the concrete order of providence in specific states; they do so, however, in virtue of one shared nature from which all acts characteristic of being human flow. Moreover, the principle of nature accounts for the gratuity of the concretely extant order of providence as it coincides with the economy of salvation. For the principle of nature allows one to affirm divine transcendent freedom: it is solely in virtue of divine *convenientia* and not due to any exigencies that might arise from human nature itself that the extant order of providence coincides with the economy of salvation. Furthermore, only by way of the relative integrity of the principle of nature is it possible to grasp the continuity of the identity of nature across various of human nature in the economy of salvation.

II. THE DESIRE FOR GOD: *SIC ET* NON-MARIE-JOSEPH LE GUILLOU'S RESPONSE TO HENRI DE LUBAC'S *SURNATUREL*

S. Thomas est tres maitre de sa pensee et de son vocabulaire: ii affirme le desir nature! de voir Dieu; ii affirme aussi nettement - et selon nous, sans moindre contradiction - que !'esprit n'est pas *effectivement* proportionne ii voir Dieu.[97]

[97] Marie-Joseph Le Guillou, O.P., "Surnaturel," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et theologiques* 34 (1950): 226-43, at 234: "St. Thomas is very much master of his thought and of his terminology: he affirms the natural desire to see God; he also affirms straightforwardly-and in our mind without the slightest contradiction-that the [created] spirit is not *effectively* proportioned to see God."

Marie-Joseph Le Guillou (1920-90), a Dominican theologian from the Province of Paris, produced what is an unjustly forgotten, astute engagement of de Lubac's *Surnaturel.* Only Georges Cottier and Henry Donneaud have saved his remarkably nuanced and construcive Thomistic response to de Lubac's challenge from the fate of oblivion. [98] Le Guillou's engagement of *Surnaturel* rests on three principal points: (1) Unlike not a few other Thomist respondents, he readily recognizes a crucial insight that de Lubac rightly presses-the absolutely unique case of the created spirit, its fundamental ontological orientation toward God and hence its natural desire for the vision of God. (2) However, Le Guillou demonstrates convincingly that Aquinas simultaneously maintains that the created spirit is not effectively proportioned for the vision of God and hence the positive supernatural character of the divine gift must be affirmed under all circumstances. These two truths neither contradict each other nor are they to be reconciled with each other by way of some notional or objective dialectic. Rather, according to Aquinas, they are two complementary truths about the created spirit, the first being the result of a *metaphysical* enquiry into the ontological structure of the created spirit, the second the result of a *theological* enquiry into the concrete operations necessary for the beatific vision to occur, a discussion ultimately completed only in the *Summa Theologiae* in the treatises on grace and the infused supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and love, as well as the gifts of the Holy Spirit. (3) Le Guillou rightly insists on the need to safeguard the proper integrity of the respective created natures. Consequently, he defends the position that the nonrealization of the transcendent end, the beatific vision, does not mutilate human nature, because the resources to reach this end simply do not belong to the nature itself.

A) A Natural Desire for the Supernatural-Properly Speaking?

Le Guillou's remarkable essay might best be understood as a perspicacious engagement and refutation of the previously

[98] See Cottier, *Le desir de Dieu,* 228-32, and Henry Donneaud, OP, *"Surnaturel* through the Fine-Tooth Comb of Traditional Thomism," in Bonino, ed., *Surnaturel,* 41-57, at 51ff.

mentioned thesis forwarded by de Lubac in *Surnaturel:* "'Natural desire for the supernatural:' most theologians who reject this formula, reject together with it the very doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas." [99] Le Guillou's argues that while Aquinas indeed held the natural desire for the vision of God, this affirmation is fundamentally different from, albeit essentially related to, the desire for the supernatural, a desire elicited by the supernatural virtue of hope. The latter desire is fundamentally different because it is supernaturally elicited; however, it is essentially related to the natural desire, because it is that very natural desire (conditional by nature) that is presupposed as well as perfected by the supernaturally elicited desire. Thus Le Guillou will show that rejecting the formula "natural desire for the supernaturel" in its precise sense does not entail a rejection of Aquinas's teaching at all. On the contrary, on the basis of Aquinas's teaching this formula must be rejected.

B) The Historical Context of Aquinas's Argument: The Conviction That the Immediate Vision of God Is Impossible

Before anything else, Le Guillou puts great emphasis on the importance of recalling the historical context in which the problem of the natural desire for the vision of God arises for Aquinas. [100] His insistence upon a natural desire for the vision of God constitutes his considered response to the strong contestation of the very possibility of any immediate vision of God by two quite different intellectual strands, both exercising a subtle influence on the thought of the day.

The first is a strand of Greek Christian apophaticism, mediated into the Western medieval debate by Scotus Eriugena, for whom the impossibility of the immediate vision of God does not constitute a problem, because for him the supposition suffices that an unfulfilled desire eternally links the beatified spirit to the

[99] "<Desir naturel du surnaturel >: la plupart des theologiens qui repoussent cette formule, repoussent avec elle la doctrine meme de saint Thomas d'Aquin" (De Lubac, *Surnaturel,* 431).

[100] Le Guillou, "Surnaturel," 228.

invisible cause.[101] The second is a strand of Neoplatonism inherited by Arabic philosophers who deny the very possibility of the immediate vision of God by the human being and instead propose that human felicity is attained by way of the contemplation of separate substances (angels)-that is, beings higher in the hierarchy of being than humans but lower than God. Only these separate substances would, according to this position, be capable of an immediate vision of the One.[102]

The philosophical contestation of the very possibility of an immediate vision of God constitutes the concrete discursive context of Aquinas's argument for a *desiderium naturale.* The point of Aquinas's whole line of argumentation is to establish, by way of arguments acceptable to the philosophical disputants, the suitability between the nature of the human spirit and its supernatural destiny. Le Guillou argues convincingly that the theologian Aquinas, who knows by divine revelation that we are destined for a perfect beatitude, the immediate vision of God, intends to show by arguments of reason why such a perfect beatitude, though infinitely surpassing human nature, lies in direct line with its fulfillment. As we have seen above, the universal metaphysical principle from which Aquinas develops such a philosophical argument in book 3 of the *Summa contra Gentiles* is the following: the ultimate perfection of each being consists in its unification with the principle or cause of its being.

Aquinas, by applying this principle to the *creatura intellectualis,* develops the proper and immediate principles of the rational soul. He does so by embarking upon a metaphysical analysis of the structure proper to the *anima rationalis* in which he draws equally on the Augustinian *inquietum cor* and the Aristotelian and Arabic desire to know the essence of a thing *(quid est).* Not only does this analysis allow him to lay bare the fundamental orientation of the created spirit toward the intellection of the divine essence;[103] more importantly, it allows him

[101] Aquinas handles this aspect of the question in a magisterial way in *ITh* I, q. 12, where the *desiderium naturale* indeed figures prominently.

[102] Aquinas engages and refutes this position explicitly in *ScG* III, cc. 41-44.

[103] Le Guillou, "Surnaturel," 229.

to demonstrate (in *ScG* III) the concrete possibility of the vision of God against its impossibility (Greek apophaticism) and against the failure of Arabic Neoplatonism to recognize its true meaning. And while Aquinas does rely on the Augustinian tradition, which is so sensitive to an elan that "carries" the human being, so to speak, to the vision, Le Guillou rightly stresses that Aquinas quite intentionally avoids the claim of that tradition that one may ascertain naturally and experientially such a call to the vision of God. Le Guillou helpfully points out that, contrary to the sweeping Augustinian claim of a *natural desire for the supernatural,* Aquinas remains more modest and restrained in his interest of proffering and defending solely a structural metaphysical analysis of a natural desire as it pertains to the respective principles of human and angelic nature in their proper relative integrity.

C) What Is a Desire?

In order to gain a deeper sense of the nature of *"desiderium"* according to Aquinas, Le Guillou recalls Aquinas's analysis of the passions:

> Properly speaking, desire may be not only in the lower, but also in the higher appetite. For it does not imply fellowship in craving, as concupiscence does; but simply movement towards the thing desired. *(STh* I-II, q. 30, a. 1, ad 2)[104]

Here we finally are offered a crisp definition of *desiderium:* "simplex motus in rem desideratam." Desire denotes the spontaneous reaction of the lower as well as the higher appetite to the apperception of a good, that is, the tendency toward a good that is inchoately understood and loved, yet not possessed. Unlike hope *(spes),* which regards something in the future that is "arduous and difficult to obtain," "desire ... regards the future

[104] "[D]esiderium magis pertinere potest, proprie loquendo, non solum ad inferiorem appetitum, sed etiam ad superiorem. Non enim importat aliquam consociationem in cupiendo, sicutconcupiscentia; sed simplicem motum in rem desideratam." See Le Guillou, "Surnaturel," 229 n. 4.

good absolutely." [105] For Aquinas, desire is, so to speak, a distance covered by the rational appetite, the will, anterior to the intellect's consideration of the possibilities of its realization. The desire is an inchoate movement that becomes one of a firm consistency only if there is for it the possibility of realization. Hence hope, which always presupposes desire, is an essential component of such a firmly consistent movement of the will, for hope considers the possibilities and difficulties of gaining the desired good. [106] To put it differently, while *desiderium* is a simple motion that belongs inherently to the nature of the created spirit and the principal operation of the rational appetite, *spes* belongs essentially to the embodied human existence in the extant order of providence as it coincides with the economy of salvation. For *spes* has to tackle the profound difficulties that arise from the loss of original righteousness. Consider Aquinas's discussion of the twofold difficulty hope has to attend to:

> A thing is *difficult* which is beyond a power; and this happens in two ways. First of all, because it is beyond the natural capacity of the power. Thus, if it can be attained by some help, it is said to be *difficult;* but if it can in no way be attained, then it is *impossible;* thus it is impossible for a man to fly. In another way a thing may be beyond the power, not according to the natural order of such power, but owing to some intervening hindrance .... To be turned to his ultimate beatitude is difficult for man, both because it is beyond his nature, and because he has a

[105] *STh* 1-11, q. 40, a. 1: "Secundo, ut sit futurum: non enim spes est de praesenti iam habito. Et per hoc differt spes a gaudio, quod est de bono praesenti. - Terrio, requiritur quod sit aliquid arduum cum difficultate adipiscibile: non enim aliquis dicitur aliquid sperare minimum, quod statim est in sua potestate ut habeat. Et per hoc differt spes a desiderio vel cupiditate, quae est de bono futuro absolute" ("Secondly, that it is future; for hope does not regard that which is present and already possessed: in this respect, hope differs from joy which regards a present good.-Thirdly, that it must be something arduous and difficult to obtain, for we do not speak of any one hoping for trifles, which are in one's power to have at any time: in this respect, hope differs from desire or cupidity, which regards the future good absolutely").

[106] *STh* 1-11, q. 40, a. 1: "Quarto, quod illud arduum sit possibile adipisci: non enim aliquis sperat id quod omnino adipisci non potest. Et secundum hoc differt spes a desperatione" ("Fourthly, that this difficult thing is something possible to attain: for one does not hope for that which one cannot get at all: and, in this respect, hope differs from despair").

hindrance from the corruption of the body and the infection of sin. *(STh* I, q. 62, a. 2, ad 2)[107]

Note that the *desiderium naturale* per se contributes effectively nothing besides providing the fundamental structural openness of the *intellectus* as well as the natural precondition of the simple motion to being turned to ultimate beatitude *(converti ad beatitudinem ultimam).* The concrete possibility of realizing the ultimate end, the enjoyment of God, is *de facto* only opened by, and indeed occurs inchoately in, the gift of divine faith,[108] while the infection of sin is healed by the ensuing gift of sanctifying grace. Now, enlightened by faith, the intellect is able to present the ultimate end quite differently to the will as well as to consider quite concretely the means-the antecedent reality as well as the promise of the continuing aid by divine grace-of attaining the ultimate end. Thus the enlightenment of faith gives rise to hope, which in turn fortifies the will in striving toward attaining fully what the intellect already beholds in its assent of faith-the happiness of eternal life:

[107] *"[D]ifficile* est quod transcendit potentiam. Sed hoc contingit esse dupliciter. Uno modo, quia transcendit potentiam secundum suum naturalem ordinem. Et tune, si ad hoc possit pervenire aliquo auxilio, dicitur *difficile;* si autem nullo modo, dicitur *impossibile,* sicut impossibile est hominem volare. Alio modo transcendit aliquid potentiam, non secundum ordinem naturalem potentiae, sed propter aliquod impedimentum potentiae adiunctum .... Converti autem ad beatitudinem ultimam, homini quidem est difficile et quia est supra naturam, et quia habet impedimentum ex corruptione corporis et infectione peccati."

[108] As Romanus Cessario, O.P., states in his astute theological treatment of Christian faith: "Faith as an act of judgment attains the uncreated Being of God-in scholastic shorthand, the *res;* thus, the oft-quoted adage of Aquinas: *'Actus autem credentis non terminatur ad enuntiabile, sed ad rem'* ['the act of the believer does not reach its end in a statement, but in the thing'] .... [ST 11-11, q.1, a. 2, ad 2.] The 'things' refers to all of the mysteries of the Christian religion, but, in an ultimate and foundational way, to God himself, as the object of theological faith" *(Christian Faith and the Theological Life* [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996], 71). Hence, according to Aquinas, the act of faith has its ultimate term in the divine life itself, such that faith begins the personal communion with God, the end of which St. Augustine adumbrates beautifully in *De civitate Dei* 22.30: "He shall be the end of our desires, who shall be seen without end, loved without cloy, praised without weariness.... There we shall rest and see, see and love, love and praise. This is what shall be in the end without end" (quoted in Cessario, *Chrisitan Faith and the Theological Life,* 54).

[T]he hope of which we speak now, attains God by leaning on His help in order to obtain the hoped for good. Now an effect must be proportionate to its cause. Wherefore the good which we ought to hope for from God properly and chiefly, is the infinite good, which is proportionate to the power of the divine helper, since it belongs to an infinite power to lead anyone to an infinite good. Such a good is eternal life, which consists in the enjoyment of God Himself. For we should hope from Him for nothing less than Himself, since His goodness, whereby he imparts good things to His creature, is no less than His Essence. Therefore the proper and principal object of hope is eternal happiness. (*STh* 11-11, q. 17, a. 2)[109]

Note Aquinas's employment in this article of the universal metaphysical principle "an effect must be proportionate to its cause." *An infinite good, the enjoyment of God, can only be brought about by a proportionate cause: God.* In an unexpected context, the question whether an angel needs grace in order to turn to God, Aquinas offers a concise application of this principle:

[T]he natural movement of the will is the principle of all things that we will. But the will's natural inclination is directed towards what is in keeping with its nature. Therefore, if there is anything which is above nature, the will cannot be inclined towards it, unless helped by some other supernatural principle .... Now it was shown above ... when we were treating of God's knowledge, that to see God in His essence, wherein the ultimate beatitude of the rational creature consists, is beyond the nature of every created intellect. Consequently no rational creature can have the movement of the will directed towards such beatitude, except it be moved thereto by a supernatural agent. This is what we call the help of grace. (*STh* I, q. 62, a. 2)[110]

[109] "[S]pes de qua loquimur attingit Deum innitens eius auxilio ad consequendum bonum speratum. Oportet autem effectum esse causae proportionatum. Et ideo bonum quod proprie et principaliter a Deo sperare debemus est bonum infinitum, quod proportionatur virtuti Dei adiuvantis: nam infinitae virtutis est proprium ad infinitum bonum perducere. Hoc autem bonum est vita aeterna, quae in fruitione ipsius Dei consistit: non enim minus aliquid ab eo sperandum est quam sit ipse, cum non sit minor eius bonitas, per quam bona creaturae communicat, quam eius essentia. Et ideo proprium et principale obiectum spei est beatitudo aeterna."

[110] "Naturalis autem inclinatio voluntatis est ad id quod est conveniens secundum naturam. Et ideo, si aliquid est supra naturam, voluntas in id ferri non potest, nisi ab aliquo alio supernaturali principio adiuta.... Ostensum est autem supra, cum de Dei cognitione ageretur, quod videre Deum per essentiam, in quo ultima beatitudo rationalis creaturae consistit, est supra naturam cuiuslibet intellectus creati. Unde nulla creatura rationalis potest habere motum voluntatis ordinatum ad illam beatitudinem, nisi mota a supernaturali agente. Et hoc dicimus auxilium gratiae."

Hence the firm movement of the will toward the infinite good that is eternal happiness-in short, the habit of hope-can only be brought about by divine grace. Consequently, this hope is a supernatural, infused virtue. Such an elevation and perfection of natural hope indeed presupposes and draws upon the *desiderium,* the simple movement toward the desired thing. There is no movement of hope without the simple inchoate movement of *desiderium.* The former always presupposes the latter while the latter in and of itself is unable ever to reduce itself into a movement of firm consistency toward a specific end. The *desiderium,* however, has its own proper consistency, which arises from the very structure of the *intellectus* itself.

D) What Is the "Natural" Desire for the Vision of God?

In the case of the natural desire for the vision of God, the attribute "natural" denotes the consistency of the desire: a consistency arising from the nature of the *intellectus.*[111] It belongs to the very nature of the intellect consistently to give rise to the simple motion of the will to desire the human spirit's highest good. Hence it is precisely that consistently present, inchoate natural motion of the rational appetite which grace presupposes and perfects. The *desiderium* remains, however, an inchoate movement of the will, somewhat conditional, because it is less than a firmly realized movement of the rational appetite to a specific good. When we ask what it is that elicits this desire consistently as a *"simplex motus,"* Le Guillou points us to what the human intellect comes to know naturally: "Thomas calls it a natural desire, because it arises from the nature of the intellect as such, insofar as it is commended by natural knowledge. "[112] Hence, Le Guillou emphasizes, the *desiderium naturale visionis Dei* is by no means a natural desire in the sense of a Scotist *"pondus naturae,"* a weight of nature pulling us inexorably toward the vision of God. Rather, it is a desire elicited by the very things the

[111] Le Guillou, "Surnaturel," 230 n. 4.

[112] Ibid.,230.

intellect comes to know, and hence a desire that is objectively directed at everything implied in our natural desire to know to the fullest degree by way of comprehending the causes of the things we come to know, an unlimited intellectual enquiry that continuously transcends known causes and eventually, at least in principle, leads to the first cause, the cause that cannot be transcended because it is the source and origin of all causes. Consequently, in the end this natural desire may develop into the full-fledged desire to come to know-to "see" by way of the *intellectus-the* essence of this first cause.[113]

Hence, it is crucial to realize in the debate over the *desiderium naturale visionis Dei* that Aquinas's proof of the natural desire for the vision of God in book 3 of the *Summa contra Gentiles* is a proof properly at home in the desire to know essences and causes, which as such is the clear manifestation of the openness *(capacitas, aptitudo)* of the human *intellectus* for all being. Le Guillou reminds his readers at this apposite moment of the specific way in which Aquinas understands the image of God to be in all human beings:

> Since man is said to be to the image of God by reason of his intellectual nature, he is the most perfectly like God according to that in which he can best imitate God in his intellectual nature. Now the intellectual nature imitates God chiefly in this, that God understands and loves Himself. Wherefore we see that the image of God is in man ... [f]irst, inasmuch as man possesses a natural aptitude for understanding and loving God; and this aptitude consists in the very nature of the mind, which is common to all men. *(STh* I, q. 93, a. 4)[114]

[113] Relevant here is the *"admiratio"* of the philosopher: *STh* I, q. 12, a. 1; I-II, q. 3,a. 8; *In loan.* I, lect. II; I *Metaphys.,* 1 (Marietti ed., 1-4).

[114] "[C]um homo secundum intellectualem naturam ad imaginem Dei esse dicatur, secundum hoc est maxime ad imaginem Dei, secundum quod intellectualis natura Deum maxime imitari potest. Imitatur aurtem intellectualis natura maxime Deum quantum ad hoc, quod Deus seipsum intelligit et amat. Unde imago Dei ... potest considerari in homine ... [u]no quidem modo, secundum quod homo habet aptitudinem naturalem ad intelligendum et amandum Deum; et haec aptitudo consistit in ipsa natura mentis, quae est communis omnibus hominibus." Aquinas distinguishes this image of creation from the image of recreation, to be found in the just and consisting in the conformity of grace, and from the image of likeness, which is the likeness of glory to be found only in the blessed. See also *De Verit.,* q. 8,a. 1, ad 6; q. 14,a. 10, ad 4; *ScG* III, c. 54; III, c. 98; *STh* I, q. 12, a. 4, ad 3; *STh* I-II, q. 2, a. 3.

Note at this point that for Aquinas the terms *"capacitas"* and *"aptitudo"* signify an exclusively receptive potency, contrary to *"facultas,"* which signifies an active potency.

E) What Is Special about the Natural Desire?

It is here where Le Guillou acknowledges the Thomist point of contact with de Lubac's Augustinian elan of nature for the supernatural. The natural desire appears in the consciousness as the difference between the proper object of the created spirit (which is the realm of all being) and its connatural object which is the consciousness of a nonaccordance between the nature of the *intellectus* and its very ground. Instead of committing the errors of ontologism or illuminationism, Le Guillou does nothing but offer a full acknowledgment of the gift of the active principle of the *intellectus,* the irreducible being-in-act of the intellect *(intellectus agens)* in every created spirit, an act which indeed begs the question of its source. However, while its very existence unavoidably raises the question of its source and giver, the *intellectus agens* by no means carries with and in itself an innate knowledge of God, in any remote form whatever.

The human spirit aspires naturally to unite itself effectively to the one it divines negatively and ideally in its universality beneath the manifold species of its proper object (being)-God. This desire for union, however, is nothing but the desire to understand the truth, as Le Guillou's choice of citation from the *Summa contra Gentiles* shows:

> [U]ltimate felicity is to be sought in nothing other than an operation of the intellect, since no desire carries on to such sublime heights as the desire to understand the truth. Indeed, all our desires for pleasure, or other things of this sort that are craved by men, can be satisfied with other things, but the aforementioned desire does not rest until it reaches God, the highest point of reference for, and the maker of, things. *(ScG* III, c. 50, 9)[115]

[115] "[I]n nullo alio quaerenda est ultima felicitas quam in operatione intellectus: cum nullum desiderium tam in sublime ferat sicut desiderium intelligendae veritatis. Omnia namque nostra desideria vel delectationis, vel cuiuscumque alterius quad ab homine desideratur, in aliis rebus quiescere possunt: desiderium autem praedictum non quiescit nisi

It is indisputably the case that Aquinas holds, in Le Guillou's words, "that in the very core of the human being there is an aspiration of a self-accomplishment in the order of the spirit, in a dimension somewhat divine."[116] Le Guillou is readily willing to grant this point to de Lubac and to affirm that a definition of the human being along the lines of Aristotle, as rational animal, does not exhaust at all the greatness of the human being. Acknowledging that much emphatically does not, however, entail agreeing with the Augustinian thesis that the human spirit's proper and only connatural object is God in and of himself. Rather, the being that is human is *qua intellectus* structurally oriented toward an enquiry into its spiritual identity up to its proper limits as a finite being, composite of rational soul and body.

F) The Natural Desire Denotes an Ordination to the Vision of God

After having reached the point of closest contact with de Lubac, Le Guillou rightly presses the point that Aquinas's argument concerning the natural desire for the vision of God never passes beyond the idea of an ordination in the sense of a real metaphysical possibility.[117] The argument amounts in each case always only to the defense of the possibility of the vision, as in the following:

> [I]t is impossible for natural desire to be unfulfilled, since 'nature does nothing in vain.' Now, natural desire would be in vain if it could never be fulfilled. Therefore, man's natural desire is capable of fulfillment *[implebile]. (ScG* III, c. 48, 11)[118]

It is only no\\'., after a closer reading of the first twenty-five chapters of book 3 of the *Summa contra Gentiles* that this

ad summum rerum cardinem et factorem Deum pervenerit."

[116] Le Guillou, "Surnaturel," 231.

[117] Ibid.

[118] "Impossibile est naturale desiderium esse inane: 'natura enim nihil facit frustra' [Arist., *De caelo* II 11]. Esset autem inane desiderium naturae si nunquam posset impleri. Est igitur implebile desiderium naturale hominis."

particular claim can be appreciated in its proper discursive context. The subsequent statement "So, it must be fulfilled after this life" ("Oportet igitur quod impleatur post hanc vitam") cannot be read as a kind of quasi-ontological necessity obeying a metaphysical exigency. Rather, it must be understood as an anticipation of what is intimated in book 3, chapters 51-63, and is fully developed only in book 4. In short, it is the *convenientia* of the economy of salvation itself that is in the one obtaining order of providence the concrete implementation of what on the basis of the principle of nature remains merely *"implebile."* Consider again at this point what Aquinas states in the opening chapter on divine providence about those creatures that "bear His likeness and reflect His image:"

> [T]hey are not only ruled but are also rulers of themselves, inasmuch as their own actions are directed to a fitting end. If these beings submit to the divine rule in their own ruling, then by virtue of the divine rule they are admitted to the achievement of their ultimate end; but, if they proceed otherwise in their own ruling, they are rejected. *(ScG* III, c. 1, 4)

"To submit to the divine rule in their own ruling," however, was the primordial gift of original righteousness. Unlike the gift of nature itself, the primary perfection, the gift of an antecedent, habitually perfected secondary perfection can be refused and, alas, indeed was refused. After the initial refusal, any fulfillment of the natural desire rests upon a new, infinitely superior initiative of God (hence *"felix culpa"),* an initiative that infallibly, though not irresistably, restores the original gift of habitually perfected operation in order, finally, to elevate the original gift to its infinitely surpassing perfection in the beatific vision.

G) The Natural Desire Is a Genuine Capacity-Reflecting the Fundamental Openness of the Human Being for God

Does Le Guillou then embrace the interpretation that such a desire, for Aquinas, must simply and solely be a question of a passive natural potency or a simple obediential potency in the

strict and limited sense? Interestingly, Le Guillou does not take this to be the consequence of Aquinas's metaphysical analysis of the ontological structure of the created intellect. Rather, he astutely observes that wherever Aquinas treats the natural desire for the vision of God *ex professo,* the *doctor communis* affirms that the natural desire reveals a capacity of the human spirit in regard to the vision of God.[119] Moreover, the fact that Aquinas uses next to *"capacitas"* also the terms *"ordinatio," "habilitas," "aptitudo,"* and *"inclinatio"* indicates rather clearly that he intended to signal that the *desiderium naturale visionis Dei* is an altogether proper desire for the *creatura intellectualis-created* after all *ad imaginem Trinitatis.*[120]

"Capacity," according to Le Guillou, entails a purely passive ordination to the beatific vision, such that either the capacity is fulfilled by a determinate object or, if it is not, it simply remains unformed. The *"desiderium naturale"* "designates the real capacity which the created spirit has of opening itself to the vision of God, the possibility of a positive *convenientia,* which we can only await and to which the created spirit cannot adapt itself on its own."[121] However, by way of its natural desire, the ontological structure of the created spirit reveals its capability of a genuine reception: the vision of God can pour itself into the created spirit's activity without destroying or transmuting it, because it is-due to its ontological constitution as *intellectus-capax Dei.* Indeed, the beatific vision is the *de facto* return of the created spirit to its source. Le Guillou rightly draws attention to a crucial passage:

> The divine substance is not beyond the capacity of the created intellect in such a way that it is altogether foreign to it, as sound is from the object of vision, or as immaterial substance is from sense power; in fact, the divine substance is the first intelligible object and the principle of all intellectual cognition. But it is beyond the capacity of the created intellect, in the sense that it exceeds its power; just as sensible objects of extreme character are beyond the capacity of sense power. Hence the philosopher says that "our intellect is to the most evident things, as the eye of the owl is to the light of the sun" [Aristotle,

[119] Le Guillou, "Surnaturel," 232.

[120] Ibid. He refers here to *Sfh* I, q. 93, a. 2, c. and ad 3; III, q. 9, a. 2; III, q. 4, a. 1.

