*The Thomist* 80 (2016): 165-89

# UNPACKING THE CHALCEDONIAN FORMULA: FROM STUDIED AMBIGUITY TO SAVING MYSTERY

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ONE OF THE CENTRAL questions Christian theologians continue to ask themselves, as they confront the mystery of the person of Christ, is, what is the significance for us today of the Council of Chalcedon? For generations of modern scholars, especially those in the West, the dense and rather technical phrases forged at that fifth-century gathering of Christian bishops and appended to a restatement of what we know as the "Nicene creed" represented a major milestone in the Churches' ongoing clarification of how disciples are to understand the person of Jesus the Savior.

In J. N. D. Kelly's widely used survey, *Early Christian Doctrines*,[1] for instance, Chalcedon's "settlement" of the twenty-four-year dispute between Nestorius and his Antiochene supporters and Cyril of Alexandria and the Church of Alexandria was the culmination of "the decisive period for Christology"[2] in the early Church, an attempt to define an understanding of Christ that could be accepted by all Christians throughout the Empire, but which nevertheless—surprisingly, perhaps—"failed to bring permanent peace."[3] Aloys Grillmeier, in his foundational study of the growth of early Christian understandings of Jesus, speaks of the years up to Chalcedon as

[1] J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (rev. ed.; San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978), 310-43.

[2] Ibid., 310.

[3] Ibid., 342.

temporally defining "the development of belief in Christ from its beginning to its first climax in a council of the Church."[4] In an influential study of the theology of the seventh-century monk and theologian Maximus the Confessor, Hans Urs von Balthasar emphasizes the centrality of Chalcedon's formulaic, classically dialectical picture of the person of Christ as central to Maximus's whole approach to God, the world, and the human spirit. The reason, Balthasar argues, lies in Chalcedon's ability to affirm both unity and abiding difference in Christ as the dominant pattern of God's relationship to creation:

> From the moment that Chalcedon, in its sober and holy wisdom, elevated the adverbs 'indivisibly' (ἀδιαιρέτως) and 'unconfusedly' (ἀσυγχύτως) to a dogmatic formula, the image of a reciprocal indwelling of two distinct poles of being replaced the image of mixture. This mutual ontological presence (περιχώρησις) not only preserves the being particular to each element, to the divine and the human natures, but also brings each of them to its perfection in their very difference, even enhancing that difference. Love, which is the highest level of union, only takes root in the growing independence of the lovers; the union between God and the world reveals, in the very nearness it creates between these two poles of being, the ever-greater difference between created being and the essentially incomparable God.[5]

With a little help from German Romantic philosophy, and perhaps from his Jesuit confrère Erich Przywara, Balthasar here sees in the Chalcedonian picture of Christ not only Maximus's central inspiration, but the early Church's final paradigm for conceiving how the transcendent God can be present and crucially active in the world.

One might multiply examples. But does this understanding of Chalcedon's portrait of Christ really represent its intent or its lasting meaning? What led to its articulation? What was, one may ask, the real achievement of this gathering of over 500 Eastern bishops, mainly from the Greek-speaking East, called by the new emperor Marcian and his long-influential spouse, the

[4] Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, trans. J. S. Bowden (Oxford: Mowbrays, 1975) 555.

[5] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, trans. Brian E. Daley, S.J. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003) 63-64.

Empress Pulcheria, in a port suburb across the Bosporus from Constantinople, in October of 451? On the level of Church politics, at least, it was a step towards restoring a balance, however briefly, between major centers of influence in the Church of the mid-fifth century, and the theological traditions with which they had become associated: a balance precariously achieved in 433, after the bitter controversy over Nestorius's views on how to conceive the person of Christ, by what is often called the "Formula of Reunion," which sketched the outlines of traditional faith in the Savior—a formula apparently drafted at that time by Theodoret of Cyrus and proposed by the Church of Antioch, but which was also warmly embraced by Theodoret's principal rival, Cyril of Alexandria. After heated debates between the bishop of Constantinople, the Antioch-trained exegete Nestorius, and Cyril of Alexandria, Church leaders in 433 had agreed—at least on paper—on a document they could live with.

The principal agents of this peace of 433, however, were dead by the mid-440s: John of Antioch in 442, Cyril himself in 444, Proclus of Constantinople in 446. Tensions began to rise again in the imperial capital, as rival groups, doubtless driven both by political ambition and religious traditionalism, accused each other of treachery and extremism. The story of the conflict in the mid-440s between the archimandrite Eutyches, well supported at the imperial court and by Cyril's successor Dioscorus of Alexandria, and leading clerical figures of the capital who opposed Eutyches, such as Eusebius of Dorylaeum, is well known. Although the motives for tension and rivalry between Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria seem to have been complex, according to ancient witnesses, the religious reasons that were given all had to do with how one conceived the person of Christ. Eutyches, drawing on the older Alexandrian and Apollinarian tradition that emphasized the organic, dynamic unity of action and consciousness in the divine Savior of humanity, refused to accept any formula that spoke of two abiding natures, or operative substantial realities, present in the person of the incarnate Word. Christ is a single agent, called

by the Letter to the Hebrews "the pioneer of our salvation."[6] To number the realities in Christ was to divide him. Yet most of the Constantinopolitan establishment, by contrast, held tenaciously to the "two unconfused natures" and "double consubstantiality" language of the Formula of 433: God and created humanity, after all, must never be fused into one—God remains God, not a piece of the living world!

In response to his aggressive promotion of a highly unitive, God-centered picture of Christ, Eutyches was deposed by the patriarch and resident bishops in Constantinople—the "Home Synod" —late in 448. An outcry ensued. In the summer of 449, a council of Greek bishops met, with imperial support, at Ephesus, to deal with the conflict. Chaired, reportedly in a highly dictatorial manner, by Archbishop Dioscorus of Alexandria, and recklessly resistant to the voices of both the Church of Antioch and the Latin West, the assembled bishops reinstated Eutyches to his clerical rank, and in turn deposed and excommunicated the leading spokesmen of the Antiochene Church, who were thought still to have a dominant voice in the Church of the capital. Supporters of a more "symmetrical" picture of Christ's divinity and humanity felt that now *they* had been the victims of political violence. Hence when the Emperor Theodosius II, who had permitted this polarization of positions to occur, himself died in the summer of 450, it was time for his successors, Marcian and Pulcheria, to take conciliatory steps, for the unity of Church and society.

The Council of Chalcedon, convened in September and October of 451, was intended to be such a step. This time the imperial court carefully assured a balanced representation of voices in the seating of delegates and guaranteed a leading role in the conduct of business not only to the main Eastern sees, but also to the Roman bishop Leo's chief legate, the Greek-speaking Sicilian bishop Paschasius of Lilybaeum. It was easy enough for this new council to reverse the work done at Ephesus in 449, to reinstate the losers there, and even to depose Dioscorus of Alexandria—notably for the contempt he had shown at Ephesus

[6] Heb 2.10; 12.2.

towards Leo of Rome. The *Acta* make it clear, however, that most of the bishops present at Chalcedon were hesitant to go beyond that, or even to try to debate a new "formula of union" on the theology of the person of Christ; they were content to reaffirm "the faith of Nicaea," regarded since the 370s as the touchstone of biblical orthodoxy, as expressed in its creed—the reformulated Nicene Creed produced by the Council of Constantinople of 381—and were apparently ready to take as also normative a few now-classic letters of Cyril and Leo on the Christological issue. It was the emperors, in fact, at the urging of Leo's delegates, who finally prevailed on the bishops at Chalcedon to go a step farther, and to allow a small drafting commission, huddled for a few hours in a side-chapel of the basilica of St. Euphemia, where the council was meeting, to stitch together, in addition to the Nicene text, a new statement of common faith—driven largely by the emperors' threat of adjournment, and of calling a new council in the West, if the Eastern delegations continued to resist. The resultant statement of faith, reluctantly agreed to in advance, enthusiastically acclaimed in the event, is what we know as "the Chalcedonian definition."

It is important to look closely at the whole of the council's statement of faith if one is to realize its intent and its real value. Cardinal Grillmeier rightly stressed its "dogmatic" rather than speculative character.[7] It was, in other words, a "ballpark" definition, a formal agreement on the boundaries of orthodox Christian faith concerning the person of Christ, but clearly not intended to break new theological ground, to solve age-old problems of understanding who Jesus is in creatively crafted new terms, or even to give unambiguous clarifications of the terms it does use. Some of its language was technical, and drew on the philosophical parlance of the day; some appears to have simply been taken from the works of writers who had been part of the controversy on both sides. Probably most of the more than five hundred bishops present would have been hard put to explain what "substance" and "nature" (universal reality) and

[7] Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:545.

"hypostasis" and "prosopon" (reality as individual and concrete) actually mean, when applied to Christ, and what the difference among them is. The purpose of the statement seems rather to have been to reaffirm the main lines of the tradition of Christian orthodoxy, and to rule out the kind of language and thinking about Christ that seemed most seriously to present a danger of veering away from that tradition. It is a composite document, clearly intended to be inclusive. To the degree that it offers a positive delineation of Christ's person, the Chalcedonian formula sets out to piece together a patchwork of terms and phrases from various sources, perhaps in the hope that the appearance of a seamless conceptual whole might in time—if not questioned too closely—become the basis of real concord in faith, worship, and polity.

The statement begins, accordingly, with a description of the council's understanding of its mission: to resist the discord sowed in the Church, it says, by the Evil One, to build peace by removing falsehood, and reaffirming normative, centrist tradition.[8] Significantly, the weight is on liturgically and synodically formulated phrases, rather than on Scripture—perhaps because scriptural texts were capable of so many conflicting interpretations. Expressly following the precedent of the Alexandrian synod that had met at Ephesus in 431 (the ecumenical council that never was) the bishops of Chalcedon insist that the Creed of Nicaea (325) shall "shine in first place" (*prolampein*)—an acknowledged primacy in understanding the mystery of God that from this time on became standard procedure in ancient conciliar efforts to deal with doctrinal controversy—and add that the Creed of Constantinople (381), a reformulation of the Nicene symbol aimed at ruling out heresies that had become evident after 325, shall also "remain in force"

[8] Complete Greek and Latin texts of the decree, with an English translation, can be found in Giuseppe Alberigo et al. and Norman Tanner, eds., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1 (London: Sheed and Ward; Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 83-87. For another excellent English translation, with notes and ample introductions, see Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, 3 vols., Translated Texts for Historians 45 ( Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 2:201-5.

(*kratein*). After quoting both creedal formulas in full—our first documentary evidence, in fact, for the now-familiar text of the Creed of Constantinople—the formula goes on to assert that these "should have been sufficient for the knowledge and support of true religion,"[9] but that new views of the person of Jesus, obviously deviant from apostolic teaching, now call for new responses consistent with this Nicene tradition. Accordingly, the council declares that it has "received, as in agreement [with this faith], the synodical letters of the blessed Cyril, then shepherd of the Alexandrian church, to Nestorius and the Orientals"[10]—by which it seems to mean only Cyril's "second" letter to Nestorius from 430, not his later and more challenging "third," along with his affirmation of the Formula of Reunion from 433.[11] It adds that it has also "appropriately included, as a support of right teaching," Pope Leo's letter to bishop Flavian of Constantinople:[12] the famous *Tome* in which Leo enunciates, in polished, if somewhat ambiguous, Latin phrases, the more "symmetrical" picture of Christ advocated in the Greek world principally by Theodoret and the Antiochenes. "Classic" texts, representative of different schools of thought, are here being cited, in other words, as normatively echoing the two more formal "Nicene" creeds.

Only then, in third place, does the statement of Chalcedon move on (apparently at the emperors' insistence) to enunciate its own synthetic position, which, like what has gone before, seems carefully crafted to be both traditional and even-handed.

[9] Alberigo and Tanner, eds., 1:84.

[10] Ibid., 158.

[11] The text of the decree does not specify just what "synodical letters" of Cyril to Nestorius are included, although it is his "second" letter to Nestorius in the spring of 429, not the stern ultimatum sent to Nestorius by Cyril and his local synod in the fall of 430, which was read at the first session of Chalcedon. Cyril's letter "to the Orientals," also read in the first session, clearly is the letter of the Alexandrian synod to John of Antioch and his Church, *Laetentur caeli*, of 433. See the *Acta* of Chalcedon, Session 1, nos. 240 (*Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, ed. E. Schwarz [Berlin, 1914-40], J. Straub [Berlin, 1971-84], and R. Riedinger [Berlin, 1984-95], II, 1, 1 [pp. 104.13-106.29]) and 246 (*ACO* II, 1, 1 [pp. 107.20-111.8]); and Session 5, no. 34 (*ACO* II, 1, 2 [p. 129.8-10]); Alberigo and Tanner, eds., 1:83-87.

[12] Alberigo and Tanner, eds., 1:85.

First, the statement excludes what it regards as extreme and unacceptable positions on the person of Christ: those who "split up the mystery of the dispensation"[13] into regarding Christ as *two sons*; those who say that the *divinity can suffer*; those who conceive of a "*confusion or mixture*" of these two natures in him; those—presumably Apollinarian sectaries—who think of his human form as itself coming from heaven; those—like the now-discredited Eutyches—who insist that the once-two natures that constitute the person of Jesus have become, since the moment of their union, only one. Only then, in last place, does the statement express the council's understanding of Jesus in positive, declaratory terms.

As Grillmeier observed over sixty years ago, this positive statement itself is a mixture of plain language—"one and the same Son, who *is* our Lord Jesus Christ"[14]—and technical language borrowed from the philosophical traditions of Hellenism and the theological writings of earlier well-known Fathers: from the Cappadocians, Cyril, Proclus of Constantinople, Basil of Seleucia, even apparently from Nestorius himself. So this "one and the same Christ" is

> acknowledged to be unconfusedly, unalterably, undividedly, inseparably [four adverbs with a considerable philosophical and theological history[15]] *in* two natures, since [now borrowing two phrases from Leo's *Tome*] the difference of the natures is not destroyed because of the union, but, on the contrary, the character of each nature is preserved and comes together in one person [πρόσωπον: "persona," role, self-presentation] and one hypostasis [or concrete individual], not divided or torn into two persons but one and the same Son and only begotten God, Logos, Lord Jesus Christ . . .[16]

All of this is traditional, the statement adds, "just as in earlier times the prophets and also the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught

[13] Ibid.

[14] Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:159.

[15] For the Neoplatonic background to the way the union of distinct natures in Christ is conceived in the language of Chalcedon, see Luise Abramowski, "Συνάφεια und ἀσύγχυτος ἕνωσις als Bezeichnung für trinitarische und christologische Einheit," in *Drei christologische Untersuchungen* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1981), 63-109.

[16] Alberigo and Tanner, eds., 1:86; Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1:159.

us about him [the statement's only reference to Scripture], and as the symbol of our Fathers [i.e., the Nicene Creed] transmitted to us."[17] Finally, the decree prohibits any Christian from writing, thinking or teaching anything that might contradict the basic shape of the faith witnessed to here.

Read as a whole, the Chalcedonian statement makes it clear that this famous final section is not meant to push back the frontier of theological reflection on the person of Jesus, but simply to establish agreed conceptual standards for remaining within the tradition of orthodoxy for the future. The emphasis is on the earlier formulation of that tradition, in the creeds of Nicaea and Constantinople, with priority given to the former; one might even say that all of what follows the quoting of those creeds is really meant as a set of hermeneutical rules for reading the Christological vision of Nicaea correctly, in the context of fifth-century controversy. Those rules are both negative and positive: how one may *not* interpret Nicaea; and how one *may*, even *must* interpret it, in order to remain in the Church's communion of faith and sacrament. But in setting up these rules, in carefully fixing this boundary to exclude some positions and leave room for others, great care is taken that the main fears and favorite phrases of both sides of the current controversy be explicitly respected. The five positions excluded are, presumably, meant to represent extremes—caricatures perhaps, of what groups at the time actually held, lines that no credible, centrist member of either side would want to follow. What positions might be included under the positive part of the statement is less clear, precisely because phrases from a variety of authors, with a variety of contrasting positions on the person of Christ, are here skillfully woven into a single paragraph that is designed to give an appearance of tranquil cohesion. Somewhere in that mix, the statement suggests, lies orthodoxy.

The lasting value of Church documents and synodal statements—their meaning within the continuing life of the community—lies, as we have come to learn, in their *reception*: in the messy, unpredictable process by which the wider

[17] Alberigo and Tanner, eds., 1:86-87.

Church—its bishops, its writers, its holy people, its "ordinary" faithful—judges and uses such statements and over time decides, implicitly or explicitly, to recognize them as normative for faith, to pray and live by them.[18] And the difficulty with regarding the Chalcedonian formula as representing the quintessence of the Church's classical understanding of the person of Christ, as modern theologians often take it to be, is precisely that its reception was not unambiguous, not instantaneous, and by no means unanimous, and that—in contrast to the creed of Nicaea, which also took a good fifty years to be widely accepted as a norm of orthodox faith—its reception at all by Eastern Christianity depended, in the end, on further modifications and nuanced qualifications that also became canonical for orthodox Christians over the next two centuries: on further, crucial hermeneutical rules for interpreting both *its* language and the Nicene salvation narrative it summed up. These are the rules enunciated in the decrees of what most Christians today recognize as the fifth, sixth, and seventh ecumenical councils. Without the canons of Constantinople II (further emphasizing the unique personal union of Christ's two natures in a single divine, eternal subject), Constantinople III (insisting that the two natures in Christ still remain sufficiently distinct to include two complete and functioning wills), and even Nicaea II (arguing that if Jesus is truly God with a human face, it is wholly appropriate to venerate the image of that face as something holy), as supplements to its formulations and guides to its proper interpretation, the Chalcedonian decree would probably be regarded today as fully orthodox only by Western Christianity.

The full story of the reception of Chalcedon is, of course, too lengthy and complicated to be told at any length here. Attempts by the emperor Marcian (d. 457), and by his successor Leo I (d. 474), to install bishops favorable to the council's union

[18] On the theological and canonical process of the "reception" of official dogma, see A. Grillmeier, "Konzil und Rezeption. Methodische Bemerkungen zu einem Thema der ökumenischen Diskussion der Gegenwart," in *Mit Ihm und in Ihm: Christologische Forschungen und Perspektiven* (Freiburg: Herder, 1975), 303-34.

formula in Alexandria, and soon afterwards even in Antioch, ended in violence and schism, as more and more monks and pastors in the Greek-speaking world raised irate objections to Chalcedon's even-handed representation of the person of the Savior: it was a political solution, opponents charged, rather than an authentic articulation of the tradition of faith in which these Churches worshipped and preached; it was a victory for the humanistic, overly analytical thinking of Nestorius and his Antiochene supporters; it was a Western solution, an expression of the dry, neatly balanced categories of papal bureaucrats, rather than of the intense devotion to the Savior, or of the sense of human transformation by the dynamic personal presence of the divine in Jesus, which had already become the core of much Greek, Egyptian, and Syrian spirituality.[19]

For Eastern bishops who had attended the council in 451, the choice of whether or not to abandon Chalcedon's statement of faith in the years that followed, and to join in the call for a new gathering, seems to have been a difficult one; most of them were not schooled in the niceties of the disputed terminology, yet they realized the pastoral dangers both in continuing to maintain the council's position as normative and in returning to the ideological conflicts of the 440s by simply abandoning Chalcedon. One bishop from the coast of Polemonian Pontus in northern Asia Minor, Euippius of Neocaesaraea, when canvassed for his advice by the emperor Leo a few years later, wrote back that he and his local colleagues had come to the conclusion that they should not abandon the Chalcedonian position: because so many wise and holy bishops had been present there, and because (more importantly) those bishops at Chalcedon had so strenuously endorsed the faith of Nicaea.

[19] For a detailed attempt to depict this Eastern attitude to the Chalcedonian formula, see W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), especially 137-42 (the attitude of Eastern monks towards the person of Christ) and 148f. (many in the East saw Chalcedon as a victory for Nestorianism). On the general sympathy for Antiochene thinking in the West at this period, and on the post-Chalcedonian tendency for popes and Western theologians to identify the Chalcedonian statement with papal teaching authority, see ibid., 131-35, 196-99.

Borrowing a famous phrase, however, from Gregory of Nazianzus,[20] the rhetorical genius of the fourth-century Church, Euippius assured the emperor that he and his colleagues were expressing this view "as fishermen, not as philosophers [ἁλιευτικῶς, οὐκ ἀριστοτελικῶς]"; all the technical complexities of person and nature, "unconfused" and "inseparable," it seems, were a little beyond them.[21]

In 482, the emperor Zeno attempted to provide an alternative formulation of the unity of Christ without the help (and possible divisiveness) of calling a new council: the so-called *Henotikon*, drafted by his patriarch Acacius originally as an expression of imperial Church policy for Egypt, and later proposed more generally, it seems, for the whole empire. This document decrees, for the sake of unity and peace, that only the creed of Nicaea, and its later interpretations at Constantinople and at the Cyrilline synod at Ephesus (431), along with Cyril's more contested "third" letter to Nestorius, shall be considered normative expressions of Christian faith; "and everyone who has held or holds any other opinion, either at the present or another time, whether at Chalcedon or in any synod whatever, we anathematize."[22] The result of this implied slight of the council, as being at least possibly heretical, was a new schism: this time a break in communion from the side of Rome and the Latin West (the so-called Acacian schism), which was not healed until 519, after the elderly Latin-speaking emperor Justin, at the urging of his nephew Justinian, the future emperor and architect of a renewed Mediterranean unity, gave in to the demands of Rome and affirmed an explicitly Chalcedonian theology as the norm once again.