[121] Le Guillou, "Surnaturel," 232.

Metaphysics 2.1.993b9]. So, a created intellect needs to be strenghened by a divine light in order that it may be able to see the divine essence. *(ScG* III, c. 54, 8)[122]

While the natural desire for the vision of God arises from the unique structural kinship, by way of participation of the effect in the cause, between the divine substance and the created intellect, the fulfillment of this desire lies utterly beyond the capacity of the created intellect. And since the created intellect does not subsist per se but is realized in the existence of separate substances (angels) as well as in the existence of human beings, the natural desire, which in the structural analysis of the created intellect is one, comes to operate only according to the specific nature of the extant intelligent creatures. Hence, for angels, due to their specific nature as separate substances, this desire is an innate, unconditional desire. For human beings, due to their specific nature as composites of soul and body, it is an elicited and conditional desire.

H) Three Possible Objections from Aquinas's Oeuvre

In order to advance our understanding of how precise, and how precisely delineated, Aquinas's notion of the natural desire for the vision of God is, Le Guillou offers three paradigmatic instances from Aquinas's work that seem to question, indeed, to negate the very possibility of such a natural desire for the vision of God. [123]

[122] "Divinia enim substantia non sic est extra facultatem creati intellectus quasi aliquid omnino extraneum ab ipso, sicut est sonus a visu, vel substantia immaterialis a sensu, nam divina substantia est primum intelligibile, et totius intellectualis cognitionis principium: sed est extra facultatem intellectus creati sicut excedens virtutem eius, sicut excellentia sensibilium sunt extra facultatem sensus. Uncle et Philosophus in II *Metaphys.* [2.1.993b10], dicit quod 'intellectus noster se habet ad rerum manifestissima sicut oculus noctuae ad lucem solis.' Indiget igitur confortari intellectus creatus aliquo divino lumine ad hoc quod divinam essentiam videre possit."

[123] Le Guillou, "Surnaturel," 233.

(a) "Natural desire can only exist for what can be obtained naturally." (III *Sent.*, d. 27, q. 2, a. 2, ad 4)[124]
(b) "Now in his nature man is proportioned to a certain end for which he has a natural appetite." *(De Verit.,* q. 27, a 2)[125]
(c) "[T]his particular good (which he does not naturally desire)-for example, the vision of God." *(De Verit.,* q. 22, a. 7)[126]

Le Guillou correctly stresses that Aquinas distinguishes three things from each other:

(1) the natural and necessary appetite for the beatitude *in communi,*
(2) the natural and elicited desire for the vision of the essence of God, and
(3) the effective choice of God as final end and hence the *desiderium gratiae* for the beatific vision.

The three texts that Le Guillou quotes as possible contradictory evidence from Aquinas's *opus* address (1) and (3), but not (2). But what about passage (b)? Considering how the citation continues, should it not fall under (2)? Did Le Guillou misinterpret Aquinas at this subtle point? At a first glance, passage (b), because of the way it appeals to the philosophers' metaphysical *admiratio,* seems to be pertinent to (2), despite the difference in terminology. However, if we take a closer look, the end to which the *appetitus naturalis* is directed in this passage is designated as *"aliqua contemplatio divinorum,"* which is not the intellectual vision of

[124] "Desiderium autem naturale non potest esse nisi rei quae naturaliter haberi potest." The text continues beyond Le Guillou's quotation: "Uncle desiderium naturale summi boni inest nobis secundum naturam, inquantum summum bonum participabile est a nobis per effectus naturales" ("Wherefore the natural desire for the highest good is naturally in us to whatever extent the highest good can be participated by us through a natural effect").

[125] The text continues: "... and for the obtaining of which he can work by his natural powers. That end is a contemplation of divine things *[aliqua contemplatio divina]* such as is possible to man according to the capabilities of his nature; and in this contemplation philosophers have placed man's ultimate happiness" {St. Thomas Aquinas, *Truth,* [Chicago: H. Regnery Co, 1952-54), 3:315). ("Homo autem secundum naturam suam proportionatus est ad quemdam finem, cujus habet naturalem appetitum; et secundum naturales vires operari potest ad consecutionem illius finis, qui finis est aliqua contemplatio divinorum, qualis est homini possibilis secundum facultatem naturae, in qua philosophi ultimam hominis felicitatem posuerunt.")

[126] St. Thomas, *Truth,* 3:61. ("[H]oc speciale quod non naturaliter appetit, ut visionem Dei.")

the divine essence, but rather what a natural theology as the very acme of metaphysical contemplation is indeed able to accomplish. Aquinas is here interested only in that aspect of the philosophers' metaphysical *"admiratio"* that can be realized by human effort and ingenuity alone, resulting in a knowledge, albeit *"debilis,"* that is proportionate to the active potency, the faculty, of the human intellect, at its highest point of metaphysical contemplation. In the particular discussion, Aquinas is after the distinct contrast between that end to which human nature is proportioned and for which, hence, it has a natural appetite, and

> an end for which man is prepared by God which surpasses the proportion of human nature, that is, eternal life, which consists in the vision of God by His essence. That vision is not proportionate to any creature whatsoever, being connatural only to God. *(De Verit.,* q. 27, a. 2)[127]

Now it becomes clear that this particular passage indeed falls under (1) as well as (3). Aquinas distinguishes here between nature and grace, that is, between an end proportionate to human nature and a natural appetite directed toward such an end, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, an end infinitely surpassing human nature toward which the human being is directed by grace through the infused theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. In book 3 of the *Summa contra Gentiles,* on the contrary, Aquinas is not pursuing a contrastive analysis of nature and grace, but a metaphysical enquiry into the structure of the created intellect, as an effect that participates ontologically in its cause. And it is such an enquriy that yields the insight into the created intellect being *capax Dei* and into an ensuing natural desire for the vision of God that corresponds to the very ontological structure of the created intellect.

[127] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Truth,* 3:315. ("Sed est aliquis finis ad quern homo a Deo praeparatur, naturae humanae proportionem excedens; scilicet vita aeterna, quae consistit in visione Dei per essentiam, quae excedit proportionem cujuslibet naturae creatae, soli Dea connaturalis existens.")

I) The Indispensable Elements Entailed in an Affirmation of the Natural Desire for the Vision of God

In conclusion, Le Guillou urges three fundamental and equally indispensable aspects of the consideration of the natural desire for the vision of God.

First, it is altogether necessary to affirm the significance of the natural desire for the vision of God:

> The very structure of the created spirit gives witness to a desired opening *in the prolongation of its proper perfection,* an opening toward a supernatural surpassing which would be the vision of God Himself, the divine essence. The realization of which, however, being absolutely out of the range of the created spirit, depends solely on God's good pleasure. Naturally powerless to realize the desire's fulfillment, the created spirit can only wait for the gratuitous gift, which can neither be accessed nor demanded. [128]

However, he also stresses that it is this very gift of the beatific vision that makes good the authentic symbiosis of the two orders, the natural and the supernatural. For the latter by no means simply redoubles the natural order in some heterogeneous and incomprehensible juxtaposition.

Second, it is altogether necessary to affirm the positive supernatural character of the divine gift. For only God is to himself his proper connatural object. Hence, the positive content of the word "supernatural" corresponds to that of an order of communion with God, accorded gratuitously. And God is absolutely free to communicate his divine life. The fact that God created a spirit capable of such communion in no way obligates him to grant the beatific vision. [129]

Third, it is altogether necessary to maintain the integrity of the respective created natures. "The created spirit is in its very structure raised above itself. It carries in its own structure the call to realize itself in a transcendent end." [130] Hence it aims always

[128] Le Guillou, "Surnaturel," 240.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid.

beyond its connatural end. However, the nonrealization of this transcendent end does not result in the loss of the created spirit's proper consistency, though it will not achieve perfect felicity. Indeed, the unsatisfied desire does not mutilate at all the nature of the spirit, simply because the resources necessary to fulfill it do not belong to the created spirit's nature itself. Rather, by way of its structure, the human spirit simply opens up to the divine gratuity, to the good pleasure of God.

In short, Le Guillou concludes, "the natural mystery of the created spirit consists in the fact that it structurally orients our attention to the mystery of God: the image of God points back to its model." [131] Furthermore, in the concretely obtaining order of providence, to be satisfied with humanity's connatural end amounts to a sin!

]) "Natura pura": The Integrity of the Relative Principle of Nature

After having secured these indispensable aspects of a correct consideration of the natural desire for the vision of God according to St. Thomas, Le Guillou once more returns to the relative integrity of the principle of nature. It is the very ontological structure of the created spirit that he understands to be referred to by the notion of "pure nature" *(natura pura}:*

> It is for this very reason we deem it necessary to affirm the radical possibility of a "pure nature," which is not at all a nature closed in upon itself. For we see no other way to safeguard the affirmation of the new creation, which the first creation by itself does not require at all. Pure nature is not a nature which would be completely foreign to us. . . . It rather designates in our world the very structure proper to the created intellect. In our opinion, in a created world, in which the human being were not called to the beatific vision, the created spirit would still rise above itself. [132]

Insisting upon the contested concept of the *"natura pura"* (according to the above understanding) has a twofold value for Le

[131] Le Guillou, "Surnaturel," 242.

[132] Ibid.

Guillou: first, it puts into the right light the created structure of the spirit; second, it insists strongly on the absolute difference between the "created" and "uncreated" and hence allows to account for the gratuity of God's actual plan with the world. Here Le Guillou agrees explicitly with de Lubac that the theologian's task is to contemplate the gratuity of the actual plan of God and not some hypothetical plan. It is for this very reason that Le Guillou, on the one hand, reclaims Jacques Maritain's rightly famous statement that, in fact, God would not have created human nature if he had not ordained it to the elevation by grace. On the other hand, he refuses for the reasons given to speak with de Lubac of a "natural desire for the supernatural. "[133]

CONCLUSION

Sic

Le Guillou's response to Henri de Lubac's *Surnaturel* represents a highly nuanced position that in an exemplary way maintains the subtle synthesis of the *doctor communis* on this intricate topic. Le Guillou agrees with de Lubac on one point of surpassing importance: Human nature is *capax Dei,* is ontologically oriented towards the beatific vision. There is in the human being a positive fittingness, an opening inscribed into the very core of the nature of the human *intellectus,* created *ad imaginem Trinitatis.*

Et Non

However, the affirmation that the created intellect has only one concrete ultimate end is fully compatible with the distinction between two orders of finality. Indeed, positing one concrete ultimate end makes the distinction between such two orders of

[133] Ibid., 242f.: "[C]' est pourquoi nous reprendrions volontiers la formule de M. Maritain: *'de fait* ii (Dieu) n'aurait pas cree la nature s'il ne l'avait pas ordonnee a la grace.' Mais nous nous refusons a parler avec le P. de Lubac d'un desir nature! du surnaturel."

finality indispensable. For the genuinely surpassing gratuity of attaining the ultimate end can only be safeguarded if there obtains a finality that corresponds to the natural faculties of the created intellect. Without a proportionate proximate finality of human nature toward which humans are able to move on the basis of their nature, there would exist no active potency for sanctifying grace to presuppose and to perfect. In order for the human being-qua human-to be elevated to the ultimate end, and in this supernatural actuation neither to be transmuted into some other nature nor recreated *ex nihilo,* the gratuitous transcendence of the ultimate end requires the relative but proper integrity of a nature, including its proportionate finality, that is intrinsically open and waiting for such an elevation.

In a highly compressed passage in the *Compendium Theologiae,* Aquinas holds both aspects together: on the one hand, *qua* structure of the *intellectus,* there obtains a *desiderium naturale* for ever-more perfect knowledge up to and including the knowledge of the essence of the first cause; on the other hand, the *intellectus* is not effectively proportioned to see God and hence lacks the natural disposition for such knowledge. And since the intellect is by definition unable to present to the will the ultimate good, which is the essence of the first cause, the will does not actuate a fortified *desiderium,* a specific motion to this end as presented by the intellect. Hence the *desiderium naturale* has to remain a simple motion, conditional upon some future activation:

> [W]e cannot attain our ultimate end by the actuation of our intellect through the instrumentality of the agent intellect. For the function of the agent intellect consists in rendering *actually* intelligible the phantasms that of themselves are only *potentially* intelligible.... These phantasms are derived from the senses. Hence the efficacy of the agent intellect in reducing our intellect to act is restricted to intelligible objects of which we can gain knowledge by way of sense perception. Man's last end cannot consist in such cognition. The reason is that once the ultimate end has been reached, natural desire ceases. But no matter how much we may advance in this kind of understanding whereby we derive knowledge from the senses, there still remains a natural desire to know other objects.... Hence our natural desire for more perfect knowledge ever remains. But a natural desire cannot be in vain.

Accordingly, we reach our last end when our intellect is actualized by some higher agent than an agent connatural to us, that is, by an agent capable of gratifying our natural, inborn craving for knowledge. So great is the desire for knowledge within us that, once we apprehend an effect, we wish to know its cause. Moreover, after we have gained some knowledge of the circumstances investing a thing, our desire is not satisfied until we penetrate to its essence. Therefore our natural desire for knowledge cannot come to rest within us until we know the first cause, and that not in any way, but in its very essence. This first cause is God. Consequently the ultimate end of an intellectual creature is the vision of God in His essence.[134]

Previous discussion has brought out the fact that no creature is associated with God in genus. Hence the essence of God cannot be known through any created species whatever, whether sensible or intelligible. Accordingly, if God is to be known as He is, in His essence, God Himself must become the form of the intellect knowing Him and must be joined to that intellect, not indeed so as to constitute a single nature with it but in the way an intelligible species is joined to the intelligence. For God, who is His own being, is also His own truth, and truth is the form of the intellect .... Our intellect is not equipped by its nature with the ultimate disposition looking to that form which is truth; otherwise it would be in possession of truth from the beginning. Consequently, when it does finally attain to truth, it must be elevated by some disposition newly conferred on it. And this we call the light of glory, whereby our intellect is perfected by God, who alone by His very nature has this form properly as His own. In

[134] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology,* trans. Cyril Vollert, S.J. (St. Louis and London: Herder, 1952), 109-11 (c. 104). *(Compendium theologiae,* c. 104, in S. Thomae Aquinatis Doctoric Angelici, *Opuscula theologica,* vol. 1: *De re dogmatica et morali* [Rome: Marietti, 1954], 51f.: "208. Est autem impossibile nos ultimum finem consequi per hoc quod intellectus noster sic reducatur in actum: nam virtus intellectus agentis est ut phantasmata, quae sunt intelligibilia in potentia, faciat intelligibilia in actu, ut ex superioribus patet [cap. 83]. Phantasmata autem sunt accepta per sensum. Per intellectum igitur agentem intellectus noster in actum reducitur respectu horum intelligibilium tantum in quorum notitiam per sensibilia possumus devenire. Impossibile est autem in tali cognitione ultimum hominis finem consistere. Nam ultimo fine adepto, desiderium naturale quiescit. Quantumcumque autem aliquis proficiat intelligendo secundum praedictum modum cognitionis quo a sensu scientiam percipimus, adhuc remanet naturale desiderium ad alia cognoscenda .... Uncle semper remanet naturale desiderium respectu perfectioris cognitionis. Impossibile est autem naturale desiderium esse vanum. 209. Consequimur igitur ultimum finem in hoc quod intellectus noster fiat in actu, aliquo sublimiori agente quam sit agens nobis connaturale, quod quiescere faciat desiderium quod nobis inest naturaliter ad sciendum. Tale est autem in nobis sciendi desiderium, ut cognoscentes effectum, desideremus cognoscere causam, et in quacumque re cognitis quibuscumque eius circumstantiis, non quiescit nostrum desiderium, quousque eius essentiam cognoscamus. Non igitur naturale desiderium sciendi potest quietari in nobis, quousque primam causam cognoscamus, non quocumque modo, sed per eius essentiam. Prima autem causa Deus est, ut ex superioribus patet [cap. 3; 68ss]. Est igitur finis ultimus intellectualis creaturae, Deum per essentiam videre.")

somewhat the same way the disposition which heat has for the form of fire can come from fire alone. This is the light that is spoken of in Psalm 35: 10: "In Thy light we shall see light."[135]

For Aquinas, there cannot exist an innate, unconditional natural desire for the supernatural-the supernatural in the strict sense of the word being nothing less than the specific overarching good of God according to his proper quiddity, the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as presented by revelation and inchoately embraced in the infused virtue of divine faith.[136] Henri de Lubac, with the thesis of a "natural desire for the supernatural," overshot the goal. What has to occur-and indeed what does occur in the economy of salvation via divine *convenientia-is* a perfecting of the natural, conditional desire by sanctifying grace into the unconditional desire of the infused virtue of hope to see "the God whom I know (by faith) *secundum suam propriam quidditatem* (and as the Trinity), the God whom I know as able to give Himself to me *according as He is the object of the divine knowledge itself.*"[137]

rn Aquinas, *Compendium ofTheology,* 111-12 (c. 105). *(Compendium theologiae,* c. 105, [Marietti ed., 52f.]: "211. Manifestum est autem ex superioribus [cap. 12, 13] quod nullum creatum communicat cum Deo in genere. Per quamcumque igitur speciem creatam non solum sensibilem, sed intelligibilem, Deus cognosci per essentiam non potest. Ad hoc igitur quod ipse Deus per essentiam cognoscatur, oportet quod ipse Deus fiat forma intellectus ipsum cognoscentis, et coniungatur ei non ad unam naturam constituendam, sed sicut species intelligibilis intelligenti. Ipse enim sicut est suum esse, ita est sua veritas, quae est forma intellectus. 212 .... Intellectus autem noster non est ex ipsa sua natura in ultima dispositione existens respectu formae illius quae est veritas, quia sic a principio ipsam assequeretur. Oportet igitur quod cum earn consequitur, aliqua dispositione de novo addita elevetur, quam dicimus gloriae lumen: quo quidem intellectus noster a Deo perficitur, qui solus secundum suam naturam hanc propriam formam habet, sicut nee dispositio caloris ad formam ignis potest esse nisi ab igne: et de hoc lumine in Psal. xxxv, 10 dicitur: *In lumine tuo videbimus lumen.")*

[136] On theological faith, see Cessario, *Christian Faith and the Theological Life.*

[137] Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge,* 284 n. 1.

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THE ABIDING THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF HENRI DE LUBAC'S *SURNATUREL*

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THE MOST INFLUENTIAL EVENT in Catholic theology of the twentieth century was the appearance of Henri de Lubac's *Surnaturel* in 1946.[1] This is not an especially novel or controversial claim. In this article I want to say why I think it true, and true precisely because of the centrality and fundamentality of the theological theses de Lubac put forward, and not merely in virtue of its historical location, its being "of this time, of that place," to steal a title from Lionel Trilling. But before that, which is indeed the burden of this essay, something should be said about some of the other ways in which a theologian can be-and de Lubac was-influential. Moreover, it will help to situate de Lubac if one considers him next to some other of the great figures of the past century.

By "influential" here I mean "pivotal," an event that makes a watershed, that marks a before and an after. There are many great

[1] *Sumaturel: Etudes historiques,* nouvelle edition, ed. Michel Sales, S. J. (Paris: Desclee de Brouwer, 1991). De Lubac was born in 1886 and died in 1991. For a good introduction to the context, content, and importance of *Sumaturel,* see the articles collected in *Sumaturel: A Controversy at the Heart of Twentieth-Century Thomistic Thought,* ed. Serge-Thomas Bonino, O.P., trans. Robert Williams and revised by Matthew Levering (Ave Maria, Fla.: Sapientia Press, 2009). This is a translation of a volume published by the *Revue Thomiste* in 2001. Also highly to be recommended is Bernard Sesboiie, S.J., "Le Surnaturel chez Henri de Lubac: Un conflit autour d'une theologie," *Recherches de science religieuse* 80 (1992): 373-408. For de Lubac's own account of the circumstances of the production of *Sumaturel,* see chapter 2 of his *At the Service of the Church: Henri de Lubac Reflects on the Circumstances That Occasioned His Writings,* trans. Anne Elizabeth Englund (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993).

works of theology from the first half and middle of the twentieth century. But Charles Cardinal Journet's *Church of the Word Incarnate* (French 1941, 1951) or Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange's *De revelatione* (1945) do not mark a before and after. Something like Yves Congar's *Chretiens desunis* (1937) marks a before and after in Catholic ecumenical theology, but not in Catholic theology as a whole.

The significance of *Surnaturel* does not belong to it in isolation, of course. Part of its influence owes to the cumulative impact of other works to which it is related both by historical assumptions and by systematic links. But *Surnaturel* is the keystone of the arch. De Lubac and his work, crowned by *Surnaturel*, turn out to be pivotal, I think, in three ways.[2] First, there is his influence on both the form and the content of the publicly taught and institutionally sponsored theology of the Church. As to form, it is more historically minded. As to content, it is less focused on already defined dogma, it is almost anything except neo-Scholastic-and if not anti-philosophical, it is inclined to be at least a-philosophical, a-metaphysical.[3] Combined with the more historical cast of things, this can induce a mild case of historicism, which de Lubac would by no means have countenanced.

In a second way, there is de Lubac's influence on how the history of theology is read and understood, and what we understand its possibilities to be. Not only neo-Scholasticism since Leo XIII, but also the silver Scholasticism of the sixteenth and ensuing centuries have been largely consigned to oblivion because they are thought to be a distortion of St. Thomas and the larger tradition. Furthermore, if as Serge-Thomas Bonino says, de Lubac taught people better to appreciate St. Thomas's relation to the Fathers, he also flattened out the difference between St. Thomas

[2] For a similar list, see Serge-Thomas Bonino, "Introduction," in *Surnaturel: A Controversy*, viii.

[3] For the destructive effect of de Lubac on the regnant neo-Scholasticism, see Fergus Kerr's *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 86. See also R.R. Reno's review of Kerr's book in *First Things* (May 2007).

and the Fathers.[4] Saint Thomas is no longer esteemed as doing something different, as offering us theology in its "scientific" form.[5] Although de Lubac himself, obviously, read St. Thomas, he made it possible to link present concerns to patristic heritage while skipping the reception of the latter by the high Scholasticism of the thirteenth century. For some, this was a recovery of legitimate theological pluralism; for others, it was an impoverishment of the very idea of theology and, together with the abandonment of its scientific form, a detaching of theology from an adequate metaphysics of being.

De Lubac's influence is pivotal in a third way, too, in that he has installed in the common mind of countless contemporary theologians certain key theses in theological anthropology. This is what I shall be mostly concerned with.

Preliminarily, however, it is useful to underscore de Lubac's unique position by considering other figures of recent Catholic theology. It is impossible to do this here in any depth or breadth but one can at least glance at the table of contents of Fergus Kerr's *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians.* Is Karl Rahner's *Spirit in the World* (German, 1939) pivotal?[6] One may have been tempted to say that in America forty years ago. However, transcendental Thomism is, I think, fairly moribund now. Doctoral students still trawl through the vast ocean of Rahner's corpus for dissertations. But those who appreciated the transcendental part of transcendental Thomism can now proceed directly to the German Idealists without the detour through the thirteenth century, in part because of de Lubac. Those who appreciated the Thomist part have come to realize how little interested Rahner really was in the thought of St. Thomas, and have had further to deal with Heidegger's historical claims about onto-theology more directly. As for the later Rahner, the more he

[4] Bonino, "Introduction," viii. See also Henry Donneaud, O.P., *"Surnaturel* through the Fine-Tooth Comb of Traditional Thomism," in *Surnaturel: A Controversy,* 56-57.

[5] See Aidan Nichols, O.P., "Thomism and the Nouvelle Theologie," *The Thomist* 64 (2000): 1-20, especially 12-15, reporting the reactions of Marie-Michel Labourdette, O.P., and Marie-Joseph Nicolas, O.P.

[6] Rahner was born in 1904 and died in 1984.

wrote, the more the white, incandescent light of the experience of the God who has come close to us overwhelmed all the colors in the palette of revelation, and made the contours of the creed itself difficult of discernment. [7]

There is also Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-88). The *Theo-drama* especially has been something fresh and enlivening for Catholic theology. But then, does not Balthasar rather return us to de Lubac? Do they not together make one front? It is notable that the same institutional resources, the journal *Communio* and Ignatius Press, serve the memory and the continuation of their work equally. They both sought the destruction of neo-Scholasticism, Balthasar more openly, I think, in *Razing the Bastions (Schleifung der Bastionen* [1952]), but de Lubac more effectively. De Lubac's work as a whole, but especially *Surnaturel,* dismantled Scholasticism by purporting to demonstrate the historical and theological ignorance of its custodians. Every learned footnote was a shell landed on the parapets Balthasar wanted thrown down. In this way, *Surnaturel* makes things like the *Theo-drama* possible-I mean, possible as finding an audience.

Mentioning Balthasar reminds us that of course de Lubac was not alone in the work of destruction. In some sense, *Surnaturel* operates as the flagship of a potent squadron. There were Balthasar and Rahner, and also men like Henri Bouillard *(Conversion et grace chez s. Thomas d'Aquin* [1944]). This is to return to the first sense in which de Lubac was influential.

Should *Surnaturel* also be taken to stand with Marie-Dominique *Chenu'sLe Sau/choir: Une ecole de theologie* (1937)? [8] This, I think, is the only possible rival to *Surnaturel,* because it is such an important step along the way to a revival of that part of

[7] Bernard Lonergan, the other great transcendental Thomist, certainly aspired to a pivotal role with *Method in Theology* (1973) and its cognitional theoretic prologue, *Insight* (1957). The Lonergan Institutes and Workshops and Newsletters continue very much with us, as a visit to the Internet will verify. His work has born most fruit, to my mind, in such people as Ben Meyer in exegesis and history *(The Aims of Jesus* [London: SCM Press, 1979) and Hugo Meynell in philosophical theology, and continues to shape many minds. But one does not have to take a position on Lonergan in order to practice Catholic theology. With de Lubac, arguably, one does.

[8] Chenu was born 1895 and died in 1990.

Modernism that had to do with how theological statements and dogma mean what they do, how they could be true, how they are related to history. *La nouvelle theologie,* whose center is de Lubac, was certainly in some measure the continuation of the controversy over *Une ecole.* However, Chenu and de Lubac stand for what I take to be two different wings of what Pius XII addressed in *Humani generis* (1950).

Chenu renewed the historicist view of theology and dogma condemned first by Pius X, then by Pius XII, a view developed transcendentally by the later Rahner, and ending in what has become the default position of many contemporary theologians, who make of experience a font of theology as long as it is understood to be something communally and culturally mediated-a Catholic form (Alfred Loisy's) of Liberal Protestantism. [9] *Humani generis* addresses this in article 16. But de Lubac was no relativist. His properly theological influence consists in the re-Platonizing of theology, a re-Platonizing which has been developed and continued in the postmodern drive to avoid the strictures of Heidegger against onto-theology. [10] Pius touches on this-not in these terms of course-in articles 25 and 26 of the encyclical.

[9] For Chenu's historicism, see Thomas Joseph White, OP., "The Precarity of Wisdom: Modern Dominican Theology, Perspectivalism and the Tasks of Reconstruction"' in *Ressourcement Thomism: Sacred Doctrine, the Sacraments and the Moral Life,* ed. Matthew Levering and Reinhard Hutter (Washington D.C.: The Catholic Universitry of America Press, forthcoming). For Rahner's historicism, see Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Human Religion and the Religion of Christ," in idem, *New Elucidations,* trans. Sister Mary Theresilde Skerry (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 74-87.