[20] See *Orat*. 23.12 (an oration entitled "On Philosophy, and the Selection of Bishops").

[21] For this reply and a number of others, gathered—in Latin translation—in a collection known as the *Codex Encyclius*, see the text in *ACO* II [pp. 9-98], esp. no. 40 (*ACO* II [p. 84.2-3]); for a discussion of the collection and its importance for the reception of Chalcedon, see Grillmeier, "*Piscatorie – Aristotelice*" in *Mit Ihm und in Ihm*, 283-300; Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 161-63.

[22] See Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 174-83, 192; for a full text and translation, see ibid., 360-62.

Justinian himself, a learned theologian as well as a masterly politician, spent the first decade after his own accession, in 527, trying to bring the opponents and the defenders of Chalcedon together by promoting patient dialogue on the theological issues. By that time, however—eighty contentious years after the council—positions had hardened into immovable fronts, and the issues dividing the main parties were less substantial differences over how to understand the person of Christ than differences in how one identified and privileged the voices of authentic tradition. If Cyril of Alexandria was to be the touchstone of orthodoxy, as most sixth-century parties to the discussion now seemed to agree, how was the Church to evaluate the contribution of Pope Leo, and of Leo's friendly Antiochene correspondents such as Theodoret? Which of Cyril's writings best represented his normative position? Was Cyril's approach to Christ compatible with the formula of Chalcedon, and with the Christology of those who now defended Chalcedon as orthodox?[23] Or was Chalcedonian Christology, in fact, a disguised form of the Nestorianism, the divisive conception of Christ, that Cyril had so adamantly opposed?

Two things seem to have become apparent to Justinian during his own early experiences trying to broker a new settlement. One was that, as emperor himself after 527, responsible for both the civil and the ecclesiastical peace, he could not simply abandon the Christological statement of

[23] In the late fifth and early sixth centuries, representatives of both sides of the controversy over Chalcedon produced anthologies or florilegia of excerpts from Cyril's voluminous works, designed to show the compatibility or incompatibility of the Chalcedonian formula with his thought. Severus of Antioch composed a treatise, the *Philalethes*, attacking the reliability of such a pro-Chalcedonian florilegium of texts from Cyril; see R. Hespel, *Le florilège de Cyrille refuté par Sévère d'Antioche*, Bibl. du Muséon, 37 (Louvain, 1955). On the increasing use of these anthologies in sixth- and seventh-century controversial theology, see Marcel Richard, "Notes sur les florilèges dogmatiques du Ve et du VIe siècle," *Actes du VIe Congrès international d'Etudes byzantines* I (Paris, 1950), 307-18 (= *Opera Minora*, 3 vols. [Turnhout: Brepols, 1976-77] vol. 1, no. 2); and especially "Les florilèges diphysites du Ve et du VIe siècle," in Aloys Grillmeier and Heinrich Bacht, eds., *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, 3 vols. (Würzburg: Echter, 1951-54), 1:721-48 (= *Opera Minora* vol. 1, no. 3).

Chalcedon, or leave it among documents whose orthodoxy remained undecided, as Zeno's *Henotikon* had diplomatically tried to do. If the empire did not continue to affirm the Chalcedonian statement, formed under imperial leadership, as integral to its official vision of Christianity as the state religion—as binding law—the Latin West would be lost to the empire, and important voices in the Greek cultural and political elite would be alienated as well. Equally important, perhaps, a monument of imperial religious policy that had been formulated at the behest of his predecessor Marcian, and officially defended for decades would now be abandoned. Justinian's other realization, however, was that he also could not continue to promote Chalcedon in its original, carefully balanced but verbally ambiguous form, if he was to have any hope of regaining for the Church and the empire large regions of Syria and Egypt that were now in schism. The language of Chalcedon, by itself, was simply too open to what many in the East regarded as a "Nestorian" reading. The only hope for a single policy on Christian orthodoxy that might be acceptable to at least sizeable portions of both the Chalcedonian and the non-Chalcedonian public lay in a thoroughgoing but subtle rephrasing or expansion of the council's statement, along lines that made fully clear its compatibility with Cyril's Word-centered vision of Christ, in both his earlier and his later writings. Although resisted by some pro-Chalcedonian controversialists of the 540s—notably Leontius of Byzantium—Justinian's "neo-Chalcedonian" approach to Christology (to use a disputed term coined by modern Western historians) was eventually canonized as binding Church doctrine at a synod of Greek bishops summoned by the emperor to his palace in the capital in 553. This is the synod that has been received by the principal Churches of both East and West as the Second Council of Constantinople.

After a lengthy theological introduction, condemning by name three of the main figures honored in the fifth-century "school of Antioch"—Theodore of Mopsuestia, from the late fourth century, who remained the best-known Antiochene exegete and theoretician; Theodoret of Cyrus, an outspoken

critic of Cyril and an influential voice at Chalcedon; and a letter attacking Cyril by the fifth-century Syrian bishop Ibas of Edessa—precisely for their resistance to the most uncompromising form of Cyril's Christology, the 14 canons of Constantinople II also make it clear that the "one hypostasis or person" in Christ, mentioned at Chalcedon, *is* in fact none other than the eternal Word of God,[24] and that the Jesus "who was crucified in his human flesh *is* truly God and the Lord of glory, and one of the members of the holy Trinity."[25] It also suggests that there are both orthodox and unorthodox ways of understanding traditional Cyrillian characterizations of Christ's person—a union of the divine and human realized "*from* two natures"; "*one nature* of the Word of God, made flesh" – as well as orthodox and unorthodox understandings of the "two-nature" language of the theologians of Antioch and of Chalcedon itself. Both sides of the controversy, in other words, were now seen as being on equal footing; each had truth on its side, when properly understood, but the language of each side stood in danger of heresy through one-sided readings or exaggeration.[26] After Constantinople II, in consequence, the Chalcedonian formula, as such, remained a central part of the recognized tradition of imperially sponsored orthodoxy, but its official interpretation had now been qualified in some degree, submitted to new official norms and ranged alongside other, competing Christological formulas, precisely in order to be acknowledged with them as part of the longer orthodox tradition.

The conclusion seems clear. Without in any way detracting from its importance as a formulation of what is central to the Christian tradition, the Chalcedonian definition itself can better be understood as a mid-fifth-century way-station, a brilliant but largely unsuccessful attempt to reconcile competing traditions of language and thinking about the person of Christ, than as a

[24] Canons 2, 3 and 5 (Alberigo and Tanner, eds., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* 1:114-16). This seems to be expressed clearly in the concluding phrases of the Chalcedonian formula, but apparently was not unambiguous enough for its critics.

[25] Canon 10 (ibid., 1:118).

[26] Canons 8 and 9 (ibid., 1:117-18).

settlement, let alone as the climax, of patristic debates about Christ, or as itself an adequate foundation for lasting ecumenical agreement. Despite the efforts of imperial policy in the second half of the fifth century to set the formula of Chalcedon quietly aside (as in the period of the "Acacian schism," between 478 and 518) or later to enforce it as settled imperial law (as generally after 518 under Justin), public argument over the structure and activities of Christ's person, as one who is both God and human, continued unabated after the council. Fronts hardened, political and theological rivalries now became the foundations of Christian bodies that no longer shared ecclesial communion (many of which still exist, as the "Oriental Orthodox" Churches). In the process, imperially sponsored efforts to recast the council's statement of faith in language acceptable to all the disagreeing parties—including the official formulations of Constantinople II and III—also never succeeded in establishing the reconciliation of these Churches with the wider Chalcedonian communion, despite their eventual acceptance in the Orthodox and Catholic traditions as ecumenical conciliar statements.[27]

One reason, surely, for this mixed reception was the perceived ambiguity of the Chalcedonian formula itself. Its carefully crafted phrases excluded positions which most informed Christian thinkers of the mid-fifth century would immediately have recognized as extremes, and which few would have directly affirmed for themselves: thinking of Christ as "two sons," thinking the Godhead by itself can suffer, thinking that humanity and divinity have been "confused" in Christ into some new, hybrid entity which is neither divine nor human because it is both at once. But Chalcedon's *positive* formulation of how the Church must interpret Nicene theology and confess the person of Christ, for all its even-handedness, still seems to have struck many—probably a majority—of Greek-speaking Christians as *too* symmetrical, too dialectical, too ready to

[27] See Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*; Christian Lange, *Mia Energeia: Untersuchungen zur Einigungspolitik des Kaiser Heraclius und des Patriarchen Sergius von Constantinopel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012).

affirm the continuing, even independent, functioning of the two utterly different realities or "natures" united in Christ's one "person," to count as an unambiguous affirmation of the Church's ancient faith that it was truly God the Son who spoke and healed, died and rose, as the Jesus of the Gospels. The echoes of Antiochene phrases in the formula, the prominent place in it of carefully balanced phrases taken from Pope Leo's "Tome" to Flavian of Constantinople (449), all continued to call forth an allergic reaction in the many Eastern monks and faithful who had come, in the controversies of the mid-fifth century, to regard Cyril of Alexandria, and Cyril alone, as the most articulate and reliable spokesman for Christian piety. The Chalcedonian statement, despite its anchoring in the Nicene and Constantinopolitan creeds, and its final assertion that the "one *persona* (*prosopon*) and individual (*hypostasis*)" formed by the two continuing, countable realities (οὐσίαι, φύσεις) in Christ *is* "one and the same only-begotten Son, God, Word, Lord Jesus Christ," apparently did not seem, in the eyes of many, to insist clearly enough that it was *God* who was the agent of the saving work of Jesus, God the Son who is the actual referent when we speak of the earthly actions and sufferings of the Son of Man.

So the Christological controversies of the century that followed the Council of Chalcedon, within the sphere of influence of the imperial Church—controversies that grew even more intense, in both language and spirit, than those of the three decades that preceded the council—came to be centered on whether or not the terminology of the Chalcedonian statement could be reconciled with the conception of the person of Christ found in the older, more universally recognized representatives of the orthodox tradition: especially in Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Cyril of Alexandria. In this process of the "reception" of Chalcedon, a new style of theology, which had haltingly begun in the late-fourth-century controversies with the "Eunomian" Arians over how to conceive of God as both radically one and irreducibly three—a style I would characterize as "scholastic" or academic—now almost completely replaced the more exegetical and homiletic forms of theological discourse that had predominated in earlier centuries.

Whereas previously theological controversies had been conducted largely in oratorical style—in works shaped by the rhetorical canons of epideictic and forensic speech—Christological argument from the mid-fifth century on came to be couched almost exclusively in the style of the classroom, the scholastic disputation, the philosophical lecture. The exact definition of terms, the analysis of traditional formulas, the development of complex chains of argument in syllogisms and theses, formed an increasingly large part in the development of theological ideas. Technical concepts and strategies, drawn especially from the ideologically Neoplatonic commentators on the Hellenistic philosophical "scriptures" of Plato and Aristotle, now came to play a decisive, if unacknowledged, role on all sides in reflection on the unity of the person of Christ. Learned monks and educated laypeople (often called σχολαστικοί), rather than bishops, more and more dominated theological discussion. In the process, for that very reason, it became increasingly important to establish one's credentials by showing that the orthodox "Fathers," from Athanasius to Cyril, supported one's position—a task usually accomplished by appending a sizeable anthology of authoritative excerpts from these classical authors to one's own attempts at Christological argument.[28] As a result, controversy over Christ's person, from the mid-fifth to the mid-ninth century, turned into a series of technical, subtle, philosophically sophisticated debates over the logical consistency of the Chalcedonian formula, and over who now represented the true legacy of Cyril. What Westerners since the Middle Ages would call Scholastic theology began, I believe, in the thought-world of these later Greek Fathers.

What I would like to argue here, too, is that even in this new style of argument current in the sixth and seventh centuries, much more came to be at stake than simply the attempt to justify Chalcedon's orthodoxy, a quarrel over dry, technical theological terminology or over arcane details of the ontology

[28] For further details of this new "scholastic" style of theological argument, see my article, "Boethius's Theological Tracts and Early Byzantine Scholasticism," *Mediaeval Studies* 46 (1984): 158-91.

of the human subject. Among those who defended the orthodoxy and the indispensable importance of Chalcedon's "symmetrical" picture of Christ in this philosophical fashion, the central issue was not so much the full humanity of Christ, or the parallel survival of what modern scholars like Grillmeier call "word-flesh" and "word-human being" models of conceiving Christ's unity, as it was a wider perspective that probably had never crossed the minds of the drafters of the Chalcedonian formula itself: a new sense of the *paradigmatic* importance of the person of Christ, in its very structure, for revealing *God's way of saving and transforming humanity* through non-destructive union, as the goal of creation itself. For Leontius of Byzantium in the mid-sixth century, as for Maximus the Confessor in the mid-seventh and John of Damascus in the mid-eighth, the Chalcedonian formula becomes, to an increasing degree, more than just a summary of the varying terms and models used to speak of Christ; it develops into the concrete, living model of how God acts to save and "divinize" humanity, by establishing a relationship with the world and with each of us, which—analogous to the person of Christ itself—makes us one with God in our concrete mode of being who we are, without compromising either the natural distinctiveness of what we are as creatures, or the inconceivable fullness of what God is.

For Leontius—to take him simply as an early but representative example—it was the Chalcedonian formula, properly and deeply understood, which offered the Churches the most reliable guide for avoiding possibly misleading ways of understanding the person and work of Christ. This was not simply a battle about words, Leontius insisted:

> What is at issue for us is not a matter of phrasing, but the *manner* in which the whole mystery of Christ exists [περὶ τοῦ τρόπου τοῦ ὅλου κατὰ Χριστὸν μυστηρίου]. So we cannot make judgments or decisions here simply on the basis of this or that expression or of certain phrases, but on the basis of its fundamental principles [ἐκ τῶν πρώτων ἀρχῶν].[29]

[29] *Deprehensio et triumphus super Nestorianos* 42 (*PG* 86:1380B).

Yet the most fundamental of those principles behind the Chalcedonian portrait of Christ, in Leontius's view, is (significantly) not some biblical or traditional theological assertion, but the distinction between universal being and particular being—οὐσία or φύσις, on the one hand, and ὑπόστασις or πρόσωπον, on the other—which I have mentioned already. This is a terminological rule developed in the 360s or 370s by the Cappadocian Fathers for expressing the unity and distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit within the one God, but (curiously) not applied with any consistency to the mystery of Christ during the bitter fifth-century debates leading up to Chalcedon. So "substance" or "nature," in Leontius's terminology—terminology that resonates constantly with the discourse-world of the Neoplatonic commentaries on Aristotle contemporary to his work—refers to the kind of universal reality in which many individuals participate, the kind of reality—like "horse," "cow," or "human being"—that defines what any individual thing is. The language of "hypostasis," on the other hand—and in the case of human beings, "person" (πρόσωπον)—refers to a concrete individual within such a universal class, something or someone existing uniquely "by itself" (καθ' ἑαυτό), able to be counted, to be labeled with a proper name. And while, as Leontius readily admits, "there is no such thing as a non-hypostatic nature"[30]—while universal natures or substances (such as "divinity" or "humanity") have no independent existence as universals, either in this present realm of being or in some separate, ideal world of forms—still individual things or hypostases are also unintelligible, and to that degree unreal, apart from their structural relationship to universal reality—apart, in other words, from being *what* they are.[31] So the ontological structure of particular things, in Leontius's view, consists of a kind of dialectic, a reciprocal shaping,

[30] *Contra Nestorianos et Eutychianos* 1 (*PG* 86:1277D–1280A).

[31] For a discussion of the question of the status of universals and their relation to individual things in fifth- and sixth-century philosophy, and of the influence of these discussions on Leontius and his contemporaries, see my article, "'A Richer Union': Leontius of Byzantium and the Relationship of Human and Divine in Christ," *Studia Patristica* 24 (1993): 239-65, esp. 246-53.

that takes place between universal substances or natures and concrete individuals.[32]

What distinguishes a being—universal or individual—from all others, Leontius and his contemporaries assume, are that being's "characteristics" or ἰδιώματα: universals or generic "natures" are marked off from other natures by "essential qualities" (οὐσιοποιοὶ ἰδιώτητες), concrete individuals by individual qualities or "accidents." In each case, it is these particular qualities or characteristics that mark a thing off as what it is, and not something else.[33] The importance of all of this for Christology is that it is precisely in this interplay of universal and individual qualities—of essential characteristics and particular, historical features or "accidents"—that things and persons become what and who they are; and it is this that makes it possible for a single, concrete thing to share at once in two distinct, unconfused natures. What distinguishes spirit from matter, soul from body, for instance, on the level of substance or nature—being without extension, intelligent and free, on the one hand, and being solid or colored on the other—is precisely the set of specific characteristics that unite all souls or all bodies with each other in the same universal class. But what distinguishes *this* soul from all other souls—its conscious relationship or σχέσις to a particular bodily frame, in a particular corner of time and space—is precisely what unites it ontologically to *this* body, enables them both to form *this*

[32] See *Contra Nestorianos et Eutychianos* 1 (*PG* 86:1280A): "Nature admits of the predication of being, but hypostasis also of being-by-oneself. The former presents the character of genus, the latter expresses individual identity. The one brings out what is peculiar to something universal, the other distinguishes the particular from the general. To put it concisely, things sharing the same essence and things whose structure [λόγος] of being is common are properly said to be of one nature; but we can define as a 'hypostasis' either things which share a nature but differ in number, or things which are put together from different natures, but which share reciprocally in a common being."

[33] Leontius, like many Platonically oriented Aristotelians of his time, seems simply to assume that the characteristics that allow us to tell universals or individuals from one another are, in themselves, constitutive of the reality of those universal or individual entities. The epistemological and gnoseological levels are not carefully or consistently distinguished.

particular person: not just a "soul" or a "body" or even a "human being" in general, but Peter or John.

It is this set of defining relationships (these σχέσεις, in the technical vocabulary of Aristotle's *Categories* and Porphyry's *Eisagōgē*),[34] which in turn make understandable the Chalcedonian portrait of the unique person of Christ, in Leontius's view. Christ, as Son of God and Son of Mary, is naturally set off from all other beings in heaven and on earth by the transcendent characteristics of God's essence, on the one hand, insofar as we (for the most part negatively) understand them, and by the universal characteristics of humanity (itself a composite of the generic characteristics of soul and body), on the other. What makes him *God* is not what makes him *human*, and vice versa: these characteristics, and the universal natures or substances they identify, are "unconfused." At the same time, the characteristics that mark the *Son* off, within the divine nature, from Father and Holy Spirit, that identify him as a divine *hypostasis*—his generation from the Father's being, his filial obedience, his role as receiver and sender of the Spirit—are precisely the characteristics which, when mingled with the unique *human* accidents of his historical existence—being a Jew from the early Roman Empire, the son of Mary, the carpenter from Nazareth, a man of determined appearance and height and weight—make him a single, unique, historical hypostasis who is *both* God and human, or in Leontius's words, give him "coherence and unity with himself."[35] And it is the relationship of mutual interchange and completion, "the common share in being" (κοινωνία τοῦ εἶναι),[36] which exists concretely between these two natures themselves in the person of Christ—God the Word forming Jesus for himself as his way of existing in the world, the human Jesus fully expressing in human terms what it is to be Son of God—that results in their "mutually inherent

[34] See esp. *Contra Nestorianos et Eutychianos* 4 (*PG* 86:1288A–1289A); Daley, "A Richer Union," 252-53.

[35] *Epilyseis* 1 (*PG* 86:1917D); see also *Epaporemata* 25 (*PG* 86:1909CD).

[36] *Contra Nestorianos et Eutychianos* 1 (*PG* 86:1280A); *Epilyseis* 1 (*PG* 86:1917D).

life" (ἡ ἀλληλοῦχος ζωή).[37] Yet while Christ's personal existence is based on these relationships, the unity at the core of his person is not simply extrinsic or accidental, not simply a matter of moral harmony between two wholly different conscious subjects, as the Antiochene theologians seemed (to their critics, at least) to suggest. It is a "substantial" union, in which the concrete individual, Jesus, is constituted in his being by the very confluence, the mutual shaping, of these two analogous, incommensurable, yet still radically personal realities—his being Son of God and son of Mary—through the shared characteristics that mark them off from other divine or other human persons.[38]

Although all this analysis may seem to some like the driest form of metaphysical speculation, Leontius insists that comprehending its meaning is, in fact, central to a proper understanding of the orthodox tradition of faith. The Chalcedonian picture of Christ—as *one* hypostasis, one individual, one Christ Jesus, who exists as subject *in two* unconfused and undivided natures, both of which continue to be fully intact and operative as what they are while being joined inseparably with each other in a way that mutually defines both—is not only logically coherent, in Leontius's view, but theologically necessary to a Christian understanding of the world. "The mode of union, rather than the structure [λόγος] of

[37] *Contra Nestorianos et Eutychianos* 4 (*PG* 86:1288D).

[38] *Epilyseis* 4 (*PG* 86:1925C); *Epilyseis* 8 (*PG* 86:1940D); *Contra Aphthartodocetas* (*PG* 86:1353A); *Deprehensio et triumphus super Nestorianos* 42 (*PG* 86:1380D). Although Aristotle and his earlier commentators had seen "relationship" (*to pros ti*, *schesis*)—spatial relationships, for instance, such as "near this tree," or temporal relationships such as "before the flood"—as the most extrinsic kind of accident, Plotinus and the Neoplatonist commentators of the fifth century had begun to argue that some kinds of relationship, at least, can represent a sharing of, and even a constitutive basis for, being: see Plotinus, *Enn*. 6.1.6; Simplicius, *In Cat*. 7 (ed. C. Kalbfleisch [Berlin, 1907], 169.1-173.32). For further discussion, see my essay, "Nature and the 'Mode of Union': Late Patristic Models for the Personal Unity of Christ," in Stephen Davis, Daniel Kendall, S.J., and Gerald O'Collins, S.J., eds., *The Incarnation: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Incarnation of the Son of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 164-96.

nature, contains the great mystery of religion," he writes.[39] The gospel is not simply the communication of a deeper understanding of what God is, or what humanity is, although we come to understand both God and humanity in a new way because of our faith in Christ. Rather, the gospel is the proclamation of the union of God and humanity in a particular person: the news that God's eternal Son and a finite human being have in fact become a single individual within history, without thereby ceasing to be what God the Son and what that particular human being are, in and by themselves.

Somewhere, Leontius insists, between "the way of confusion," identified with the approach of Eutyches, and "the way of division," identified with that of Nestorius, lies the reality that the Church—doubtless without fully realizing it at the time—proclaims of Christ at Chalcedon: "the middle way of unconfused and inseparable union." He explains:

> This is the kind of *union* we are speaking of: more unitive than the kind that completely divides, but richer than the kind that completely confuses, so that it neither makes the things united completely the same as each other, nor wholly other. If, then, a union of this kind shows its product to be neither wholly the same nor wholly different, we must investigate *how* it is the same, and *how* different. True belief recognizes the sameness to be in the hypostasis, the difference in the natures.[40]

Chalcedon, in Leontius's reading, sets before the later Church this paradox that lies at the heart of the biblical message, and that Balthasar rightly saw as central to Maximus's theological vision in the seventh century. The "organic union" (συμφυὴς ἕνωσις) of the Son's divine nature with a full human nature in the single person of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, results not in a kind of mythic hero, whose every act and thought is miraculous because his humanity is permanently changed by belonging to God, but in something much more astonishing: in a God who is "with us" and makes our weaknesses, even our mortality, his own, while remaining utterly divine; and in a man

[39] *Epilyseis* 8 (*PG* 86:1940C).
[40] Ibid. (*PG* 86:1941AB).

who always acts humanly, even though his "nature and his name" (to paraphrase Charles Wesley) is "Son of God."

My argument here has been simply this: although modern Western theologians have tended to see Chalcedon's paradoxical formulation of who and what Christ is as the climax and lasting settlement of several centuries of ancient controversy, in fact by itself it settled very little, but led only to more bitter and lasting disputes. What Christians since the Middle Ages understand as "Chalcedonian" Christology is, in fact, Chalcedon as "received" in the following four centuries: a reading of the council's cautious formulation through the modifying lenses of several later ancient councils, as well as through the hermeneutical contributions of late antique philosophy and the interpretation of a number of influential ancient and medieval theologians. Beginning with the intensely pro-Chalcedonian apologetics of Leontius of Byzantium, in the mid-sixth century—whom I have cited at some length here—but continuing in the writings of others like the more critical Emperor Justinian, the philosophical politician Boethius, and (in the following centuries) Sophronius of Jerusalem, Maximus Confessor, and John of Damascus, to name a few, it was the reception of Chalcedon's paradoxical vision of Christ's person as suggesting something *more than originally intended*—as holding out nothing less than a model for God's saving relationship with the world he created—that seems to have assured the definition itself its continuing place at the center of Christian reflection. For Leontius, as later for Maximus and John of Damascus, both of whom build on his terminology and arguments, only the language and thought of Chalcedon, as interpreted and received, can give adequate expression to the "mystery of union," the recognized reality of "God with us," that is, in the end, the heart of the world's salvation.

*The Thomist* 80 (2016): 191-225

# ON THOMAS AQUINAS'S TWO APPROACHES TO FEMALE RATIONALITY

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ALTHOUGH THE FEMALE human being was never at the center of his daily and intellectual attention, Thomas Aquinas as a religious thinker had no choice but to consider her in a wide range of different contexts. She is found in theoretical-speculative discussions (about creation, original sin and its punishment, resurrection) and in more practical ones (about marriage, reproduction, ordination of women, women as teachers, as witnesses). Thomas's ideas about the female human being have been investigated by theologians, philosophers, and historians. Often, but not always, the research has been inspired and even distorted by one form or another of feminism.

In this article I shall not discuss all the different aspects of the topic "woman" as they can be found in Thomas's works, but limit myself to one of them, namely, his understanding of female rationality. I have become intrigued by the fact that he thought about the rationality of woman in two different ways which he never integrated or explicitly connected. In the majority of his texts Thomas describes woman's rationality as "inferior" in comparison to the "superior" male rationality. This justifies her subordination to the male human being and is expressed in her inability to control her passions. There are, however, other texts in which Thomas discusses the human mind in general, without specifying whether he means the mind of the male or the female human being. He recognizes in the human mind two aspects or functions of rationality, namely, a *ratio superior* which he labels symbolically "masculine" and a *ratio inferior* which he calls "feminine." The meaning of this is

that woman's rationality is not of an inferior kind, but includes both aspects of rationality.

The thesis underlying this article is that not enough attention has been paid to the fact that two fundamentally different ways of understanding female rationality can be found in the work of Thomas Aquinas. His symbolic use of male and female has too often been confused with what one could call the "real" relationship between man and woman. The aim of this article is to present these two different understandings in Thomas, without making any detailed attempt to trace their historical origins. In addition, I want to show the new perspectives that are opened up by his second approach.

The first part of this article will focus on the "inferior rationality" of women and try to understand what is meant by inferiority. The discussion will develop around an analysis of the words *mollis* and *mollities*. This will lead me to the relationship between inferior rationality and bodily weakness on the one hand, and between inferior rationality and the passions on the other hand. The practical consequences of woman's inferior rationality shall also be treated. The second part of this article will focus on the human mind, and on the difference between *ratio inferior* and *ratio superior*. The definition of these two functions of human rationality will be followed by an analysis of texts where Thomas describes original sin as a paradigm for concrete sin, and where he connects *ratio inferior* to woman/feminine and *ratio superior* to man/male. The discussion will be completed by a study of the relationship between the *ratio inferior* and the *vis cogitativa*. This will allow me to bring out the importance of this second understanding of female rationality.

## I. Woman's Inferior Rationality

Woman's intellectual capacity is repeatedly described by Thomas with the unflattering comparatives *debilior* (*debilis* meaning, among other things, "disabled, infirm, feeble, frail,

weak")[1] and *inferior*. Almost every woman does not have a "firm judgment of reason"; she is "unstable of reason."[2] She does not possess "sufficient strength of mind" (to resist concupiscence).[3] There is clearly a "deficiency of reason"[4] because she has an overall "weakness of nature."[5]

These descriptions of female rationality can only be understood insofar as they stand over and against the male rationality which is described in almost bodily comparatives as *fortior*, *firmior*, *robustior*. The male has more "strength of soul."[6] In him "the discretion of reason predominates."[7] It is therefore natural and even useful that female rationality is subordinated and obedient to this superior rationality.[8]

In what follows, I will try to make clear what, according to this viewpoint, causes the inferiority of female rationality. My analysis will revolve around Thomas's use of the adjective *mollis* and the substantive *mollities,* both of which are used in his description of the human being.

[1] *In I Tim.*, c. 2, lect. 2 (Thomas Aquinas, *In Omnes S. Pauli Apostoli Epistolas Commentaria*, vols. 1 and 2 [Turin: Marietti, 1953]). Translations of particular Latin words are taken from C. T. Lewis and C. Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955).

[2] *STh* II-II, q. 156, a. 1, ad 1: "iudicium rationis non firmum"; "non habens solidam rationem."

[3] *STh* II-II, q. 149, a. 4: "sufficiens robur mentis."

[4] *In I Cor.*, c. 14, lect. 7: "defectus rationis"; *STh* II-II, q. 70, a. 3.

[5] IV *Sent.*, d. 44, q. 1, a. 3, qcla. 3, ad 2: "imbeccilitas naturae" (*Scriptum super Sententiis Magistri Petri Lombardi*, vol. 2, ed. P. F. Mandonnet [Paris: Lethielleux, 1929]).

[6] *In I Cor.*, c. 10: "vigor animae."

[7] *STh* I, q. 92, a.1, ad 2: "abundat discretio rationis"; *In I Tim.*, c. 2, lect. 3.

[8] *In I Tim.*, c. 2, lect. 3. For the idea of male superiority, female inferiority, and subordination in general see I *Polit.*, lect. 3 (*In Octo Libros Politicorum Aristotelis Expositio* [Turin: Marietti, 1966], 66 and 152); *STh* I, q. 96, a. 4; and *STh* II-II, q. 164, a. 2.

### *A) The Relation between the Bodily Disposition and the Rational Capacities*[9]

*Mollis* and *mollities* both have positive as well as negative meanings. The positive meanings point to physical qualities, such as "easily movable, flexible, supple, pliant" and to corresponding "psychological" qualities, such as "soft, tender, delicate, gentle, mild, pleasant." The negative meanings range from a rather mild "weakness" to "effeminate, unmanly, untrustworthy" (for *mollis*) and "susceptibility, irresolution, effeminacy, voluptuousness, wantonness, unchastity" (for *mollities*).[10]

*Mollis* is first of all used in Thomas's analysis of human knowledge and is connected to the sense of touch. This sense is on the one hand a sign of a good bodily constitution (i.e., of a harmonious body, fit for the human soul). It is also the center of sensitivity, because the finer the sense of touch, the better, strictly speaking, is one's sensitive nature as a whole. Thomas relies on Aristotle when he says that those who possess a soft (*mollis*) body or a good sense of touch have a good mental

[9] For this idea see Kari Elisabeth Børresen, *Subordination and Equivalence: The Nature and Role of Woman in Augustine and Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981), 174-75. Translation of updated French original: *Subordination et Equivalence. Nature et rôle de la femme d'après Augustin et Thomas d'Aquin* (Oslo: Norwegian University Press; Paris: Maison Mame, 1968; updated and reprinted Kampen: Kok Pharos Press, 1995). She develops this more in her article, "God's Image, Is Woman Excluded? Medieval Interpretation of Gen. 1, 27 and I Cor. 11, 7," in K. E. Borresen, ed., *Image of God and Gender Models in Judaeo-Christian Tradition* (Oslo: Solum Forlag, 1991), 220-21. Cf. Elisabeth Gossmann, "Anthropologie und soziale Stellung der Frau nach Summen und Sentenzenkommentaren des 13. Jahrhunderts," in Albert Zimmerman, *Miscellanea Mediaevalia, Veröffentlichungen des Thomas-Instituts der Universität zu Köln,* vol. 12/1: Soziale Ordnungen im Selbstverstandnis des Mittelalters (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1979), 292; Kristin M. Popik, "The Philosophy of Woman of St. Thomas Aquinas," in *Faith and Reason* 4, no. 4 (Winter 1978): 16 and following; Richard J. McGowan, "Thomas's Doctrine of Woman and Thirteenth-Century Thought," in *Essays in Medieval Studies: Proceedings of the Illinois Medieval Association* 2 (1985), 212.

[10] The German translation gives the positive as well as the negative meaning in the difference between "Weichheit/Zartheit" and "Weichlichkeit."

capacity.[11] Fine sensitivity or bodily softness is a disposition for a fine intelligence.

Thomas never uses *mollis* in this positive meaning when describing the female human being. If he were to do so, he would inevitably admit the "natural" intelligence of women. Thomas rather uses the comparative *mollior* in the negative meaning of "weakness" in order to describe the female body. He thereby makes an explicit link between the weaker (*mollior*) body of woman and her inferior intellectual capacities.[12] In the light of what I said above about "*mollis*" and the sense of touch, it seems then that woman's physical weakness consists in the defective functioning of her sense organs. An optimal reception and processing of information in the senses is lacking, and as a consequence, woman's reason is less well informed and functions less well. The adjective *mollis* which stood guarantee for good understanding receives now paradoxically the meaning of that which hinders good rational activity.

The above is confirmed by other texts that provide a more philosophically developed insight into the correlation between bodily condition and level of rationality. In Thomas's philosophical anthropology, the human soul is the form of the body. As such it is proportioned to the body, as form is to matter, and the moving power to that which is moved.[13] The quality of the body is relevant for the quality of the soul and vice versa. Within the framework of this general idea, Thomas says that the particular soul will reflect the particular bodily conditions. This has implications for the intellectual capacities: "thus because some men have bodies of better disposition, their souls have a

[11] See for example: II *Sent.*, d. 32, q. 2, a. 3: "eos qui sunt boni tactus et molles carne aptos mente esse"; *Q. D. De Anima*, a. 8 (*Quaestiones Disputatae De Anima* [Turin: Marietti, 1965]; *STh* I, q. 76, a. 5; *ScG* II, cc. 73 and 90 (Turin: Marietti, 1924); II *De Anima*, lect. 19 (*In Aristotelis Librum De Anima Commentarium* [Turin: Marietti, 1948], 19, 483-85); *STh* I, q. 85, a. 7.

[12] *In II Tim.*, 2, lect. 2: "Women have a softer body than man, and thus a weaker reasoning faculty. Reasoning however, is the ordering of act and effect of each object" ("mulieres sunt mollioris corporis quam viri, ita et debilioris rationis. Rationis autem est ordinare actus et effectus uniuscuiusque rei"). See Isidore of Sevilla, *Etymol.*, 11.2.18: "But the word woman [*mulier*] comes from softness [*mollities*], as if *mollier* [cf. *mollior*, "softer"], after a letter has been cut and a letter changed, is now called *mulier*" ("Mulier vero a mollitie, tamquam mollier, detracta litterata vel mutata, appellata est mulier").

greater power of understanding."[14] What Thomas has in mind here is that intellectual knowledge relies upon the sensitive apprehensive powers and the information they provide. The sensitive powers, however, use bodily organs.[15] If those powers and bodily organs are in some way of a lesser quality, intellectual knowledge will be affected. The sensitive powers which Thomas has in mind here seem to be not only the external senses, but also the internal senses—the common sense, imagination, the cogitative power, and memory.[16]

Thus follows a certain understanding of the female human being: her weak bodily disposition is reflected in a weak intellectual capacity. Because she has a corporeal "weak temperament," she does not have a "firm reason."[17] Thomas admits that there exist exceptions, that is, intelligent women, but they are apparently so seldom to be found that he cannot give them too much weight in his reflection.[18]

It is interesting to compare woman here with children. A child has a "wet brain"[19] which, together with other bodily

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[13] II *Sent*., q. 21, q. 2, a. 1, ad 2. See also II *Sent*., d. 32, q. 2, a. 3; *STh* I, q. 85, a. 7; *STh* I-II, q. 50, a. 4, obj. 3 and ad 3; *STh* II-II, q. 156, a. 1, ad 1. In this life form/soul and body are attuned to each other. In the afterlife the body is influenced by the soul's quality.

[14] *STh* I, q. 85, a. 7.

[15] *STh* I-II, q. 50, a. 4, ad 3: "Because the apprehensive powers inwardly prepare their proper objects for the 'possible intellect,' therefore it is by the good disposition of these powers, to which the good disposition of the body cooperates, that man is rendered apt to understand" ("quia vires apprehensivae interius praeparant intellectui possibili proprium objectum, ideo ex bona dispositione harum virium, ad quam cooperatur bona dispositio corporis, redditur homo habilis ad intelligendum"); *STh* I, q. 101, a. 2.

[16] *STh* I, q. 78, a. 4 (for the list of the internal senses); and *STh* I, q. 85, a. 7 (for the specific relationship between the quality of the internal senses and the level of understanding). The cogitative faculty will be discussed in part II of this article.

[17] *STh* II-II, q. 156, a. 1, ad 1: "debilis complexio"; "solida ratio." Also for relationship between female bodily constitution and rationality: *In I Tim*., c. 2, lect. 2; VII *Nic. Ethic*., lect. 5 (*In Decem Libros Ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nicomacheum Expositio,* ed. R. M. Spiazzi [Turin: Marietti, 1949], 1376).

[18] VII *Nic. Ethic*., lect. 5 (Marietti ed., 1376); and *STh* II-II, q. 156, a. 1, ad 1. See also *STh* II-II q, 177, a. 2. For further treatment of these exceptional women, see below.

[19] *De Verit*., q. 18, a. 8, ad 5 (Turin: Marietti, 1953).

defects, hinders the working of the sensitive powers and consequently, of the intellect. A child, however, grows up and nothing hinders the male child from reaching perfect intellectual knowledge, as the influence of his bodily characteristics on his intellectual capacities seems to be something temporary and passing.[20] From what Thomas writes about woman, one has the impression that for her no change or improvement seems possible; her deficient bodily condition will always be accompanied by lower intellectual capacities.

Thomas uses *mollis* not only in an epistemological context, but also in an ethical one. In discussing the virtue of perseverance, he opposes perseverance to *mollities*. *Mollities* is defined as the readiness to withdraw from or to forsake a good on account of a long endurance of difficulties and toils, or on account of sorrow caused by lack of pleasure. Thomas connects this to the first meaning of *molle*: "nam molle dicitur quod facile cedit tangenti," that which easily gives in or yields to what touches it. This incapacity can be caused either by habit (*consuetudo*) or by disposition. The latter is exactly the problem of the female human being: her fragile disposition causes in her *mollities*, the inability to withstand difficulties which deprive her of pleasure.[21]

In addition to the above rather mild negative interpretation of *mollities,* Thomas also uses the comparative *mollior* and the substantive *mollities* in the stronger negative meaning of moral weakness[22] when speaking about women. The idea is that woman's inferior rationality equals an inferior ability to understand rational rules of conduct and to apply them. As a result she is more open to and easily carried away by her

[20] *STh* I, q. 101, a. 2; II *Sent*., d. 20, q. 2, a. 2; *STh* I, q. 99, a. 1.

[21] *STh* II-II, q. 138, a.1 and ad 1. For the idea of the "feminine male" or *homo effeminatus*: I *Polit*., lect. 10 (Marietti ed., 152); *STh* I-II, q. 102, a. 6, ad 6; *STh* II-II, q. 138, a.1, ad 1. Another text from *STh* II-II, q. 153, a. 5, ad 2, mentions that *luxuria* weakens man's heart. Thomas is influenced by Aristotle on this point. For texts of Aristotle, see Maryanne Cline Horowitz, "Aristotle and Woman," in *Journal of the History of Biology* 9, no. 2 (1976): 183-213, at 210.

[22] *STh* II-II, q. 156, a. 1, ad 2.

passions.[23] This raises the fundamental question, whether weak rationality causes moral weakness.

The idea that women's inferior rationality includes the inability to control her passions needs more attention. Therefore I will look at Thomas's analysis of original sin, which includes the situation before the first sin, original sin itself, and its aftermath.

## *B) Woman's Weak Rationality and Her Inability to Control Her Passions*

### 1. Before the Original Sin

Before the original sin the relationship between God and the human being, between man and woman, soul and body, reason and the passions, was one of harmony, *iustitia*, or *rectitudo*.[24] Harmony means order (*ordinatio*), but does not mean equality.[25] The human being was subordinated to God, the body to the soul, passions to reason, exterior things to the human being, and, most important for us, woman to man. Harmony stands for a hierarchy between lower and higher beings.[26]

In the context of his discussion of creation and original sin, Thomas does not invoke his Aristotelian philosophical anthropology to explain the origin of the inferior female

[23] *STh* I-II, q. 156, a. 1, ad 2: "a man fails to stand to that which is counseled, because he holds to it weakly by reason of the softness of his body, as we have stated with regard to woman" ("aliquis non persistat in eo quod consiliatum est, ex eo, quod debiliter inhaeret propter mollitiem corporis, ut de mulieribus dictum est"); I *Polit*., lect. 10 (Marietti ed., 159); *In I Tim.*, c. 2, lect. 2.

[24] *STh* I-II, q. 82, a. 3; II *Sent*., d. 21, q. 2, a. 3; *STh* I, q. 21, a. 1.

[25] *STh* I, q. 92, a. 1, ad 2: "nor is inequality among men excluded by the state of innocence" ("nec inaequalitas hominum excluditur per innocentiae statum"). For an explicit discussion of subordination of one human being to another as a situation that is not *post lapsum*, see *STh* I, q. 96, a. 4.

[26] For subordination of soul to God, and inferior faculties to superior ones see *STh* I, q. 94, aa. 1 and 4; *STh* I-II, q. 85, a. 5. For all the subordinations, except for woman to man, see *In V Rom*., lect. 3; *STh* I-II, q. 82, a. 3; *STh* II-II, q. 164, a. 1. Gossmann sees this hierarchy which allows only "Uber- und Unterordnung" as the direct outcome of the monotheistic view ("Anthropologie und soziale Stellung der Frau," 286).

rationality. He accepts that man and woman are equal as human beings, insofar as both were created as images of God "secundum spiritum," or in "intellectus sive mens."[27] This fundamental equality does not exclude differences in their level of rationality: woman possesses a less strong rational capacity than man.[28] And because it is right and just that the stronger should govern the less strong, woman was by creation subordinated to man.[29]

Concerning the relationship between reason and the passions (emotions), Thomas mentions first of all that there were no passions related to "bad" things (things considered *malum* by the person who undergoes the passion). For this reason there was no fear and sorrow before the original sin. Moreover, there were no passions (e.g., concupiscence) related to a nonpossessed good. There only existed passions related to a present good (such as joy and love) or related to a good reachable in the future (such as desire and hope).[30] More important, however, was the absence of rebellious or disorderly passions.[31] All the passions followed the judgment of reason.