[10] See Joseph Komonchak's discussion of de Lubac's different estimations of the Aristotelian and patristic views of man, the difference between man as a nature and man as the image of God, in "Theology and Culture at Mid-Century: The Example of Henri de Lubac," *Theological Studies* 91 (1990): 579-602. For the post-modern interest in neo-Platonism, one can start with Wayne Hankey, "Le role du neoplatonisme clans Jes tentatives postmodernes d'echapper al'onto-theologie," pour le XXVIIe Congres de l' Association des Societes de Philosophie de Langue Fram;aise. Universite Laval, Quebec, 18 aout - 22 aout, 1998, published in *La metaphysique: son histoire, sa critique, ses jeux,* Actes du XXVIIe Congres de I' Association des Societes de Philosophie de Langue Fram;;aise,2 vols. (Quebec: Les Presses de l'Universite Laval, 2000); and "Neoplatonism and Contemporary French Philosophy," *Dionysius* 23 (2005): 161-89. Both articles can be found posted on Hankey's website.

In this light, we can divide the theological territory after the Second Vatican Council as follows: (1) those who agree with Chenu, and the later Rahner, on dogma, and also with de Lubac on the correctness of his theological anthropology and reading of St. Thomas; (2) those who do not agree with Chenu on dogma, but agree with de Lubac, and appreciate him together with Balthasar-the "Communio" theologians; (3) those who agree with neither. [11]

It is an immense task to come to terms with de Lubac and his work. To understand almost any figure in Catholic theology of the past seventy-five years, it is important to ask what his relation was to de Lubac. This makes it both necessary and difficult to come to terms with him. There are also other difficulties of which it is necessary to be aware. They involve the complicated ecclesial and political context in which pro- and anti-de Lubac camps formed in post-war France. De Lubac was deeply committed to "spiritual resistance" to the Nazi power throughout the war. For this he suffered, and narrowly escaped arrest. Some of de Lubac's theological opponents, on the other hand, were supporters of Vichy. [12]

In this essay, however, I want to consider the teaching of de Lubac, not as a counter in the relative fortunes of conservative and progressive agendas, but as an influence within the mind of Church. In the end, this is what must drive the "political" for Catholics. It is a matter not of article 16 *Humani generis-that* is for Chenu-but of article 26. [13] De Lubac makes an historical claim in *Surnaturel*, a claim about the history of theology, but he also makes a properly theological claim, about the *res*, about how things are between man and God. Both claims are contested;

[11] In this light, we can appreciate the tragedy of Lonergan: he sought to provide an inoculation against the historicism and doctrinal relativism to which the first group fell prey; he sought to maintain the scientific character of theology, which the second group has abandoned.

[12] For the circumstances of the publication of *Surnaturel,* see Etienne Fouilloux, "Henri de Lubac at the Moment of the Publication of *Sumaturel,"* in *Sumaturel: A Controversy,* 3-20.

[13] In *Humani generis* 26, Pius reproves those who "destroy the gratuity of the supernatural order, since God, they say, cannot create intellectual beings without ordering and calling them to the beatific vision."

neither can be separated from the other. Still, the second is the more important.

How strange the claim for the importance of *Surnaturel* sounds upon opening de Lubac's volume and looking at the list of what must strike the novice, anyway, as very prolix, if very learned, historical studies of some of the obscurities in the controversial theology of the sixteenth and seventeeth centuries and in the Scholasticism of the last 500 years. How could studies on such things as the emergence of the idea of the natural impeccability of angels and of the language of Christian anthropology, "supernatural" and "superadded," have moved the theological world off its axis?

On the other hand, the first and fourth parts of the book may seem even on their face to have some greater importance. And it is indeed in these parts, the essays on "pure nature" and the "natural desire for God," that de Lubac accomplishes most of his work.

De Lubac's theological claim is, negatively, that we do not need the idea of "pure nature" in order to safeguard the gratuity of the supernatural order, and, positively, that there is in man an innate desire for the vision of God. His historical claim is that the first notion is a sort of bastard child of late Scholasticism, and that the second, a notion alive and well in St. Thomas, has been obscured by that same late Scholasticism. It was the intertwining of the historical, Thomist, thesis with the theological one that made *Surnaturel* so impossible to ignore. Could de Lubac be right on both counts? Then Thomists have misunderstood St. Thomas, and the Church her own truth, for half a millennium. At the time, both seemed equally devastating, and so both equally impossible.

In what follows, I look first at "pure nature," and second at the natural desire for the vision of God. I then turn to some criticism of de Lubac's theses, dogmatic and historical. Last, I explore why he remains at the center, whether acknowledged or not, of so much Catholic theology.

I. PURE NATURE

What is "pure nature"? It is human nature considered simply in its created reality, in its mere distinction as a reality from God. This is to consider it apart from any gift of grace or glory.[14] That is to say, it is to consider it apart from any help of God that enables man to live with God's own life: knowing what only he could know (i.e., things beyond our own powers of investigation and reasoning), and loving in the manner only he can love (i.e., so acting from charity as to merit divine happiness), which is to know God as God knows himself. More concretely, pure nature is human nature considered as created, but not created in Christ and not destined to be conformed to Christ, not called to adoptive sonship, not called to a life animated by the Holy Spirit, not called to behold God face to face.[15] The idea of pure nature becomes theologically prominent, by de Lubac's account, in the sixteenth century response to Baianism. Michel de Bay- "Baius"-held in the sixteenth century that the gifts given to Adam before the Fall were all owed to him. They were all required in order that he be able to do what by his nature he should do, act in a morally upright way. Without the things given to Adam, Adam could not really be human. And acting in a morally upright way, with the aid of these helps that were owed to him, Adam would have merited heaven. To this collapse of the order of grace into nature, St. Robert Bellarmine responded with

[14] "Pure nature" is also unsullied by the effects of sin, the ignorance, malice, languor, and concupiscence spoken of in *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 85, a. 3. See Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., "Nature and Grace in Thomas Aquinas," in *Sumaturel: A Controversy,* 155-88.

[15] Here indeed we touch upon some of the scriptural grounds for the assertion of "pure nature." We are not natural but adopted sons of God. As the adopted son of a human father has no claim in justice to be so adopted, so we are freely and as a gift adopted, and this implies that things could have been otherwise. Again, God's native dwelling is in heaven, not in man, and the Holy Spirit is a guest in our hearts, not a servant. Again, according to Exodus 33:20 we cannot see God and live. Saint Thomas takes this to mean that we cannot see God in this life *(STh* I, q. 12, a. 11). He also teaches that in the next life, we cannot see God without the *lumen gloriae (STh* I, q. 12, a. 5). Exodus seems also to imply, however, that were we somehow admitted to cognitive immediacy vis-a-vis a divine "object" and in an ungraced nature, our life should be desttoyed. It worth recalling that, for St. Thomas, rapture is a species of violence *(STh* II-II, q. 175, a. 1).

the hypothesis of "pure nature." To Adam is owed by nature the air we breathe and the water we drink. To Adam is owed by nature the capacity to come to the knowledge of the moral law and the chance to acquire the moral virtues. But it is not owed us that we be called to heaven or furnished with the means-grace and the theological virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit-by which to get there. To Adam is owed friendship with Eve, but not with God. We could have been established in a purely natural condition, and we could have been left to attain but a purely natural end, with no insult taken or injustice done. This natural end would include some sort of knowledge of God, to be sure, but something far short of the vision of God face to face, knowing even as we are known.

Why does de Lubac think "pure nature" such a dangerous notion? It severs or at least ignores the link between the orders of nature and grace without which we fall into "extrinsicism." There are two issues here, at least, an apologetic one and a systematic one.

The notion of pure nature can, and sometimes has been, developed in such a way as to imply that man need not be interested in the offer of grace and the invitation to glory. Having a natural end perfective of his natural powers, a natural happiness satisfying all his natural appetites, the gospel can sound for him as news, perhaps curious news, but not good news, not as news necessary if we are at all to find happiness.

The systematic issue is that of the unity and integrity of the divine plan. The completeness of the natural order in the developed system of pure nature, and the parallelism of the natural and supernatural orders, can lead us to think of the supernatural order as a second thought, an after thought. First God thinks out human nature. Then he considers whether and what extra gifts to give it. The unity of the world order becomes questionable, and therefore also the unity, as it were, of the divine mind. This is incompatible with such texts as the prologue to the Fourth Gospel or the first chapter of Colossians, where all things

are created in Christ, and the divine destiny of man is declared already in his origins.

II. THE NATURAL DESIRE TO SEE GOD

Contrary to the hypothesis of pure nature, de Lubac would have us reassert the natural desire for the vision of God, which is the positive link between nature and grace, the natural and the supernatural. This natural desire is something structural in man. It is a built-in appetite, as much as is our desire for food or for society. It is not a conditional desire, but an absolute desire. The supernatural finality of man is something "inscribed" on our being.[16] The desire to see God is therefore in the first place a structural desire, and not a conscious desire. It comes to explicit consciousness and we know its existence only when it is woken by the word of the gospel.[17]

The influence of Maurice Blondel (1861-1949) and the support of Etienne Gilson (1884-1978) can be recalled here. On the issue of what St. Thomas means by the natural desire to see God, de Lubac enjoys the agreement of the great historian of medieval Christian thought, especially of St. Thomas's thought, as to the accuracy of his exegesis. Gilson gave, and for some still does give, historical cover to de Lubac.[18]

More original was the influence of Blondel. We might urge the candidacy of Blondel's *L'Action* to be counted the most significant event within Catholic theology of the twentieth century, except that it was sustained as a philosophical thesis, and occurred in 1893. Its bearing on de Lubac's project, however, is enormous. In *L'Action,* Blondel undertakes to show that human life and moral action cannot make ultimate sense without the postulation of something more than natural, more than worldly, entering into

[16] This is the way de Lubac puts it in *The Mystery of the Supernatural,* trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York: Crossroad, 1998), 55: "My finality, which is expressed by this desire, is inscribed upon my very being as it has been put into this universe by God." Or the finality is said to be "imprinted" on our being (ibid., 76, 80).

[17] Ibid., chap. 11, "The Unknown Desire."

[18] As does also M.-D. Chenu to de Lubac's reading of subsequent Thomist tradition.

the scope of our hope and expectation. He does not demonstrate the Christian supernatural order, of course. But he demonstrates that there is in man an anticipation of something beyond our limits, something that can be shaped and determined in the Christian form, though we can know that precise form only with revelation. *L'Action* is very much a philosophy pointing beyond the limits of philosophy, and for that reason it made Blondel's philosophical career difficult in secularist France. What is important for the purposes of this essay is to see that, in the terms of *Surnaturel,* Blondel offers as close a *philosophical* demonstration as is possible that in fact, nature is not "pure," and that there is a natural desire for the supernatural.

For de Lubac, Sacred Scripture (e.g., the Colossians hymn), the Fathers (recall St. Augustine's restless heart), the medievals rightly read (including St. Thomas), and philosophy all converge on the truth of his theses: he feels the position is *strong,* unshakable.

If the desire for the vision of God is natural, in the sense of innate, and absolute, how is grace not compromised in its character precisely as what is not owed to us? If the desire is natural in the sense de Lubac gives to it, how has he not repeated the mistakes of Baius and Cornelius Jansen, the criticism of which begins his account of the modern theology of grace and nature? De Lubac never denies the gratuity of grace, never says that grace is something owed, never says our deification is something due to us in justice. The question is whether he implies it. If the desire for the vision of God is natural, how can the object not be owed in the same way as air is owed to those whose nature includes lungs, or water is owed to those whose nature is 97 percent watery? It was this question that aroused, and still arouses, the greatest resistance to de Lubac's views.

De Lubac has three strategies here. The first is to say that the desire is a desire not for vision as owed, but for vision precisely *as* freely given gift.[19] The desire is not to possess God as something

[19] De Lubac, *Sumaturel,* 484: "main tenons que le desir de Dieu est absolu. Le plus absolu de tous Jes desirs. Desirer la communication divine comme un libre don, comme une initiative gratuite, c'est bien la desirer d'un desir par lui-meme inefficace, mais ce n'est pas pour autant, ainsi qu'on dit parfois, n'en avoir qu'un desir platonique, conditionnel our conditionne" ("we

due to us, as something our own and as falling within the scope of our power. In that way, we do not escape our own confines, and we are not beyond ourselves. The natural desire for God is a desire to be beyond our nature, to exist ecstatically in the freedom and freely given friendship of God.

A second strategy characterizes the natural desire as something given us just because God wills to give himself to us in friendship. [20] As de Lubac is fond of saying, our desire for the vision of God is his call to us, and the call is prior to the desire. The desire to *go* up higher is installed only in view of the ontologically prior divine invitation to *come* up higher.

A third strategy, one developed subsequently to *Surnaturel* itself, is to understand the gift of the natural desire by analogy with the gift of creation itself. [21] Just as there is no creature prior to creation to receive the gift of created being, so there is no human creature prior to creation to receive the ordination to the vision of God. This is because a nature's finality defines the nature. There is no daylight between nature and finality. If then our true finality is unto the vision of God, then this defines our nature, and cannot be something superadded to an already created human nature. And yet, just as created being is a gift, utterly gratuitous, so the ordination to God as to one's end, enjoyed in vision, is likewise a gift, utterly gratuitous.

maintain that the desire is absolute, the most absolute of all desires. To desire the divine sharing as a free gift, as a gratuitous initiative, is indeed to desire it with a desire that is of itself inefficacious, but it is not for that reason, as is sometimes said, to have but a platonic desire for it, conditionally or conditioned").

[20] De Lubac, *Sumaturel,* 486-87: "S'il ya dans notre nature un desir de voir Dieu, ce ne peut etre que parce que Dieu veut pour nous cette fin surnaturelle qui consiste ale voir. C'est parce que, la voulant et ne cessant de la vouloir, ii en depose et ne cesse d'en deposer le desir dans notre nature. En sorte que ce desir n'est autre que son appel" ("If there is in our nature a desire to see God, this can only be because God wants this supernatural end for us, an end that consists in seeing Him. It is because, willing it and not ceasing to will it, He puts the desire for it and does not stop putting the desire for in our nature, in such away that the desire is not anything else but his call").

[21] For this argument, see Henri de Lubac, "The Mystery of the Supernatural," in idem, *Theology in History,* trans. Anne Englund Nash (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 293-94, 300-301. This article first appeared in 1949. See also *Mystery of the Supernatural,* 71, 79-80.

The second strategy seems to envision the possibility of our nature without the desire. The third strategy, however, closes this possibility off: we would not be ourselves, what we are, without the natural desire. This strategy seems to envision the possibility of *some* created spirit, if not those actually created, *not* called to vision. In fact, the deepest impulse of de Lubac is to deny there can be created spirit not called to vision. Under the pressure of *Humani generis*, however, he grants the possibility of some created spirit not called to vision. Pope Pius teaches that Catholic theologians must deny that God "cannot create intellectual beings without ordering and calling them to the beatific vision" (HG 26).[22] To be sure, this possibility remains "abstract" for de Lubac, for *we* could not have been so created and still be ourselves, but even so, according to John Milbank, granting even this much to the magisterium threatens to tip de Lubac's position into incoherence.[23] It is worth adding that de Lubac's concession is little responsive to the teaching of the Holy Father, who surely understands, contrary to de Lubac, that *we* could indeed have been so created, created as not called to grace and glory.

III. SOME EVALUATION

What should one think of these strategies de Lubac employs to deny that his position destroys the gratuity of grace? To say that we desire God not as something justly given us and as our due but as a freely given gift, and that therefore the natural desire does not encroach on the gratuity of grace seems to me to confuse innate desire and conscious desire. The "as" in the saying that we desire God only *as* a gift is something that is installed only by

[22] "Deum entia intellectu praedita condere non posse, quin eadem ad beatificam visionem ordinet et vocet." For de Lubac's strange claim that the Holy Father is doing nothing except repeat what he, de Lubac had taught in "Le Mystere du surnaturel" (1949) and in his very words, see *At the Service of the Church,* 71, 308-9. See "The Mystery of the Supernatural," 302; *Mystery of the Supernatural,* 79-80.

[23] John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle: Henri de Lubac and the Debate concerning the Supernatural* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 37-41. For a response to this book, see Reinhard Hutter, "Feingold, Milbank, and the Desire to See God," *Nova et Vetera* (English edition) 5 (2007): 81-132.

consciousness. It is conscious mind, with its capacity to bend back on itself and its objects that inserts the precisive *qua*, the specifying *as*. Thus, it cannot save the assertion of an innate, preconscious, constitutive desire from the consequence that gratuity is destroyed.

The second strategy does not preserve gratuity for us unless it is granted that God can make us without the natural desire for vision. But the third strategy seems to preclude that. After all, de Lubac says of himself that he would not be himself, he would not be what he is, were he not called to the vision of God. This certainly seems to follow from the third strategy. To my mind, it is the clearest expression of what is wrong with de Lubac's position. If I cannot be what I am without the innate desire to see God, if I cannot be placed in being without this, an innate desire, then it becomes unthinkable that God will frustrate it. More importantly, it becomes impossible for me to think of myself as not rightly receiving the gift of grace and vision as the completion of my desire. But in that case, how can I experience grace as a gift? How can I experience grace as grace, as a gift that is set off from all the others, the incomparable gift? The gifts of God are all bound up in the one gift of creation, and I cannot discover a self, I cannot conceive of a self, not ordered to vision. I can experience myself as a whole as a gift. But I cannot experience grace and glory as *another* gift. I cannot experience it as a grace to a self that could be what it is without the gift. But this is required, to my mind, by the reality of election discovered in the Bible. To be chosen is to realize oneself as not having to be chosen. And again, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard nor the heart of man conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor 2:9).

Speaking more strictly here, I would distinguish person and nature. I think it true to say that we are not who we are without the ordination to God, without the grace he has offered, without the promise of vision. Who we are is something dramatically constituted; it is something we become according as we are related to other persons, make moral decisions, and especially, according as we are engaged with the God revealed to us by

Christ, whose Spirit dwells in our hearts. But what we are-that is another question. What we are can be the same, indeed, is the same, whether we are called to grace and glory or not. Sharing in the divine nature does not give us another nature. Deification does not make us no longer men.

The dogmatic issue raised by the teaching of *Surnaturel* is therefore settled, and against de Lubac, by Pius XII. The historical issue of the interpretation of the teaching of St. Thomas is, I think, settled by the monograph of Lawrence Feingold.[24] An innate desire for St. Thomas, a desire built in to the nature, prior to knowledge of its object, prior to any elicited act relative to its object-such a desire is an absolute, unconditional desire, and an absolute desire destroys the gratuity of grace.[25] To deny such a desire for the supernatural does not mean man is not "open" to the supernatural; it does not mean the supernatural end is not *conveniens* relative to the nature. It means there is no natural *actual* ordination to a supernatural end. Rather, for St. Thomas, our being actually ordered to a supernatural end is itself a supernatural work.

> Just as the first perfection of man, which is the rational soul, exceeds the capacity of corporeal matter, so does the last perfection which man can attain to, the beatitude of eternal life, exceed the capacity of the whole of human nature. And because each and every thing is ordained to an end through some operation, and because those things which are unto the end have to be proportioned to the end in some way, it is necessary that there be some perfections of man by which he is ordered to the supernatural end, which perfections exceed the capacity of the natural principles of man. But this could not happen unless, beyond the natural principles, there were some supernatural principles of operation infused into man by God. *(De virtutibus in communi,* a. 10)

Prior to grace, without grace, there is no ordination to the supernatural end. If one thinks Feingold is correct in taking such texts as controlling, if one thinks he is correct about St. Thomas, and one thinks St. Thomas is correct about the *res,* then, once

[24] Lawrence Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God according to St. Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters* (Rome: Apollinare Studi, 2001).

[25] This is the burden of ibid., chap. 2; see also ibid., 648-53.

again, de Lubac's position is untenable. [26] One may say, as Bonino does, that one of the abiding achievements of de Lubac is to have shown the openness of nature to grace, and this against over-confident systems of late Scholasticism, imagining in too great detail a world without grace. But the exact way de Lubac asserts this openness cannot be sustained.

I have mentioned John Milbank, who is perhaps the most vociferous claimant to the mantle of de Lubac. He thinks to style Radical Orthodoxy as the most faithful custodian and developer, theologically and speculatively, of the theses of the *Surnaturel.* If Milbank is correct, if Radical Orthodoxy really is the legitimate heir to *Surnaturel,* then making up our minds about de Lubac is a much easier task than previously, in that Milbank broadcasts *en clair* what de Lubac almost always encrypted in his observations on and criticisms of the views of other theologians, ancient and modern. Then one may say, I think, that de Lubac's position is as incoherent as some Thomist critics argued when it was first proposed. Milbank says that the natural desire is neither of nature nor of grace, and is of both. [27] That is, he thinks de Lubac anticipates the collapse of the distinction between the orders of nature and grace that he says is the original position of Christian wisdom, a wisdom according to which philosophy is no handmaid, but rather an organ of theology.

To be sure, de Lubac and Milbank preserve at least part of the divine freedom, the gratuity of creation itself. In holding so insistently to the necessity of the perfection of our return to the First Principle, however, they risk not being able to escape the completion of the neo-Platonist circle, and so must also assert the necessity of our emanation from God. Plotinian and Prodan Neoplatonism is not a cafeteria line; things are very tightly connected. In this light, de Lubac and Milbank stand for a partial

[26] As for the assertion of the natural desire to see God in *STh* I, q. 12, a. 1, I return to the interpretation of Sylvester of Ferrara; see Feingold, *Nature Desire to See God,* 319-21. Our orientation to the truth, in virtue of which we want to know the cause of things-that is our "openness" to a supernatural end; and our conditional desire to know God once we know he is-that is the sign of it.

[27] Milbank, *Suspended Middle,* 39-40.

identification of Christianity with Neoplatonism. Others, like Sergius Bulgakov, stand for a more complete identification. [28] And indeed, if the natural desire is innate, all the rest seems to follow: if the desire is innate and so *defines* our nature, then the consequence seems inescapable-however systematically and for the sake of the gospel we try to obscure it-that in some sense hardly distinguishable from univocity our nature *is* divine; therefore, our end must be the divine end, the possession of the divine goodness, and, looking backward, our beginning must be an emanation that is more like generation than creation. [29]

If those last implications are correct, then a position like Bulgakov's is coherent, and de Lubac's, which is an uneasy mix of Aristotle and Plato, is not. [30]

IV. WHY DE LUBAC'S SPECULATIVE POSITION STAYS ALIVE

I have already touched upon a very important first reason why de Lubac's position remains in play, and that is the perennial availability and attractiveness of the Neoplatonist picture of the world. Nor is the difficulty of integrating the truth both of Plato and of Aristotle into the gospel to be underestimated. But there are other reasons that de Lubac remains a contemporary theological voice.

[28] See Sergius Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God,* trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008), 120-21 (necessity of creation}, 169-70, 187 (necessity of a supernatural end).

[29] In the same vein, see Guy Mansini, O.S.B., "Tight Neo-Platonist Henology and Slack Christian Ontology: Christianity as an Imperfect Neo-Platonism," *Nova et Vetera* (English edition), forthcoming.

[30] This is, of course, the very assessment de Lubac makes of St. Thomas; see the concluding contrast of the Aristotelian and patristic (Platonist) anthropologies in *Sumaturel,* 435-36. De Lubac writes: "partout, chez saint Thomas, ces deux conceptions de la *nature* aritotelicienne et de *!'image* patristique se melent, sans qu'on puisse dire si elles s'y combinent vraiment ou si elles s'y heurtent, ni laquelle des deux finallement reussit a dompter l'autre" ("everywhere with St. Thomas, these two conceptions, that of Aristotelian *nature* and that of patristic *image* mix with one another, without it being possible to say if they truly combine, or if they just bang in to one another, nor which of the two finally succeeds in overcoming the other"). See Komonchak, "Theology and Culture," 590-91; and Tracey Rowland, *Culture and the Thomist Tradition: After Vatican II* (London: Routledge, 2005), 130-31, reading Macintyre.

A) The Theorem of the Supernatural

First, there is a difficulty in negotiating not only the continuity but also the difference between the Fathers and St. Thomas. One will look long and hard in the Fathers, and mostly in vain, for any even implicit expression of the gratuity of grace as distinct from the gratuity of creation. I think it is implicit in the later Augustine when, in the controversy about grace, he tracks down the necessity of an interior grace for conversion and charity.[31] But most patristic discussion of our *de facto* end as willed by God, while giving due expression to the generosity and goodness of God, and indeed marveling at the gift of himself as unforeseen and unforeseeable apart from Christ, does not set this *de facto* end off against the foil of a purely natural end. The idea of a purely natural end, while it is nowhere said to be unthinkable, is in fact unthought. The gratuity of friendship with God and the freedom with which he so engages us is praised, but not played off against an order of "pure nature."

One should think here also of the appeal de Lubac can and did make to such scriptural passages as 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Genesis 1:24. Saint Paul prays that the "spirit, soul, and body" of the Thessalonians be preserved complete. What is this *pneuma*, this "spirit"? For St. Irenaeus, it is the Holy Spirit, and the perfect man, the complete man, is not perfect and complete without the indwelling of God. For Origen, this *pneuma* is rather the created effect in us of God, perfecting us by divinizing us, setting us on the road to eternal life. The first answer evokes the proscription of "pure nature"; the second evokes a natural desire for the vision of God.[32]

Again, what does the first anthropological word of the Scriptures mean, that man is made in the image and likeness of God? How can an image be an image and not of its nature be

[31] See J. Patout Burns, *The Development of Augustine's Doctrine of Operative Grace* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1980), chap. 4, sect. 1.

[32] See Henri de Lubac, "Tripartite Anthropology," in *Theology in History*, 117-200, esp. 129 and 130-44 (Irenaeus and Origen). This essay was to be part of the great but never-completed work on mysticism.

ordered ever more to manifest its Exemplar? If such manifestation for rational and intellectual creatures means reflecting God also according as they know him, then there must be a natural desire, a desire innate to the image, to see God.[33] For his part, St. Thomas distinguishes what the image is according to nature and what it is according to grace.[34] But absent the installation of an Aristotelian conception of nature into Christian anthropology, there will always be the temptation to Platonize and speak, not of the nature of man, but of the nature of the image, the nature of manifestation and the idea of a conformation of the image to the Exemplar than which no greater can be thought.

Such considerations stemming from St. Paul and the way the Fathers read him, and from Genesis and the way it continues to seem possible to read it, give pause. It will always be tempting to explain Scripture and the Fathers by speaking of a "natural desire" for God. But it will be a mistake to think this will mean what it would for St. Thomas. In de Lubac's case, such a mistake would also be ironic, since he was himself sensitive to and taught us to be sensitive to such anachronism. "Nature" is a common word, and it has a common meaning and usage, and everyone will think he knows what it means in ordinary discourse and how to use it. But "natural desire" is a term of art in St. Thomas. It means what it does, first of all, only within the elaborate theoretical development St. Thomas makes of what Aristotle means by *physis.* Of this, de Lubac was thoroughly aware. The question is whether St. Thomas's indebtedness to the Fathers deformed what he had from Aristotle as much as de Lubac thought.

Again, and second, "nature" means what it does for St. Thomas *also* in dependence on what Bernard Lonergan has called the "theorem of the supernatural," distinguishing the orders of nature and of grace.[35] This distinction, which entails because of Aristotle

[33] De Lubac, *Sumaturel,* 490, and esp. 434-35, where de Lubac speaks of St. Thomas as "transposing" the biblical and Platonic anthropology of man as the image of God into the terms of Aristotle's conception of nature.

[34] *STh* I, q. 93, a. 4.

[35] Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Herder, 1971), 13-19.

also a distinction of ends, natural and supernatural, was worked out in the generation just prior to St. Thomas by Philip the Chancellor. And of this development, already in place by the time St. Thomas wrote, de Lubac seems not so aware.[36]

The lateness of Philip's distinction can of course be taken as an invitation for us to ask whether entertaining such an hypothesis is a theoretical advance or a corruption. But before we pronounce this distinction relative to our end a corruption, it will be enlightening for us to look in the Fathers for affirmations of the freedom of creation itself. Are they many and clear? They are not. There is a clear affirmation in St. Irenaeus. There is one also in St. Athanasius. St. Augustine, as one might reasonably expect, is clear.[37] But St. Gregory Nazianzen, for his part, gives us the pure Platonism, teaching that it is impossible to think God would not create, and Gregory does so, moreover, in the very vocabulary of Neoplatonism.[38] Does this make the divine freedom relative to creation questionable? Of course not. It shows us how slowly the Christian mind came to be concentrated and to find clarity of expression on absolutely essential issues.