[27] *Super I Cor.* (reportatio vulgata). 11, lect. 3: "And in this way it is clear that God's image is present in man according to the spirit, in which there is no difference between male and female. Consequently woman is the image of God, just as the male" ("Et sic patet quod imago Dei attenditur in homine secundum spiritum, in quo non est differentia masculi et foeminae. Et ideo mulier est imago Dei sicut et vir"); *Super Col.*. 3, lect. 2; *STh* I, q. 93, a. 6, ad 2: "Therefore we must understand that when Scripture had said, 'to the image of God He created him,' it added, 'male and female He created them,' not to imply that the image of God came through the distinction of the sexes, but that the image of God belongs to both sexes, since it is in the mind, wherein there is no sexual distinction. Wherefore the Apostle (Col. 3:10), after saying, 'According to the image of Him that created him,' added, 'Where there is neither male nor female'" ("Et ideo dicendum est quod Scriptura, postquam dixerat, ad imaginem Dei creavit illum, addidit, masculum et feminam creavit eos, non ut imago Dei secundum distinctiones sexuum attendatur; sed quia imago Dei utrique sexui est communis, cum sit secundum mentem, in qua non est distinctio sexuum. Unde apostolus, ad Col. III, postquam dixerat, secundum imaginem eius qui creavit illum, subdit, ubi non est masculus et femina"). See also *STh* I, q. 97, a. 3 for the difference between *anima* (which gives life to the body) and *spiritus* (which stands for the immaterial intellect).

[28] *In I Cor.* (reportatio Reginaldi di Piperno). 11, vers. 10.

[29] *STh* I, q. 92, a. 1, ad 2; *STh* I., q. 96, a. 4.

[30] *STh* I, q. 95, aa. 2 and 3.

[31] *STh* I, q. 95, a. 2.

In sum, before the original sin, woman was created in God's image as a rational creature. Her rationality, however, was inferior to man's rationality and this is why she was naturally subordinated to man.[32] Man and woman alike knew passions within the limits set by their rationality.

## 2. Original Sin

Original sin was initiated by the devil who, as a serpent, seduced Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. Her inferior rational capacity caused her to believe his words and to be seduced, and her closeness to Adam put her in the best position to convince him by her words.[33] Woman was a link in the seduction of Adam, who could not directly be seduced by the devil. Although both Eve and Adam were subject to pride, the inordinate striving after one's own excellence or inordinate love of oneself,[34] ultimately Adam was the sufficient cause of the original sin, bears the responsibility for it, and is the one who transmits it. Even though Thomas says that woman is the beginning (*initium*) of sin, evil, or corruption in this world,[35] he puts the final responsibility for the original sin on Adam. Moreover, if Eve alone would have sinned, the original sin would not have been transmitted to subsequent generations.[36]

## 3. After the Original Sin

Original sin, the spiritual uprising of the human being against God and his justice,[37] is the loss of the right relation between God and man, and as a result the primordial harmony

[32] *STh* I , q. 92, a. 1, ad 2.

[33] *STh* II-II, q. 165, a. 2, corp. and ad 1; *In I Tim.,* c. 2, lect. 3. Cf. *De Verit*., q. 18, a. 6, ad 3.

[34] *STh* II-II, q. 163, a. 1; *STh* I-II, q. 84, aa. 2 and 3; *De Malo*, q. 8, aa. 2-4. For the difference between the pride of Adam and Eve, see *STh* II-II, q. 163, a. 4.

[35] *STh* I, q. 92, a. 1, obj. 3 and ad 3; III *Sent.*, d. 12, q. 3, qcla. 2, sol. 2, obj. 1 and ad 1, ad 2; for woman as *initium malum*, see *In I Tim.,* c. 2, lect. 3.

[36] *STh* I-II, q. 81, a. 5; IV *Sent.*, d. 1, q. 2, a. 2, qcla. 2, ad 1.

[37] *STh* I-II, q. 82, a. 3.

is broken on all levels. The punishments and consequences of the first sin are multiple, but can be brought together in *concupiscentia* or the excessive and inordinate attention and desire of the human being for itself and for the perishable goods of this world.[38] In concupiscence a person experiences the revolt of body against soul,[39] or more exactly the tendency of the passions (which are reactions to the sensible world) to escape the moderation of reason. The passions are not totally disobedient to reason, but disobedient to a certain extent.[40] Reason has to fight the rebellious passions, not in order to suppress them completely, but in order to make them into an integral part of the morally good act.

There is no doubt that according to Thomas man and woman alike suffer from concupiscence.[41] They seem to differ, however, in the way in which they can handle the new situation and implement a solution that consists in bringing the passions into a rational framework and not being ruled by them. Thomas describes female reason as unable to do so: it is not strong enough to resist passions, has no authority over them, and, as a result, woman is easily carried away in her judgments by her passions, for example, concupiscence, anger, and fear.[42] One can infer from this that the male human being is capable (at least in principle) of governing his passions. Insofar as morality has a great deal to do with the guidance and rule of reason over the passions, this has two implications. First, it leads to the idea that women are morally inferior. Second, in order to make up

[38] *STh* I-II, q. 82, a. 3: "inordinate convertuntur ad bonum commutabile"; *De Malo,* q. 4, a. 2: "pronitas ad inordinate appetendum."

[39] See *STh* II-II, q. 163, a. 1.

[40] *De Malo*, q. 7, a. 1, ad 17; *STh* I, q. 95, a. 2.

[41] *STh* I-II, q. 82, a. 3, ad 3; *STh* I-II, q. 82, a. 4.

[42] VII *Nic. Ethic*., lect. 5 (Marietti ed., 1376); *STh* II-II, q. 156, a. 1, ad 1 (quoting Aristotle): "et propter hoc dicit quod mulieres non dicimus continentes, quia non ducuntur, quasi habentes solidam rationem, sed ducunt, quasi de facili sequentes passiones"; also idem, ad 2; *STh* II-II, q. 149, a. 4; I *Polit*., lect. 10 (Marietti ed., 159). See Prudence Allen, *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution. 750 BC–AD 1250*, vol. 1 (2d ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 109; R. J. McGowan, "Thomas's Doctrine of Woman and Thirteenth-Century Thought," in *Essays in Medieval Studies: Proceedings of the Illinois Medieval Association* 2 (1985), 217.

for this absence of a strong and controlling reason, woman needs the guidance and correction of man and his rationality.[43]

We can now sketch the relationship between man and woman after the original sin. Thomas often compares it to two other basic relationships that constitute a household: master and slave, and father and child.[44] In all three cases there is a relationship between a superior and a subordinate. But they differ from each other. Although a master can develop a friendship with his slave insofar as he relates to him as a rational human being, within the relationship master-slave he uses him as a subordinate for his own purposes.[45] The relationship between father and child contains authority and obedience, and its aim is the well-being of the child. The relationship between man and woman is also one of superior toward inferior, but woman is neither man's slave nor his child. After the fall a woman has to obey her husband even against her will,[46] but this does not turn their relationship into a despotic one. It is a civil one in which man intends the good of the woman.[47] Moreover, woman is given some degree of autonomy and independence. This relationship between nonequals is ultimately given a (limited) positive turn insofar as it is a cooperation between partners for the good of the household and the education of the children.[48]

We can now summarize the above analysis of the meanings of *mollis* and *mollities*, as expanded through a consideration of the correlation between bodily weakness and inferior intellectual capability, and through a discussion of original sin and

[43] IV *Sent*., d. 36, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3; I *Polit*., lect. 10 (Marietti, ed., 159); *ScG* III, c. 123. See on this idea in Aristotle, Horowitz, "Aristotle and Woman," 212.

[44] I *Polit*., lect. 10 (Marietti ed., 159 and 152); *STh* I-II, q. 105, a. 4.

[45] VIII *Nic. Ethic*., lect. 11 (Marietti ed., 13); *STh* II-II q. 47, a. 12, ad 2.

[46] For *dominium* before and after the original sin, see *STh* I, q. 96, a. 4; and *STh* II-II, q. 164, a. 2, ad 1.

[47] A very interesting text is *STh* II-II, q. 57, a. 4, where Thomas defines what is *alterum*. He compares the relationship between master and slave, and father and child, with the relationship between husband and wife. Woman is *aliquid viri*, but also independent and subject to a civil or economic relationship. See also *STh* I, q. 92, a. 1.

[48] For complementary tasks of man and woman in the household, see II *Sent.*, d. 18, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1; *STh* II-II, q. 164, a. 2; *In I Cor.*, c. 7, lect. 1.

its aftermath. Thomas considers woman to be created as an image of God precisely insofar as she has a rational nature, just as man does.[49] She is never said to be nonrational. There is, however, a difference between weak female rationality and strong male rationality, and this legitimizes the subordination of woman to man. Whereas Thomas the theologian sees the female inferiority to be the result of the creation by God, Thomas the philosopher finds her inferior rationality to be related to her weak bodily disposition (as expressed in the use of *mollior* to describe women). The inferiority of woman's rationality consists in the fact that she is less well informed by the senses (external and internal) and has a less-developed knowledge. And as a consequence of her weak intellectual power, she is less capable of adhering to the rational rules of action, and is more easily overwhelmed by her passions. The basic problem of woman is understood to be her weak rationality and not the fact that she has passions as such. Passions are present in man as well as in woman. Her inability to control the passions is a by-product of her weak rationality.[50] In short, woman knows a bodily inferiority, a rational inferiority, and as a result also a moral inferiority.[51]

### *C) Social Implications of the Inferiority of Woman's Rationality*

The inferiority of woman's rationality and her subordination to man has three major social implications. She is prohibited from holding a public position, from teaching publicly, and

[49] *STh* I, q. 93, a. 4, ad 1.

[50] Compare this to what Horowitz writes about Aristotle's view of woman: "In the *Nicomachean Ethics* as in the *Politics*, woman's failing derives not from the quantity of her appetites in relation to her reason, but from the qualitative lack of control her reason exercises over her appetites" ("Aristotle and Woman," 210).

[51] As mentioned above, Thomas occasionally writes that women are often stronger *qua anima* and from a moral point of view. I will discuss this point at the end of part I. See, for example, IV *Sent*., d. 25, q. 2, a. 1, qcla. 1, ad 11.

from speaking in public. In all three, Thomas is mainly influenced by St. Paul.[52]

## 1. Exclusions from Public Functions

The inferiority of woman's intellectual capacity and her subordination to the male human being are the main arguments used for excluding her from public offices and functions. She cannot be ordained as a priest because of her subordinate status,[53] nor baptize in public (she can only do so in cases of emergency).[54] She is prohibited from being a witness, not because she is emotional (*ex affectu*), but because of her inferior rationality. Thomas puts her on par with children and *amentes*.[55] For the same reasons she is forbidden to take on any kind of command, either practical or spiritual. Thomas relies here on Aristotle, quoting him as saying that the rule of women leads to the corruption of the family.[56] Thomas recognizes, however, the temporary rule of women (maybe in the absence of their husbands who were on a crusade)[57] and the role of woman as the spiritual and practical leader in a monastery for women.[58]

## 2. Prohibition to Teach

Thomas distinguishes between different kinds of gifts that the human being can receive from God: the gift or grace of

[52] *In I Tim.*, c. 2, lect. 3. On these three points see Gossmann, "Anthropologie und soziale Stellung," 281-97. See also Carla Casagrande, "La donna custodita," in George Duby and Michelle Perrot, eds., *Storia delle donne in occidente*, vol. 2, *Il Medioevo*, ed. Christiane Klapisch-Zuber (Roma: Editori Laterza, 1990).

[53] IV *Sent.*, d. 25, q. 2, a. 1, qcla. 1.

[54] *STh* III, q. 67, a. 4.

[55] *STh* II-II, q. 70, a. 3.

[56] *In I Tim.*, c. 2, lect. 3, refers to Aristotle: "Et philosophus dicit quod dominium mulierum est corruptio familiae sicut tyrrani in regno" (Thomas refers here to a text about tyranny, where no comparison is made between women and rulers); IV *Sent.*, d. 19, q. 1, a. 1, qcla. 3, ad 4; *In I Cor.* (reportatio vulgata), c. 14, lect. 7.

[57] IV *Sent.*, d. 25, q. 2, a. 1, qcla. 1, ad. 2.

[58] IV *Sent.*, d. 19, q. 1, a. 1, q. 3, ad 4.

prophecy, the gift of tongues, and the gift of the word.[59] The grace of prophecy is given to man and woman alike, because they are the same qua soul. The inferiority of woman's natural intellectual capacities poses no problem here.[60] The grace of tongues enables the human being to speak so that everybody can understand what is said. The gift of the word or the *gratia sermonis* enables the human person to communicate efficiently the knowledge received from God ("quod efficaciter loquatur") for the benefit of those listening. One could also call this gift of the word a "rhetorical" gift: it enables one, first, to teach (*instruere intellectum*); second, to move an audience emotionally, so that they will be more free to hear the word of the Lord; and third, to speak in a "convincing" way, or with such zeal, that it sways the audience to love what the words of the Lord mean and act accordingly.[61]

What is interesting is that Thomas writes that woman can receive the gift of the word, but is not allowed to use it in public. She is only allowed to instruct at home, to teach her son and children[62] and even her fellow nuns in the abbey. Thomas gives three reasons why woman should not use her gift in public: first, her subordinate status is a hindrance for teaching or instruction, because only a superior person, not a subordinate, may teach in the church; second, her speech itself may "ignite" the male feelings; and third, she has inferior intellectual capacities.[63]

The first and the third reasons rely upon the already familiar inferior intellectual capacities of woman and her resulting subordination. This is surprising, because the gift of speech is based upon the gift of prophecy, which disregards the different intellectual level of man and woman. The second objection

[59] *STh* I-II, q. 171 (prophecy); q. 176 (gift of tongues); q. 177 (gift of the word).

[60] IV *Sent*., d. 25, q. 2, a. 1, qcla. 1, ad 1; *In I Tim.*, c. 2, lect. 3; *STh* II-II, q. 177, a. 2, ad 2.

[61] See *STh* II-II, q. 177, a. 1.

[62] *STh* II-II, q. 177, a. 2, corp. and ad 1 and ad 3; *In I Cor.* (reportatio vulgata), c. 14, lect. 7; *STh* III, q. 67, a. 4, ad 1; *In I Cor.* (reportatio vulgata), c. 11, lect. 2; *In I Tim.*, c. 2, lect. 3.

[63] See *STh* II-II, q. 177, a. 2.

brings in a new element: it attributes power to female speech. As shall be seen in the following section where I discuss woman's virtue of silence, at stake is not her rhetorical power, but what she radiates through her speech.

The concrete social implications of the above are clear: in times where teaching at the university consists of public disputations, woman is excluded from the university, an institute of higher learning, as a teacher and as a student.[64] Thomas never explicitly discusses this point. He does, however, mention that women cannot be a lawyer or advocate.[65]

## 3. Female Speech and the Virtue of Silence

Thomas writes that woman should possess the virtue of silence (*taciturnitas*) whenever she appears in public.[66] Although this is already implied in the prohibition to hold public and official positions, and in the prohibition to teach in public, Thomas makes a separate point of it. He writes that whereas man needs to speak appropriately, what adorns woman is her silence,[67] not only because she is subject to man, but also because "her words are like fire."[68]

Although I will not elaborate on it here, in his commentary on the First Letter to Timothy (*In I Tim.*, c. 5, lect. 2) Thomas

[64] See Allen, *Concept of Woman,* 400.

[65] *In I Cor.* (reportatio vulgata), c. 14, lect. 7: "If therefore they ask and dispute in public, it would be a sign of shamelessness, and this is disgraceful/shameful to them. Hence it also follows that in law the office of advocate is forbidden to women" ("Si ergo in publico quaereret et disputaret, signum esse inverecundiae et hoc est ei turpe, et inde est etiam quod in jure interdicitur mulieribus officium advocandi"). See also *STh* I-II, q. 102, a. 6, ad 6.

[66] For a discussion of this topic, see Casagrande, "La donna custodita"; *In I Tim.*, c. 2, lect. 3; I *Polit.*, lect. 10 (Marietti ed., 161); III *Polit.*, lect. 3 (Marietti ed., 376); *In I Cor.* (reportatio vulgata), c. 14, lect. 7.

[67] I *Polit.*, lect. 10 (Marietti ed., 161): "Ad mulieris enim ornatum vel honestatem pertinet quod sit taciturna . . . sed hoc ad ornatum viri non pertinet, sed magis quod sicut decet loquatur."

[68] *In I Tim.*, c. 5, lect. 2 cites Eccl. 9: "Colloquium eius quasi ignis exardescit." The same text is cited in *In I Tim.*, c. 2, lect. 3; *STh* II-II, q. 177, a. 2. Conversation with a woman is problematic for *continentia*: see *De perfectione spiritualis vitae* (*Opuscula Theologica,* vol. 2, *De Re Spirituali)* [Turin: Marietti, 1954], 593).

mentions several vices, including verbosity and curiosity, to which women who do not occupy themselves with work are particularly prone. With these in mind one can understand his recommendation for women to be silent and connect it to the prohibition to speak in public. It seems that the inflammatory characteristics of female speech are in the first place related to the unlimited quantity of words women are capable of producing, to the foolish content of their speech, and to its gossipy character. One could call them a cause of "social upheaval."[69] In addition, given the fact that women are easily led away by their passions, the prohibition to speak up in public might also be related to the fact that female speech expresses and radiates her passions. The mere uttering of words by a female human being seems to be dangerous and threatening in itself, and whatever content it has is permeated by that threat. Moreover, in some texts Thomas seems to suggest that in particular the sexual passions are at stake.[70] And this may ultimately explain why a woman should be silent in public: her mere speech is capable of exciting the human "libido."[71]

We should also add that Thomas does not deny that women are capable of another kind of speech that is authentic, convincing, and not threatening. For example, a woman can convince her husband in the privacy of their house to conduct a more virtuous life. The recognition of the possible neutrality of female speech and her superior moral qualities are quite surprising, given the view of Thomas we have explained until now.[72]

[69] See Lisa Perfetti, ed., *The Representation of Women's Emotions in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 2005), 1.

[70] *In Duo Praecepta Caritatis et in Decem Legis Praecepta Expositio (Opuscula Theologica,* vol. 2, *De Re Spirituali* [Turin: Marietti, 1954], 1282: "quia propria passio mulierum est concupiscentia." Lisa Perfetti puts it this way: "Women, stigmatized by their inherent carnality" (*Representation of Women's Emotions*, 9).

[71] *STh* II-II, q. 177, a. 2: "lest men's minds be enticed to lust [*ad libidinem*], for it is written [Sir 9:11] 'Her conversation burneth as fire.'"

[72] IV *Sent*., d. 25, q. 2, a. 1, qcla. 1, ad 1.

### *D) Exceptions to the Rule: Strong Women*

Thomas writes on various occasions that there are exceptions to this view of women. He mentions intelligent, courageous and virtuous women; he speaks of women capable of convincing their husbands to improve their moral behavior, women whose steadfastness in their passions is admirable.[73] Besides that, Thomas recognizes the possibility of change in woman's inferior rational capacities through education and grace.[74]

These exceptions to the rule have been discussed by Kristin Popik. She explains them by using texts of Thomas which seem to indicate that the quality of human rationality is dependent upon and influenced by bodily conditions which are not only specifically male or female, but are general human bodily conditions. She mentions "health of the body, habits, the hardness or softness of the flesh, physical strength, the temperaments, the perfection of the sense organs."[75] What these texts seem to tell us is that a different bodily condition can be found in different women, in different men, and in man and woman alike. Popik's point neutralizes the sex-determined origin of the female rational inferiority and points to a fundamental potential equality between male and female human beings with regard to their bodily constitution as well as their corresponding rational capacity. Her interpretation allows for strong men and strong women, for weak men and weak women.

[73] *STh* II-II, q. 156, a. 1, ad 1; *STh* II-II q. 177, a. 2; VII *Nic. Ethic.*, c. 5 (Marietti ed., 1376); *Super Ioan.*, c. 11, lect. 4 (*Super Evangelium S. Ioannis*, ed. R. Cai, O.P. [Turin: Marietti, 1952], 1510 and 1519-1520); c. 4, lect. 2 (Marietti ed., 597); c. 19, lect. 4 (Marietti ed., 2438); and c. 20, lect. 2 (Marietti ed., 2492); IV *Sent.*, d. 25, q. 2, a. 1, qcla. 1, ad 1. We are not talking here about Mary and other exceptional women.

[74] See *Super Ioan.*, c. 4, lect. 2 (Marietti ed., 598), quoted in Popik, "Philosophy of Woman of St. Thomas Aquinas," about the education of the Samaritan woman through her daily contact with the Jews. For grace as a changing influence, Popik mentions *STh* III, q. 72, a. 8, ad 3; and q. 72, a. 10, obj. 3 and ad 3.