B) The Issue of Apologetics

Second, there is the issue of apologetics. De Lubac especially regretted "pure nature" in its developed form for what he conceived of as its deleterious influence on the ability of Christians to mount a successful apologetics. Correlatively, the affirmation of the natural desire for God was the necessary foundation of such an apologetics.

[36] I find no reference to Philip the Chancellor in *Surnaturel,* nor in de Lubac's *Augustinianism and Modem Theology,* trans. Lancelot Sheppard (New York: Crossroad, 2000), nor in his *Mystery of the Supernatural.*

[37] See *The Teachings of the Church Fathers,* ed. John R. Willis, S.J. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), no. 84.

[38] "But since this movement of self-contemplation alone could not satisfy Goodness, but Good must be poured out and go forth beyond Itself to multiply the objects of Its beneficence, for this is essential to the highest Goodness, He first conceived the Heavenly and Angelic Powers ..." (Gregory Nazianzen, *Oration 38, "On the Theophany or Birthday of Christ,"* ix *[NPNF,* series 2, 7:347]).

This is a serious issue, and we should try to listen to de Lubac sympathetically at this point. Before we are justified by grace, before our embrace of Christianity, it seems that it must be possible for us to desire for ourselves a more than natural end, in fact, a strictly supernatural end. Otherwise, the proposition of the gospel cannot engage us, cannot interest us. But we can desire something as perfecting us only if, beyond a conscious interest in it, we can think of it as perfecting our nature. That is, our conscious desire for a supernatural end will move us to conversion only if we can suppose ourselves, by nature, to have some ordination to God as possessed in vision. By the same token, we must think a purely natural end insufficient, inadequate really to make us happy.

On this view, eliciting some mere velleity to see God, a conscious but vague wish upon a star that it could be true-what Suarez and John of St. Thomas make of the natural desire-is wholly inadequate. [39] We must, as apologists, be able to make the addressee of our apology conscious of such a desire as he thinks will make him the most unfortunate of men if it is not met. The apologist, on this view, proceeds to recommend the supernatural good of friendship with God, and so the gospel is recommended at its highest value.

Now, it is certainly correct that man by his nature must be thought to be open to the supernatural possession of God. But that does not sufficiently describe the situation of the man we are addressing. We can suppose him already conditioned by the supernatural *existentiale* of Karl Rahner. [40] Or we can suppose with de Lubac that he is constituted by an innate desire for the vision of God. Or we can suppose that he is already moved by habitual grace and charity, offered to him according to St. Thomas in his first moral decision. [41] On the first two suppositions, our apology will always recommend the gifts of God and his friendship to one able to appreciate them. But in the last

[39] For Suarez and John of St. Thomas, see Feingold, *Natural Desire,* 432-41.

[40] Karl Rahner, "Concerning the Relationship between Nature and Grace," in *Theological Investigations* l, trans. Cornelius Ernst (Baltimore: Helicon, 1961), 297-317.

[41] *STh* I-II, q. 89, a. 6.

case, we will not be sure whether the one we address is already animated by the supernatural and ready to understand the gift of God (cf. John 4:10). Perhaps indeed there are no signs of this. And then we may well proceed as does St. Augustine in his *First Catechetical Instruction.* [42] He starts by asserting the emptiness of such things as riches, honor, and bodily pleasures, and the foolishness of dedicating one's life to their pursuit. He evokes the inescapability of death. He evokes the judgment of God. He then holds out the prospect of "true rest," where there is a "sweetness and comfort," not further specified, that can be tasted even now. And he promises that there is "more genuine and pleasurable joy in a good conscience amidst afflictions" than is to be found by one "who has a bad conscience amid delights" (16.25). And the prospective Christian is exhorted to become one "for the sake of ... everlasting blessedness and perpetual rest" (17.27). There follows the production of a warrant for the reasonableness of faith, namely, the shape of salvation history as a whole, in which the role of Christ as the fulfillment of the types and prophecies of the Old Testament is especially prominent. The introductory and fundamental appeal, the initial motivation which is the engine of the entire discourse, is self-interest. It is not an exhortation to the love of God above all things; it is not an exhortation to friendship with God; it is not an evocation of the vision of God as completing our nature.

Why does Augustine aim so low? What has happened to the restless heart of the *Con(essions-that* heart made by God for himself, and unquiet until it rest in him? It has retired before a more mature episcopal experience. [43] We might turn to St. Thomas for some explanation. Prior to grace, in our postlapsarian condition, we do not love God, even naturally, above all things. Prior to grace, we are not concretely ordered to God. Prior to grace, we do not seek friendship with God. Rather, as St. Paul says, we are enemies of God (Rom 5). Prior to grace, man can

[42] St. Augustine, *The First Catechetical Instruction,* trans. Joseph Christopher, Ancient Christian Writers 2 (New York: Newman Press, 1946).

[43] The *Confessions* were written in 397-98; the *First Catechetical Instruction* dates from about 405. Augustine was ordained a priest in 391, and bishop in 395.

desire to see God, indeed, but desire it only concupiscently, as did the ancient philosophers. According as we love God for the sake of the act of contemplation as perfecting our nature, we love him by the love of concupiscence. [44] That is, the pagans desire it for their own good, and their own good as conceived by their own lights. This is to want the vision of God as *part* of my final end, and not *as* my final end, where it is the result of grace and charity. Prior to grace, we can desire God as wage-earners, but not as sons. And so St. Augustine does not address the prospective Christian as, now, already a son. He appeals to what the man can understand now of Christianity, and also of God, as serving his self-interest. He appeals to the wage-earner now in order to make him a son after he has entered the hospital of the Church.

When de Lubac says he could not be himself without the desire for God, he is telling the truth; but it is a truth about his person, not his nature.

The evocation of the fragility and emptiness of such things as riches and honor and the rather more extended canvass depicting the fleeting and tawdry character of bodily pleasure-surely a reflection of the fact of our practically universal conspiracy with concupiscent appetite-bears a further word of examination. It reminds us of what we want to escape, something more present to us than what is only promised, namely, the incalculable and unforeseeable good God offers-which is, after all something that no eye hath seen nor ear heard nor has it entered into the heart of man. It has not entered man's heart because, I would say, there is no desire for it "inscribed" upon our nature "as it has been put into this universe by God. "[45] It is rather something inscribed or written on our nature by the apostolic ministry, where our nature functions in this regard as a blank page which very suitably *receives* the inscription, and makes the letters legible in their unexpected novelty by the contrast with the page. Just as St. Paul conceives)t, the letters he makes of the Corinthians are of his writing, "not with ink but with the Spirit ... on tablets of human

[44] III *Sent.*, d. 35, q. 1, a. 2, qla. 1; *N Sent.*, d. 49, q. 1, a. 2, qla. 1, ad 3.

[45] De Lubac, *Mystery of the Supernatural*, 55.

hearts," and not some message already encrypted in those hearts (2 Cor 3:3).

De Lubac wants apology to look like mystagogical catechesis. I would say rather that apology should concentrate on our misery, which is manifested, first, in the order of knowledge, in that what is naturally knowable of God is in fact known only with great pains and then only rarely apart from revelation. Second, in the order of moral action, our natural end and perfection, insofar as that consists in the attainment of moral virtue, is hardly attained, and rarely apart from grace. Nor can we avoid grave moral fault apart from grace. Third, in the order of physical being, our properly personal life of knowing and loving has no intrinsic limitation, and yet we are consigned to a finite exercise of knowing and loving by death. What a doom and a destiny, what a dread and a gloom enveloping life. Fourth, in the order of metaphysical being, the soul is immortal and survives the wreck of death, since it is an incorruptibly simple quasi-substance. But without the body, we cannot see *philosophically* how it can place its typical operation, and a substance that does not operate seems hardly to exist at all.

For this misery there is only one remedy, grace; and for the conundrums, knots, paradoxes in thought our misery includes or leads to, there is only one solution, the light of the gospel. It is, I think, on the evocation of our misery, and not on the appeal to our innate desire for God, that such apologists as Pascal take their stand.

It is worth remembering that it is enough to approach the sacrament of reconciliation with imperfect contrition. The sacrament will evoke and provide perfect contrition, if we lack it. But sometimes, it is all we can do to come to the sacrament because we dread the loss of heaven and fear the pains of hell, trusting that the mercy of God will also and in the event make us love him above all things and sorry to offend him as the loving Father he is. But we do not always begin with calling out "Abba, Father" (Gal 4:6). Sometimes we start by saying "Wretched man

that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom 7:24).

V. CONCLUSION

There is a final reason, of course, why de Lubac will remain, and that is paragraph 22 of the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*.

> In fact, only in the mystery of the incarnate Word is the mystery of man truly illumined. For Adam, the first man, was the figure of Him Who was to come, namely Christ the Lord. Christ, the last Adam, in the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear.[46]

Everyone will recognize this as the key anthropological statement of the council, the beacon held up by Pope John Paul II in *Redemptor hominis* (8), recalled in *Redemptoris missio* (2), quoted again in *Veritatis splendor* (2) and in *Fides et ratio* (13). This is the text that both John Paul II and then Cardinal Ratzinger held up as the hermeneutical key to *Gaudium et spes*.[47] This text of *Gaudium et spes* came so readily to the mind of the pope, one supposes, because as a young bishop he, Karol Woytyla, helped compose this constitution. Also working on it was the old theologian, Henri de Lubac. Paul McPartlan observes that *Gaudium et spes* 22 recalls a passage in de Lubac's *Catholicism*.[48] "By revealing the Father and by being revealed by him, Christ completes the revelation of man to himself."[49] And again: "It is through Christ that the person reaches maturity, that man emerges definitively

[46] Translation from the Vatican web site (www.vatican.va), modified.

[47] At the Extraordinary assembly of the Synod of Bishops in 1985, marking the twentieth anniversary of the close of the Council. See Tracey Rowland, *Ratzinger's Faith: The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 32. If it is the hermeneutical key, then one is saved from "extrinsicist" readings of the constitution (34-36).

[48] Paul McPartlan, *Sacrament of Salvation: An Introduction to Eucharistic Ecclesiology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), 74.

[49] Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: A Study of Dogma in Relation to the Corporate Destiny of Mankind*, trans. Lancelot Sheppard (New York: New American Library, 1961), 189.

from the universe, and becomes conscious of his own being."[50] These dicta of 1938 anticipate the theses of *Surnaturel.* Why cannot man know himself completely and become perfectly conscious of his own being apart from Christ? One answer might be because there is no such thing as pure nature and that there is such a thing as an innate natural desire for the vision of God.[51]

But the text of *Gaudium et spes* itself embraces no such determinate answer, and it is not the only possible answer. *Gaudium et spes* does not commit itself to any technical, ontological theses on the natural desire nor on the relation of nature to grace. The text asserts no more than does Sacred Scripture, which is to say, it asserts a narrative unity between the First and Last Adam, and so by implication no more than a narrative unity between nature and grace, and so, also by implication, no more than a narrative unity between the philosophical knowledge of man and nature and the theological knowledge of Christ and grace.[52] De Lubac, by contrast, in his theology, makes the connection metaphysical, ontological.

At the end of the day, we can recognize that the work of de Lubac played an essential role in the twentieth century in the Church coming to a better-because more traditional-mind on the unity of nature and grace in the single plan of God, according to the mind of him who repents not and has no second thoughts. Yet the path to this good destination included historical error, as in the interpretation of St. Thomas, and theological confusion, as in the relation of such things as innate desire and gratuity. Can such a thing be possible? Can God write straight with crooked lines? Of course he can, just as also-in the grand framework of *Gaudium et spes,* the glory of the Last Adam is in part constituted by bearing the wounds of the First.

What then remains of the theological anthropological theses of de Lubac? For all of Catholic theology, for all Catholic

[50] Ibid.

[51] Supposing this is the only answer can lead to some rather unfortunate positioning of things, as in William L. Portier's review of Fergus Kerr, O.P., *Twentieth Century Catholic Theologians,* in *Communio* 35 (2008): 494-504.

[52] See Rowland, *Culture and the Thomist Tradition,* 134.

theologians, there remains just what the magisterium accepted from them: an affirmation of the openness of man to the supernatural; an affirmation of the unity of the economy, in such sayings as that man cannot understand himself except in the light of Christ; and an assertion of this unity as Christological. What remains is enough, in other words, to merit the gratitude of every Catholic theologian.

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FROM MEDIEVAL VOLUNTARISM TO HURSTHOUSE'S VIRTUE ETHICS

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IN RECENT DECADES there has been an attempt to reinstate virtue ethics in moral theorizing and debate. One contribution in this regard is that of Rosalind Hursthouse, whose book *On Virtue Ethics*,[1] seeks a rapprochement between an Aristotelian-inspired virtue ethics and Kantian deontology. Hursthouse's *On Virtue Ethics* captures the interest of a Thomist in part because of her discussion of the ends in the light of which we evaluate plants, animals, and human beings as members of their respective species. Her reflections bear a certain resemblance to Thomas Aquinas's observations concerning the natural inclinations (at *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 2). While Philippa Foot pioneered contemporary discussion concerning the subject of ethical naturalism,[2] Hursthouse, building upon Foot's work, has led the way in discussing the "ends" (which bear a certain similarity to Aquinas's "natural inclinations") that are characteristic of embodied beings, that is to say, of humans and of other animals. Her project, however, reveals a certain operative anthropological dualism. Put briefly, rationality is not constrained in its deliberations by the parameters suggested by our animal "ends"; it ultimately enjoys an absolute freedom in imposing its own "ends" as though from outside the corporeal conditions of our being. Thus, in transcending the

[1] Rosalind Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[2] P. Foot, "Does Moral Subjectivism Rest on a Mistake?" *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 15 (1995): 1-14.

bodily dimensions of human being, rationality is free to manipulate them according to its own designs.

As I will demonstrate, Hursthouse's account betrays some of the same features as are found in the theorizing of John Duns Scotus concerning the ethical life, albeit in a mutated form.[3] Scotus's conception of ethics, however, constitutes a rupture with an Aristotelian-inspired virtue ethics, whose major medieval proponent was Thomas Aquinas, not least because of his treatment of the natural inclinations-which treatment also results, I will argue, in an operative anthropological dualism. If, however, we are hylomorphically constituted as body-soul unities, our bodies and their natural inclinations must necessarily enter into our appraisal of what conduces to human flourishing; if it does not, ethics becomes voluntarist in nature.

History shows that Scotus's speculations contributed to the death of the virtue-ethics tradition that arguably culminated in Aquinas. Clearly, it is not possible to predict the future of contemporary virtue ethics; nevertheless, given the historical precedent of Scotus, there are grounds for grave misgivings about a virtue ethics grounded in a dualistic anthropology. Ultimately,

[3] My line of argument does not require me to establish a causal link between Scotus and Hursthouse. It simply hinges on the similarity between Scotus's and Hursthouse's attitudes towards the will and human nature. Nevertheless, Hursthouse's speculations do unfold in dialogue with Kant, whose moral philosophy arguably traces its genealogy back to Scotus. In particular, she attempts to effect a rapprochement between Aristotle and Kant when dealing with emotion and motivation (On *Virtue Ethics,* 91ff.), seemingly unaware of the kind of developments indicated in this article, developments which arguably render such a rapprochement impossible. For a treatment of the significance of Scotus's treatment of the will and morality for Kant's ethics, see Hannes Mohle, "Will und Moral: Zur Voraussetzung der Ethik des Johannes Duns Scotus und ihrer Bedeutung fiir die Ethik Immanuel Kants," in Ludger Honnefelder, Rega Wood and Methchild Dreyer, *eds.,]ohn Scotus: Metaphysics and Ethics* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 573-94. Ingham and Dreyer summarize Scotus's historical legacy as follows: "Scotus's philosophical legacy ... can be summarized as an attention to personal, subjective awareness, in the light of rational principles. These principles link logic, ontology, and ethics to form a whole whose unifying principle is the person in the act of self-reflection. In his followers, these principles will be developed and enhanced throughout the fourteenth century. The principles will influence the thought of Ockham, as we know, but also thinkers such as Suarez, Molina, Leibniz, Wollf, and Kant" (Mary Beth Ingham and Mechthild Dreyer, *The Philosophical Vision of John Duns Scotus: An Introduction* [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004], 208).

a voluntarist ethics entails the imposition of arbitrary dictates, whether by the divine will, as in Scotus's system, or by human reason, as in Hursthouse's scheme. As such, voluntarism is fundamentally indifferent to human flourishing, that is to say, the flourishing of beings who are psychosomatically constituted. Given the importance of human flourishing for virtue ethics, there is an inherent contradiction in a virtue ethics that is voluntaristic.

In order to make this case it will first of all be necessary to examine Aquinas's account of human nature and the natural inclinations as well as Scotus's voluntarist rejection of teleology in ethics.

I. AQUINAS ON THE NATURAL INCLINATIONS

The central text for our consideration of St. Thomas's view of the natural inclinations is that from the *Prima Secundae* in which he offers his exposition of the precepts of the natural law:

> Since, however, good has the nature of an end and evil, the nature of a contrary, hence it is that all those things to which man has a natural inclination, are naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and consequently as objects of pursuit, and their contraries as evil, and objects of avoidance. Wherefore according to the order of natural inclinations, is the order of the precepts of the natural law. Because in man there is first of all an inclination to good in accordance with the nature which he has in common with all substances: inasmuch as every substance seeks the preservation of its own being, according to its nature: and by reason of this inclination, whatever is a means of preserving human life, and of warding off its obstacles, belongs to the natural law. Secondly, there is in man an inclination to things that pertain to him more specially, according to that nature which he has in common with other animals: and in virtue with this inclination, those things are said to belong to the natural law, *which nature has taught to all animals,* such as sexual intercourse, education of offspring and so forth. Thirdly, there is in man an inclination to good, according to the nature of his reason, which nature is proper to him: thus man has a natural inclination to the know the truth about God, and to live in society: and in this respect, whatever pertains to this inclination belongs to the natural law; for instance, to shun ignorance, to avoid offending those among whom one has to live, and other such things regarding the above inclination. *(STh* 1-11, q. 94, a. 2)

From the above passage it is evident that Aquinas considers the natural inclination to the good to be that which underpins the others-to self-preservation, to procreation and education of offspring, and to knowledge of the truth. In other words, the unfolding of these specific inclinations is a manifestation of the inclination to the good. "Now," according to Aquinas, "being good, conveying as it does the notion of desirability, implies being an end or goal, and this is where causality starts, for no agent acts except for some end, and except some agent acts no matter acquires form." It is for this very reason that Aquinas can call the end "the cause of causes."[4] Teleology is intrinsic to his conception of ethics in which God, as the supreme good, is the final end of all human striving.

All things desire the good, not only those that have knowledge but also those that lack it.[5] Consequently, they are ordered towards effects that are in agreement with their particular ontological constitution.[6] Now a thing can be ordered and directed toward an end in one of two ways: first, by itself, as when a man directs himself to where he wishes to go; second, by another, as when an arrow is directed by an archer towards a determinate place. While rational beings move themselves to an end, for they have dominion over their actions through their free will, those things that lack reason are directed to an end by virtue of their natural inclination "as being moved by another and not by themselves."[7] Irrational nature can be compared to God as an instrument to the principal agent.[8] Aquinas recognizes that the analogy of the arrow and the archer is limited, for while creatures receive their nature from God, what natural things receive from man in addition to their nature involves a certain violence. Consequently, "as the violent necessity in the movement of the arrow shows the action of the archer, so the natural necessity of

[4] *STh* I, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1.
[5] *De Verit.*, q. 22, a. 1.
[6] Ibid.
[7] *STh* I-II, q. 1, a. 2.
[8] Ibid. See also *STh* I, q. 22, a. 2, ad 2; and I, q. 103, a. 1, ad 3.

things shows the government of Divine Providence, "[9] for God has bestowed on them their forms by which they have their inclinations. Consequently, "natural things go to their ends inasmuch as they cooperate with the one inclining and directing them through a principle implanted in them." [10]

In delineating his conception of the natural appetite possessed by things, Aquinas thus synthesizes two perspectives. On the one hand, it is clear that what is directed or inclined to something by another is directed to whatever is intended by the one directing it-as, for example, the arrow "is directed at the same target at which the archer aims."[11] It follows that since all natural things have been directed by a certain natural inclination towards their ends by God, the prime mover, "that to which everything is naturally inclined must be what is willed or intended by God."[12] God of course can have no other end than himself;[13] since, therefore, "He is the very essence of all goodness, all other things must be naturally inclined to good." [14] On the other hand, while all things are directed by God to good, each thing nevertheless inclines toward the good in accordance with a principle, which issues from the very form with which God has endowed it, "by which it tends of itself to good as if seeking good itself."[15] In other words, in virtue of an innate principle, all things are said to incline toward the good of their own accord. Aquinas succinctly expresses his position with the following interpretation of Scripture: "For this reason it is said in Wisdom (8:1) that divine

[9] *STh* I, q. 103, a. 1, ad 3.

[10] *De Verit.,* q. 21, a. 1.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] To the objection that God, as the last end, is not directed to an end and that he therefore does not strive for an end or good, Aquinas replies: "By the same nature by which a thing tends to an end which it does not yet have, it delights in an end which it already has. Thus by the same nature the element earth moves downward and rests there. Now it is not consonant with the last end to tend to an end, but it is consonant with it to take pleasure in itself as an end. Though this cannot properly be called an appetite, still it is something belonging to the genus of appetite, and from it all appetite is derived. For from the fact that God takes pleasure in Himself, He directs other things to Himself" (ibid., ad 11).

[14] *De Verit.,q.* 21, a. 1.

[15] Ibid.

wisdom 'ordereth all things sweetly' because each one by its own motion tends to that for which it has been divinely destined."[16]

The definition of the "good" as "what all desire" is not meant to signify that something is good simply because it is desired; on the contrary, the essence of good constitutes the moving principle of the appetite. "The essence of goodness consists in this, that it is in some way desirable. Hence the Philosopher says *(Ethic.* i): *Goodness is what all desire.* Now it is clear that a thing is desirable only in so far as it is perfect; for all desire their own perfection. But everything is perfect in so far as it is actual."[17] Since to be good belongs pre-eminently to God, it follows that he is the end of all things. This assertion is predicated upon the notion that God is the first effective cause of all things. Every agent impresses its likeness on its effect so that "the perfection and form of an effect consist in a certain likeness to the agent."[18] It is this participation of the likeness of the agent on the part of the effect that makes the agent desirable, conferring on it the nature of good. "Therefore, since God is the first effective cause of all things, it is manifest that the aspect of good and of desirableness belong to Him."[19] Indeed, God is the supreme good inasmuch as "all desired perfections flow from Him as from the first cause."[20]

Clearly, for Aquinas, God's act of creation is a *communicatio bani.* When discussing whether God wills things apart from himself, Aquinas notes that natural things not only have an inclination to their own proper good-striving to acquire it if it is absent and resting in it when possessed-but also "to spread abroad their own good amongst others, so far as possible."[21] If it pertains to natural things insofar as they are perfect to communicate their goodness to others, all the more does it belong to the divine will to do so. Thus, concludes Aquinas, God "wills

[16] Ibid.

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

[18] *STh* I, q. 6, a. 1. See also *STh* I, q. 4, a. 3: "For since every agent reproduces itself in so far as it is an agent, and everything acts according to the manner of its form, the effect must in some way resemble the form of the agent."

[19] Ibid.

[20] *STh* I, q. 6, a. 2.

[21] *STh* I, q. 19, a. 3.

both Himself to be and other things to be; but Himself as the end, and other things ordained to that end."[22] Since God is the final end of all created reality, all creatures necessarily desire their fulfilment in him. Everything, including man as an agent endowed with free will, tends towards the objective of "becoming like God, inasmuch as He is good,"[23] each imitating the divine goodness according to its own measure.

II. AQUINAS ON HUMAN FREEDOM

It is clear that all men desire their final end, a fact which is evidenced by the desire each has for his own perfection and perfect goodness. This perfection of man is precisely what we call beatitude.[24] Beatitude, according to Aquinas, is that which a man cannot not want.[25] God as final cause moves man to act not only by presenting an object to his consciousness, but also by moving his will: "Every activity, of both nature and will, comes from him as first mover."[26] This assertion in no way undermines an understanding of voluntary activity as predicated on an internal principle within the subject. Anything that acts as an efficient cause, whether actually or potentially, needs to be set in motion by another mover. The will is a case in point, for it begins to will after it has not been willing. Something must therefore have moved it to will. We cannot entertain the possibility of an infinite regress, the will moving itself to will through a process of deliberation based on some previous volition. So, states Aquinas, "we have to conclude that the original volition of will comes forth from the will by the impulse of some exterior efficient cause."[27] This exterior efficient cause is of course none other than God. Aquinas therefore cites two reasons, pertaining to efficient and final causality respectively, that make it clear that God alone can

[22] Ibid.
[23] *ScG* III, c. 20.
[24] *STh* I-II, q. 3, a. 2.
[25] *ScG* IV, c. 92.
[26] *STh* I-II, q. 6, a. 1, ad 3
[27] *STh* I-II, q. 9, a. 4.

be the cause of man's willing: "First, because the will is a power of the rational soul, which is caused by God by creation. . . . Second, because of the will's bearing on universal good, none other than God, who is the universal good, can cause it to act."[28]

Does not this ineluctable desire for the universal good, for beatitude, eradicate human freedom? Aquinas notes the following objection: "every motion received from an irresistible agent is of necessity. Now God, who is of infinite power, is irresistible .... Therefore when he acts on the human will its motion necessarily follows."[29] He responds by pointing out that divine providence moves things according to their condition, so that from necessary causes effects follow of necessity and from contingent causes effects follow contingently. The will is not determined *ad unum,* but is rather confronted with many objects. Consequently, God moves it in such a way that it is not constrained by necessity to a determined object; instead, its motion remains contingent, except in the case of those things to which it is moved by the exigencies of its nature.[30] (In speaking this way of what many call the natural desire for God, Aquinas does not depart from his general account of the desire of all creatures for God. According to Porter, Aquinas's doctrine "conveys a theological interpretation of our common psychology, but it does not imply an actual, positive desire for God as an object (however inchoately known) of common human striving.")[31]

It should not be supposed that Aquinas offers a neat, and consequently facile, solution to the problem of human freedom. A quotation from *De Potentia* encapsulates well the intricacy of the matter: "[T]he will naturally desires happiness, although it

[28] *STh* I-II, q. 9, a. 6.

[29] *STh* I-II, q. 10, a. 4, obj. 1.

[30] See *STh* I-II, q. 10, a. 1 for a broad outline of those things which man wills in accordance with the exigencies of his nature: "By nature he wills all that matches his entire ability, not just his will, for instance to know the truth, to be, to live, and so forth, indeed all that relates to the integrity he was born to have: the universal object of the will embraces all these as so many particular goods."