[75] Popik ("Philosophy of Woman of St. Thomas Aquinas," n. 78), refers to VII *Nic. Ethic.*, c. 5 (Marietti ed., 1376), where Thomas mentions ill persons, who have a diseased temperament because of bad habits, after the manner of a perverse nature; *STh* I, q. 85, a.7; and *STh* II-II, q. 156, a. 1 ad 2. In this last text Thomas mentions bilious persons, melancholy, softness of temperament, phlegmatic temperament.

The problem with this interpretation is that its textual basis is too narrow. It is based on a limited number of texts about exceptional women and, more particularly, about the influence of the human, bodily conditions on the intellect. And more importantly, this interpretation diminishes the impact of the host of texts in which Thomas makes the explicit link between the weak female body and the inferiority of her intellect. Popik's interpretation turns Thomas's insights into a new theory, which he himself in no way developed. Exceptional women are and remain exceptional and Thomas does not give the exceptions to the rule any weight in his considerations, because there are not enough of them.[76]

### *E) Conclusion*

The insights of Thomas as laid out in this first part of this article are partly based upon Aristotelian ideas, and certainly incorporate the limitations put on woman's public behavior by St. Paul. Woman is never considered by Thomas to be nonrational, but she is characterized by the possession of a weak rationality. This characterization thrives only within the comparison to a strong, male rationality. It is philosophically justified by the acceptance of a weak bodily disposition in woman and expresses itself in less developed theoretical and practical rational knowledge. Weakness of practical rationality equals "being influenced by." Woman's rationality is, on the one hand, easily influenced by her passions, and this is considered to be negative. On the other hand, because her own reason fails in controlling her passions, she needs to be guided and controlled by an external rationality, and more specifically, by male rationality. This influence is considered to be positive. Woman is physically, rationally, and morally inferior to the male human being, and needs his help on all three levels.

In this view, woman's inferior rationality has almost nothing to contribute. Only a minor positive function is given to it

[76] VII *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 5 (Marietti ed., 1376); and *STh* II-II, q. 156, a. 1, ad 1. See also *STh* II-II q, 177, a. 2.

insofar as it complements the male rationality in the household and education. The only really positive role given to woman is a physical role, namely, reproduction. And here rationality is not involved.

## II. Female Rationality in the Context of the Analysis of the Human Mind

It is not only the above understanding of female rationality that we find in Thomas's works. When discussing the human mind in general, he distinguishes between two aspects of rational thinking, the *ratio superior* and *ratio inferior*. Although he makes the link between the *ratio inferior* and "woman," he does not identify female rationality with this one part/aspect of the human mind, but rather points out that every human being, male and female alike, has two complementary kinds of rationality. In what follows I will focus on this analysis of the human mind, and investigate what *ratio superior* and *ratio inferior* stand for. I will again pay attention to Thomas's understanding of original sin. This time, however, I will look at it insofar as it is a paradigm for all concrete sin. This will enable us to understand how he connects *ratio inferior* to "woman" and what meaning that holds. My aim is to make clear that Thomas does not identify female rationality with *ratio inferior*, but rather points out that the female human being, just as every human being, has a "double" rationality.

### *A) Description of the Human Mind in General*

The larger framework in which Thomas understands the human mind is a hierarchical universe, in which the human person stands between the higher, spiritual beings and the lower, material beings. Given this position Thomas discerns various "kinds" of rationality in the human mind. First of all he distinguishes between intellect and reason. Whereas *intellectus* stands for immediate apprehension, *ratio* is the discursive use of the same faculty, and arrives at its conclusions through a process of deliberation. Second, relying on book 12 of Augustine's *De*

*Trinitate*, Thomas discerns in the *ratio* two functions (*officia*), namely, *ratio superior* and *ratio inferior*.[77] What constitutes their difference is partly the objects they occupy themselves with, and mainly the different criteria of judgment they use.[78] These two different *rationes* are similar insofar as both have a speculative and a practical way of considering their objects.[79]

*Ratio superior* is discursive reason focusing on the higher beings in this universe. It counts among its primary objects the *necessaria*, the *aeternae rationes*, *verum*. It also has secondary objects that belong to the temporal sphere, among them human actions and passions. The act of the *ratio superior* is twofold. In its theoretical act it contemplates (*inspicere*) the truth and nature of the necessary and eternal and eventually also of the temporal in the light of the eternal. In its practical act it deliberates or reflects (*consulare*) when it uses the eternal and necessary *rationes* as rules for human actions.[80] Its deliberation about human actions and passions results not only in a judgment, but eventually also in the consent to carry out a certain act ("consensus in actum vel opus"). The *ratio superior* has the last word concerning the human act.[81]

[77] *De Verit.*, q. 15, a. 2; *STh* I, q. 79, a. 9, s.c., corp., and ad 1.

[78] II *Sent.*, d. 24, q. 2, a. 2, ad 5.

[79] *De Verit.*, q. 15, a. 2, ad 5 and ad 13; q.15, a. 3; *STh* I, q. 79, a. 9.

[80] *De Verit.*, q. 15, a. 2: "sive ut ab eis rationem et quasi exemplar operandi accipiens." Cf. *De Verit.*, q. 15, a. 3: "This happens when one bases his deliberation about practical matters on the fact that something is acceptable to God, or prescribed by divine law, or (acts) in a similar manner" "utpote cum aliquid deliberat de agendis, ex hoc quod aliquid Deo est acceptum, vel divina lege praeceptum, vel aliquo huiusmodi modo"; ibid., ad 5; *De Verit.*, q. 15, a. 5; *STh* I, q. 79, a. 9; *STh* I-II, q. 74, a. 9: "the higher reason 'is intent on contemplating or consulting the eternal law' . . . it consults it by judging and directing other things according to it: and to this pertains the fact that by deliberating through the eternal types, it consents to an act or dissents from it" ("ratio superior inhaeret rationibus aeternis conspiciendis, aut consulendis . . . consulendis autem, secundum quod per rationes aeternas de aliis judicat et ordinat: ad quod pertinet, quod deliberando per rationes aeternas consentit in aliquem actum, vel dissentit ad eo"); *STh* II-II q. 45, a. 3; *De Malo*, q. 7 a. 5.

[81] *STh* I-II, q. 74, a. 7; II *Sent.*, d. 24, q. 2, a. 2. In the background stand the three different moments Thomas distinguishes in the practical reasoning of the human being, namely, *consilium*, *judicium*, and *consensus*. *Consilium* is rational deliberation or "inquisition." It is deliberation not about an end, but about the means that can help

*Ratio inferior* is discursive reason, which has as its objects the *inferiora*, the *contingentia*, the *temporalia*, and the *res caducae* (transitory). Parallel to the *ratio superior*, its act can be a theoretical one (contemplation) or a practical one (concerning human acts). In its thinking, it uses only criteria belonging to this temporary world, that is, it judges "by the rule of human reason, which rule is derived from created things"[82] and not according to the eternal or necessary. Insofar as it concerns itself with the human act, its practical judgment is not about the act itself, but about the passion that precedes it.[83] By "passion" is meant here the reaction (of attraction or distancing) of the human being towards the surrounding world, which presents itself through the senses.

The relationship between these two aspects of the human mind is both one of dependence and one of independence. *Ratio superior* and *ratio inferior* are related as *regulans* and *regulatum*, because every judgment by the *ratio inferior* needs ultimately to be seen in the light of the criteria of the *ratio*

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toward the attainment of that end ("ea quae sunt ad finem"). See *STh* I-II, q. 14; *STh* II-II, q. 47, a. 2. This deliberation results in a judgment or *judicium* about what needs to be done. *Judicium* includes an *electio* or choice. Deliberation, judgment, and election are followed by a *consensus* or consent. Consent can be described as the agreement to carry out a certain action, whenever this is possible. See *STh* I-II, q. 15; *STh* I-II, q. 74, a. 7, ad 1: "Consent is an act of the appetitive power, not absolutely, but in consequence of an act of reason deliberating and judging" ("consentire est actus appetitivae virtutes non absolute, sed consequens ad actum rationis deliberantis, et judicantis"). For a discussion of these three moments, see *STh* I-II qq. 13, 14, and 15.

[82] *STh* I-II, q. 74, a. 7, corp. and ad 3: "ex regula rationis humanae, quae sumitur ex rebus creatis"; *De Malo*, q. 7, a. 5. For concrete examples see II *Sent*., d. 24, q. 2, a. 2; *De Verit*., q. 15, a. 3: "However, the movement of the appetite will belong to lower reason, in case/ when it follows a judgment of lower reason. As when one decides about practical matters on the basis of lower causes, as, for instance, considering the depravity of the act, the dignity of reason, the enmity of men, or something of this sort" ("Inferioris vero rationis est quando motus appetitus consequitur inferioris rationis judicium. Ut cum deliberatur de agendis per causas inferiores, utpote considerando turpitudinem actus, dignitatem rationis, hominum offensam, et huiusmodi").

[83] *STh* I-II, q. 74, a. 7: "ad rationem superiorem proprie pertinent consensus in actum; ad rationem vero inferiorem, quae habet inferius judicium, pertinent judicium praeambulum, quod est de delectatione"; and ibid., ad 3: "inferior ratio per rationes temporales deliberans quandoque huiusmodi delectationem acceptat, et tunc consensus in delectationem pertinet ad inferiorem rationem." See also *De Verit*., q. 15, a. 3.

*superior*.[84] The reason for this is that in the order of knowledge man starts with the temporal and rises to the eternal, but in the order of judgment he starts with the eternal and descends to the temporal.[85]

From the above it is clear that every judgment of the *ratio inferior* can be made by the *ratio superior*, but not the other way around. Where human moral actions are concerned the *ratio superior* can judge and give its consent to human actions and passions, whereas the *ratio inferior* can only judge and give consent to passions.[86]

Notwithstanding the ultimate dependence of the *ratio inferior* on the *ratio superior*, the *ratio inferior* enjoys a certain degree of autonomy. It judges according to its own norms, and it can even oppose the *ratio superior*. Thomas compares the relationship between inferior and superior reason to that between man and woman in concrete life: although *de jure* woman should not want to do anything that opposes the decisions of the male human being, *de facto* she can want to do something against him.[87]

The chief point here is that the *ratio inferior* (in its practical function) considers and judges the passions. I will return to this point when I consider the *vis cogitativa*.

[84] *In I Cor.* (reportatio vulgata), c. 11, lect. 3: "et secundum hoc mulier est ex viro, et propter virum: quia administratio rerum temporalium, vel sensibilium, cui intendit inferior ratio, vel etiam sensualitas, debet deduci ex contemplatione aeternorum, quae pertinent ad superiorem rationem et ad eam ordinari"; *De Verit.*, q. 15, a. 3; *De Verit*., q. 15, a. 4, ad 6 and ad 11; *De Verit*., q. 15, a. 2, ad 14 and ad 15; *STh* I, q. 79, a. 9, corp. and ad 2; *STh* I-II, q. 74, a. 8, ad 1; q. 74, a. 7; II *Sent*., d. 24, q. 3, a. 1, ad 5; II *Sent*., d. 24, q. 3, a. 4, ad 1; *STh* II-II q. 182, a. 4.

[85] *STh* I, q. 79, a. 9.

[86] *STh* I-II, q. 74, a. 7; II *Sent*., d. 24, q. 3, a. 1, ad 5.

[87] *De Verit*., q. 15, a. 4, ad 14: "quod mulier de jure non debet velle contra debitam viri ordinationem; sed tamen de facto quandoque potest contrarium velle et vult; et ita est de inferiori rationi." Another proof of this independence of inferior reason can be found in Thomas's discussion of sin in *ratio inferior* and *ratio superior*. See *De Verit*., q. 15, aa. 3-5; *STh* I-II, q. 74, aa. 7-10.

*B) Original Sin as a Paradigm for Concrete Sin*

In those texts where Thomas considers the first sin as a paradigm for every concrete sin, he connects the *ratio inferior* with the female and the *ratio superior* with the male. This opens up another approach for understanding the human mind in general, and for understanding woman's rationality in particular. I will first analyze those texts where Thomas considers original sin as a paradigm for every concrete sin. Second, I will discuss the use of female/male for inferior and superior reason. Finally, I will show that the *ratio inferior* necessarily relies upon the so-called *vis cogitativa*, how it does so, and what the implications are for our understanding of female rationality.

*C) Original Sin as a Paradigm for Human Sin in General*[88]

Thomas uses original sin in a paradigmatic way when he explains concrete sin. Whereas the parties involved in the original sin were the serpent, Eve, and Adam, in concrete sin the parties involved are sense knowledge, the *ratio inferior*, and the *ratio superior*. Just as the serpent presented the apple to Eve, so does the external world present itself to the senses and sense knowledge.[89] And exactly in the same way in which Eve gave in to the temptation and ate from the forbidden fruit, so does the *ratio inferior* give its consent to a reaction to this sense knowledge, after deliberating and judging the incoming information. To put it in other words, the *ratio inferior* is responsible for the "delectatio, sive complacentia delectationis, sive consensus"[90] or the judgment and consent to a particular passion. And it can do so in accordance with the norms of the

[88] *STh* II-II, q. 165, a. 2, s.c.; II *Sent.*, d. 21, q. 2, a. 1, s.c.: "ordo tentationis interioris qui in nobis nunc agitur, repraesentat ordinem tentationis in primis parentibus servatum." See Gossman, "Anthropologie und soziale Stellung der Frau," 293.

[89] Before the original sin, the devil could influence only through external suggestion. After the first sin, he could also use internal suggestion, that is, fantasy or imagination. *STh* II-II q. 165, a. 2, ad 2.

[90] *De Verit.*, q. 15, a. 3; *STh* I-II, q. 74, a. 6.

*ratio superior* or not. When it does not take the norms of the *ratio superior* into account, it can command unlawful passions, or fail to check the unlawful movement of the passions.[91] And just as Eve presented the apple to Adam, who in his turn ate from it, so can the consent of the *ratio inferior* to a particular passion have an influence on the *ratio superior*.[92] It may eventually cause the *ratio superior* to neglect its superior norms of judgment and give its consent to the performance of a sinful act.

Where Eve was the link in the seduction of Adam by the serpent, so is the *ratio inferior*, as Thomas sees it, a necessary link (*praeambulum*) in the seduction of every human being by the external world.[93] Nevertheless, the ultimate responsibility for the moral (good or evil) act is to be found in the *ratio superior* because it and only it gives its consent to a concrete act (*consensus in actum*).[94]

### *D) Feminine "Ratio inferior" and Masculine "Ratio superior"*

When he regards the original sin as a paradigm for every concrete sin, Thomas transfers the sexual identity of Adam and Eve to the different functions of human rationality. The *ratio superior* is said to be masculine/*vir* and the *ratio inferior* is said to be feminine/*mulier*. He makes use of the following relational words: *tamquam* (as if, so to speak), *attribuere* (to attribute to), *comparare* (to unite, to connect), *repraesentare* (to stand in place

[91] *STh* I-II, q. 74, a. 6.

[92] II *Sent.*, d. 21, q. 2, a. 1, s.c.

[93] *STh* II-II, q. 165, a. 2, ad 4: "we cannot be tempted by the devil, except through that part of the soul which bears or reflects the likeness of a woman" ("non posse nos a diabolo tentari, nisi per illam animalem partem, quae quasi mulieris imaginem in homine gerit sive ostendit"); *In Rom.*, c. 7, lect. 3: "It is clear that human reason according to that which it is/according to what is proper to it, is not inclined to evil, unless it is moved by concupiscence" ("Manifestum est autem, quod ratio hominis, secundum illud quod est proprium sibi, non inclinatur ad malum, sed secundum quod movetur a concupiscentia"); *STh* I-II, q. 74, a. 7; *STh* I-II, q. 71, a. 2, ad 3.

[94] *De Verit.*, q. 15, a. 3; *STh* I-II q.74, a. 4, corp. and ad 1; *STh* I-II q. 88, a. 4, ad 2.

of), and *per modum*.[95] Clearly, he is using the male/female categories in an allegorical/mystical way.[96] As a result of this, the real relationship between man and woman becomes the spiritual *conjugium* or union of inferior and superior rationality in the human mind. Thomas says explicitly that this union excludes sensuality (*sensualitas*), symbolized by the serpent in the story of the original sin.[97] The point is worthy of some attention.[98]

At first sight, connecting "superior" with man and "inferior" with woman seems to be directly based upon the ideas analyzed above in part I. This is precisely what most interpretations of female rationality according to Thomas do: they interpret the texts of Thomas in terms of the "real" relationship between man and woman. As a result they identify woman's rational

[95] Thomas refers over and over again to Augustine (*De Trinitate* 12) for this identification of inferior reason with woman and of superior reason with man. See *De Verit*., q. 15, a. 2, obj. 9 and ad 9; *De Verit*., q. 15, a. 4, ad 7; *In I Tim*., c. 2, lect. 3; *In I Cor.* (reportatio vulgata), c. 11, lect. 1; *STh* I-II, q. 74, a. 6, s.c.; q. 74, a. 7; II *Sent*., d. 24, q. 3, a. 4, s.c.; d. 21, q. 2, a. 1, s.c.; *STh* II-II, q. 165, a. 2, s.c. Thomas recognizes two versions of this identification in Augustine. He only accepts the one from *De Trinitate* 12, where woman is not sensuality, but *ratio inferior*. For the development of this idea in Augustine see T. J. Van Bavel, "Woman as the Image of God in *De Trinitate XII*," in *Signum Pietatis. Festgabe fur C. P. Mayer* (Wurzburg, 1989), 286.

[96] *In I Cor.*, c. 11, lect. 1: "Possunt tamen haec mystice accipi." See also *In I Tim.*, c. 2, lect. 3: "locutio figurativa." For figurative speech, see *In I Cor.* (reportatio Reginaldi de Piperno), c. 11, vers. 2.

[97] *De Verit*., q. 15, a. 2, ad 9: "According to Augustine, as man and woman, between whom there was the carnal marriage bond, belonged to human nature and the serpent did not, so lower reason, as woman, belongs to the nature of higher reason, whereas sensuality, as the serpent, does not" ("sicut ad naturam humanam pertinebat vir et mulier, inter quos erat carnale conjugium, non autem serpens, ita ad naturam superioris rationis pertinet inferior tamquam mulier, non autem sensualitas tamquam serpens, ut dicit Augustinus XII *De Trinitate* [Cap. XII]").

[98] For the history of this idea: see Maryanne Cline Horowitz, "The Image of God in Man—Is Woman Included?" in *Harvard Theological Review*, 72 (1979) 3-4, pages 194 and 202. Gossman, "Anthropologie und soziale Stellung der Frau," 288, points out that there exists another parallel to this between man/woman and superior/inferior reason, namely, the one between *scientia* and *sapientia*. See also M.Th. d'Alverny, "Comment les theologiens et les philosophes voient la femme," in *La Femme dans les civilisations des Xe-XIII siecles, Actes du colloque tenu a Poitiers les 23-25 septembre 1976* (Poitiers, 1977), 19.

capacities with the *ratio inferior* because it is called "feminine." And they ascribe to this *ratio inferior* characteristics which belong to the first, realistic approach.[99] What is overlooked here is that the allegorical use of "male" and "female" implies a fundamental change of meaning, precisely because of its connection with *ratio superior* and *ratio inferior*. First of all, although "female" is connected with "inferior," it paradoxically loses its negative connotation of "less perfect" and inferior. The text of question 15, article 2 of *De Veritate* makes this clear: *ratio inferior* and *ratio superior* stand for one and the same rational activity, mainly distinguished by their objects and their criteria of judgment. *Ratio inferior* is described as being one possible face of human rationality, different from and other than *ratio superior*. The different objects and the different criteria of judgment do not lead to a hierarchy between *ratio inferior* and *ratio superior*. We are far away from the real relationship between man and woman which is essentially hierarchical in nature because based upon different degrees of rationality. This brings us to a second point: the hierarchy between inferior and superior has made way for a spiritual *conjugium* of *ratio inferior* and *ratio superior*. The relationship between the male and the female human being as described in part I above allowed only for some kind of cooperation, on the level of sexuality, education, and household, but had nothing to do with rationality. Here the *conjugium* is a union between two functions of the human mind. And the spiritual character of this *conjugium* brings us back to part I, where I discussed the situation before the original sin. God created man and woman as images of himself "secundum spiritum." Whereas in the first approach this basic equality between man and woman was overshadowed by the different levels of their rationality or intelligence, the second approach focuses precisely on this basic equality.

[99] Gossmann formulates this well in"Anthropologie und soziale Stellung der Frau," 288. See also T. J. Van Bavel, *Augustine's View on Women* (Villanova, Pa.: St. Augustine's Press, 1990), 26. An example of this confusion may be found in G. Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: "Male" and "Female" in Western Philosophy* (London: Methuen, 1984), 32-33.

The implication of the above is clear: when Thomas labels the *ratio inferior* "feminine," he is not identifying woman's rationality with *ratio inferior*, nor does he say that she has a "relative inability"[100] for higher reasoning. *Ratio inferior* is one aspect of woman's rationality, just as it is of man's rationality. *Ratio inferior* is symbolized by woman, but does not cover the whole of woman's rationality. Thomas recognizes in the *ratio superior* and the *ratio inferior* two necessary functions of the human mind, male and female alike.

In what follows, I will take the discussion one step further and focus on the *ratio inferior* in its relationship to that faculty which is right below it in the hierarchy of the faculties of the mind, namely, the so-called cogitative power (*vis cogitativa*). I will analyze what Thomas says about the *vis cogitativa* in general, about the difference between this faculty in animals and in human beings, and finally about its necessary relation with reason and, more particularly, with *ratio inferior*. The aim or goal of this analysis is it to show how the *ratio inferior* stands for that part of every human mind, male and female alike, which copes with the complex world surrounding it.

## *E) Vis cogitativa*[101]

### 1. Description

Thomas distinguishes between external and internal senses. The five external senses are sight, hearing, touch, taste, and

[100] Popik, "Philosophy of Woman of St. Thomas Aquinas," 21.

[101] Some articles on this topic are Leo A. White, "Why the Cogitative Power?", *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association* 72 (1998): 213-27; Julien Peghaire, "A Forgotten Sense, the Cogitative according to St. Thomas Aquinas," *Modern Schoolman* 20 (1943): 123-40, 210-29; George Klubertanz, *The Discursive Power: Sources and Doctrine of the "vis cogitativa" according to St. Thomas Aquinas* (St. Louis: The Modern Schoolman, 1952); Thomas V. Flynn, "The Cogitative Power," *The Thomist* 16 (1954): 544; Deborah L. Black, "Imagination and Estimation: Arabic Paradigms and Western Transformations," *Topoi. An International Review of Philosophy*, vol. 19 (2000), 59-75. The central texts of Thomas about the *vis cogitativa* are III *Sent.*, d. 26, q.1, a. 2; *STh* I, q. 78, a. 4; q. 81, a. 3; *ScG* II, cc. 60, 73, 76; II *De Anima*, lect. 13 (Marietti ed., 397); *Q. D. De Anima*, a. 13.

smell. The internal senses process or judge information gathered by the external senses: common sense (*vis communis*), memory, cogitative sense (*vis cogitativa*), and imagination. The *vis cogitativa* is thus a sensitive faculty with a bodily organ. Whereas an external sense has as its object "proper" sensible objects, the cogitative faculty has as its object nonsensible characteristics of what is apprehended through the external senses. Thomas calls them *intentiones*. For example, the visible object is the proper object of sight. But the utility of this object is the nonvisible object of the cogitative faculty.[102]

The different texts of Thomas concerning the *vis cogitativa* point to the fact that it has a wide range of operations. It plays a role in the coming about of theoretical abstract understanding,[103] as well as in practical thinking. I will limit my discussion to its contribution to moral thought.

In order to understand the *vis cogitativa* in this last sense, one has to go back to the external senses. They receive information: for example, a sheep sees a wolf. The color of the wolf's fur, the sound it makes, and so forth, are registered by the senses, but do not cause any reaction in the sheep. This will only happen when the sensible information is judged by the *vis cogitativa* (or, for a sheep, the *vis aestimativa*, as explained below), which judges and formulates a judgment about the attractiveness (e.g., utility) or repulsiveness of the object that is known through the external senses. This judgment causes in its turn a reaction, namely, a sensitive movement away from (in this case, the sheep flees) or towards the object. These reactions are the so-called passions. They are psychosomatic acts, in which a change in the soul goes hand in hand with a physical reaction of the body. They are vital for the survival of the individual and the species, insofar as they enable the living being to react to the world surrounding it.

[102] In the very interesting text of *De Veritate*, q. 25, a. 1, Thomas analyzes the relationship between the apprehensive and the appetitive powers on the natural, the sensitive, and the rational level. He makes the interesting distinction between a thing (*res*) and its appetibility (*ratio appetibilitatis*), which is nothing else but the so-called *intentiones* of the cogitative faculty.

[103] See for this point Black, "Imagination and Estimation," 67-68.

What I have called until now *vis cogitativa* is slightly different in animals and in the human being. In animals this highest faculty in the animal soul (*anima sensitiva*) is called the "estimative" faculty (*vis aestimativa*). As Deborah Black writes: "Estimation just is an animal's ability to discern in its environment which things are natural enemies and allies, and which objects are suitable to serve as the raw materials for its provision of shelter and other necessities of life."[104] This evaluative apprehension is nondeliberative and regards particular objects. Although there is no necessary movement away from or towards any specific individual object, once an object has been evaluated, the reaction that follows upon it is necessary.[105]

In the human being this same faculty is called the cogitative faculty (*vis cogitativa*). Thomas also uses the name *ratio particularis*.[106] It is called *particularis* because it occupies itself with particular objects in which particular nonvisible qualities are discerned (e.g., specific utility, delectability). Its apprehension differs from the rational evaluative apprehension which uses universal intentions (e.g., abstract utility or goodness or *ratio appetibilitatis)* and relates to particular objects as instances or examples of this abstract quality.

This cogitative faculty is called *ratio* because its apprehension of these *intentiones* is not intuitive, but the result of a process of deliberation.[107] The *vis cogitativa* is indeed characterized in man by *deliberatio*, *discursio*, *collatio*, or is called *collativa*. What is meant here is that in evaluating an object on the sensitive level the human being compares, adds, and divides.[108] Precisely in this its activity resembles that of reason: *inquirere* and *conferere*.

[104] Ibid., 66.

[105] *De Verit*., q. 25, a. 1.

[106] For *vis aestimativa* in human beings as *vis cogitativa* see *De Verit*., q. 15, a.1; II *De Anima*, lect. 13 (Marietti ed., 397); *STh* I, q. 78, a. 4; *STh* I, q. 81, a. 3; *Q. D. De Anima*, a. 13; *De Verit*., q. 1, a. 11; *STh* I-II, q. 51, a. 3; *De Verit*., q. 10, a. 5.

[107] *STh* I, q. 78, a. 4; *ScG* II, c. 73; VI *Nic. Ethic*., lect. 1 (Marietti ed., 1123). For a good example of the deliberation involved in the human *vis cogitativa*, see III *Sent*., d. 26, q. 1, a. 2. Thomas discusses here the "irascibile" power and its activity; *STh* I, q. 81, a. 3; *De Verit*., q. 10, a. 5; *De Verit*., q. 15, a. 1; *STh* I-II, q. 51, a. 3.

[108] *STh* I, q. 78, a. 4, corp. and obj. 5 and ad 5.

This deliberative activity results in an evaluative judgment about the object known through the senses: it is judged to be useful or not, dangerous or attractive, etc.

The characterization of the *vis cogitativa* as *ratio particularis* and of its activity as judgment based on deliberation is to be understood within the framework of the idea that in the human being the highest of the sense faculties touches the lowest of his intellectual faculties. Thomas takes this insight from Dionysius's *De divinis nominibus*. It belongs to the larger framework of thought in which the human soul (*anima)* is a *confinium*,[109] or contains in himself both the sensitive and the spiritual world. To put it more precisely, in the *vis cogitativa* the sensitive faculty and the rational faculties meet.[110] The *vis cogitativa* "participates" in the lowest of the rational faculties, that is, discursive reason.[111]

Although Thomas recognizes that these two faculties meet, he never writes that they are identical. The *vis cogitativa* is and remains a sensitive power, with a bodily organ, even when its activity resembles rational discursive activity.[112] The evaluative activity of the cogitative faculty cannot transcend the level of particularity.[113]

[109] *STh* I, q. 77, a. 2.

[110] *De Verit*., q. 14, a. 1, ad 9; *De Verit*., q. 25, a. 2; III *Sent*., d. 23, q. 2, sol., qcla. 1, ad 3; II *Sent*. d. 24, q. 2, a. 1, ad. 3; III *Sent*., d. 26, q. 1, a. 2. In *STh* I, q. 78, a. 4, ad 5 Thomas speaks about *refluentia*: "The cogitative and memorative powers in man owe their excellence not to that which is proper to the sensitive part; but to a certain affinity and proximity to the universal reason, which, so to speak, overflows into them" ("quod illam eminentiam habet cogitativa et memorativa in homine, non per id, quod est proprium sensitivae partis, sed per aliquam affinitatem et propinquitatem ad rationem universalem, secundum quamdam refluentiam"). See Peghaire, "A Forgotten Sense," 126.

[111] *De Verit*., q. 14, a. 1, ad 9: "potentia cogitativa est quod est altissimum in parte sensitive, ubi attingit quodammodo ad partem intellectivam ut aliquod participet eius quod est in intellectiva parte infimum, scilicet rationis discursum."

[112] *De Verit*., q. 15, a. 1; *De Verit*., q. 18, a. 8, ad 5; *De Verit*., q. 1, a. 11; *De Verit*., q. 10, a. 5; *STh* I, q. 78, a. 4; *Q. D. De Anima*, q. un., a. 8; II *Sent*., d. 24, q. 3, a. 1, obj. 3 and obj. 6; *ScG* II, c. 73.

[113] *De Verit*., q. 25, a. 1, ad 3.

## 2. *Vis cogitativa* and *ratio inferior*

What is of interest for the present topic is that the activity of the *vis cogitativa* is presupposed by the *ratio inferior*. The judgment about and the consent of the *ratio inferior* to a passion is in fact only possible because an evaluation has previously been made by the *vis cogitativa*[114] on the sensitive level about the attractiveness or repulsiveness of an object. To put it another way, the *vis cogitativa* is necessary for the coming about of a passion, insofar as every passion is based upon a judgment or evaluation made by the cogitative power about the nonsensitive content of the information received through the external senses. However, it is not the cogitative power, but only the *ratio inferior* that gives its final consent or approval to the judgment made, by judging again and putting the proposed sensitive reaction in the framework of its rational considerations. This same approval will ultimately need to be subject to the more universal criteria of the *ratio superior*.[115] Only then will it eventually be integrated in the human act as a whole.

The meaning of the above is first of all that the *ratio inferior* cannot be understood without the preliminary activity of the cogitative power. Without the *vis cogitativa* which can grasp the attractiveness or repulsiveness of an object, no passion can come about. Second, the relation between the *ratio inferior* and the cogitative power gives us an insight into the nature of human

[114] *STh* I-II, q. 74, a. 7, ad 1: "Consent is an act of the appetitive power, not absolutely, but in consequence of an act of reason deliberating and judging" ("consentire est actus appetitivae virtutis non absolute, sed consequens ad actum rationis deliberantis et judicantis"); ad 3: "nevertheless, before the judgment of the higher reason is pronounced, immediately when the sensual faculty proposes/offers a delectation, inferior reason while deliberating the matter in reference to temporal principles, sometimes approves of this delectation: and then the consent to the delectation belongs to the lower reason" ("sed tamen, antequam ad judicium superioris rationis deveniatur, statim ut sensualitas proponit delectationem, inferior ratio per rationes temporales deliberans quandoque huiusmodi delectationem acceptat, et tunc consensus in delectationem pertinent ad inferiorem rationem").

[115] *STh* I, q. 81, a. 3: "Ipsa autem ratio particularis nata est moveri et dirigi in homine secundum rationem universalem."

existence according to Thomas. Man is not only attuned to the higher realities. Even if his final completion lies in the vision of God, man very much lives and acts in a concrete world, to which he reacts through a complex and combined activity of sensitive and rational practical judgment.

There is a text of Thomas about figurative speech, where he writes that "a smiling meadow" does not mean that the meadow smiles, but that the flowering meadow resembles in its beauty a smiling human being.[116] Similarly, the connection between woman and *ratio inferior* should not be interpreted as a reduction of female rationality to inferior rationality (in the sense of the first part of this article), but rather as an homage to women and an acknowledgment of their strength. "Inferior" in *ratio inferior* is devoid of its inferiority, and is related to the richness and complexity of the interaction of human beings with the world that surrounds them.

## CONCLUSION

Thomas thinks about female rationality in two different ways. He certainly shows no originality in his first approach. His characterization of woman as having an inferior rationality reflects the existing social culture of his time and the intellectual tradition in which he worked (Aristotle, Paul).[117] The secondary literature and especially feminists have mainly focused on this characterization of female rationality.

His second way of looking at female rationality has been less investigated. The reason is not so much that it was less developed and discussed by Thomas himself, but rather that the

[116] "pratum ridet, non est sensus huius locutionis quod illud pratum rideat, sed illud quod ego significare intendo, scilicet quod pratum similiter se habet in decore cum floret, sicut homo cum ridet" (*In I Cor.* [reportatio Reginaldi de Piperno], c. 11, vers. 2).

[117] R. J. McGovan, "Augustine's Spiritual Equality: The Allegory of Man and Woman with Regard to *Imago Dei*," *Revue des etudes augustiniennes* 33 (1987): 255-64, discusses this point concerning Augustine's thinking. He himself refers to the article of F. E. Weaver and J. Laporte, "Augustine and Woman: Relationships and Teachings," in *Augustinian Studies 12* (1981): 115-31.

secondary literature did not sufficiently recognize the allegorical/symbolic use of "male" and "female."

One wonders why and how Thomas held these two approaches to female rationality at the same time. One might find an explanation in the two different traditions of thought he was coping with: Aristotelian and Augustinian. One might also point to the difference between an Aristotelian philosophical anthropology in which the human being is a unity of body and soul and a more theological anthropology in which the nonbodily human mind, male and female alike, is an image of God. Or one might understand these two views as based upon the tension in Christian exegesis between the two versions of the creation of man and woman in Genesis, or the tension between Genesis 1:26-27 and 1 Corinthians 11:7-9.[118]

Whatever the causes for these two ways of looking at woman's rationality, and however interesting the research about that may be, the basic insights they give us are even more interesting. Both approaches accept woman as an image of God "secundum spiritum." Both accept woman as a rational human being. They differ ultimately in the way they value female rationality.

In the first approach the "spiritual" similarity between man and woman is neglected in favor of a focus on the different level of their rationality. Woman is physically inferior, and consequently also rationally and morally inferior.

In the second approach, the spiritual similarity between man and woman is the basis upon which the difference between *ratio inferior* and *ratio superior* is built. As a result the words "female/woman" and "inferior" become almost neutral terms. The "feminine" part of the mind is an integral part of every mind, male and female alike. In addition, the necessary link between the lower reason and the cogitative faculty shows how human rationality is based upon a rich interaction between the sensitive level, the *ratio inferior*, and the *ratio superior*. One can only hope that this approach to male and especially female

[118] See Horowitz, "The Image of God in Man—Is Woman Included?", 178.

rationality will be given more attention in Western thought and culture.

*The Thomist* 80 (2016): 227-71

# ATOMS, GUNK, AND GOD: NATURAL THEOLOGY AND THE DEBATE OVER THE FUNDAMENTAL COMPOSITION OF MATTER

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LET US SAY we take a rock and divide it in two. We then divide each of the halves again. We repeat. We keep repeating, over and over and over again, until we have reached down to the level of molecules and then to atoms and then to subatomic particles and beyond. What, eventually, will we end up with? (A) Do we eventually reach "rock bottom," a layer of fundamental objects that can be divided no further? Or (B) could the dividing process be carried on forever?

Let us take (A), the idea that there are fundamental, indivisible objects. We may call these "atoms," and the theory that affirms their existence *atomism*. (I use the label for historical reasons; the "atoms" discussed in the history of metaphysics are of course not equivalent to the atoms of contemporary physics, which are divisible into constituent subatomic particles.) What must be the nature of these objects? Here we can identify two distinct versions of atomism.

According to the first, these entities cannot be spatially extended, since extension entails divisibility. After all, if something has discernible length, then its conceptually distinguishable left and right halves, for instance, could be separated from each other, at least in theory. The existence of the matter constituting the left half seems not to entail the existence of the matter constituting the right half or vice versa, so one could persist without the other (e.g., the left half could be annihilated while the right half continues in existence), and

could be divided from the other. Whether they could actually be separated by us, using current or future technology, is of course an entirely different question from the philosophically significant issue of divisibility in principle. Atoms are, on this view, extensionless "point particles" with no actual or potential proper parts. This may be called *atomism version 1*.

According to the second version of atomism, these indivisible objects are nevertheless spatially extended. The reality of atoms is affirmed, but the relation obtaining between extension and divisibility, which is supposedly entailed, is rejected. Despite being spatially extended, these particles cannot possibly be divided. Consequently, although they are spatially extended, they do not possess actual proper parts in the sense that "proper part" is typically understood (i.e., as involving smaller constituent objects, which could in theory exist apart from the whole). The claim is not merely that they cannot be divided by us using current or future technology, nor that their division would be inconsistent with contingent physical laws. The impossibility referenced here is not mere physical impossibility. Rather, the claim is that it is metaphysically impossible (and logically impossible, for those who equate metaphysical and logical impossibility) for them to be divided. There is no possible world in which these entities are in any way divided, either by splitting in two or by destroying one section while leaving the rest intact. This may be called *atomism version 2*.

Atomism's major competitors may be grouped under the affirmation of (B), according to which division could go on forever. Matter is infinitely divisible. But what does infinite divisibility imply? Here there is a further divergence of views. One camp affirms the *gunky view* of matter. On this view, a material object is infinitely divisible because it is composed of an actual infinity of proper parts: any material object is composed of smaller proper parts that are themselves real objects composed of smaller proper parts that are themselves real objects composed of smaller proper parts, and so on, ad infinitum. Another camp denies the reality of actual infinities (at least in the material realm), and affirms instead the reality of *extended simples*. On this view matter is infinitely divisible, as

on the gunky view, but not because material objects are composed of an actual infinity of smaller objects. Instead, material nature bottoms out (in a sense) at objects that are spatially extended and potentially subject to division, but that lack actual proper parts. They are not composed of real, smaller objects. Rather, what makes it true that the object is divisible is simply its *potentiality* for division, its real and irreducible capacity to be broken up into brand new, smaller objects composed out of the same stuff as the original object, the original extended simple.[1]

There are thus four main views concerning material composition: *atomism version 1*, *atomism version 2*, the *gunky view* of matter, and the *theory of extended simples*. Each of these has a long history (Aristotle for example was a staunch advocate of extended simples, as were nearly all the Scholastics)[2] and each retains defenders in the current literature.[3]

[1] Thus, as Ned Markosian points out and develops further, the ontology of extended simples seems to entail a real and irreducible distinction between "objects" and "stuff," a distinction reflected in ordinary language via count nouns vs. mass nouns. See Ned Markosian, "Simples," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 76 (1998): 213-26; "Simples, Stuff, and Simple People," *Monist* 87 (2004): 405-28.

[2] For historical background see Thomas Holden, *The Architecture of Matter: Galileo to Kant* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Robert Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes: 1274-1671* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), esp. 279-99 and 606-32.

[3] Regarding the contemporary scene there is however some ambiguity. One might argue that atomism is quite widely held, having the status of something like a default position among many; this seems particularly the case for those who work in philosophy of mind, where, as Jonathan Schaffer and Yujin Nagasawa both observe, the claim that nature bottoms out in fundamental material objects is an important background assumption in reductionist ontologies of the mental (see Jonathan Schaffer, "Is There a Fundamental Level?" *Nous* 37 [2003]: 498-517; and Yujin Nagasawa, "Infinite Decomposability and the Mind-Body Problem," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 49 [2012]: 357-67). However, while it is true that there are many advocates of the idea that there must be a fundamental layer of the material world, oftentimes these authors do not specify whether they think that material fundamentality entails atomism version 1, atomism version 2, or whether a bottom layer of extended simples (divisible but not actually possessed of real lower-level proper parts) would suffice to fulfill the explanatory role they think needs to be played by a "fundamental" level. Sometimes treatments of fundamentality will openly acknowledge the ambiguity between atoms and extended simples; see for instance Andrew Newman, "On the Constitution of Solid

I lack the space here to review even the most important of the arguments for and against these four theories, and I encourage readers not already engaged with this literature to delve into it; the debate over the fundamental composition of matter (or lack thereof) is one of the oldest and most fascinating in metaphysics.[4] But even if I had the space, it is not my aim

Objects out of Atoms," *Monist* 96 (2013):149-71. Authors who unambiguously defend a specific version of atomism are in fact relatively few in the recent literature (though atomism version 1 does have unambiguous opponents, like Daniel Giberman, "Against Zero-Dimensional Material Objects [and Other Bare Particulars]," *Philosophical Studies* 160 [2012]: 305-21). By contrast, the gunky view has been the topic of a number of sympathetic treatments: see for example Peter Forrest, "Grit or Gunk: Implications of the Banach-Tarski Paradox," *Monist* 87 (2004): 351-70; Schaffer, "Is There a Fundamental Level?"; Ted Sider, "Van Inwagen and the Possibility of Gunk," *Analysis* 53 (1993): 285-89; and Dean Zimmerman, "Indivisible Parts and Extended Objects: Some Philosophical Episodes from Topology's Prehistory," *Monist* 79 (1996): 148-81; and "Could Extended Objects Be Made out of Simple Parts? An Argument for 'Atomless Gunk,'" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 51 (1996): 1-29. Favorable discussions of extended simples include the two works by Markosian cited above; Kris McDaniel, "Extended Simples," *Philosophical Studies* 133 (2007): 131-41; "Extended Simples and Qualitative Heterogeneity," *Philosophical Quarterly* 59 (2009): 325-31; and Patrick Toner, "Emergent Substance," *Philosophical Studies* 141 (2008): 281-97. Note that Peter Simons, "Extended Simples: A Third Way between Atoms and Gunk," *Monist* 87 (2004): 371-84, is usually classed as a defender of extended simples, but it is unclear whether he takes these to be divisible or not (see esp. ibid., 379 and 381), such that it is unclear whether he advocates extended simples or instead atomism version 2.