[31] Jean Porter, "Desire for God: Ground of the Moral Life in Aquinas," *Theological Studies* 47 (1986): 52.

desires it necessarily."[32] The lack of clarity available to us in our understanding of freedom owes itself to our created condition. Thus our thought returns to our origin, to God as the efficient cause of all created reality. Human beings, like all other beings, are what they are by virtue of the divine act of creation. It follows that what is natural to the created soul is so precisely on account of its created condition. Creation is the ground of human freedom, but how this can be so ultimately escapes our comprehension. We can say, however, that freedom is opposed to violence and coercion and that these manifest themselves in obstructing natural inclinations and processes.[33]

The ineluctable directedness of man to the supreme good, which is inscribed within the ontological constitution of his being, thus furnishes the transcendental condition for the possibility of his lack of determination with respect to intermediate ends. This supreme good which lacks nothing is of course beatitude. All other particular goods suffer limitation and so can strike us as not being good from some point of view. Thus, Aquinas states, "[T]he will can refuse them or accept them as the case may be, for it is able to respond to one and the same object from different points of view."[34] Every created good, however, participates in the being of uncreated good. The attainment of a created good therefore provides an experience of reflected beatitude. As Aquinas says in *De Malo:* "As a created good is a likeness and sharing of uncreated good, so the attainment of a created good is a happiness analogous to true happiness."[35] Josef Pieper signals the existential import of Aquinas's assertion in the following words: "[A]ll happiness has some connection with eternal beatitude. Some connection, if only this, that every fulfilment this side of Heaven instantly reveals its inadequacy. It is immediately evident that such satisfactions are not enough; they are not what we really have

[32] *De Pot.,* q. 10, a. 2, ad 5.

[33] See *De Pot.,* q. 10, a. 2, ad 5: "Now there is no violence or compulsion when a thing is moved in accordance with the order of its nature, but there is if its natural movement be hindered."

[34] *STh* I-II, q. 10, a. 2.

[35] *De Malo,* q. 5, a. 1, ad 5.

sought; they cannot really satisfy us at all."[36] These satisfactions give rise to a feeling that we have not obtained what we really sought and suggest that we have not attained that which we really desired.[37] This experience arises because every finite good is simply a symbolic anticipation of the infinite good.[38] Perhaps we could add that this experience has a causal efficacy in so far as it spurs us on to the attainment of eternal beatitude.

III. SCOTUS AND A LAW CONCEPTION OF ETHICS

In a discussion of Scotus's action theory, Thomas Williams states that it constitutes "not so much an unraveling of the Thomist synthesis as a deliberate dismantling."[39] In contrast to

[36] Josef Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation,* trans. Richard and Clara Winston (South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 1998), 16-17.

[37] See Robert Spaemann, *Happiness and Benevolence,* trans. Jeremiah Alberg, S.J. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 17-18: "What is the phenomenological basis for the idea that our volition heads towards some ultimate goal which encompasses all our determinate goals of action? Is it that rather frequent experience of getting something which we wanted, only to find that we have not, in fact, obtained that which we *really* wanted *[sic].* Apparently there was something else we wanted in and with that which we wanted."

[38] "[O]gni bene finito e un'anticipazione simbolica de! bene infinito" (Giacomo Samek Lodovici, *La felicita del bene: una rilettura di Tommaso d'Aquino* [Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2002], 107).

[39] Thomas Williams, "From Metaethics to Action Theory," in *The Cambridge Companion to Scotus,* ed. Thomas Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 334.

While I argue that a watershed in the history of moral thought occurred with Scotus, others, notably Servais Pinckaers, O.P., have attributed this pivotal influence to Ockham. See Servais Pinckaers, O.P., *The Sources of Christian Ethics,* trans. Mary Thomas Noble, O.P. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 241-53. The elements of Scotus's thought outlined in this article are to be found in a more extreme form in Ockham, a fact readily grasped on reading Pinckaers' account of Ockham's ethical thought. Locating the origins of particular developments in the history of thought is not an exact science. In any case, the main arguments of this present article remain regardless of whether it is Scotus or Ockham or someone else who unleashed the intellectual current that undermined a unitary conception of human nature and that gave voluntarism a stronghold in Western moral theory. In this regard, I think that we can rule out a positive response to the second of the following questions posed by Bonnie Kent: "Was it only Scotus and his fellow travelers who began the transformation of classical virtue ethics that eventually produced the Kantian good will? Or was the transformation already taking place, albeit more subtly, in the works of Aquinas?" (Bonnie Kent, *Virtues of the Will: The Transformation of Ethics in the Late Thirteenth Century* [Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995], 254). Kent bases this line

Aquinas, Scotus thinks that natural happiness has nothing at all to do with morality-hence his rejection of natural teleology, so important in Aristotelian-Thomistic ethics. In the latter, the naturally impressed ends that are furnished by the natural inclinations, and that are understood as final causes, furnish conditions for the exercise of true freedom. In this scheme of things, to negate these conditions is to undermine human freedom itself. Moral norms derive their force from the human good.

Scotus breaks this intimate connection between moral goodness and the human good. In his estimation, the concept of the moral goodness of an action is not necessarily or inherently reducible to what conduces to human flourishing. [40] Good actions are not good because of any relationship to human flourishing but because God has freely commanded them. In keeping with his rejection of Aristotelian-Thomistic teleology, moreover, Scotus argues that the will can determine itself to act independently of any final cause as co-principle. He denies that the rational appetite acts on account of its relation to a final cause. Indeed, he regards any appeal to

of questioning on Aquinas's drastic revision of Aristotle's understanding of a habit. Thus, for example, Aquinas writes: "From the very character *[ratio]* of a habit ... it is clear that it is principally related to the will, inasmuch as a habit is that which one uses when one wills" *(STh* I-II, q. 50, a. 5). As Kent puts it, Aquinas "consistently describes a habit as that whereby we act *when we will,* or that which we use *when we will"* (Kent, *Virtues of the Will,,* 254). A full response to the question posed by Kent is not possible in the context of this article. It must nevertheless be pointed out, as I have already observed, that for Aquinas-in contrast to Scotus-the will has a natural teleological ordering to God as the supreme good in a created order in which moral imperatives issue from ontological indicatives-in other words, in a created order in which moral goodness has not been divorced from ontological goodness. Thus, while Ockham's position concerning the freedom of the will can be regarded as a radicalization of Scotus's, Scotus's thought concerning the same can in no way be viewed as a development of Aquinas's speculations. The quotation from Thomas Williams supports this claim.

[40] A Scotist might attack Aquinas's notion of the human good as gerrymandered so as to fit with the morally good. A response to this criticism will become apparent in the course of this article. In brief, as will be seen, Aquinas's approach is able to account for the role of human embodiment in ethical deliberation in a way that Scotus's is not. Another possible criticism of Aquinas's position is that it cannot account for the Christian call to take up one's cross as well as Scotus's account. In response, I would point out that while to take up one's cross issues in a flourishing that transcends the capacity of our natural unaided powers, this flourishing nevertheless engages the human person as a psychosomatic unity.

final causes as flight of fancy *(fugiendo finguntur viae mirabilis),*[41] arguing that the will must be viewed as an efficient cause that moves itself.[42] In this way, Scotus removes any determination from the will other than that which comes from itself.

Scotus posits that human beings are free in the strongest possible sense. In this regard he distinguishes between *free* powers (i.e., the will) and *natural* powers. The former, in contrast to the latter, are undetermined with regard to contradictory or contrary states: the will "with no change in its nature, either [of two contradictory or contrary states] falls equally under its power."[43] A free power, moreover, is a self-mover, that is to say, a sufficient cause of its own actions. In addition, a free power can refrain from acting even when all the conditions for its acting are present.[44] The distinction between free and determined is basic so that "One can give no other reason why [a power] elicits its action in this way except that it is this sort of cause."[45] In discussing the kind of causation involved in being a free self-mover, Scotus argues that there is an indeterminacy of "superabundant sufficiency" and that something indeterminate in this sense is capable of determining itself with regard to opposites.[46]

An important point to note in Scotus's treatment of the will is his ascription of two inclinations to it, namely, the *affectio commodi* (affection for the beneficial or advantageous) and the *affectio iustitiae* (the affection for justice).[47] While the precise nature of the affection for justice is a matter for debate, the most plausible interpretation is that which views it as an inclination to

[41] *Scotus,InMetaph.,* 9, q. 14, n. 47. Latin text and translation in Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M., trans., *A Treatise on Potency and Act: Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle,* Book 9 (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 2000).

[42] Scotus, *In Metaph.,* 9, q. 14, nn. 122-4.

[43] Scotus, *In Metaph.,* 9, q. 15, n. 11.

[44] Scotus, *In Metaph.,* 9, q. 15, n. 22.

[45] Scotus, *In Metaph.,* 9, q. 15, n. 24.

[46] Scotus, *In Metaph.,* 9, q. 15, n. 31.

[47] Scotus, *Ordinatio,* lib. 3, suppl. d. 26. Latin text and translation in *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality,* ed. and trans. Allan Wolter (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 179-81. All references to and translations of the *Ordinatio* are taken from this text.

act in accordance with the moral law regardless of its connection with our own happiness. Otherwise the will would be necessitated to its own self-fulfillment. [48] Richard Cross well describes Scotus's *affectio iustitiae* as "that in virtue of which the will can determine itself to a different course of action from a slavish seeking after the natural goals of human existence. "[49]

According to Scotus, the pursuit of happiness, if unchecked, can be immoral. Expressed otherwise, it can be counter to the divine will. Sin in effect consists, for Scotus, in failing to restrain the *affectio commodi* by the *affectio iustitiae* in accordance with the divine command, as in the case of the fallen angels. God's will in effect furnishes the rule or measure for every free appetite. [50]

Clearly, for Scotus, there is a rupture between what the divine will commands and the natural conditions of human happiness. We therefore need to restrain the natural appetite for happiness in order that we might conform our willing to the divine will. Scotus contends that God can establish a new law in place of a former one, the new law being right because it is established by the divine will.[51] The entire realm of natural law is in fact subject

[48] Scotus, *Ord.* 4, suppl. d. 49, 9-10 (Wolter, trans.,182-97).

[49] Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 87.

[50] Scotus, *Rep.* 2, d. 6, q. 2, n. 10. The edition employed is the *Opera Omnia,* ed. Wadding, vol. 22 (Paris: Vives,1844).

[51] "Hence I say that many other things can be done orderly; and many things that do not include a contradiction other than those that conform to present laws can occur in an ordained way when the rectitude of such law-according to which one acts rightly and orderly-lies in the power of the agent himself. And therefore such an agent can act otherwise, so that he establishes another upright law, which, if it were set up by God, would be right, because no law is right except insofar as the divine will accepts it as established. And in such a case the absolute power of the agent in regard to something would not extend to anything other than what might happen ordinately if it occurred, not indeed ordainedly with respect to this present order, but ordainedly with respect to some other order that the divine will could set up if it were able to act in such a way" (Scotus, *Ord.* I, d. 44 [Wolter, trans., 257]). For a discussion of Scotus's natural-law theory, see Hannes Mohles, "Scotus's Theory of Natural Law," in Williams, ed., *Cambridge Companion to Scotus,* 312-31. Mohles explains the distinction between "ordinate power" and "absolute power" as follows: "If someone acts within the bounds of the order established by existing law, that person acts by "ordinate power" *!potentia ordinata);* if someone either transgresses the existing order or replaces the commandments that constitute that order, that person acts by "absolute power" *(potentia absoluta)"* (ibid., 317).

to God's absolute power so that divine omnipotence can dispense from any commandment that enters partly into the constitution of a given order. [52]

Several points regarding Scotus's position ought to be mentioned here, as relevant to the concerns of this article. First, his rejection of natural teleology in the realm of ethics paves the way for ethics to become simply an affair of the mind, divorced from the reality of human being as psychosomatically structured. The will, unrestrained by teleological considerations, is set apart from and above the bodily dimensions of human being, which dimensions are teleologically determined. The teleology of our embodied condition necessarily determines what conduces to our flourishing as bodily beings and what does not promote such flourishing. For Scotus, however, bodily flourishing does not necessarily instantiate what is morally good. Therefore, the good will, in exercising its freedom, should presumably seek to undermine the bodily conditions of flourishing if and when they conflict with what is morally good. At the very least, one can say that there is a conflict between the volitional and somatic aspects of the human being as conceived by Scotus, a conflict in which the will can exercise a despotic rule over the body as opposed to the political rule envisaged by Aristotle and Aquinas. Scotus's approach to ethics arguably leads in the direction of an anthropological dualism despite his position that the composite of soul and body is *per se unum.* [53] In other words, there is a tension between the implications of his doctrine concerning the freedom of the will, on the one hand, and his anthropology, on the other. If one is convinced, moreover, that anthropological dualism offers an erroneous account of the structure of the human person, one will be logically constrained to reject Scotus's ethics. [54]

[52] On Scotus's understanding, when a commandment is replaced with another, the order which it partly constitutes and in which it receives its legitimation is also replaced.

[53] Scotus, IV *Sent.*, d. 12, q. 1, n. 19. For Latin text, see *Opera Omnia,* vol. 17 (1844).

[54] A fundamental problem with dualism, both in its Platonist and Cartesian forms, is that it has difficulty in explaining how the soul and body are joined. Thus, Aquinas tells us, certain Platonists postulate one or other spirit or humor as the medium between soul and body. None of these devices however is necessary if one accepts the soul as the form of the body (Q.D. *De Anima,* a. 9). For a contemporary philosophical account of the unitary nature of the human

More specifically, the radical freedom of the will proposed by Scotus, divorced as it is from considerations of natural teleology, leaves the way open for human freedom to be directed against our natural inclinations-something that effectively happens later in the history of Western civilization, as evidenced by various developments in the bioethical and sexual-ethical domains. This point lies at the heart of the critique of Hursthouse's virtue ethics in the next section. At issue here again is the ontological unity of the human person. If human embodiment in all its dimensions (i.e., including its teleological constitution), is partly constitutive of what it is to be a human person-in other words, if we truly are psychosomatic unities-then the body and its natural processes and inclinations must enter into our understanding of moral normativity. [55]

IV. HURSTHOUSE'S ETHICAL NATURALISM AND THE SUBVERSION OF THE NATURAL INCLINATIONS

Hursthouse's book *On Virtue Ethics* furnishes an interesting contribution to contemporary virtue ethics. As part of her project

person, see David Braine, *The Human Person: Animal and Spirit* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1992). Braine contends that human beings are not "assemblages of parts, inner and outer," but rather "wholes-psychophysical wholes-wholes in whose operations the mental cannot be extricated from the physical and the physical cannot be understood apart from the mental" (ibid., 22-23). See also Karol Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, trans. Andrzej Potocki (London: D. Reidel, 1979), 189-258. The work of Lawrence A. Shapiro, which draws upon a variety of sources (e.g., neuroscience, evolutionary theory, and embodied cognition), converges with the positions of Aristotle, Aquinas, and Braine. Shapiro writes that "as embodied cognition research progresses, the traditional boundaries between mind and body will either continue to fade or will require extensive realignment. In short, my bet is that the mind is far more incarnate than most philosophers, and certainly most laypersons have appreciated" (Lawrence A. Shapiro, *The Mind Incarnate* [Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 2004], 228). Shapiro might well have added that Aristotelians and, in particular, Thomists are not included among "most philosophers" in this respect.

[55] This notion clearly informs Aquinas's elaboration of the precepts of the natural law at *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 2, where the inclinations to preservation of one's own being and to procreation and education of offspring have a somatic reference. Moreover, *synderesis-"a* habit containing the precepts of the natural law, which are the first principles of human actions" *(STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 1, ad 2)-appoints the end of the moral virtues. In other words, our somatic constitution enters into the formulation of the end of the moral virtues.

Hursthouse attempts to effect a certain rapprochement between an Aristotelian-inspired virtue ethics and Kantian deontology. Whether or not she is successful in this attempt-indeed, whether such a rapprochement is possible at all-will become clear in the remainder of this article. As the first step in my engagement with Hursthouse's virtue ethics I turn to her treatment of ethical naturalism, that is to say, naturalism as it obtains in the case of rational animals as against the other animals.

When discussing the more sophisticated of the other animals, Hursthouse discerns three ends with respect to which they are evaluated: (1) individual survival, (2) the continuance of the species, and (3) characteristic pleasure or enjoyment/characteristic freedom from pain.[56] It is open to question whether characteristic pleasure or enjoyment/characteristic freedom from pain constitutes an end in itself. It seems more correct to regard it as an index of attainment of a connatural end. Its inclusion by Hursthouse is therefore unwarranted. In relation to specifically social animals, Hursthouse mentions a fourth end, namely, (4) the good functioning of the social group. There is here a certain parallelism with the precepts of the natural law as delineated by Aquinas (at *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 2).

Hursthouse points out that, just as social animals can be evaluated in light of the four ends cited above, so we might expect that human beings could be appraised "in the light of some fifth end which relates to this new, transforming, capacity" that is rationality.[57] What, she asks, could this fifth end be? She identifies a few alternatives that are drawn from tradition. One alternative is the preparation of our souls for the life hereafter, an end which she rejects since to adopt it would be "to go beyond naturalism towards supernaturalism."[58] The second alternative mentioned in passing by Hursthouse is contemplation, that is to say, "the good functioning of the theoretical intellect."[59] Here she has Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* in mind and the common interpretation of

[56] Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics*, 200.

[57] Ibid., 218.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

it according to which he falls foul of a latent Platonism.[60] Quite rightly, Hursthouse wishes to reject any candidates for this "fifth end" that are devoid of reference to the body. Thus, while she concludes that she can see no plausible candidate for the fifth end, she suggests that "the genuinely transforming effect of our rationality on the basic structure adequately registers the 'huge gap' that exists between us and the other animals."[61]

Her own talk about "the genuinely transforming effect of our rationality on the basic structure" -presumably meaning our basic somatic structure-seems to bespeak a hylomorphic conception of the human being, yet other considerations indicate, as will become evident, that her operative anthropology is in fact dualistic. In her scheme of things the will lacks the kind of ecstatic character found in Aquinas's treatment of the natural inclinations. It ultimately turns back upon and lords it over the somatic condition of human being along with its natural inclinations (as will presently become apparent).[62]

Whilst Hursthouse's use of the notion of "end" exhibits certain superficial similarities with the Thomistic natural inclinations, therefore, her understanding of the characteristic human end thus seems to be a purely psychological one, devoid of any intrinsic connection with the somatic aspect of the ontologically unitary entity that is the human being in the Aristotelian tradition. Indeed the third end, which humans share in common with other animals (characteristic pleasure or enjoyment/characteristic freedom from pain), albeit in a modified manner, places her theorizing at a complete remove from the Aristotelian tradition of ethics. Not

[60] R.-A. Gauthier, for example, tells us that in spite of Aristotle's philosophical commitment to the ontological oneness of the human person, his ethics can nevertheless be characterized as "an ethics of the mind," that is to say, "a rational ethics" (R.-A. Gauthier, "On the Nature of Aristotle's Ethics," in *Aristotle's Ethics: Issues and Interpretations,* ed. James J. Walsh and Henry L. Shapiro [Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1967], 28). An unavoidable consequence of this primacy of reason is that "the properly moral values connected with the body must necessarily be relegated to the instrumental level" (ibid., 29).

[61] Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics,* 218.

[62] See G.J. McAleer, *Ecstatic Morality and Sexual Politics: A Catholic Antitotalitarian Theory of the Body* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), for a profound treatment of being and the natural inclinations as ecstatic and of their subversion in contemporary civilization.

surprisingly, these two different approaches entail important implications that are radically different from each other.

Hursthouse quite rightly discerns characteristics that human beings share in common with other kinds of being, although she fails to advert to the fundamental inclinations that ground them. Thus, for example, "like the other higher mammals, we characteristically enjoy food and suffer when physically damaged; like some other sophisticated social animals, we characteristically enjoy company and play, and suffer when solitary or confined." [63] Hursthouse is also correct in asserting that "we do not seem to be pained by and enjoy these things in just the same way as the other animals do," [64] adverting to rationality as the reason for this difference. It is precisely on account of rationality, moreover, that human beings are not limited in their pursuit of their "characteristic pleasures" and avoidance of their "characteristic pains." While other beings are very restricted, humans display a remarkable variety in this regard. The reason that the other animals live the way they do is because "it is in their nature to do so." [65] In other words, "they are biologically determined. " [66] We on the other hand are not. Indeed, as she states later on, it is "an open question whether any human being is good, or living well, given what we could be, not something that has already been determined by nature. " [67]

Passing on to an assessment of the ethical implications of her position, Hursthouse argues that ethical evaluations cannot be strictly analogous to biological/ethological evaluations of good, that is to say, healthy, well-functioning animals. Put simply, "Nature determines how they should be, but the idea that nature could be normative with respect to us, that it could determine how we should be, is one we will no longer accept. " [68] The notion that human nature ought to play some role in ethical evaluations

[63] Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics,* 218-19.
[64] Ibid., 219.
[65] Ibid., 220.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid., 228-29.
[68] Ibid., 220.

is strikingly undermined on the basis of our rationality or, as Hursthouse tellingly expresses the point, in virtue of "our free will if you like."[69] The voluntarism instigated by Scotus at the end of the thirteenth century appears in an anthropocentric guise, instantiating Vereecke's claim that "We are the inheritors or opponents, albeit often unconsciously so, of systems elaborated in former times."[70]

It might be objected that my portrayal of Hursthouse's position is unfair, that in fact she does elsewhere insist that human nature ought to play some role in ethical evaluations. She argues that the four ends, delineated above, introduce a certain normativity into how we understand what constitutes characteristic human behavior: "[T]he structure-the appeal to just those four ends-really does constrain, substantially, what I can reasonably maintain is a virtue in human beings."[71] In response to this objection, I simply point to an apparent contradiction between this assertion and her statement that "the idea that nature could be normative with respect to us, that it could determine how we should be, is one we will no longer accept."[72] One might wish to interpret Hursthouse as meaning that, while the natural-end structure as found in other animals is maintained, reason effects changes within it. It is far from clear, however, what precisely this could mean. At any rate, as will become evident, a certain practical dualism is operative in Hursthouse's thinking, a dualism in which the freedom of the will plays an ultimately coercive role vis-a-vis the body.[73]

Hursthouse does not speak of fundamental inclinations underlying the ends she posits as characteristic of human action; yet it is clear that her position is consonant with the notion that

[69] Ibid., 221.

[70] Louis Vereecke C.Ss.R., *De Guillaume d'Ockham a saint Alphonse de Ligouri* (Rome: Collegium S. Alphonsi de Urbe, 1986), 149 (my translation).

[71] Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics,* 224.

[72] Ibid., 220.

[73] I do not wish to give the impression that Hursthouse's thought is entirely characterized by this dynamic. It clearly is not. The arguments that I make however substantiate the claim that it is certainly present and, as such, ultimately renders her virtue ethics voluntaristic in tenor.

we are free in spite of our fundamental inclinations, not because of them. It is of course possible to act contrary to the directedness of the fundamental human inclinations-thereby undermining the conditions of true freedom according to the Thomistic tradition, but truly positing our freedom according the tradition that finds its origin in Scotus. With regard to characteristic human ways of going on, Hursthouse states: "Apart from obvious physical constraints and possible psychological constraints, there is no knowing what we can do from what we do do, because we can assess what we do do and at least try to change it."[74] This assertion is no doubt true to a large extent, but surely not always true. Modes of behavior that-albeit grounded in the natural inclinations-are historically, culturally, and socially conditioned are one thing; modes of behavior that go against the fundamental inclinations to the good are quite another. If the will exercises its freedom voluntaristically so as to undermine fundamental inclinations to the good, it undermines the very conditions of freedom. Freedom has parameters, beyond which its exercise enters into the realm of self-destruction. It is one thing to effect changes in a country's educational system, for example, in order to achieve greater access for the less privileged in society. It is quite another thing to facilitate a gay lifestyle and to do so in a way that undermines heterosexual marriage.[75] Or again, to use a

[74] Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics*, 221.

[75] While Hursthouse offers a brief discussion of practicing homosexuals, she unfortunately does not give the reader much to go on. Her discussion, which focuses on temperance and licentiousness in sexual behavior (ibid., 215), presumes her later dismissal of the idea "that nature could be normative with respect to us" (ibid., 220). She maintains that practicing homosexuals can be temperate or licentious with regard to sexual activity in the same way as heterosexual people can. She offers no critique of the notion that bodily sexual differentiation and the teleological ordination of the sexual organs have any significance for the moral appraisal of sexual acts or, indeed, for one's understanding of temperance and licentiousness with regard to the same. Hursthouse's position provides further evidence of an underlying dualistic anthropology in her ethics, for it entails a rejection of the relevance of the facts of one's engendered body for the moral appraisal of genital sexual acts on the basis of a divorce between the physical and psychic aspects of the person. For extended critiques of gay anthropology, see David S. Crawford, "Liberal Androgyny: Gay Marriage and the Meaning of Sexuality in Our Time," *Communio* 33 (2006): 256-60; and E. Christian Brugger, "Dualism and Homosexual 'Complementarity': A Reply to Salzman and Lalwer [sic]," *Josephinum* 14 (2007): 218-39. Crawford argues that the notion of "alternative

slightly less politically charged example, many people would accept that whether or not possibilities that recent advances in biotechnology have brought about ought to be realized is something that must be appraised in the light of deeper anthropological considerations. What, for example, does it mean to be a human person? When does human life begin? When does death occur? Certainly, considerations of pleasure or enjoyment/characteristic freedom from pain do not offer any reliable judgment as to whether a particular course of action will objectively conduce to human flourishing.

One might object that my interpretation of Hursthouse's intent is unwarranted. Julia Annas, for example, offers an interpretation that is far more benign. Referring to Hursthouse's assertion that "Apart from obvious physical constraints and possible psychological constraints, there is no knowing what we can do from what we do do, because we can assess what we do do and at least try to change it,"[76] Annas points out that although we eat to satisfy hunger, as do lions, our eating is not tied simply to the satisfaction of hunger as it is in the case of lions: "It involves a number of social aspects-eating is standardly a social occasion, meals are structured in various ways, numerous conventions are involved."[77] Eating is, moreover, informed by individual choice-we like some kinds of food and not others, sometimes we eat just to be polite, and we at times take great pains to prepare food in complex ways. The basic point that Annas wishes to make is that "even our basic needs and the ways we fulfill them are thoroughly transformed by occurring in the life of a rational animal."[78]

orientations"-to which appeal is made in order to legitimate homosexual practice-has tacitly reduced the body to "the material conditions and circumstances of sexual acts" and, consequently, to "a merely material and therefore sub-personal level of reality." He continues: "In effect, it has placed the body outside the person as such. In this way, the sexualized body has been drained of its intrinsic meaning and relationship to the person him- or herself" (Crawford, "Liberal Androgyny," 257).

[76] Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics*, 221.

[77] Julia Annas, "Virtue Ethics: What Kind of Naturalism?" in *Virtue Ethics Old and New*, ed. Stephen M. Gardiner (Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 22.

[78] Ibid.

Interpreting Hursthouse's assertion from within its own confines and without reference to anything else she writes, Annas' interpretation would find some legitimation. Yet elsewhere, as already pointed out, Hursthouse states that "it is an open question whether any human being is good, or living well, given what we could be, not something that has already been determined by nature."[79] Hursthouse does not flesh out this claim very much in terms of concrete illustrations. In a brief consideration of feminist concerns, she denies any validity to the notion of "essentialism." In other words, she does not believe that it is in the nature or essence of female human beings that they are bound to do whatever women have always done. "We can do otherwise."[80] What exactly she means by her rejection of essentialism is not totally clear as she does not state her position in unequivocal terms. The analogy Hursthouse draws between women and female cheetahs-or, more precisely, pregnant female cheetahs-affords some space for interpretation. Female cheetahs have "a rotten life" in comparison with their male counterparts. Hursthouse illustrates this point in a footnote with a factual account of the hardships experienced by female cheetahs when searching for prey during pregnancy. These cheetahs can of course do nothing to change their conditions; their lot is determined by nature. When Hursthouse posits that female human beings are not constrained in the same way as cheetahs, it is difficult not to detect an implicit reference to control of their reproductive powers. She is after all rejecting essentialism, and essentialism has nothing to do with any accidental aids that may be provided to a woman to render her pregnancy more comfortable. This interpretation seems to be borne out by her assertion that "Our concepts of 'a good human being' and 'living well, as a human being' are far from being completely constrained by what

[79] Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics*, 228-29.

[80] Ibid., 221.

members and biologically specialized members of our species actually, or, at the moment, typically, do." [81]

Hursthouse's contention that "it is an open question whether any human being is good, or living well, given what we could be, not something that has already been determined by nature" [82] provides further support-given the context-for the claim that her notion of end is a psychological one, lacking any intrinsic connection with those fundamental inclinations which are grounded in the bodily aspect of our being. This end is a function of the will which, since it is devoid of such connection, can freely use its freedom either with or against the inclinations and deem itself to be good in doing so. There seems ultimately, therefore, to be no protection against arbitrariness in moral decision making when it comes to issues in which the body and its fundamental inclinations are centrally involved. In this case, Hursthouse's virtue ethics does not seem to possess any principles that would allow it to hold strong against morality conceived as an expression of one's subjective preferences and moral discourse as a rationalization of the same. One is reminded, *mutatis mutandis*, of Hegel's criticism of Kant, expressed by Macintyre as follows:

[81] Hursthouse's position concerning what has for some come to be considered the ultimate resort in birth control, namely, abortion, is delineated somewhat in her famous article, "Virtue Theory and Abortion," in *Virtue Ethics*, ed. Roger Crisp and Michael Slote (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). It ought to be noted that she in no way advocates wholesale abortion. Indeed, she obviously considers termination of pregnancy to display a lack of virtue in most instances, stating that the "cutting-off of a human life" is always "a matter of some seriousness" (ibid., 230-31). She does nonetheless consider it to be a moral right, albeit adding *"nothing* follows from this supposition about the morality of abortion, according to virtue theory, once it is noted (quite generally, not with particular reference to abortion) that in exercising a moral right I can do something cruel, or callous, or selfish, light-minded, self-righteous, stupid, inconsiderate, disloyal, dishonest-that is, act viciously" (ibid., 227). Pregnancy is not just one among many physical conditions, according to Hursthouse, "but that does not mean that one can never regard it in that light without manifesting a vice" (ibid., 232). Thus, for example, "When women are in very poor physical health, or worn out from childbearing, or forced to do very physically demanding jobs, then they cannot be described as self-indulgent, callous, irresponsible, or light-minded if they seek abortions mainly with a view to avoiding pregnancy as the physical condition that it is" (ibid.). It is noteworthy that Hursthouse dismisses the status of the fetus as having anything to do with the rightness or wrongness of abortion-"within, that is, a secular morality" (ibid., 228).

[82] Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics*, 228-29.

"[T]he conscientious moral agent dominated by the form of the categorical imperative is in fact licensed to do anything at all-provided he does it conscientiously. "[83]

The foregoing critique affords argumentative support to the contention that any synthesis between Aristotle's and Kant's ethics cannot redound to the benefit of the former. Aristotle's ethics is teleologically inspired, whereas Kant's is not. For Aristotle, *eudaimonia* is the motive force, for Kant it is duty. Aristotle's moral agent is embodied, Kant's is disembodied. These features of the Kantian account of the moral life show a remarkable similarity with those which characterize Scotus's thought. [84] Hursthouse's attempt to sustain a dialogue between these traditions ends up subverting natural teleology in order to assert the primacy of the will. In doing so she also posits an operative anthropological dualism. *Plus r;a change, plus c'est la meme chose.*

CONCLUSION

In her elaboration of a Neoaristotelian virtue ethics Hursthouse strikingly limits her engagement with Aristotle's writings to his ethical texts. Particularly noteworthy is the lack of reference to Aristotle's inquiry into the human soul, which inquiry, as Thomas S. Hibbs puts it, "marks the culmination of natural philosophy and precedes the study of ethics and politics, on the one hand, and the study of metaphysics on the other." In brief, "The study of the soul is pivotal. "[85] Any treatment of Aristotle's ethics that ignores his *De anima* is simply misguided. Aquinas understood this point well. Hibbs summarizes Aquinas's position as follows: "On the one hand, the human body is raised up, transformed by its union with the intellectual soul. On the other

[83] Alasdair Macintyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 218.

[84] The judgment of Ingham and Dreyer concerning Scotus's discussion of the natural law can be applied here: there "is clearly a structural similarity that anticipates the moral framework offered by Kant" (Ingham and Dreyer, *The Philosophical Vision of John Duns Scotus*, 137). See also n. 3.

[85] Thomas S. Hibbs, *Virtue's Splendor: Wisdom, Prudence, and the Human Good* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), 51.

hand, the soul is naturally ordered to union with the body. We cannot disavow our bodies without courting self-misunderstanding. "[86]

The understanding of the human person underlying Hursthouse's project is ultimately not hylomorphically conceived as a psychosomatic unity. Intimately linked to this anthropological rupture is the voluntaristic attitude that raises its head in her theorizing. Here one can discern the influence of Kant and, more distantly, Scotus. So, for example, while in Scotus's voluntaristic account of the divine law God's omnipotent freedom trumps human freedom, for Hursthouse human freedom finally reigns supreme over the conditions of human bodily being and its inclinations. In both cases this freedom proves finally to be arbitrary. While Scotus's approach views morality as an external imposition on human nature with no necessary reference to its intrinsic inclinations, Hursthouse's approach simply substitutes human desire for the divine will. Her account is at one with Scotus's in the sense that this desire can if needs be trump the natural inclinations. In place of Scotus's conception of the divine law as an external imposition of arbitrary dictates of the divine will, Hursthouse's virtue ethics ends up by substituting the arbitrary dictates of human desire.

To the extent that voluntarism characterizes Hursthouse's take on virtue ethics her project falls foul of an internal contradiction: while seeking to elaborate a Neoaristotelian virtue ethics with its inbuilt teleological dynamics,[87] she imports a voluntarist attitude when it comes to issues relating to the body and its inclinations. There is, I believe, an inherent contradiction in an ethics that purports to be concerned with human flourishing yet adopts a voluntarist attitude towards the bodily aspects of that flourishing. Since the case of Scotus shows that there is an irreconcilable and, indeed, logical opposition between voluntarism, on the one hand, and human nature as teleologically and hylomoporphically

[86] Ibid., 55.

[87] Hursthouse's elaboration of a schema of ends for which animals and humans act bears witness to her appropriation of Aristotle's teleological concerns.

conceived, on the other, one has to conclude that Hursthouse's project lacks coherence in this respect.

This shortcoming could well be remedied by reflecting on the implications of Aristotle's *De anima* for an ethics that claims to be Aristotelian in inspiration. Attention, moreover, to the implications for ethics of Pseudo-Dionysius's dictum *bonum est diffusivum sui* would I believe serve to transform her notion of end as simply a psychological one, devoid of any necessary reference to the incarnate nature of human being, into something more akin to Aquinas's understanding of the natural inclinations as structuring the very life of practical reason.[88] In this latter conception-which takes to heart the implications of Aristotle's *De anima* for ethics-the body can never be viewed as an object over and against a knowing and willing subject. "I" am the composite of my body and soul and it is precisely this composite that properly furnishes the subject of the moral enterprise.[89]

[88] See *STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 1, ad 2.

[89] I would like to thank two anonymous reviewers for their insightful observations and advice as well as Rev. Dr. Seamus Murphy, S.J., who also commented upon an earlier draft of this article.

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IN DEFENSE OF THE LOSS OF BODILY INTEGRITY AS A CRITERION FOR DEATH: A RESPONSE TO THE RADICAL CAPACITY ARGUMENT

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THE CONTEMPORARY DEBATE over the validity of the neurological criteria for death can be understood best as a disagreement over which of two distinct criteria for death--either the loss of bodily integrity or the loss of radical capacity-is compatible with an authentic anthropology that upholds the dignity of the human person. [1]

Traditionally, the presence or absence of bodily integration has been used to discern the presence or absence of human life. This is the criterion endorsed both by Pope John Paul II when he taught that the "death of the person is a single event, consisting in the total disintegration of that unitary and integrated whole that is the personal self" [2] and by the President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavioral Research when it concluded that "death is that moment at which the body's physiological system ceases to constitute an integrated whole." [3] Proponents have used this

[1] For a more comprehensive account of my views on the validity of the neurological criteria, see my essay, "Is the Brain-Dead Patient *Really* Dead?" *Studia Moralia* 41 (2003): 277-308.

[2] Pope John Paul II, "Address to the 18th International Congress of the Transplantation Society, (August 29 2000)," *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 1 (2001): 89-92, at 91.

[3] President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavioral Research, *Defining Death* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1981), 33.

criterion to argue for the validity of the total-brain death definition for death: Since the brain is the integrating organ of the human body, loss of the brain inevitably leads to loss of bodily integrity and thus to death. [4]

In contrast, in recent times, the presence or absence of a radical capacity, more precisely the radical capacity for personhood, has been proposed as an alternative criterion for discerning the presence or absence of human life.[5] Proponents have used this criterion to argue for the validity of the neocortical definition for death: Since the neocortex is the organ responsible for those distinctive higher-order functions-language, learning, memory, and complex thought-that constitute us as persons, loss of the neocortex leads both to loss of personhood and to death.

In the new edition of his textbook, *Catholic Bioethics and the Gift of Human Life*, William May refers to a Thomistic argument-I will call it the radical capacity for sentience (RCS) argument-presented at a recent meeting [6] that suggests that the presence or the absence of the radical capacity for sentience can be used to discern the presence or absence of human life.[7] The RCS argument has been used to argue for the validity of the total-brain death definition for death: Since the human brain is required for sentience, loss of the brain inevitably leads to loss of the radical capacity for sentience and thus to human death. Integral to this argument is the premise that animals are defined by their radical capacity for sentience: An animal is a sentient creature. Thus, according to this argument, loss of the whole brain, and therefore, the loss of the radical capacity for sentience, necessarily involves a substantial change that transforms a human being into something that is not even an animal. Convinced by the

[4] This is the basic argument made by the President's Commission. Also see the analysis by James L. Bernat, "The Definition, Criterion, and Statute of Death," *Semin. Neurol* 4 (1984): 45-51.

[5] As a representative example of this position, see Robert M. Veatch, "The Impending Collapse of the Whole-Brain Definition of Death," *Hastings Center Report* 23 (1993): 18-24.

[6] Westchester Institute Scholars Forum on the Brain Dead Criteria, Washington, D.C., 10-11 April 2008.

[7] William E. May, *Catholic Bioethics and the Gift of Human Life*, 2d ed. (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 2008), 352-53.

veracity of the RCS argument, May concludes that "bodies" that really are brain dead "are *not* human or even mammalian."[8]

In this essay, I will respond to May by pointing out that anyone who accepts the logic of the radical capacity for sentience argument he embraces must also endorse the brain-stem and the neocortical definitions for death, putting the lives of the most disabled of neurologically disabled patients at risk. This is troubling. However, I will also suggest that we do not need to accept the RCS argument because it is flawed. It presupposes an ambiguous criterion for the material foundation for a radical capacity that links the radical capacity for sentience to a particular part of rather than to the whole nervous system. Instead, I will defend the coherence of a loss of bodily integrity as a criterion for death that is grounded in a more robust understanding of how a radical capacity is linked to the integrity of the body.

I

According to the RCS argument, a brain-dead patient has died-he has undergone a substantial change that makes him something other than a human being-because he is not even an animal. The logic of the RCS argument is as follows. It begins by defining an animal as a creature with a radical capacity for sentience. It borrows this definition from the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition. Next, it proposes that the whole brain is the material foundation for this radical capacity for sentience. Therefore, it concludes that an animal that has lost its whole brain has also lost its radical capacity for sentience, and as such, ceases to be an animal. From this argument, it follows that the brain-dead patient, who has lost his radical capacity for sentience, is not even an animal. Thus, a brain dead patient has died, that is, he has undergone substantial change that makes him something other than a human being.

As I noted in the introduction, however, the logic of the radical capacity for sentience argument can also be used to justify both

[8] Ibid., 353.

the brain-stem and the neocortical definitions for death. I begin with the brain-stem definition. Following the RCS argument, we define an animal as a creature with a radical capacity for sentience. We then propose that the brain stem is the material foundation for this radical capacity for sentience. In support of this claim, we point to patients who have lost their brain stems and are therefore in a coma. They are incapable of sentient acts. We therefore conclude that an animal that has lost its brain stem has also lost its radical capacity for sentience, and as such, ceases to be an animal. Thus, a patient who has lost his brain stem has died, that is, he has undergone substantial change that makes him something other than a human being.

Three objections can be raised against this argument. First, it might be denied that the brain stem is the material foundation for the radical capacity for sentience. However, the scientific evidence does not support this objection. Individuals who have experienced brain-stem death from either illness or damage cannot perform sentient acts.[9] Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that they have also lost their radical capacity for sentience. Notice that this empirical analysis parallels the analysis that is presupposed by the radical capacity for sentience argument: Patients who have lost their brain stem are incapable of sentience in the same way that patients who have lost their whole brain are incapable of sentience. Thus, to deny the validity of the premise that the brain stem is the material foundation for sentience is to also deny the validity of the premise of the RCS argument that the whole brain is the material foundation for this radical capacity.

Second, it might be argued that we could never know when the brain stem is completely and irreversibly lost. Therefore, we need to presuppose that all patients in irreversible comas have retained their radical capacity for sentience. We need to always treat them as human beings. This, however, is not a conceptual objection to my argument. It is a medical one. Until recently, physicians could

[9] David Bates, "Coma and Brain Stem Death," *Medicine* 32 (2004): 69-74.

not determine if the whole brain had been destroyed and beyond repair. Now they can. Today, physicians cannot determine if the brain stem has been completely destroyed and is beyond repair.[10] However, as medical technology advances, it is not unreasonable to think that they will be able to do this in the future. At that point, irreversibly comatose patients with permanent brain-stem damage would be considered dead: They would have undergone a substantial change, becoming something other than human beings. At that point, these disabled patients could be killed to harvest their organs. This is troubling.

Finally, those who endorse the RCS argument could argue that loss of the brain stem does not lead to the loss of the radical capacity for sentience but rather to the loss of the ability to exercise this capacity. This would be comparable to a severe genetic abnormality that leads to mental retardation. We would all agree that a baby with Trisomy 13 is incapable of rational activity though he has not lost the radical capacity to engage in such activity. In other words, we would all agree that he is still a human being, though a disabled one. It must be noted, however, that this objection can also be raised against the radical capacity for sentience argument. The loss of the whole brain does not lead to the loss of the radical capacity for sentience but to the loss of the ability to exercise this radical capacity. In other words, the brain-dead patient remains a human being, though a disabled one. Thus, to deny the validity of the argument that loss of the brain stem leads to loss of the radical capacity for sentience is also to deny the validity of the RCS argument that loss of the whole brain leads to loss of the same capacity. Both arguments have the same logical structure, and both make use of the same kind of empirical data that show that the loss either of the brain stem or of the whole brain makes someone incapable of being sentient.

[10] For commentary, see S. D. Shemie et al., "Brain Blood Flow in the Neurological Determination of Death: Canadian Expert Report," *Canadian Journal of Neurological Sciences* 35 (2008): 140-45; and M. K. Heran, N. S. Heran, and S. D. Shemie, "A Review of Ancillary Tests in Evaluating Brain Death," *Canadian Journal of Neurological Sciences* 35 (2008): 409-19.

II

We turn now to the neocortical criterion for death, and its justification by the logic of the RCS argument. To do this, we begin by defining a human being as a creature with a radical capacity for rationality. The human being is a rational animal. Next, we propose that the neocortex is the material foundation for this radical capacity for rationality. We conclude that a human being who has lost his neocortex has also lost his radical capacity for rationality, and as such, ceases to be a human being. From this argument, it follows that several categories of severely disabled patients, who have lost their radical capacity for rationality-including some patients in the persistent vegetative state and others with end-stage Alzheimer's Disease-are not human beings. They too are dead, that is, they have undergone a substantial change that makes them something other than a human being.

As before, three objections can be raised against this argument. First, it may be denied that the neocortex is the material foundation for the radical capacity for rationality. Instead, they could claim that the whole brain is the material foundation for this radical capacity. In response, once again, the scientific evidence does not support this objection. First, individuals born without a neocortex never manifest any signs of rationality. [11] They are only capable of those sentient acts associated with animals. Second, patients who have lost their neocortical function from either illness or injury-for example, end-stage Alzheimer's patients and a subset of PVS patients with tumors that have destroyed their neocortex-cannot rational acts. [12] They

[11] D. A. Shewmon et al., "Consciousness in Congenitally Decorticate Children: Developmental Vegetative State as Self-Fulfilling Prophecy," *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology4* l (1999): 364-74.

[12] For details, see The Multi-Society Task Force on PVS, "Medical Aspects of the Persistent Vegetative State-First of Two Parts," *New England Journal of Medicine* 330 (1994): 1499-1508; The Multi-Society Task Force on PVS, "Medical Aspects of the Persistent Vegetative State-Second of Two Parts," *New England Journal of Medicine* 330 (1994): 1572-79; and Richard C. Mohs and Vahram Haroutunian, "Alzheimer Disease: From Earliest Symptoms to End Stage," in *Neuropsychopharmacology: The Fifth Generation of Progress,* ed. K. L. Davis et al. (Baltimore: Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins, 2001), 1189-98.

may be able to respond to light or to respond to sound but they are unable to reason. They too are only capable of sentient acts that are characteristic of animals. Both of these observations reveal that the neocortex is absolutely necessary for rationality.

Once again, this empirical analysis parallels the analysis that is presupposed by the key premise in the RCS argument. We only know that the whole brain is the material foundation for the radical capacity for sentience because patients who have lost their whole brain from either illness or injury cannot perform sentient acts. In the same way, we know that the neocortex is the material foundation for the radical capacity for rationality because patients who have lost their neocortex cannot perform rational acts. Thus, to deny the validity of the premise that links the function of the neocortex to rational behavior is also to deny the validity of the premise of the RCS argument that links the function of the whole brain to sentient behavior.

Second, in a parallel argument to the objection raised above,it might be argued that we could never know when the neocortex is completely and irreversibly lost. Therefore, we need to presuppose that all patients with neocortical damage have retained their radical capacity for rationality. We need to always treat them as human beings.

In response, once again, this is not a conceptual objection to my argument. It is a medical one. It is not unreasonable to think that physicians will be able to diagnose irreversible and complete loss of the neocortex in the future. At that point, end-stage Alzheimer's and some PVS patients would be considered dead: they would have undergone a substantial change becoming something other than human beings. At that point, these disabled patients too could be killed to harvest their organs. Again, this is troubling.

Finally, in another parallel argument, it might be argued that loss of the neocortex leads not to the loss of the radical capacity for rationality but to the loss of the ability to exercise that same capacity. According to this objection, the person who has lost his neocortex remains a human being. Yet the same objection could

be raised against the RCS argument. To deny the validity of the argument that loss of the neocortex leads to loss of the radical capacity for rationality is also to deny the validity of the argument that loss of the whole brain leads to loss of the same capacity. Both arguments have the same logical structure, and both make use of the same kind of empirical data that show that the loss either of the neocortex or of the whole brain makes someone incapable of being either rational or sentient respectively.

III

As I demonstrated above, the logic of the RCS argument can be used to justify the brain-stem and the neocortical definitions for death, putting the lives of the most disabled of neurologically disabled patients, including those in a coma and in the vegetative state, at risk. However, I am convinced that we do not need to accept the RCS argument because it is flawed: It presupposes an ambiguous criterion for the material foundation for a radical capacity that links the radical capacity for sentience to a particular part of rather than to the whole nervous system.

To illustrate my point, I pose the following question: How do we identify the material foundation for a radical capacity? The RCS argument appeals to observations that patients who have lost the functioning of their whole brain are unable to perform sentient acts. Thus, the argument concludes that the whole brain is necessary for sentience. It then proposes that the whole brain is the material foundation for the radical capacity. From this analysis, it is clear that the RCS argument identifies the material foundation for a radical capacity with an organ that is necessary for that radical capacity to be actualized. However, as I have pointed out, there are other parts of the animal-for instance, the brain stem, understood here as a part of the whole brain that can be identified as an independent part, an independent organ-that are as necessary for sentience as is the whole brain. Thus, the RCS criterion for identifying the material foundation for sentience is ambiguous.

Instead, I propose that the material foundation for a radical capacity is that part of the organism that is both *necessary and sufficient* for a radical capacity to be actualized. The robustness of this criterion may be seen in its application to the radical capacity for reproduction. What is the material foundation for the radical capacity to reproduce? With the RCS criterion-that a material foundation is a part that is necessary for the radical capacity to be actualized-there are multiple material foundations for reproduction. For the woman, her ovaries, her uterus, and her vagina would all fulfill this criterion. Again, the criterion is ambiguous. Instead, I would suggest that since all of these organs together are necessary *and sufficient* for reproduction, it is more fitting, at a minimum, to identify the entire reproductive system as the material foundation for the radical capacity for reproduction.

With this in mind, we should note that neither the whole brain nor the brain stem is both *necessary and sufficient* for sentience. An isolated brain or an isolated brain stem cannot be sentient. Both are parts of the organism that process inputs received from sensory neurons that innervate all the other tissues of the body. Properly speaking, therefore, the whole brain requires a functioning nervous system, *in toto,* in order for the organism to be sentient. [13] To put it another way, in theory, if a patient could permanently lose functioning of those parts of the nervous system other than the brain without losing the functioning of his whole brain itself, then he too would be unable to perform sentient acts. Therefore, it is more accurate to say that the material foundation for the radical capacity for sentience, at a minimum, is the entire

[13] Developmental neurobiologists have shown that human brain development is shaped by sensory experience. For instance, visual deprivation early in development leads to radical changes in the region of the brain associated with vision. Congenitally deaf and congenitally blind adults have altered brain architectures. In fact, in contrast to seeing subjects, blind individuals appear to have brains that allow them to better resolve peripheral sounds. Moreover, loss of sensory connections in adulthood leads to brain reorganization. This evidence among others suggests that the isolated brain, severed from the rest of the nervous system, is an incomplete and fundamentally defective brain. For details and further discussion, see B. Roder eta!., "Improved Auditory Spatial Tuning in Blind Humans," *Nature400* (1999): 162-66; and L. Merabet and A. Pascual-Leone, "Neural Reorganization following Sensory Loss: the opportunity of change," *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 11 (2010): 44-52.

nervous system because the. entire nervous system is both necessary and sufficient for sentience. A similar analysis would reveal that it is more accurate to say that the material foundation for the radical capacity for consciousness, at a minimum, is the entire nervous system and not the neocortex because the entire nervous system is necessary and sufficient for consciousness.

In sum, changing the criterion for the material foundation for a radical capacity from the part that is not only necessary for that actualization of that capacity to the part that is both necessary *and sufficient* for the same allows us to challenge the neocortical and brain-stem criteria for death without jettisoning the philosophical wisdom that we inherit from the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition.

IV

In light of the argument outlined above, it is reasonable to affirm that the material foundation for both the radical capacity for consciousness and the radical capacity for sentience is, at a minimum, the entire nervous system. In theory, therefore, in order to determine if a human being has died-that is, undergone a substantial change such that he is neither a rational nor a sentient creature-we would have to determine if he has completely and irreversibly lost the functioning of his entire nervous system. In reality, however, this is not possible because the nervous system innervates every tissue of the whole human being. To put it another way, we could never lose the entire the nervous system without losing the organism. Thus, the only real sign for the death of the human being must be the loss of the human orgamsm.

How do we discern the presence or the absence of the human organism? As I have discussed in more detail elsewhere, an organism can be defined scientifically as a discrete unit of living matter that follows a self-driven, robust developmental pathway that manifests its species-specific self-organization. [14] The

[14] For discussion, see my paper, "The Moral Case for ANT-Derived Pluripotent Stem Cell Lines," *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 6 (2006): 517-37. Also see the insightful remarks in Eric T. Olson, *The Human Animal: Personal Identity without Psychology* (New

organism's organization gives it its metabolic and teleological integrity. To put it another way, an organism's organization gives it its ability to live and to grow in a species-specific manner. Thus, the definitive sign for the presence or the absence of the organism, and thus the presence or absence of its life, I propose, is the presence or the absence of its organization, its bodily integrity. Consequently, since the brain-dead patient remains sufficiently organized to exist and to grow as a human being, albeit a disabled human being in the ICU, does, he remains an organism. He has bodily integrity and as such is not dead. He is still a living human being.

One could object to this argument by pointing out that there are clear examples of organized nonorganisms. For example, severed embryonic human limbs and detached human organs can be maintained in the laboratory for extended periods of time. Though these entities are organized, they are certainly not organisms. Therefore, the objector could claim that the presence or absence of organization cannot be used as a sign for the presence or absence of the organism.

Yet this objection relies upon an equivocation. It assumes that the organization found in an intact twelve-year-old child is the same kind of organization found in a severed embryonic limb. This is not the case. The organization of the intact child's body is unlike the organization of the severed embryonic limb, in the same way that the human "being" of a human adult is unlike the human "being" of the human cell.[15] In the former case, the organization of the intact child's body, which I will call organismic organization, is such that it can coordinate and regulate the child's metabolic and teleological functions. To put it another way, the child is organized in such a way that he is capable of growing to maturity and of attaining his end as a

York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 124-53.

[15] This is an argument I have heard made by some who advocate the morality of abortion. To those who claim that the human embryo is a human being and as such have a right to life, the retort is made that the human skin cell is also a human being. Since it is moral to kill a human skin cell, it should also be moral to kill a human embryo. The argument fails to acknowledge that the human embryo is an organism while the human skin cell is not.

human being. He can grow and mature because his organization is radically unlike the organization found in severed limbs or detached organs. His organization is such that the activities of his parts are coordinated in a way that tends to keep him alive and maturing.

In contrast, the organization of the severed embryonic limb, which I will call suborganismic organization, is unable to coordinate and regulate the limb's metabolic and teleological functions. Not surprisingly, therefore, in culture, the embryonic human limb cannot grow and reach the size of an adult man's arm. It cannot do this because the activities of the severed limb's parts, its cells and its tissues, are not coordinated in a way that tends to keep the limb as a whole alive and ordered towards its functional end. In fact, the limb only gets its teleological properties from the way it relates to the intact human organism. There are two kinds of organization, organismic and suborganismic organization, and only the former, what one may call bodily integrity, is a manifestation of the organism.

The organization found in a brain-dead patient is clearly organismic in nature because brain-dead toddlers are able to grow and mature into brain-dead adults. Dependent upon mechanical ventilation and clinical support, they are nevertheless as capable of maintaining their own metabolic integrity and teleology as severely disabled human beings who are cared for in an ICU are capable of maintaining theirs. [16] Like ICU patients, they maintain their bodily integrity. They are human organisms. They are alive.

V

In sum, proponents of the radical capacity for sentience (RCS) argument, including William May, have used it to argue for the validity of the total-brain death definition for death. However, as I have described in this article, an ambiguous criterion for the material foundation for a radical capacity, which lies at the very

[16] For details and further discussion, see Alan Shewmon, "The Brain and Somatic Integration: Insights into the Standard Biological Rationale for Equating 'Brain Death' with Death," *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 26 (2001): 457-78.

heart of the RCS argument, linking the radical capacity for sentience to a particular part of rather than to the whole nervous system would allow advocates of both the brain-stem and neocortical definitions of death to use the same RCS argument or some variant of it to advance their claims, putting the lives of the most disabled of neurologically disabled patients at risk.

Changing the criterion for the material foundation for a radical capacity from a part that is necessary for that actualization of that capacity to the part that is both necessary *and sufficient* for the same allows us to challenge the neocortical and brain-stem criteria for death without jettisoning the philosophical wisdom that we inherit from the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, the wisdom that undergirds the criteria endorsed by Pope John Paul II and the President's Commission. With this clarification, it is clear that the brain-dead patient has the bodily integrity that is characteristic of human beings. He, therefore, is still an intact human being, albeit a disabled human being like the human beings in the ICU. Thus, he is still alive. The brain-dead patient is not dead.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Perspective of the Acting Person: Essays in the Renewal of Thomistic Moral Philosophy. By MARTIN RHONHEIMER, edited with an introduction by WILLIAM F. MURPHY, *JR*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008. Pp. xxxix + 329. $39.95 (paper). ISBN978-0-8132-1511-2.