[4] I classify this as a debate in metaphysics, even though it involves a subject (the composition of matter) that is of obvious interest and importance for physics as well. I do so because a resolution to the question is currently beyond the competence of physics and is likely to remain so. There are multiple reasons for this pessimism, one of them being the seeming impossibility of proving definitively, by empirical means, any one of these theories. One could try to split or decompose the entity under consideration, but lack of success in that endeavor would not prove the *impossibility* of future success, and thus would not establish atomism (whether version 1 or 2); and it is difficult to conceive of other experimental means by which one might try to prove directly that some object is wholly lacking in actual and potential parts. One might of course hold out hope that a future physics could establish one or another of the three principal views *indirectly*, via the development of some ultimate theory that entails one of them, which ultimate theory could then be validated empirically in other ways. Along these lines, McDaniel ("Extended Simples," 131) suggests that string theory might point towards the reality of extended simples. Similarly, it is commonly suggested that quantum theory points to some form of atomism. However, these suggested implications remain controversial

here to contribute to that ongoing debate. Rather, I wish to develop and defend the following argument:

*Premise 1:* Each of the four main theories of material composition is either incompatible with the truth of metaphysical naturalism, or at least incompatible with any rationally confident affirmation of the truth of metaphysical naturalism.
*Premise 2:* At least one of those four main theories is true.
*Conclusion:* Therefore metaphysical naturalism is either false or at least cannot be affirmed with rational confidence.

The disjunctive nature of the conclusion is a consequence of the treatment to be given of atomism version 2. As we will see, atomism version 1, the gunky view, and the theory of extended simples are demonstrably incompatible with the truth of metaphysical naturalism. By contrast, atomism version 2 is merely incompatible with any rationally confident affirmation of the truth of metaphysical naturalism. That weaker conclusion pertaining to atomism version 2 of course impacts the argument as a whole, since it is an argument founded on the content of each of the four theories of material constitution, and so is only as strong as its weakest link.[5]

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within physics (including among advocates of string theory and quantum theory) and show every prospect of remaining controversial into the future.

[5] In other words, if one were to abstract from the discussion of atomism version 2, and just focus on the other three theories, one would be left with the following, somewhat simpler argument:

*Premise 1:* Each of the three main theories of material composition is incompatible with metaphysical naturalism.
*Premise 2:* At least one of those three theories is true.
*Conclusion:* Therefore metaphysical naturalism is false.

As a matter of fact, since I consider atomism version 2 the most problematic philosophically of the four theories (I think it highly plausible that spatial extension does in fact entail divisibility), I would be inclined to run *this* argument instead, and simply leave atomism version 2 to one side as an unworkable theory. However, such an argument would be badly incomplete, insofar as atomism version 2 has historically had defenders. My thanks to two anonymous referees for *The Thomist* for emphasizing the need to address atomism version 2 in detail.

Metaphysical naturalism (also known as "physicalism" or "materialism," which I will employ as synonyms) has been defined in various ways,[6] but I will take it as the conjunction of the following propositions: (1) the only objects in existence (past and present) are physical objects, and (2) all of those physical objects are essentially (rather than merely contingently) physical.

The particular formulation of these propositions warrants further comment. With respect to the first, I take "object" (and synonyms like "substance" and "thing" and "entity") broadly to mean "something that exists on its own rather than as instantiated in something else." That broad notion is intended to be neutral between the major competing schools of thought in substance ontology (substratum theory, hylomorphism etc.), provided those schools are realist with respect to substance. Moreover, I formulate the view in terms of objects in order to capture the most foundational commitment of metaphysical naturalists, and to sidestep certain controversies among them. All physicalists affirm that there are no nonphysical objects (no God, no angels, no Cartesian egos, etc.).[7] This commitment is uncontroversial among them; however, one must be careful not to confuse it with a related but distinct commitment to the

[6] For thorough discussions of the nature of metaphysical naturalism see for instance Michael Rea, *World without Design: The Ontological Consequences of Naturalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); and Stewart Goetz and Charles Taliaferro, *Naturalism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008).

[7] One is tempted to add "and no Platonic Forms," but in fact there have been some self-identified physicalists who affirm the reality of uninstantiated universals or other Platonic abstracta (e.g., Evan Fales, *Causation and Universals* [New York: Routledge, 1990]). For them, the commitment to there being no nonphysical objects is a commitment to there being no nonphysical *nonabstract* objects. Wishing to sidestep this controversy I will take "objects" in my formulation of metaphysical naturalism to refer only to nonabstract objects. However, for some recent arguments to the effect that Platonism is incompatible with metaphysical naturalism see Robert Garcia, "Platonism and the Haunted Universe," in *Loving God with your Mind: Essays in Honor of J. P. Moreland*, ed. Paul Gould and Richard Davis (Chicago: Moody, 2014), 35-50; and J. P. Moreland, "Naturalism and the Ontological Status of Properties," in *Naturalism: A Critical Analysis*, ed. William Lane Craig and J. P. Moreland (London: Routledge, 2000), 67-109.

nonexistence of nonphysical properties of or states of or events arising from underlying physical properties, states, or events. That distinct commitment is a matter of controversy among physicalists, insofar as there are schools of thought in contemporary philosophy of mind (i.e., assorted versions of nonreductive physicalism and naturalist emergentism) that affirm the reality of mental states or properties or events and their irreducibility to underlying physical properties or states or events. Even granting that these schools of thought can legitimately be counted as physicalist (itself a matter of dispute in the literature), the important thing to note for our present purposes is that these schools of thought are not making a claim about objects. Susan Schneider draws attention to this fact when she writes that

> advocates of non-reductive physicalism have generally neglected the topic of the nature of substance, quickly nodding to the view that all substances are physical, while focusing their intellectual energy on understanding how mental properties relate to physical ones. . . . Nowadays, the question of whether minds are physical is often viewed as being settled in favor of the physicalist; what is viewed as being up for debate is whether, given that all substances, and indeed, all particulars, are physical, mental properties are reducible to physical ones.[8]

Consequently, my formulation allows us to clarify the uncontroversial core of metaphysical naturalism while sidestepping certain internal disputes among its advocates.

The second, modal proposition is required in order to rule out certain scenarios that metaphysical naturalism is intuitively supposed to rule out. For instance, someone may assert that all existent objects (past and present) are physical, and claim in

[8] Susan Schneider, "Non-Reductive Physicalism and the Mind Problem," *Nous* 47 (2013): 135-53, at 135. In support of this contention, she goes on to cite several sources from recent work in the philosophy of mind, including Jaegwon Kim, *Philosophy of Mind,* 2d ed. (New York: Westview, 2006), 274, who writes that within physicalism the claim that all substances are physical is "a starting point for discussion rather than a conclusion in need of defense." For an earlier discussion touching on this general issue see Noa Latham, "Substance Physicalism," in *Physicalism and Its Discontents*, ed. Carl Gillett and Barry Loewer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 152-71.

consequence to be a metaphysical naturalist in good standing, while in the next breath he affirms that any or all of these physical objects could in principle lose whatever in their nature constitutes them as physical and yet remain in existence. That is, he may claim that some or all physical objects could lose their physicality and remain in existence in ghostly, nonphysical form—or, to make the example more perspicuous, he may maintain that some or all physical objects could really transform into paradigmatically nonphysical objects like ghosts or angels or Cartesian egos. It seems clear that his claim to be a metaphysical naturalist would ring hollow. To believe that all objects are physical, but that some or all of them could really become nonphysical, is not to be a metaphysical naturalist.

The question of the truth or falsity of metaphysical naturalism is obviously significant for philosophy of religion generally and for natural theology specifically, insofar as theism is incompatible with metaphysical naturalism and insofar as these are the two main competing worldviews in the current philosophical climate in the West. If the above argument is demonstrably sound, the material-composition debate will have been shown to be of considerable (and neglected) significance for natural theology. And as will be seen below, some of the supporting arguments in favor of premise 1 have even more direct implications for natural theology, pointing toward the existence of one or more immaterial, causally powerful entities.

I will not spend time defending the second premise of the above argument. It is widely assumed that these are the four main options, and that assumption is plausible. Matter either bottoms out at a fundamental indivisible level (atoms) or it doesn't, and if it doesn't then infinite divisibility either implies actual infinite proper parts (gunk) or it doesn't (extended simples). The options are plausibly exhaustive and mutually exclusive. Moreover, those theories that put forward alternatives beyond these three tend themselves to be openly at odds with metaphysical naturalism, such that for my purposes they can be left aside, as already assuming the conclusion for which I

wish to argue.[9] My focus therefore will be on the explication and defense of premise 1.

Readers with a prior commitment to one or the other of these four views (e.g., contemporary Scholastics, who remain committed to extended simples) will be most intent on the argument(s) surrounding their own preferred theory. However, I believe that such readers will still profit from attention to the broader discussion. Moreover, from the perspective of the natural theologian, an argument that can function from multiple opposing starting points carries certain obvious advantages in terms of prospective appeal to a larger audience.

In the next four sections I will discuss atomism version 1, atomism version 2, the gunky view, and the theory of extended simples, respectively. I will then conclude with a brief recap and reflection on the significance of the results.

## I. Why Atomism Version 1 Is Incompatible with Metaphysical Naturalism

In this section I will present two distinct arguments for the incompatibility of atomism version 1 and metaphysical naturalism.

[9] One of the central arguments for Berkeleyan idealism was the claim that the four main theories are all totally unworkable, such that what we think of as material objects must actually be ideas implanted in our minds by God. Berkeley's theistic idealism is obviously incompatible with metaphysical naturalism (which he of course took to be a major advantage of the theory). Kant agreed with Berkeley that the main theories of material constitution are all unworkable, though rather than concluding to theistic idealism he concluded that the *noumena* (the things-in-themselves, contrasted with the *phenomena*, the things-as-they-appear-to-us) that we take to be material objects cannot be *anything like* what we think of as material objects—what we think of as material objects are just projections from our own narrowly circumscribed cognitive apparatus. The Kantian view, while not strictly incompatible with metaphysical naturalism, is incompatible with a rationally grounded affirmation of metaphysical naturalism, since one cannot affirm the reality of material objects at all once one has admitted that one has no idea about the real nature of the relevant noumena from which is constructed the concept "material object."

## *A) The Argument from Atomic Motion*[10]

For the purposes of this first argument, it will be assumed that atoms, despite lacking spatial extension, can nevertheless possess spatial location. (This assumption is a controversial one and will be dropped for purposes of our second argument. Thus it will be seen that whether or not one adopts this assumption regarding location, atomism version 1 will still be incompatible with metaphysical naturalism.)

*Premise 1*: All atomic motion[11] must be discontinuous.
*Premise 2*: The reality of discontinuous motion is incompatible with metaphysical naturalism.
*Conclusion 1 / Premise 3*: Therefore atomism is either incompatible with the existence of motion or incompatible with metaphysical naturalism.
*Premise 4*: Atomism cannot plausibly be taken to be incompatible with the existence of motion.
*Final Conclusion*: Therefore atomism is incompatible with metaphysical naturalism.

A justification for premise 1 is provided by Aristotle in his *Physics*:

[B]y "that which is without parts" I mean that which is quantitatively indivisible. . . . As we have said, then, that which is without parts can be in motion in the sense in which a man sitting in a boat is in motion when the

[10] A somewhat different formulation of this argument is developed at greater length in Travis Dumsday, "Some Ontological Consequences of Atomism," *Ratio: An International Journal of Analytic Philosophy* 28 (2015): 119-34.

[11] In this section (and in the section on gunk, where the topic of motion again becomes important) I assume without argument an endurantist rather than perdurantist account of change. While I personally think some of the arguments in favor of endurantism (and against perdurantism) are powerful, I lack the space to review them here and must simply take this on as an undefended assumption, acknowledging that this opens up a potential weakness in the argument. It would be interesting to explore whether some analogous version of the argument might be made to work within a perdurantist ontology, but I cannot take up that question here. My thanks to an anonymous referee for *The Thomist* for rightly emphasizing the need to flag this undefended assumption from the outset.

boat is travelling, but it cannot be in motion of itself.[12] For suppose that it is changing from AB to BC—either from one magnitude to another, or from one form to another, or from some state to its contradictory—and let D be the primary time in which it undergoes the change. Then in the time in which it is changing it must be either in AB or in BC or partly in one and partly in the other: for this, as we saw, is true of everything that is changing.[13] Now it cannot be partly in each of the two: for then it would be divisible into parts. Nor again can it be in BC: for then it will have completed the change, whereas the assumption is that the change is in process. It remains, then, that in the time in which it is changing, it is in AB. That being so, it will be at rest: for, as we saw, to be in the same condition for a period of time is to be at rest. So it is not possible for that which has no parts to be in motion or to change in any way. (*Phys.* 6.10.240b20-240b31)

Aristotle's general point is that extensionless atoms are not possible subjects of change. It follows that continuous motion (smooth motion through space over an extended period of time), conceived as a form of change, is likewise forbidden to an atom. Hence if an atom were to move from one location to another, the only way it could do so would be discontinuously. An object wholly lacking spatial parts can only move from one place to another by discontinuous jumps ("teleportation," to use a contemporary label). This holds true whether space is conceived as itself continuous or atomic (i.e., composed of continuous spatial regions or spatial points); either way, if an object has no parts, it cannot be the case that part of the moving

[12] Aristotle is thinking of a case where there exists a spatially continuous macro-object that is moving and that happens to contain some atoms, which, by virtue of their being within a moving body, are carried along for the ride. It is not clear to me that he ought to allow even this sort of atomic motion. However, in what follows he focuses on atomic motion "of itself," and I will proceed accordingly.

[13] The cross reference is to *Physics* 6.3.234b10-234b21: "Further, everything that changes must be divisible. For since every change is from something to something, and when a thing is at the goal of its change it is no longer changing, and when both it itself and all its parts are at the starting-point of its change it is not changing (for that which is in whole and in part in an unvarying condition is not in a state of change); it follows, therefore, that part of that which is changing must be at the starting-point and part at the goal: for as a whole it cannot be in both or in neither. (Here by 'goal of change' I mean that which comes first in the process of change: e.g. in a process of change from white the goal in question will be grey, not black. . . .) It is evident, therefore, that everything that changes must be divisible."

object is in one region (or point) at one time while the rest of it remains behind, catching up as the motion progresses. Yet that is what is required for continuous motion. Extension is a prerequisite for any continuous (as opposed to abrupt) transition from one spatial region or point to another.[14]

Putting it a bit differently, if extensionless atom A begins its motion at location (region or point) L1 and ends it at L2, then at some time it must in fact reach L2. But since A has no parts (potential or actual), then whenever it comes to occupy L2 it must do so all at once, not gradually (i.e., not part-by-part, with some part of A entering L2 while the rest of A continues to progress toward it). *All* of A must occupy L2 (all of L2 if L2 is a spatial point, or merely part of L2, if L2 is an extended region) whenever *any* of A comes to occupy L2. So wherever A was before reaching L2 (in this case, L1), the transition to L2 cannot have been gradual. It is, rather, an all-or-nothing affair. Now, if space is seen as continuous, then the distinction between L1 and L2 must be a distinction obtaining between spatially extended regions, and any transition from one to the other will be a transition over an extended region or subregion. Likewise, if space is point-sized, and L1 and L2 are viewed as distinct spatial atoms, then there must be some gap between L1 and L2 (or else L1 and L2 would not really be distinct at all, but would rather be overlapping space atoms—if such is even possible). Either way then, on a continuous or an atomic model of space, any transition from L1 to L2 on the part of an atomic substance would have to involve a jump, a shift from one area to another without passing through the region (or gap) in between.

[14] As with any Aristotelian text, interpretation is liable to be controversial. However, the interpretation employed here (namely, that Aristotle can be seen as arguing against the possibility of continuous local motion in any supposed atomic realm) has a long historical pedigree in the Scholastic tradition. For one example of this interpretation (and its usage in a very different context) see Aquinas, *STh* I, q. 53, a. 1, obj. 1 and ad 1. This interpretation can also be seen in more recent texts on Scholastic philosophy of nature, such as that of V. E. Smith, *The General Science of Nature* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1958), 354-56 and 360-61.

Aristotle seems to have been right about atomic motion necessarily being discontinuous.

Premise 2 is that discontinuous motion is incompatible with metaphysical naturalism. We may consider the fate of the atom during the period of teleportation. Obviously there must be a temporal gap between its being at location L1 and its being at location L2, for otherwise it would exist simultaneously at both L1 and L2, which is clearly impossible (certainly impossible for an object that has no spatial extension). So what is the state of the atom during its teleportation? Seemingly it either (A) ceases to exist during the period of teleportation and then comes back into existence at location L2, or (B) it continues to exist during the period of teleportation, but with no spatial location. Both of these alternatives are inconsistent with metaphysical naturalism. If option (A) holds true, then the law of conservation of energy is violated—nature contains cases of genuine annihilation and of creation *ex nihilo*. Traditionally it has often been thought that any instance of an object popping into existence *ex nihilo* suffices to prove the existence of a powerful and transcendent Creator, since objects cannot pop into existence out of nothing without a cause, and since no material object has or could have this extreme sort of creative power. (Certainly material objects can bring about changes, but they do so by manipulating themselves or already-existent objects in various ways, not by somehow prompting a being to come into existence *de novo*.)[15]

[15] I take the creative impotence of matter to be an intuitively plausible proposition (rendered still more likely by contemporary physics, via the conservation law), but it has of course received more thorough argumentative support; see for example Aquinas's arguments to the effect that no finite entity can create *ex nihilo* (*STh* I, q. 45, a. 5; q. 65, a. 3). He also provides several distinct, relevant arguments in *ScG* II, c. 20, including the following: "Furthermore, creation is the act of an infinite power alone. For the greater the power of an agent, the greater is its capacity for actualizing a potentiality more and more remote from actual existence; a power able to produce fire from water is greater than one that can produce fire from air; so that where pre-existing potentiality is altogether eliminated, every relation of a determinate distance is transcended; and thus the power of an agent which produces something from no pre-existing potentiality whatever must immediately surpass the power of an agent which produces something from matter. Now, no power possessed by a body is infinite, as Aristotle proved in

That idea is a background assumption of many a prominent cosmological argument for theism (e.g., the Kalam argument).[16] So if (A) holds, many theistically inclined thinkers would conclude that atomism automatically entails the falsity of metaphysical naturalism, and, beyond that, the reality of something possessed of at least some of the attributes traditionally ascribed to God.

Option (B), according to which the atom still exists while being teleported, but does not exist in space, seems also to conflict with metaphysical naturalism, insofar as the possession of spatial location is plausibly a necessary condition for being a *material* object at all. Material objects are objects that exist in our spatial manifold. Extraspatial entities like God, angels, Cartesian egos, and so on, are excluded from reality altogether by the naturalist because they are by definition excluded from spatial reality. The proposition that "there are no entities existing apart from our spatial realm (and any other spatial realms)" seems to be a central commitment of metaphysical naturalism. Ned Markosian, who maintains that spatial location

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*Physics* VIII. Hence, no bodily thing is capable of creating—of making something from nothing" (*On the Truth of the Catholic Faith: Summa Contra Gentiles*, trans. J. Anderson [New York: Image, 1956], 59-60). Nevertheless, in "Some Ontological Consequences of Atomism," I explore some additional problems that arise in the present context if one rejects this and instead adopts the view that material objects can in fact bring other material objects into existence out of nothing.

[16] A surprisingly common criticism of the Kalam cosmological argument is that the theist's claim that objects cannot simply pop into existence out of nothing and without a cause is implausible. Can we really be sure that this can never occur? Commonsensically, yes. Still, whatever one thinks of that point taken in the context of the Kalam argument, the idea that an atom could cease to exist at L1 and then pop back into existence (after a determinate temporal interval) at L2, and then cease to exist again and pop back into existence (after a further temporal interval of the same duration as the previous) at L3 etc., all along an ordered direction (the straight line demanded by Newtonian law), again and again, *all by chance and for no reason*, beggars belief. Such regularity could not be grounded in the natures or causal powers of the relevant objects (which after all have ceased to exist), so the regularity would have to be explained by external causes or perhaps by transcendent, causally efficacious natural laws. But each of those options raise their own problems for metaphysical naturalism (see esp. the section on extended simples below for relevant further discussion of the ontology of laws).

is not only a necessary but also a sufficient condition for an object's being a physical object, puts this sort of point as follows:

> Now suppose . . . it turns out that the true physical theory concerning the actual world posits the existence of objects without spatial locations at all. . . . And suppose that these non-spatial objects are capable of interacting with spatial objects, like our bodies. Does it follow from these suppositions that materialism is false? It seems to me that it does. Moreover, I think most materialists would be perturbed by the discovery that the true physical theory was such a theory. In fact, I suspect that most materialists, upon being convinced of such a discovery, would throw in the towel and concede that materialism is false, after all.[17]

The atomist who adopts (B) is driven to say exactly these things: first, that there are extraspatial objects (atoms undergoing teleportation); and, as if that weren't bad enough (from the perspective of the metaphysical naturalist), he seemingly must also claim that these extraspatial entities are in causal interaction with other objects that remain within our spatial continuum. After all, something must prompt the return of these nonspatial atoms to the spatial manifold, and that return itself constitutes a significant effect in that manifold, so obviously there is causal interaction between the spatial and the nonspatial in this model. (This is assuming of course that what is prompting the return-into-space of the atom is one of the material objects still present within space; if the cause of the return were actually an extraspatial causal actor then that will seem even more problematic from the point of view of the metaphysical naturalist.)[18]

[17] Ned Markosian, "What are Physical Objects?", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 61 (2000): 375-96, at 386. For some potential further implications of the idea that spatial location is definitive for being a physical object, see also Ned Markosian, "A Spatial Approach to Mereology," in *Mereology and Location,* ed. Shieva Kleinschmidt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 69-90. My thanks to an anonymous referee for *The Thomist* for drawing my attention to this new source.