This book collects ten essays by Martin Rhonheimer on moral philosophy, some of which are published for the first time in English. The essays center on two major topics: the moral object and natural law. Rhonheimer's main points of reference in this book are Thomas Aquinas and the encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*. The book contains an excellent introduction in which the editor, William Murphy, Jr., recounts Rhonheimer's intellectual biography, provides a summary of his major books, and gives a concise and useful introduction to each essay.

Towards the end of the review I will discuss an aspect of Rhonheimer's account of natural law. But for the most part I will concentrate on the topic of the moral object, with regard to which Rhonheimer has recently sparked a lively debate. He presents the most comprehensive account of the moral object in the eighth essay of this book, "The Perspective of the Acting Person and the Nature of Practical Reason: The 'Object of the Human Act' in Thomistic Anthropology of Action," originally published in 2004 in the journal *Nova et Vetera*, English edition. (N.B. The first issue of the 2008 volume of *Nova et Vetera* is almost entirely dedicated to the discussion of this essay.) Rhonheimer has the merit, in fact, of raising a number of important questions regarding Aquinas's account of the moral object. The debate ignited by these questions promises to provide us with a better understanding of a fundamental topic in Aquinas's ethics-Qne that is among the most difficult of his teachings, from both the exegetical and the philosophical point of view.

What is philosophically at stake in the topic of the moral object? The moral object defines the intelligibility or essence of an intentional action. In other words, the moral object establishes an action within a given species in the moral order: "this homicide is murder," or "this homicide is a judicial execution." Apart from its intentional dimension, an action is merely a natural event. As a purely natural event, it is described according to its natural characteristics and possesses a natural species, such as death that occurs by a falling rock. From the

natural perspective, it does not matter whether the rock fell down by itself, or was kicked off by accident, or was dropped intentionally. From the moral perspective (which is the "perspective of the acting person" *[VS* 78]), the way in which an act is achieved is of course crucial. The same natural kind of action might in fact be done by accident or intentionally, and in the latter case, either for a good or bad motive. A judge might order that someone be executed either for the sake of justice or to appease his anger (see *STh* I-II, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3). Moral specifications do not necessarily line up with natural specifications. Two acts might share the same natural characteristics but be of different moral species; conversely, two acts might be morally equivalent but differ in natural species. Thus what belongs naturally speaking to the same kind of homicide might be either an act of justice or injustice, and what is morally speaking the same kind of homicide might happen either by strangling, stoning, or stabbing (see *STh* I-II, q. 72, a. 6). What is at issue here is not classification for its own sake, but the moral evaluation of actions. In fact, moral specification, that is, describing an act as being of such and such a moral character, means above all to specify the act as good or bad (see *STh* I-II, q. 18, a. 5).

Up to this point, there is nothing controversial. Disagreement, however, surfaces when one attempts to articulate the factors that determine the moral object. In the second, third, and fourth essays, Rhonheimer discusses proportionalist theories, according to which the moral object is seen as an "expanded object," that is, as the result of a weighing of all pertinent circumstances and consequences. According to proportionalists, an action is a purely physical event that brings about good or bad effects. It cannot be morally specified as good, evil, or indifferent according to its own intentional character, independently from any further, added intentions regarding whatever incidental effects one hopes to obtain or avoid by means of the act. Rhonheimer convincingly illustrates what is problematic in this account with the example of Paul Touvier, a French collaborator of the Nazis in the Vichy regime, who killed seven Jews in order to prevent the killing of a hundred planned by the Gestapo. Is this action properly described as saving the life of ninety-three Jews, because the seven were killed with the intention to save the rest? If what one chooses are mainly consequences and not actions themselves, then, as Rhonheimer points out, the answer is affirmative. By contrast, according to Rhonheimer's own view, the action is properly described as killing seven Jews with the *further* intention of saving ninety-three. Rhonheimer explains that contrary to the proportionalists' view of the expanded moral object, the word "'object' means the basic intentional content of the human act, distinguishable from *further* intentions" regarding what someone may incidentally hope to achieve by means of the act (81; see also 196).

Those engaged in the current debate about Rhonheimer's work generally agree with him up to this point, but they disagree on a different issue. The key questions revolve around the moral object understood as the basic intentional content of the human act, an issue Rhonheimer deals with above all in the eighth essay. The conclusion he draws from this notion of the moral object is that "to

describe the object of a human act ... we must also include in the description the *will* with which it is chosen and executed" (220). To be sure, Rhonheimer has in mind the will as informed by reason (221).

What is the precise role of the basic intention (as distinct from further intentions) in the moral specification of human acts? In one sense, according to Aquinas, everything depends on the end intended by the will, so much so that the specification by the end and by the object collapse into one. The reason is that the end is precisely the object of the will, that is, of the "interior act" (see, e.g., *STh* 1-11, q. 1, a. 3; q.18, a. 6; q. 72, a. 1; q. 72, a. 3; q. 72, a. 6). But what about the "exterior act," that is, the act first intended and then commanded by the will? What is the role of the basic intention in the moral specification of the exterior act? It is here that disagreement arises.

The first topic of contention concerns whether the exterior act has a moral object of its own, in addition to being the moral object of the will. This problem can be reduced to the question of whether a certain exterior act, if consciously performed, is already by itself morally qualified, that is, specified in a morally relevant sense, independently from the reason for which it is done. Rhonheimer denies this. For him, the exterior act is the moral object of the will, but the exterior act does not itself have a moral object-although he admits that Aquinas does call the moral object the object of the exterior act, which according to Rhonheimer can cause confusion (210-11; see also 203-4).

If the exterior act does not have a moral object of its own and if it is not morally specified before reason presents it to the will, it seems that the moral specification and hence the moral quality of an exterior act depends entirely on the intention for which it is done. It is here that I find it difficult to grasp the consistency of Rhonheimer's position. On the one hand, he insists that not every exterior act can reasonably be judged compatible with every intention whatsoever. The exterior act is not indifferent in itself and the intention is not separable from the material conditions of the act (206). An exterior action becomes an object of the will only because reason orders it and presents it to the will, and reason does not operate arbitrarily: *"for reason,* there exists a non-arbitrary connection between the material elements of the exterior act, its objective moral species as a 'theft,' and its consequent valuation as 'unjust'" (222). Rhonheimer holds that there are naturally given limits to how our actions can be organized intentionally. Not every behavioral pattern is reasonably compatible with an upright intention, as in the case of intercourse with someone else's spouse or with a partner of the same sex (239; see also 84, 152-53).

On the other hand, for Rhonheimer an exterior act depends for its moral specification on the basic intention with which it is done. Thus, for example, when the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines masturbation as the "deliberate stimulation of the genital organs in order to derive sexual pleasure," this would imply that the stimulation of the genitals is not masturbation if it is done for the sake of fertility analysis (82). Also, the use of contraceptives is not morally specified as a contraceptive act apart from the intention (228, 233). Although the specific issue of contraception is not discussed at any length in the

present book, it is more suited than other examples (such as lying, 226-33) to bring out the implications of Rhonheimer's understanding of the moral object. Let us leave aside the use of contraceptives by one who does not intend to engage in sex, such as when they are employed to prevent pregnancy when there is a high risk of rape. Let us focus instead on the debated question of the use of condoms by married couples where one spouse is HIV-infected (cf. Benedict Guevin and Martin Rhonheimer, "On the Use of Condoms to Prevent A.I.D.S.," *The National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 5 [2005]: 37-48). For Rhonheimer, the use of a condom in this scenario is specified by the intention to prevent infection, not by the intention to prevent conception, for according to the hypothesis the prevention of conception is unintended. Since the contraceptive effect is unintended *(praeter intentionem),* the act is not morally specified as a contraceptive act. Hence it does not fall under the prohibition of contraceptive sexual acts by *Humanae Vitae.*

Here it seems to me that two crucial questions need to be answered, not merely in order to settle this particular issue, but also in order to gain an adequate understanding of the moral specification of human acts. First, is it true that from the moral perspective the action is not an act of contraception (although, as admitted by all, from the natural perspective it is contraception)? Second, is the contraceptive effect entirely unintended in this situation? These questions are concrete instances of the more general philosophical questions: To what extent is the intentional content of an action constitutive of the moral specification of the exterior act and how does the exterior act work back on the specification of the interior act of the will? Furthermore, what, precisely, falls under the intentional content of the human act when a certain behavior is chosen?

Granted that Aquinas holds that moral specification is entirely an issue of the will's intention, this conviction nonetheless goes hand in hand with his view that the exterior act is morally specified according to whether the things or persons the act is concerned with are in due proportion to reason. While Rhonheimer acknowledges this (206-9), he denies nevertheless that the exterior act has itself a moral object, in addition to being a moral object for the will. In my understanding of Aquinas, however, it is the exterior act together with its own moral object that becomes the moral object of the will when the said act is intended or chosen: "Although the object is the matter about which *[materia circa quam]* an act is concerned, yet it has the character of an end, in so far as the intention of the agent is fixed on it" *(STh* I-II, q. 73, a. 3, ad 1; cf. I-II, q. 20, a. 1). To return to the example of the use of condoms, it is the act with all its characteristics that becomes the object of the will. But according to the hypothesis, the contraceptive effect is not intended. Is this hypothesis consistent? Can one avoid intending an effect that inevitably follows from one's action when one intends to perform the action?

This is where the second question comes in. For Aquinas, although an undesirable effect may not be *per se* intended, it does become part of one's

intention if the effect is essentially connected with the action. He states this most clearly in *De Malo:*

> Sometimes an accident of some effect is joined to it in a few cases and rarely, and then it is reasonable to presume that the agent in intending the per se effect, in no way intends the accidental effect. But sometimes an accident of this kind always or in most cases accompanies the effect principally intended, and then the accidental effect is not separated from the agent's intention. If then in a few cases some evil is joined to the good that the will intends, the sin is excusable, for example if someone cutting timber in a woods through which people rarely pass, in felling a tree should kill a man. But if always or for the most part evil is connected with the good that is per se intended, it does not excuse from sin, even if that evil is not per se intended. *(De Malo,* q. 1, a. 3, ad 15; trans. Oesterle).

Accordingly, an HIV-infected person engaging in sexual intercourse by using a condom, assuming he regrets the contraceptive effect, intends *per se* to enjoy sexual intercourse as well as to prevent infection, but also intends-although not *per* se-contraception. It seems to follow, then, that contraception enters into the moral specification of the act, even when it is not *per se* intended, because by engaging in such action one cannot have a selective basic intention.

So, although acts are entirely specified by the end intended, once a specific exterior act is intended, the range of what is beyond the intention of the agent is limited. Not only are certain intentions incompatible with certain acts, but also certain acts cannot be done without having-at least implicitly-certain intentions. Rhonheimer acknowledges this with regard to a different scenario than the one discussed above (207 n. 42), but I do not see how this acknowledgment is consistent with his denial that the exterior act is morally specified by its own moral object, that is, by the nature of the things or persons it is dealing with, independent from the manner in which the act is intended when it is performed.

Given the prominence of a second topic in this collection of ethics, namely, that of the natural law, I would like briefly to mention a noteworthy dimension of Rhonheimer's interpretation of Aquinas. In chapter 5, an essay that appears here for the first time in English, he discusses the fundamental aspects of Aquinas's doctrine of the natural law: the nature of the first principle of practical reason as well as the relation between practical reason and the natural inclinations. Rhonheimer's central claim about the role of the first principle of practical reason ("the good is to be done, evil is to be avoided" *[STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 2]) is that, thanks to this principle, "man does not constitute himself as a practical / rational subject beforehand and independently from the relationship of the practical reason with the appetitive goals of the natural inclinations, but right *in* the grasp of the *bona* as revealed by the natural inclinations, a grasp that in any event is always a rational grasp" (107). So the first principle of practical reason is operative in the ordering of the human goods that correspond to the

natural inclinations. Practical reason is at work in the "integration of every one of these inclinations and their goals into a unified whole of all natural human strivings" (113). The natural inclinations themselves only become practical goods as they are informed and ordered by practical reason. Rhonheimer thus accounts for the fact that the natural inclinations have a practical and normative relevance, for they are normative not in their mere natural givenness, but as informed by practical reason. It is thus that the "truth of sexuality," for example, is to be found not in the blind pursuit of the sex drive, but in the ordering of the natural inclination for the preservation of the species by practical reason (111-15).

My discussion of the book, although incomplete, has nevertheless shown, I hope, that Rhonheimer intelligently engages some of the most difficult topics of ethics in general and of Aquinas's moral thought in particular. Engaging in his writings can only be profitable to the reader.

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Christ in Postmodern Philosophy: Gianni Vattimo, Rene Girard, and Slavoj Zizek. By FREDERIEKDEPOORTERE.London and New York: T & T Clark International, 2008. Pp. 159. $21.95 (paper). ISBN 978-0-567-03332-1.

Frederiek Depoortere is a postdoctoral fellow and member of Lieven Boeve's "Theology in a Postmodern Context" research group at the Catholic University of Leuven. The present book explores the work of three continental European intellectuals, each of whom turned, at some point in his career, from criticism of religion to the *caritas* of the incarnate God as the only power capable of overcoming the violence inherent in human history. The three-Vattimo, Girard, and Zizek-have been selected by Depoortere as representatives of distinct possibilities for postmetaphysical thinking about "Christ" as signifier of the divine. Despite their differences, they share a common interest in the Christian theme of divine embodiment or "immanence" in contrast to theologians who emphasize the radical otherness of God in the wake of Heidegger's apophatic ontology. Depoortere wants to explore, and ultimately test, their respective interpretations of theological "immanence" in connection with the themes of divine transcendence and Christian particularity.

The opening chapter introduces the Christology of Gianni Vattimo, with attention to its articulation in his *Belief* (1999) and *After Christianity* (2002). Here we learn how Nietzsche and Heidegger functioned as pedagogues on his way to Christ. The Teutonic lessons on the violence of metaphysical thinking prepared the Italian ex-Catholic for Christ's way of kenosis and *ii pensiero debole*

("weak thought"), in which, according to Vattimo, the nihilistic destiny of hermeneutics is announced as the heart of the gospel message. Vattimo's Christ saves by desacralizing the world and releasing the process of secular political emancipation into a history purified of any trace of transcendence. In this way, Vattimo rejects the apophatics, like Caputo and Levinas, who appropriate Heidegger to reintroduce to Western civilization the God who is "wholly other." Vattimo's eschatology is immanent, though not fully realized, for the arrival of the secular-Christie order awaits the dissolution of the remnants of metaphysical violence embedded in the dogmatic and moral doctrines of the Church. At that time, divine *caritas* alone will govern the radically historical process of interpreting Christ's message according to the rule of Augustine, *"dilige, et quad vis fac."*

The trenchant quality of Depoortere's criticism of Vattimo is matched only by its breadth. Among other concerns, he questions Vattimo's sweeping and unsubstantiated association of metaphysics and Christian dogma with violence, and interprets his kenotic Christology of the total self-emptying of divine transcendence into immanence as a "legitimation for the abandonment of Christianity" (60) in the tradition of Altizer's "Christian atheism." At the root of the material insufficiency of Vattimo's Christology lies a one-sided methodological commitment to the reconciliation ("correlation") of Christian tradition and modern secularization. As such, Vattimo seems not to have fully awakened to the contemporary postmodern situation of radical religious and ideological pluralism and the chorus of critics of the late-modern metanarrative of universal secular emancipation.

For Depoortere, pluralism, not secularization, presents the more basic challenge for Christian thinking in a postmodern context. This pluralism must be met with an exposition of the "irreducible uniqueness" of Christ and an apologetic defense of Christian truth claims in their particularity. Readers should understand that Depoortere's concept of "irreducible uniqueness" is influenced by Boeve's notion of divine "interruption" in history *(God Interrupts History[NewYork:* Continuum, 2007) and the latter's argument that Christian theology is a "radical hermeneutics" of the "open narrative" inaugurated by Christ who always exists as a "difference in continuity" in dialogical relation to other religious and philosophical perspectives. Depoortere turns to Girard and Zizek as possible witnesses to Christ's "irreducible uniqueness." His strategy is interesting, if not unproblematic: he proposes that the hypothesis of a supernatural (revealed) transcendent reality can be supported *indirectly* by (a) establishing the content of the "natural sacred" and its origins, and (b) asking about the difference of the incarnate Christ in relation to this natural sacred.

Chapter 2 explores Rene Girard's turn to Christ in connection with the exceptional character of Jesus' refusal of violence *(Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World,* 1978). Girard's argument is anthropological in nature: human desire is not fixed as in the case of other animals, but is given shape through the process of imitation ("mimesis") of the object-oriented desire of others. Because two people cannot possess the same object (recalling Freud's

reading of *Oedipus the King),* mimesis gives rise to a violent rivalry that exceeds anything found elsewhere in the animal world. As mimesis is the very basis of culture (whereby the human animal transcends "nature"), all cultures inevitably find themselves trapped in a "mimetic crisis" wherein murderous envy threatens public order. Girard argues that the "scapegoat mechanism" is born in this crisis, and the ritual sacrifice of the scapegoat aims at purification of the people through the destruction of the murderous desire projected upon the "otherness" of the scapegoat. Because the purification does not resolve the mimetic crisis at its roots, the system of violent sacrifice must be repeated. The scapegoat is an ambivalent figure, embodying both evil and redemption, and it is this strange "otherness" of the scapegoat that gives rise to the fear and worship that lie at the origins of "the metaphysical, the sacred, the divine" in natural religiosity (42-43). The uniqueness of Jesus' love enacted in life and death shatters the metaphysical, sacral aura that surrounds the scapegoat in natural religion by revealing the violence that resides at the heart of all civilization, and offering hope for the formation of a redemptive human desire through an *imitatio Christi.*

Two further conversations are introduced in order to test Girard's case for Christ's uniqueness. The first concerns Nietzsche's claim that Christian mimesis does not overcome violence, but sends it underground in the form of resentment. Depoortere argues that resentment is not the father of Christianity, but the "outcome of the unfinished impact of Christianity on world history" (59). In this way, Depoortere shows his sympathy for the view that the process of secularization is the *incomplete* product of Christian religion (insofar as secular culture channels pagan vengeance into the vices of envy, greed, and vanity, and harnesses them for the "well-being" of its "egalitarian" capitalist economy). The second conversation offers an excursus on recent work in sociobiology and the transmission of cultural information through "memes" as a possible complement to Girard's naturalistic theory of culture. The results are ambiguous: on the one hand, scientific research in "memetics" supports the idea that human desire is shaped by mimesis; on the other, sociobiology tends toward a reductive, deterministic account of the formation of human desire. Furthermore, some prominent sociobiologists, such as Richard Dawkins and Susan Blackmore, present "science" as the vaccine against religion as a dangerous viral "memeplex." Depoortere's sanguine outlook on the apologetic potential of the results of naturalistic criticism of "natural religion" prevails when he concludes that corroborating evidence for the intrinsic connection between religion and violence could be used to support the "supernatural" transcendence of Christ and his charity (83).

Depoortere's presentation of Zizek's Christology in chapter 3 is the most intellectually challenging and rewarding part of the book. He wants the reader to know that Zizek's Marxist origins survive his conversion to "Pauline materialism," or the view that the institutional body of Christ and its praxis in history is the distinguishing mark of Christ's work. Even more helpful for interpreting Zizek's Christology is the knowledge that his construction of "Pauline materialism" involves a "reactualization" of Hegel by way of Jacques

Lacan, embodying a commitment to the insights of modern German philosophical humanism and political emancipation through the subject's use of reason. Furthermore, like Girard, Zizek rejects traditional Christian beliefs about Christ's "sacrifice," though unlike Girard, "sacrifice" and even "violence" find a new meaning in Christian life.

The Lacanian reading of Hegel underscores the impossibility of achieving self-identity through reason, precisely because of the excess of human desire ("drive") characteristic of the human animal. Zizek exploits Lacan's semiotic analysis of human desire in ways that recall St. Paul's own dialectical wrestling with the self and its infinite desire before the Law. Zizek's analysis of signs and their function outside the Christie order begins with the infinite gap between the signifier and the signified: the Thing signified is marked by its radical absence in the sign. In this way, a profound tension between Law and drive arises. Law articulates the rational content of the "pleasure principle," which directs human beings to desire that limited happiness which is possible within civilization and its finite system of signs. Human drive reaches out beyond this limited happiness, and desires to transgress the Law in order to be one with the Thing itself. This is the *thanatos* drive, for the desire to close the gap between the subject and the object of desire *is* the desire not to exist as a finite ego. Outside of Christ, human transgression results in a tragic or destructive drive to be one with the "sublime beyond" of the Wholly Other. The fallenness of the human condition has its basis in the nihilism of this drive.

In the New Law of charity, the incarnate Christ redirects human desire away from the Wholly Other to the neighbor. In this light, Christ might be understood as the ultimate sign of divinity, though this is qualified by Zizek's Hegelianism: Christ is a "vanishing mediator," for the visible sign is cancelled and preserved in the outpouring of the invisible Spirit that animates the Christie body in history. Christian sacrifice is not the human act of self-oblation *before* God, it is the sacrifice of the tragic drive for the God of transcendence which permits God to exist in immanence in Christ's ecclesial Body. Depoortere quotes Zizek on this point: "When Christ dies, what dies with him is the secret hope discernible in 'Father, why hast thou forsaken me?': the hope that there is a father who has abandoned me" (117). Zi:lek is not far from Vattimo's Christian atheism here, though Depoortere notes one significant difference: for Zizek, Christian charity has its own structure of violence (Luke 14:26; Matt 10:34-39) relative to the cultural agendas of modern and postmodern secularisms alike, for the Christ-event is "the violent intrusion of Difference that precisely throws the balanced circuit of the universe off the rails" (126).

In his conclusion, Depoortere notes that both Girard and Zizek develop perspectives on a Christ whose gift of charity offers an alternative to the violence which pervades human history, a violence manifest most keenly today in global capitalism and its formation of a covetous human desire before which modern and postmodern wisdom alike remain powerless. Of the two, however, only Girard's Christology points toward a real transcendence-in-immanence. Depoortere's judgment here is probably connected to Girard's willingness to

allow the particularity of Christ's nonviolent charity shine more brightly than the synthetic power of Hegel's dialectic, which lures both Vattimo and Zizek alike into its orbit.

Christ in Postmodern Philosophy not only serves as an excellent primer for those who might be relatively new to the conversation about Christ in contemporary continental thought, but also offers a set of insights and intuitions which will prove fruitful for further reflection upon Christ's uniqueness. Depoortere's intuitions, however, stand in need of further development on the issue of Christ and the religions. On the one hand, the "postmodern" Depoortere declares his opposition to those views which present non-Christian religions as "precursors" to Christ, a position he describes as "Hegelian." The "modern" Depoortere, however, looks to the anthropological and natural sciences to construct a somewhat wooden binary opposition between "the natural sacred" (with its inherent violence) and the supernatural revelation of God incarnate. Critics will suspect that a postmetaphysical Christology, cut off from a doctrine of creation and the goodness of nature, will inevitably yield such results. One might hope that Depoortere will turn his attention to these issues in the future.

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The Mass: The Presence of the Sacrifice of the Cross. By CHARLES CARDINAL JOURNET. Translated by VICTOR SZCZUREK, O. PRAEM. South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2008. Pp. xxii + 273. $37.50 (cloth). ISBN 978-1-58731-494-0.

The Swiss cardinal and theologian Charles Journet (1891-1975) is best known as one of the principal founders of the journal *Nova et Vetera* and the author of the immense theological masterpiece *L'eglise du verbe incarne.* It is no small event that Journet's lesser-known *La messe: Presence du sacrifice de la croix,* one of the lost classics of Eucharistic theology, is now available in a fine English translation by Fr. Victor Szczurek, a Norbertine priest of St. Michael's Abbey in Orange County, California. Originally published in 1957, *La messe* came at the end of a great upheaval in Eucharist theology. At the turn of the twentieth century, a general Scholastic consensus existed in the field: Dominican, Franciscan, and Jesuit theologians perfected the general emphases of their schools while the more eclectic German school, represented by Nicholas Gihr and Joseph Pohle, largely upheld the consensus. Dom Odo Case!, who advanced an adventurous but novel account of sacramental presence, and Maurice de la

Taille, who used a massive amount of patristic data to offer a similarly novel account of the relationship of the sacrifice of the Mass to the heavenly liturgy, largely upset this consensus, and the first half of the twentieth century saw an explosion of creative but occasionally unmeasured treatises on the Eucharist.

Journet looks back upon this development with the serenity afforded by his staunch Thomism. He insists on the two Thomistic positions that the Mass is primarily Christ's sacrifice rather than the Church's sacrifice and that the Mass is of infinite efficacious power. He follows his outline of these positions with a skilled historical account of the Church's teaching on transubstantiation, communion, and the settings of the Mass. Journet takes special care to outline the sacramental presence of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary at the Last Supper and at the Mass in light of Protestant criticisms, following the general emphases of Tridentine theologians, and he is a fine controversialist. Two appendices summarize the importance of Pius XIl's encyclical *Mediator Dei* and theological approaches to the mystery of the Mass in the medieval and modern periods. Journet is an able exponent of Aquinas's teaching, which he supplements with a skilled exegesis of Cajetan's contributions to the Thomist tradition and the guiding light of the Council of Trent. He also peppers his pages with quotations from mystics such as Catherine of Siena, John of the Cross, Benedict Joseph Labre, and Marie of the Incarnation; luminaries of modern French intellectual life like Pascal, Bossuet, Leibniz, Claude!, and "Theophile Delaporte" Uulian Green); and more exotic characters like Marguerite de Veni d'Arbouze and Anne de Gonzague de Cleves. While solidly Thomistic in its doctrine, *The Mass* is closer in style and inspiration to the great works of *la nouvelle theologie* that it is meant to combat.

Journet's contribution to Eucharistic theology is to provide a profoundly Thomist alternative to these newer theologies of Eucharistic sacrifice and to correct their frequent misuse of the Angelic Doctor, perhaps the most famous of which is Vonier's and Casel's appeal to *Summa Theologiae* III, q. 60, a. 1, to justify their speculations about a "sacramental world" having its own laws of space and time. Although Journet does not explicitly correct these theologians, the existential synthesis that opens *The Mass* is a clear rebuttal of their mistakes but also a clever appropriation of their better insights. For Journet, the redemptive sacrifice of Christ opens the "universe of nature" to a "universe of redemption" that recapitulates the entire history of the world, including all previous acts of sacrifice. Of course, when Journet remarks that the unforeseen arrival of sin enables the advent of a "totally better world" (10), he alludes to the debates between Scotists and Thomists about the motive of the incarnation that raged through theological journals in the 1940s and 1950s. Rather than addressing this controversy directly, however, he appropriates the Thomist position on this question to divide the world into two economies, according to which the redemptive sacrifice is either awaited or possessed. In this respect, Journet recasts the opening of Eugene Masure's great work *Le sacrifice du chef* with more data from the history of religions, including a well-placed nod to

Mircea Eliade (cf. 7, 24, 47). This wonderfully suggestive move begs to be picked up by Thomists interested in proclaiming the gospel in the context of interreligious dialogue.

Journet does not fare quite as well when he takes up more Scholastic issues. He makes much too much ado about the debate about the principal celebrant of the Mass, which is largely terminological. The Scotists and Jesuits who argued for the relative proximity of the Church's sacrifice never denied that Christ offers the sacrifice. At times, too, Journet uses terminology that suggests the very position he wishes to criticize, especially when he speaks of the unceasing "actualization" of the redemptive sacrifice in the Mass (22) or when he notes that the Mass is a sacrifice only by "identifying itself" with the one redemptive sacrifice by its content (57). The cardinal clarifies his position by noting that the "efficacy of the sacrifice of the Cross, being supreme, does not need to be completed, but rather applied, actualized in the course of time by the heavenly Christ" (65). Later, he also notes that the one sacrifice is completed with respect to the Head but "incomplete" with respect to the members (71-72), another position with which his alleged opponents would not disagree. Journet's evocation of the heavenly Christ points to the real issue in this debate, however, namely, the relationship of the eternal and transitory acts of Christ. The cardinal's presentation of the thought of St. Thomas in this respect is straightforward (61-71), but he does not address the chief issues that informed the rich early modern discussion on this topic. In places, Journet seems to hint that sacrifice finds its essential element in an act of destruction (58 n. 5), but the "divergent view" he wishes to criticize, which is exemplified by de la Taille, merely returns to the Augustinian notion that the essence of sacrifice is to be found in the act of making something holy. If Journet really felt it necessary to correct de la Taille on this score, he could have addressed the question of the definition of sacrifice directly. Since Journet defines sacrifice as an immolation that is really distinct from oblation (76, n. 38)-in contrast to de la Taille's fourfold sequence of oblation, immolation, consummation, and participation-he argues that Christ cannot exist in a sacrificial state in heaven; as a result, the effects of Christ's transitory act must be made present to believers by God's infinite operative power, and the relationship between the sacrifice of the Cross and the sacrifice of the Mass can only be one of an efficient cause to its effect. While this very Thomist emphasis on efficient rather than final causality has wonderful applications in terms of the salvific unicity of Christ, it leads Journet to make some rather arbitrary metaphysical assertions. It seems strange-to me at least-that Journet can claim that God, by his infinite power, can make the effects of a transitory act permanent (75), while suggesting that it is "metaphysically impossible" to make those effects present to people who lived before the Incarnation (68 n. 20). Presumably the Swiss theologian would have also judged it metaphysically impossible to eternalize the act itself after the manner of Dom Odo Case!. These issues call for a much more detailed engagement with the relevant metaphysical doctrines, but *The Mass* is not

forthcoming in this regard. Although Journet rightly intuited that the solution to this problem is to be found in the notion of the divine acceptance of the sacrificial act (87), his univocal definition of sacrifice prevents him from integrating this insight into his larger synthesis.

Journet is also somewhat out of his depth when he criticizes non-Thomistic theologians and historians. *The Mass* is clearly meant to correct Case!, de la Taille, and, to a lesser extent, Masure, although their works are only discussed in a short appendix on post-Tridentine theology. With all respect due to the late cardinal, it seems a tad hasty to dismiss Suarez, Bellarmine, Lessius, de Lugo, and the Salamanticenses-each of whom arguably has a far more complex account of the sacrifice of the Mass than the Angelic Doctor-as well as modern authors such as Billot, de la Taille, and Masure--each of whom inherits this complex early modern tradition-in only 12 pages after devoting approximately 250 pages to setting forth the vast resources of Aquinas's teachings. Journet even brushes aside Joseph Andre Jungmann's *Missarum Solemnia* as presenting a "purely external and non-theological point of view" (93 n. 2). If one does not follow the Jesuit liturgist's theological suggestions-and I think there are very good reasons not to-one cannot deny the theological significance of his historical data.

Journet's rhetoric is occasionally too dismissive, as well. Consider the passage with which he ends *The Mass:* "None of the theological opinions which we have summarized," he says, "have been directly condemned by the Magisterium. It is clear, however, that whatever elements of truth they might contain, they all cannot be true at the same time, and that, as soon as the theological reflection centers on the ineffable Mystery of the Mass, one must make a choice" (267). Exactly what is the cardinal insinuating with the notion of indirect condemnation? The famous line in *Mediator Dei* that speaks of the "uncertain and vague way" that "some recent writers" had spoken about the presence of the mysteries in the liturgical year is often thought to be an indirect reference to Case! and his followers, but none of the other thinkers thatJournet summarizes has ever been suspected of heresy by the Church. The tone with which he implies that these authors "might" contain "elements of truth" is frivolous, as is his implication that none but Thomists "center" on the ineffable Mystery of the Mass. This rhetoric seems at odds with Journet's own eloquent summary of the different points that might be emphasized in the study of the liturgy (233-35). The choices Journet outlines are legitimate, but it is unhelpful to pretend that the Jesuit or Scotist theologian who makes different choices cannot also appeal to the teachings of the Magisterium and the tradition. *Mysterium Fidei* is a perfect case in point. Journet's implied distinction between liturgy and theology only exacerbates this problem.

None of this should take away fromJournet's wonderful theological synthesis. As a work of Thomistic theology, *The Mass* is superb: it is a work that will truly edify the sensitive reader, whether he be a Thomist or not. The reader of Fr. Szczurek's translation, who will gain great spiritual insight from considering the

teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas presented therein, should heed Journet's wise words: "Christ's offering is charged with too many riches not to be complex" (96).

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Catholic Health Care Ethics: A Manual for Practitioners, second edition. Edited by EDWARD J. FURTON, PETER J. CATALDO, AND ALBERT S. MORACZEWSKI, O.P. Foreword by EDMUND PELLEGRINO. Philadelphia: The National Catholic Bioethics Center, 2009. Pp. xx + 466. $59.95 (paper). ISBN 978-0-935372-54-0.

The first edition of this manual appeared in 2001. The second edition contains twenty-nine chapters, most of them either substantially reworked from the first edition, or new articles based upon developments within the field of bioethics. The work is not meant to be read from cover to cover but to be used like an encyclopedia by doctors, nurses, and members of ethics committees working in hospitals who face often complex medical dilemmas. Circumstances and medical issues change a great deal from person to person in medical situations. It is not always easy to understand practically the burdens and benefits of an array of medical and personal issues. For this reason, what may be a settled procedure or a practical conclusion about an end-of-life issue may not be true for all end-of-life issues, even though the cluster of the same guiding principles may be utilized in both cases. And so, this book has numerous practical guidelines, drawn from the teaching Church, for the practitioner to learn.

The manual is divided into six parts: Foundational Principles, Ethics Committees, Beginning-of-Life Issues, End-of-Life Issues, Selected Clinical Issues, and Institutional Issues. This reviewer could see the invisible hand of St. Thomas Aquinas guiding many solutions to problems and the visible hand of Albert S. Morazcewski, O.P. (since deceased) who was the founder of The National Catholic Bioethics Center in 1973. Of special note are the finely honed summaries of each article done by the editors. The articles taken as a whole have a profound unity to them and a passion for the truth guides them all even when there is disagreement in an area not yet clarified by the Magisterium.

The various studies are followed by an appendix of the major bioethical documents of the papal Magisterium, that is, the teaching of particular popes, and the Congregation for the Doctrine and Faith. It also includes writings from a consultative body to the Holy See, the Pontifical Academy for Life, and finally three documents of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Lesser

documents of the Magisterium are referenced in the various studies made by the thirty-three authors.

Some bioethical issues are left out, but interested readers can easily find much about these other areas by searching the *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly*, published by the same institute. I am referring to medical and ethical issues surrounding such problems as conjoined twins, adoption of embryos, craniotomy and the like.

Each study presents a robust command of the material, evidenced by the numerous endnotes citing materials even with a entries as late as 2008. Of particular interest is the debate between solid theologians and medical personnel such as Peter Cataldo and Patrick Yeung, Jr., Erica Laetham, and Joseph Tham, L.C. They tackle the question of taking one pill of plan B (levonorgestrel) after rape. Cataldo argues that the pill does not produce an abortifacient effect, based upon the scientific studies ofNicanor Austriaco, O.P., while the others think that the scientific studies of other bioethologists indicate the pill might inhibit a conception from implantation, and therefore, kill the conceptus or embryo. If further scientific research clearly indicates that the use of one pill after rape is in fact an abortifacient, then the bishops of Connecticut would be shown to have been in error by permitting such an action in the Catholic hospitals under their jurisdiction. In any case, Cataldo has done quite an admirable task in explaining moral certitude and applying it to his point of view.

For all practical purposes, all the articles deserve special recognition for their insight and wisdom. Several that struck this reviewer in particular were the following.

"Contraceptive Mandates and Immoral Cooperation," by Marie Hilliard, is exceptionally timely because she shows how the government has violated the rights of Church-sponsored hospitals by "mandating" payment for contraceptives and abortifacients through employee benefit plans for its workers and staff. She uses reason and canon law to show that "the Church is paving the way for further government intrusion" (279) and makes the case that the Church will have to stand up and vigorously to oppose these mandates. Anything less than that would seem to be complicity in a grave evil. In other words, simply cooperating against immoral procedures "even under protest" must yield to "a decisive response from the Church to these violations of its liberty" (281).

"Medical Facts and Ethical Decision Making," by Moraczewski and Greg Burke, provides both doctors and ethicists working in hospitals the questions that need to be raised when thinking through "the benefits and burdens" question and deciding whether or not a treatment is proportionate or disproportionate. They show why "it is critical to remember that the moral analysis of benefits and burdens is uniquely related to a patient's personal circumstances" (201).

The study "Chemical, Barrier, and Surgical Contraception," by John Haas, presents an extremely interesting study of the most controversial teaching of the Catholic Church concerning the "regulation of births," which could also be named the "regulation of conception." Haas shows why this teaching, which

regards contraception as immoral, is based upon sacred Scripture and the tradition of the Fathers and is taught by the papal Magisterium. Not only did *Humanae Vitae* reaffirm the Church's teaching in this matter; Paul VI, in that encyclical, made several prophecies which have turned out to be true, namely, that contraception leads to abortion and other dire consequences. Haas concludes with the potential moral problems associated with collaborating with doctors and other hospitals who do not adhere to this teaching of the natural law.

Finally, Cataldo and T. Murphy Goodwin have masterfully shown in "Early Induction of Labor" that, given abnormal pregnancies or anomalies of the fetus when the mother and child are singly or together in danger of death, the use of early induction of labor has to be based upon the premise that "human beings should live to the natural terminus of life" (118). They weave together a series of conclusions that at first seem counterintuitive because abortion is never an option in Catholic health care.

Many future studies of both revisionist bioethicists and those who uphold the Magisterium will have to reckon with the problems, insights and challenges offered in this manual. It should be at hand for every bioethical committee in Catholic hospitals-if not the major secular hospitals as well, so that the committee members may understand Catholic viewpoints when confronting issues of a Catholic patient. One would assume that by now it is on all the bishops' desks as well.

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Thomas Aquinas on the Jews: Insights into His Commentary on Romans 9-11. By STEVEN C. BOGUSLAWSKI, O.P. Mahwah, N.].: Paulist Press, 2008. Pp. 145. $18.95 (paper). ISBN 978-0-8091-4233-0.

In *Thomas Aquinas on the Jews,* Steven Boguslawski has made an important scholarly contribution, with a number of far-reaching implications. Boguslawski writes at the convergence of two fields. First, Christian reflection upon Judaism has occurred in a renewed way in the late twentieth-century, with scholars continuing to look for ways to respond to the anti-Judaism that has often been present in Christian teaching and practice. Boguslawski takes up this work via the study of St. Thomas Aquinas, also an area of study enjoying new enthusiasm in many quarters. In undertaking such a work, with a focus especially on Aquinas's *Commentary on Romans,* this book is unique.

This is not to say that Boguslawski is the first to treat Aquinas on the Jews. The work of Jeremy Cohen (beginning with *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Anti-Judaism* and continuing with *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity)* addresses the issue with force. Cohen situates Aquinas in his historical context, and insists that Aquinas's thought must be understood as a part of a larger movement in the thirteenth century, a movement exemplified above all in the "Talmud controversies" and facilitated especially by certain Dominicans, which instigated a change from relative tolerance to active persecution of Jews. In arguing for this claim, Cohen notes several features of Aquinas's thought, one of the most important of which is Aquinas's statement, in his *Summa Theologiae,* that observance of the ceremonial law constitutes mortal sin. Put simply, this is Aquinas's apparent claim that those parts of the Law whose observance Christians now forgo-but which are seen as obligatory by Jews-actually bring about spiritual death. Although Cohen's work on Aquinas has been criticized, he points here to a feature of Aquinas' thought that cannot be overlooked.

Indeed, concern regarding this claim has been highlighted also by the well-known Jewish thinker Michael Wyschogrod. Wyschogrod, in fact, notes explicitly that this is not only a matter for historical study, since Aquinas's claim has immediate and negative implications for Jewish-Christian interaction.

John Hood, whose *Aquinas on the Jews* was published between Cohen's first and second volumes, adopts a more modest thesis. According to Hood, even given this difficult claim concerning the ceremonial law, Aquinas is completely conventional regarding the Jews. In the main, he simply reiterates traditional (primarily Augustinian) teaching, which is inherently ambiguous, and indeed, ambivalent in its appraisal of the Jews. For Hood, this ambivalence is best seen in the crucial question of whether or not the Mosaic Law is effective in moving the Jewish people toward holiness. In Aquinas's work, he detects a conflicted attempt to answer both "yes" and "no" simultaneously.

The crucial insight that Boguslawski brings to the issue comes from a much broader consideration of Aquinas's work: Boguslawski argues that the key to understanding Aquinas on the Jews is to gaze through the prism of the doctrine of predestination and, more specifically, that of election, a central tenet of Aquinas's teaching. Having been largely eclipsed in contemporary theological work, election is a doctrine that also tends to be overlooked in current Thomistic scholarship. Boguslawski helps his readers to see, however, that in the case of Aquinas's teaching on the Jews, it is of critical importance.

Considering the matter with a focus on election, Boguslawski argues, allows Aquinas's positive theology of the Jews, particularly clear in his *Commentary on the Romans,* to emerge. Contra Cohen, Boguslawski insists that, for Aquinas, the state of the holiness of the Jews at any particular moment is not the most important question. The question, rather, is an ultimate one: are they destined for salvation or not? Are they chosen or not? To this question Boguslawski says Aquinas's *Commentary on the Romans* gives an unequivocal "yes." In this, Aquinas does far more than simply repeat the received tradition. In fact,

Boguslawksi argues, contra Hood, that Aquinas corrects that tradition in such a way that the priority of the Jews in God's plan of salvation is clearly asserted.

Boguslawski begins in chapter 1 with his central thesis: within the *Commentary on Romans* is found a crucial part of Aquinas's treatment of the Jews, an account that is shaped by his doctrines of predestination and election. In Chapter 2, Boguslawski examines the standard policies of the Church toward the Jews in Aquinas's day, and especially the move from the relative tolerance of the *"Sicut"* tradition to the intolerance surrounding the Talmud controversies of the 1240s. With this historical context in mind, Boguslawski considers in chapter 3 Aquinas's view of the Jews as found in his *Summa Theologiae,* noting that his relative tolerance is more like the former than the latter.

In chapters 4 and 5, Boguslawksi turns to the theological matters at the heart of this book. He considers how predestination and election function in a broad sense in Aquinas's writings. Next, he considers Augustine's account of the Jews. Then, with this background in place, he engages in a direct comparison of Aquinas's reading of Romans with Augustine's reading, in order to underscore some key differences. Specifically, Boguslawski argues, Aquinas's overarching understanding of election yields key elements of a more positive account of the Jewish people. Aquinas does not argue that the Jewish prerogatives-privileges mentioned in Romans 9:4-5-are simply foreshadowings, but rather that they continue to function after Christ. He does not claim that Israel has been replaced by the Church; he in fact insists that the fall of Israel, in its rejection of Christ, is a temporary state of affairs. Finally, in chapter 6 Boguslawski argues that, given the relevance of Aquinas's claims, his reading has a place in the contemporary debate over interpretation of Romans 9-11 and the status of the Jewish people.

There is no question as to the importance of the contribution Boguslawski makes here. He shows that Aquinas is not simply Augustinian on these questions. He underscores the fact that Aquinas cannot be described as "supersessionist" in the most basic sense, as understanding the Church to have replaced the Jews. He proves the importance of including the *Commentary on the Romans* in any reckoning of Aquinas's account of the Jews, and he offers election as the key to understanding as primary the claims Aquinas makes regarding the ultimate salvation of the Jews.

One question that must be raised of Boguslawski's work, however, has to do with an important lacunae therein. Nowhere, not even in the chapter entitled "The Jews in the *Summa Theologiae,"* does Boguslawski mention the troubling claim that Aquinas makes regarding observance of the ceremonial law as mortal sin. There may be a way, it is true, to understand this claim within Boguslawski's reading of Aquinas, given its emphasis upon the *ultimate* salvation of the Jews. There is a tension here, though. Boguslawski notes that "for Thomas, Jewish rites are not an evil to be suffered, nor are they idolatrous or to be curtailed aggressively; rather, Jews and Christians derive useful benefit from their observance" (40). An account that incorporates both Aquinas's judgment of the ceremonial law as well as this claim would have to be made carefully.

What Boguslawski offers here then is an important, if a not a final, word on the question of Aquinas's treatment of the Jews. This book offers a hopeful direction in contemporary work on the Jews within Christian theology. To those engaged in this work, as well as to those whose primary interest is in Aquinas or in readings of Romans **9-11,** it give stimulus for further thought.

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The Disfigured Face: Traditional Natural Law and Its Encounter with Modernity. By LUIS CORTEST. New York: Fordham University Press, 2008. Pp. xvii + 136. $55.00 (cloth). ISBN 978-0-8232-2853-9.

In *The Disfigured Face,* Luis Cortest joins other Thomists who have in recent decades tried to liberate the natural-law doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas from its modern proponents. Cortest provides a broad historical narrative of what he argues is the modern disfigurement of Aquinas's moral theory. While other studies have covered this ground, Cortest's narrative is unique by emphasizing the importance of the sixteenth-century debates on natural servitude and the *imago Dei,* which surrounded the Spanish conquest of the New World, and the impact these debates had on modernity.

The central argument of *The Disfigured Face* is that St. Thomas's understanding of morality and the natural law is first and foremost an ontological one. His understanding of justice is contingent on human nature and being itself. Cortest argues that the ontological foundation of Aquinas's thought was gradually abandoned in the legal debates of the sixteenth century and that this contributed to the modern notion of individual autonomy as a basis of positive human rights.

Cortest lists three objectives for the book. First, he describes the nature of traditional natural-law doctrine as it was developed by Aquinas and later "re-formulated" by sixteenth-century Spanish Thomists. Then, he explores the interaction of traditional natural law with modernity. Finally, he argues that the traditional natural-law theory of Aquinas has survived in modern times through the endorsement of the Roman Catholic Church and its prominence in papal encyclicals throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The traditional natural-law doctrine, he says, is one of the primary tools the Church uses to challenge the "overpowering influence of secular culture" (xvii).

The first chapter of the book highlights the central importance of ontology in Aquinas's moral theory by contrasting his view with those of William of Ockham, the Dominicans of Salamanca, and, finally, Francisco Suarez. Cortest

explains that existence is the fundamental category in Aquinas's philosophical system. Our understanding of truth, of nature, and, by extension, of ethics and morality, is dependent on our perception of existence (4-5). Yet, since all existence is from God, "In a very profound sense, philosophy, and especially ontology, is a consideration of a divinely created reality for Aquinas" (12).

Cortest offers the standard Thomist critique of William of Ockham's rejection of this view. Principally, with his rejection of the distinction between existence and essence, Ockham and his students, favored a "science of the particular" instead of the universal metaphysics of Aristotle and Aquinas (5). In line with this, Ockham's morality was voluntarist, emphasizing the primacy of the divine will in moral matters. A human act is right and just because it obeys divine command, not because it is congruent with human nature and existence.

The Jesuit Francisco Suarez is presented as a principal antagonist to Aquinas's ontological morality. As Cortest reads him, Suarez subordinated existence to essence and thus rejected Aquinas's carefully constructed system, which emphasized the unity of all being (9-11). When existence is excluded from ontological speculation, Cortest writes, "On the one hand ... we begin to lose contact with the physical world; our observations become purely conceptual or formal. On the other hand, if we are not concerned primarily with existence, the truth of propositions is lost in endless speculation about the possible and that which is not self-contradictory" (3-4).

Nevertheless, Cortest continues, there was a revival of Thomism beginning in the late fourteenth century with John Capreolus, which would culminate in the Spanish Thomism of Francisco de Vitoria and the Salamanca Dominicans (6-8). However, Cortest wishes to make it clear that, with exception of Domingo Banez, who Cortest praises as one of the greatest commentators of Aquinas's ontology, the Salamanca Dominicans were not theologians or metaphysicians, primarily, but moral philosophers, canonists, and legalists (7). This is an important point for the development of the argument: the Salamancans were not much concerned with an ontological morality.

In the second chapter, Cortest further distinguishes between thought of Aquinas and that of Aristotle, the Salamanca Dominicans, and Suarez. He notes that Aristotle argued that some human persons are incomplete and deformed because they lack full deliberative faculties. This led Aristotle to conclude that there is a natural hierarchy among human persons, with women, children, and slaves at the bottom. This is why Cortest does not believe a modern theory of positive rights is compatible with a strict reading of Aristotle's philosophy (18-19).

Furthermore, the Salamanca Thomists, who gained prominence during the great legal debates concerning legitimacy of the Spanish conquest of the New World, began by distinguishing between right *(ius)* and the use of an object or a person *(dominium).* Domingo de Soto makes it very clear that "Ius must ... not be confused with dominium, as it is superior to it, and of wider reference" (23). The Salamanca Dominicans argued that the Native Americans were entitled to self-governance *(dominium).* While many of them never explicitly rejected the

possibility that the Native Americans were natural slaves in the Aristotelian sense, all of them tempered Aristotle's texts to be palatable to a Christian worldview (25-26). What is important for Cortest's argument is that the Salamancans were not arguing for the ontological dignity of the Native Americans. They were arguing for the right of Native Americans to govern themselves (23-24). They were more concerned with legal and civic jurisdiction than with ontological categories.

It is Suarez and Hugo Grotius who began the transformation of *ius* to the modern idea of a personal right. "For Thomas, human beings are not free-standing individuals. . .. Aquinas defends the dignity of the human person because he conceives of man as a rational substance created by God; he did not imagine that human beings should have the freedom to live as they choose in a human society" (20). For Aquinas, any discussion of right *(ius)* is always in the context of justice, which concerns the relationship of individuals with each other (21). He rejects any form of natural servitude. Slavery for Aquinas is purely economic: those who are wise serve the common good by ruling the unwise (44-46).

Suarez, on the other hand, began referring to *ius* as "a certain moral power which every man has, either over his own property or with respect to that which is due to him" (26). And Grotius says that right *(ius)* is lordship over one's own property: oneself, other persons, or material things. In his opinion, this lordship is the constitutive element of freedom (27-29).

The third chapter of the study continues this narrative in more detail by highlighting the role Aquinas's understanding of the human person, created in the image of God, played in the debates between the Aristotelian Juan Gines de Sepulveda and the Dominican Bartolome de las Casas. Sepulveda argued that the Native Americans were natural slaves. Las Casas, on the other hand, was among the first to assert the inherent dignity of all peoples created in the image of God. He is a standard bearer of Aquinas's natural-law theory in the sixteenth century debates (31-49).

With the fourth chapter, the book begins a discussion of the modern development of human rights. The development begun by Grotius and continued by Thomas Hobbes is catalyzed by John Locke's insistence that freedom of conscience and mutual respect is more important than any religious doctrine. Locke advocated the strict separation between Church and state along with an emphasis on individual autonomy. The problem as Cortest sees it is this: "When religion is understood as a purely personal matter, it becomes extremely difficult to tolerate religious groups that defend a doctrine of absolute truth in matters of faith and morals .... For Locke, it was more important that each person in society follow his or her own conscience than for anyone to defend a doctrine of absolute truth" (53).

In the next step of the narrative, Immanuel Kant resolves the question of morality in a world lacking in ontological truth with his rational universal imperative, which insists that "any action is right if it can coexist with everyone's freedom in accordance with a universal law" (54). Kant's moral theory

establishes right and wrong according to a purely rational order. Human dignity is based on autonomy and reason rather than human nature (54-59). G. W. F. Hegel follows with a further reification of the rational by raising reason above even human dignity. In Hegel's opinion, only those human beings who are rational have any dignity (59-64). What began with an assertion of individual liberty in Locke passed through the universal reason of Kant to conclude with the exaltation of reason beyond even human dignity in Hegel.

In the final two chapters of the book, Cortest offers the Church's response to these developments. In 1879, Pope Leo XIII issued the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* in which he laid out his view of contemporary problems and called for the development of a Christian philosophy according to the principles of St. Thomas Aquinas. Leo expresses concerns that the conclusions of secular philosophers like Locke, Kant, and Hegel had crept down to common acceptance by the masses and had infiltrated the organization of states (66f.).

There is no such thing as rational autonomy, Leo declares. Following the principles of Aquinas, he argues that human reason has the force of law only when it properly interprets divine reason manifest in revelation or in the law of nature. Leo borrows the phrase "law of nature" from his secular interlocutors but employs Aquinas's definition of natural law (66-71). Like Aquinas, Leo argued that philosophy and faith strengthen each other. A philosophy without God, without a concept of absolute truth, in which falsehood is given credence, leads only to confusion and turmoil. In Cortest's reading, Leo was far from attempting to reconcile the Lockean view of natural rights with Christianity. Rather, the pope insisted that state-sanctioned autonomy lessens the dignity of the human person by subsuming him into a collective irrespective of his nature (73).

In the concluding chapter of the book, "The Survival of Tradition," Cortest provides a survey of Thomistic natural-law theory in the twentieth century, which thrived in spite of the dominant secular and philosophical antagonism to the core concepts of objective truth, universal nature, and being. It is logical, then, that he provides a brief exegesis of the work of Desire Joseph Mercier and Jacques Maritain. The former attempted to unite Thomism with modern science and experimental psychology, the latter supported the concept of a democratic state founded upon ontological truth. (77-87). The historical narrative continues through the pontificate of John XXIII to the pontificate of John Paul IL

Cortest spends a number of pages outlining John Paul's contribution to natural-law theory in the face of secular opposition and in spite of the gradual abandonment of Thomism after the Second Vatican Council. The encyclicals *Veritatis Splendor, Fides et Ratio,* and *Centesimus Annus* are the subjects of his exegesis. John Paul reasserted the necessity of an ontological foundation for any theory of natural law. Without a foundation in objective truth, freedom is reduced to self-love and individual autonomy becomes more important than morality and human nature (88-93).

The motive driving Cortest's argument is in part a response to contemporary natural-law theoreticians such Michael Crowe, John Finnis, and Germain Grisez-all of whom, Cortest argues, have capitulated to modern notions of

autonomy and reason. Crowe has abandoned any sense of a universal natural law, arguing instead for norms bound more to culture than nature (94). Finnis has conceded too much to the modern notions of individual autonomy and rationalism in his attempts to reconcile them with Aquinas's system (94-98). And Grisez harbors a greater concern for human action and practical reason than he does for human nature and existence (98-99). These modern formulations have little connection to Aquinas's natural-law theory because they have abandoned the ontological primacy inherent in his worldview (100).

Cortest concludes that in spite of the variants circulating in moral discussions, the traditional natural-law doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas has survived in the magisterial pronouncements of the Church. It "has survived in an intellectual world that has rejected almost any notion of ontological reality and understands the human person and morality in purely biological and cultural terms. For most modern thinkers, traditional natural law is like a face that no one can bear to look upon anymore. Indeed, it is a face disfigured by time and neglect" (101).

The Disfigured Face is a welcome contribution to the present discourse on the status and role of natural law in moral theology. In this study, Cortest is concerned with identifying those theologians and philosophers who departed from Aquinas's natural-law theory. A future volume might include those modern thinkers who have remained true to this theory, in line with the very magisterial documents Cortest outlines. In this regard, a principal figure not included in the bibliography but who has covered much of the same ground as Cortest is Servais Pinckaers, O.P. The present study would have been strengthened by his inclusion. Nevertheless, Cortest's succinct historical narrative along with his terse survey of the thought of principal figures in the gradual abandonment of traditional natural-law theory will prove useful for students and scholars alike.

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REVIEWS