[18] It is worth noting a further point here: if relativity theory is correct and spatial dimensions are indissolubly unified with the temporal dimension, such that space is really space-time, then an extraspatial entity would ipso facto be an atemporal entity.

The naturalist could of course simply admit the possibility of extraspatial objects, and even the possibility of causal interaction between spatial and extraspatial objects. However, aside from the badly counterintuitive nature of such moves (counterintuitive from the perspective of the naturalist, as Markosian observes), they would in addition carry a significant cost for metaphysical naturalism, insofar as they would render inert one of the central arguments against substance dualism in the philosophy of mind: the interaction problem. If some extraspatial objects (atoms in the midst of teleportation) can causally interact with spatial objects, then clearly there can be no objection in principle to other extraspatial objects (Cartesian egos) interacting with spatial objects (the human body). We will continue to assume that the physicalist wishes to exclude extraspatial objects.

Premises 1 and 2 having been established, we can proceed to the disjunctive third premise. It is necessary to put this premise in the form of a disjunction, since premises 1 and 2 do not by themselves lead to the conclusion that atomism is incompatible with metaphysical naturalism. After all, the atomist could in theory claim that there is no such thing as atomic motion, hence no dilemma between gappy existence and extraspatial existence (i.e., no dilemma between atoms going in and out of being and atoms existing "outside" of space during teleportation). On this supposition atomic motion is simply illusory, and since all

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Transcending both space and time would seem an even *stronger* indicator of nonmateriality, yet someone affirming both relativity and the reality of discontinuous atomic motion would be driven to admit the reality of atoms existing outside of both space and time. Note too that the argument can be run on various different (endurantist) views of the nature of time, including the view that temporal moments are all extended and continuous with each other and the view that temporal moments are pointlike with gaps in between them. However, if one holds to the latter, then comparable issues of course arise concerning the existential status of temporally located objects during temporal gaps (which issues become even more pressing if relativity is true and time is part of space-time). A pointlike, gappy view of time might thus give rise, by itself, to an analogous argument against metaphysical naturalism. My thanks to an anonymous referee for *The Thomist* for pointing out the need to comment on the idea of pointlike time and temporal gaps.

motion in the physical realm must reduce to atomic motion, all motion is ultimately illusory. On this view we live in a stationary universe, contrary to appearances. There have of course been historically prominent philosophies that deny the reality of any kind of change, including change in location (whether continuous or discontinuous): Parmenides comes to mind as an advocate of this within the Western philosophical tradition, and Shankara as a representative within the Hindu philosophical tradition. However, while interesting and historically important, the denial of the reality of change (including motion) is simply unbelievable. That is stated in premise 4 of the formalized argument above. And with that, we have our conclusion.

*B) The Argument from the Grounding of Location in Extension*

In the argument just considered it was taken for granted that unextended atoms could possess spatial location. However, that assumption has often been questioned, and by questioning it we can obtain our second argument against atomism version 1:

*Premise 1:* Possession of spatial extension is a necessary condition for the possession of spatial location.
*Premise 2:* Possession of spatial location is a necessary condition for being a material object.
*Conclusion 1 / Premise 3:* Therefore possession of spatial extension is a necessary condition for being a material object.
*Premise 4:* Atoms lack spatial extension.
*Conclusion 2 / Premise 5:* Therefore, atoms are not material objects.
*Premise 6:* The existence of nonmaterial objects is incompatible with metaphysical naturalism.
*Final Conclusion* Therefore the existence of atoms is incompatible with metaphysical naturalism.

We have already seen a justification for premise 2 in the preceding section. As for premise 1, we can again turn to Aristotle for guidance. He alludes to a relevant argument in one of his critiques of atomism, writing that "it is paradoxical that a

magnitude should consist of elements which are not magnitudes. Moreover, *where* will the points be?" [19] The concern seems to be twofold. First, it seems impossible that extended physical entities could be constructed out of unextended point particles. Second, an object wholly lacking the property of spatial extension is an object lacking an adequate explanation for being at any particular location. What would make unextended particle *x* be in a specific place, and unextended particle *y* in a different specific place, rather than elsewhere, or in reversed locations? After all, such a particle does not fill any of the spatial region that is one specific place—it cannot, since it is not even a three-dimensional entity, being merely a geometrical point. By contrast, extension is a perfectly adequate truthmaker: object *x* is in a specific place precisely because it extends over or fills the spatial region that is there. One might also ask whether it is even coherent to think of an unextended point-particle occupying location if all spatial locations are themselves extended, consisting of some region, and that particle fails to fill or occupy any of that region.

One might try to get around this concern by positing that space itself has a point-structure, being composed of unextended points. That way, an atom could fill space simply by being colocated with a spatial point rather than by occupying an extended spatial region. But if Aristotle is right to question the idea that an extended material object could be composed of unextended parts (how can individual unextended objects, all the while remaining unextended *as* individuals, nevertheless collectively add up to something extended?), then he would certainly be right to question the idea that a spatial region could be made up of unextended spatial points. An unextended spatial point could touch another unextended spatial point only by wholly overlapping (since they have no actual or potential parts that could allow for merely partial overlap). But overlapping unextended spatial points clearly cannot build up a three-dimensional extended space. Even an infinity of such points

[19] Aristotle, *On Generation and Corruption* 1.2.316b5-7.

would only occupy a single spatial point. And spatially distinct spatial points would not be conjoined and so could not make up a unified spatial manifold.

So the possession of a spatial location seems to depend on the possession of spatial extension; unextended objects cannot be present in space.[20] And the possession of spatial location is a necessary condition for being a material object. Hence the entities posited by advocates of atomism version 1 are not in fact material objects. But according to metaphysical naturalism, material objects are the only real, irreducible kinds of objects. Thus we get our final conclusion, that atomism version 1 is incompatible with metaphysical naturalism. Atoms, if they are genuinely unextended, somehow transcend (or in some other way exist apart from) our spatial realm, and so are not physical objects.

At this point the metaphysical naturalist is likely to maintain that something must have gone wrong with one of the ideas employed by both arguments, namely, that spatial location is a necessary condition for being a physical object. Yet we have already seen one of Markosian's arguments in favor of location being a necessary condition, and he is certainly not the only one to highlight this role for location.[21] Further, in keeping with the present argument, it is worth noting that the idea of extension being a necessary condition for materiality has had prominent recent advocates, [22] besides of course being widely held historically (e.g., by Descartes, for whom extension is not merely a necessary but also sufficient condition for being

[20] Were this article not already overly long, I would take the time to explore some additional arguments in favor of taking extension to be a necessary condition for the possession of location, and would consider some of the prominent alternative accounts of the nature and grounding of location (some of which receive sustained attention in Kleinschmidt's recent anthology, cited above). My thanks to an anonymous referee for *The Thomist* for noting the need to flag this.

[21] For another prominent recent metaphysician making this claim (though he marks out *spatiotemporal* location as the necessary condition), see Jonathan Schaffer, "Spacetime the One Substance," *Philosophical Studies* 145 (2009): 131-48.

[22] See, e.g., E. J. Lowe, "Primitive Substances," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 54 (1994): 531-52.

physical). Space permitting it would be useful to canvass other proposed accounts of the physical suggested in the recent literature, and see how they fare by comparison. Other options include the idea that we can define the physical in purely negative terms (i.e., as being nonmental)[23] or in terms of whatever objects are posited by current[24] or completed[25] physics, or by a combination of the negative and physics-based characterizations.[26] Unfortunately I cannot consider these competing definitions here, though I critique them in detail elsewhere.[27]

## II. Why Atomism Version 2 Is Incompatible with Metaphysical Naturalism

Thomas Holden points out that this version of atomism has historically been a minority view in the debates on fundamental material constitution.[28] It is easy to see why: plausibly,

[23] See for instance Seth Crook and Carl Gillett, "Why Physics Alone Cannot Define the 'Physical': Materialism, Metaphysics, and the Formulation of Physicalism," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 31 (2001): 333-60; Barbara Montero, "The Body Problem," *Noûs* 33 (1999): 183-200; Barbara Montero and David Papineau, "A Defence of the *Via Negativa* Argument for Physicalism," *Analysis* 65 (2005): 233-37.

[24] See, e.g., Augustin Vicente, "Current Physics and 'the Physical,'" *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 62 (2011): 393-416.

[25] See, e.g., J.L. Dowell, "The Physical: Empirical, Not Metaphysical," *Philosophical Studies* 131 (2006): 25-60.

[26] See Jessica Wilson, "On Characterizing the Physical," *Philosophical Studies* 131 (2006): 61-99.

[27] See Travis Dumsday, "Why Pan-Dispositionalism Is Incompatible with Metaphysical Naturalism," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 78 (2015): 107-22; "Dispositionalism, Categoricalism, and Metaphysical Naturalism," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 88 (2015): 101-12. The negative definition (a physical entity is a nonmental entity) falls prey to a variety of counterexamples of paradigmatically nonphysical entities that are also nonmental (e.g., Brahman in Hindu philosophy, vital forces in Bergsonism, the Plotinian One, etc.); definitions in terms of current or completed physics fall prey to Hempel's Dilemma (despite clever recent attempts to avoid it); and definitions that combine negative and physics-based accounts fail to avoid some of the problems faced by their individual conjuncts.

[28] Holden, *Architecture of Matter*, 14.

extension entails that the extended entity can somehow be divided, and rejection of this entailment leads to some seemingly counterintuitive results.

For instance, for any extended thing it is not only conceivable but also *imaginable* that it be divided. The claim that conceivability is a sufficient condition for possibility is much disputed; the claim that imaginability is a sufficient condition for possibility has not been subjected to as much scrutiny,[29] but prima facie seems even more plausible. If one can mentally picture event *x* that seems like good evidence that *x* is a possible event. Since for any instance of spatial extension one can picture the division of the extended entity, that is good evidence division is a possible event for any such entity. So if atomism version 2 is true, it appears that imaginability is not a sufficient condition for possibility, which seems counter-intuitive. Of course, that is hardly a decisive argument against the possibility of atomism version 2; the theory's advocates can always claim that since an atom's division is metaphysically impossible, whenever one imagines an extended thing being divided one is ipso facto *not* imagining an atom. Nevertheless this still seems an odd result and a noteworthy cost of the theory.

One might also consider that there are various ways one can divide an extended thing. One could for example divide it by tearing or cutting it in two, leaving all the stuff of the original in existence (though now spatially disjoint rather than spatially connected), or one could (in principle anyway) divide it by annihilating the middle portion of the object, leaving two smaller portions whose total quantity would not add up to that of the original object. (By "annihilating" I mean annihilation in the traditional wrath-of-God sense of that concept, i.e., totally wiping something out of existence.) Now, if atomism version 2

[29] For one discussion in the context of natural theology (and one whose perspective accords with my present suggestion), see Robert M. Adams, "Has It Been Proved That All Real Existence Is Contingent?", *American Philosophical Quarterly* 8 (1971): 284-91, esp. 285.

is true, both forms of division must be impossible. So long as the whole material object exists, its conceptually distinguishable *and* visually (at least by an act of imagination) distinguishable subregions are, in a way, necessary existents. They cannot be destroyed so long as the whole persists, even by an act of God. This idea may be strictly consistent with the claim that all physical objects exist contingently, but it seems at least in tension with it, and draws out still further the somewhat counterintuitive nature of the idea.

The prospects for atomism version 2 are poor, but this is not really our concern here. Rather, our goal is to discern whether each of the four major theories identified at the beginning of this article is compatible with metaphysical naturalism. The following is an argument for the incompatibility of metaphysical naturalism and atomism version 2:

*Assumption:* Atomism version 2 is true and genuinely distinct from the other three major options concerning the metaphysics of fundamental material composition.
*Premise 1:* An atom is either contingently indivisible or necessarily indivisible.
*Premise 2:* If an atom is contingently indivisible, then in fact it is, in principle, divisible, such that atomism version 2 collapses into either the gunky view or the theory of extended simples (which conflicts with the assumption).
*Conclusion 1 / Premise 3:* Therefore, an atom is necessarily indivisible.
*Premise 4:* If an atom is necessarily indivisible, then it is necessarily indivisible either because (A) its nature is exhausted by extension, or (B) an atom has an underlying nature (or essence or substantial form) distinct from extension that grounds or entails or otherwise determines its indivisibility.
*Premise 5:* (A) is not a workable model of atomism.
*Conclusion 2 / Premise 6:* Therefore, (B) is true.
*Premise 7:* If (B) is true, then a robust version of natural-kind essentialism is true according to which a nature (or essence or substantial form) is not reducible to a property or set of properties.
*Conclusion 3 / Premise 8:* Therefore, a robust version of natural-kind essentialism is true according to which a nature (or essence or substantial form) is not reducible to a property or set of properties.
*Premise 9:* That version of natural-kind essentialism is incompatible with any rationally confident affirmation of the truth of metaphysical naturalism.
*Final Conclusion:* Therefore, atomism version 2 is incompatible with any rationally confident affirmation of the truth of metaphysical naturalism.

The truth of premise 1 should be uncontroversial, but it still bears some explication. By "contingently indivisible" I mean that the atom is indivisible but could become divisible. Different accounts may be workable here, but one obvious idea is that the atom, while lacking any causal power(s) allowing it to be divided (hence its indivisibility), could nonetheless acquire such power(s), rendering it divisible. How that acquisition in turn would work depends in large part on one's background substance ontology.[30] For instance, if one combines atomism

[30] *Substratum theory* is typically formulated as the idea that a substance is a compound of properties (whether conceived as universals or tropes) and a substratum (or "bare particular," or "thin particular") in which those properties inhere. By that inherence in one and the same substratum the attributes are grouped together such that we get an object that is both unified and internally complex. The substratum is also that by which a substance is individuated and which preserves continuity through radical change. Recent advocates include David Armstrong, *A World of States of Affairs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); C. B. Martin, "Substance Substantiated," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 58 (1980): 3-10; J. P. Moreland, "Theories of Individuation: A Reconsideration of Bare Particulars," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 79 (1998): 251-63; and Timothy Pickavance, "Bare Particulars and Exemplification," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 51 (2014): 95-108.

According to *bundle theorists*, what we think of as a substance actually consists of a single property or compresent (or collocated or co-instantiated or mereologically fused) group of properties, with some viewing the properties as universals and others as tropes. See, e.g., Keith Campbell, *Abstract Particulars* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990); Peter Simons, "Particulars in Particular Clothing: Three Trope Theories of Substance," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 54 (1994): 553-75; and David Robb, "Qualitative Unity and the Bundle Theory," *Monist* 88 (2005): 466-92. Some argue that bundle theory entails the elimination of substance, but I will suppose here that bundle theorists can still be realists about substance.

Advocates of *primitive substance theory* deny that a substance is made up out of metaphysical *constituents*, whether attributes or substrata. Instead, "substance" is a basic ontological category, and an individual substance just is the instantiation of a substance-universal or substantial nature or what E. J. Lowe simply) calls a *kind*. Thus a particular electron is just an instantiation of the substantial nature "electron" or "electronhood," where that universal is seen as irreducible to any property-universal or group of property-universals associated with it. See Brian Ellis, *Scientific Essentialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Michael Loux, *Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction*, 2d ed. (London: Routledge, 2002); and E. J. Lowe, *The Four-Category Ontology: A Metaphysical Foundation for Natural Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

with substratum theory the story is simple: a substratum is always capable of taking on new properties, such that the existing substance which is a compound of substratum and whatever properties are needed to constitute an atom (perhaps just determinate extension?) can take on new properties, including new causal powers like a power permitting division. If one is instead a primitive-substance theorist or hylomorphist or bundle theorist the metaphysics of property acquisition will work differently. Hylomorphism and primitive-substance theory both presuppose the truth of a robust version of natural-kind essentialism in which a substantial nature or essence or substantial form (depending on the preferred terminology) is real and irreducible to its associated properties, serving to ground and unify them. (For instance, the substantial nature or essence or substantial form "electronhood" is not reducible to an associated set of properties like negative charge, half-integral spin, etc., but rather is real and ontologically prior to those properties. This robust version of natural-kind essentialism can be contrasted with other formulations in which the "substantial nature," etc., is nothing over and above its associated properties, but is instead regarded as simply a set of proper-

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*Hylomorphism*, like primitive substance theory, is the view that an individual substance is the instantiation of a substantial nature or kind or (on the usual terminology of hylomorphism "substantial form"), but with the added claim that in the case of *material* substances this substantial form is ordered to a basic potency for the reception of new substantial forms and thus for substantial change, a basic power to be transformed into an object belonging to another natural kind. This potency is viewed not as a property but as a substantial principle, traditionally known as "prime matter." Prime matter also shares commonalities of explanatory role with the substratum, insofar as it is invoked as part of the explanation of individuation (though in a manner rather different from that supposed by substratum theorists) and of persistence through radical change. Recent proponents of hylomorphism include W. Norris Clarke, S.J., *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001); Edward Feser, *Scholastic Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction* (Editiones Scholasticae, 2014); James Madden, *Mind, Matter, and Nature: A Thomistic Proposal for the Philosophy of Mind* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013); and David Oderberg, *Real Essentialism* (London: Routledge, 2007).

ties.[31]) On these substance ontologies, the acquisition of a new causal power by an atom will be allowable provided the substantial nature is such as to make room for the acquisition of such new, contingent powers. (Traditionally, advocates of robust natural-kind essentialism usually maintain that one explanatory role for the substantial nature is to govern what properties the object can or cannot take on.) On bundle theory, by contrast, a substance is either a single, independently existent property or a combination (bundle) of properties (whether conceived as universals or as tropes), and the question of whether any particular bundle admits of new properties is contingent in large part upon the particular version of bundle theory and how it accounts for property unity; still, so far as I can tell all such theories allow for the acquisition of new properties. If for instance members of a bundle are unified by a primitive compresence function that ties them stably together, there seems to be nothing that would rule out the acquisition of a new causal power by an atom (i.e., a certain collection of properties), including a power allowing for divisibility—after all, it is just a matter of the compresence function plugging in a new member of the bundle. Much the same can be said if the bundle theorist prefers colocation or mereological fusion to the compresence function.

By "necessarily indivisible" I mean that an atom is indivisible and there is no way that it could become divisible. There are two ways in which this absolute indivisibility could be cashed out, which will be considered below in the discussion of premises 4-6.

According to premise 2, a contingently indivisible atom is in principle divisible (just add the relevant power[s] allowing for division). One way this might be described is that it possesses a "mediate power" to be divided, that is, a power to acquire a power to be divided. Many causal powers are mediate in this way. Think for instance of a metal that can be broken easily, but

[31] For some recent advocates of robust natural-kind essentialism, see the proponents of primitive substance theory and hylomorphism cited in the previous footnote.

only after being first submerged in an acid bath. We can say that it has the mediate power to be broken up easily (i.e., mediate brittleness). That implies that it is, in principle, brittle. Its nature is such as to admit brittleness, or in other words its nature is such that it can indeed be broken easily, but only after certain preliminary steps are taken. So if an atom, on atomism version 2, is merely contingently indivisible, then it is in principle divisible. But then there is no clear distinction between atomism version 2 and the theories of fundamental material constitution that admit division, namely the gunky view of matter and the theory of extended simples. This collapse of atomism version 2 into one or another of its major competitors contradicts our opening Assumption, and so must be dismissed. (Of course, the advocate of atomism version 2 could at this point simply adopt one of those alternative theories, but those theories are shown below to be incompatible with metaphysical naturalism, so that move would not cause problems for my overall argument as laid out in the Introduction.)

Conclusion 1 / Premise 3 simply makes explicit the fact that the advocate of atomism version 2 must (given Assumption) abandon the notion that atoms are contingently indivisible in favor of the view that atoms are necessarily indivisible.

Premise 4 then lays out two options for understanding necessary indivisibility, that is, two options for answering the question, Why is an atom (despite being spatially extended) indivisible, and indivisible in such a way that it could not ever become divisible? The first option, labeled (A), suggests that this necessary indivisibility is entailed by the fact that the entire being of an atom is exhausted by its determinate spatial extension. Thus an atom *just is* spatial extension—spatial extension of a certain determinate extent and shape of course, but there is nothing to being an atom over and above being determinately extended. Since it is nothing but that property, there is of course nothing about it that would admit the acquisition of genuinely new properties, no potency for bearing or receiving new properties in any way. Extension *qua* ex-

tension is functionally inert in every way.[32] Now, (A) has some interesting implications. First, it apparently entails the truth of bundle theory. If an atom just is extension, then an atom is a property: there is no underlying substratum bearing or possessing extension, no underlying substantial nature grounding extension, etc. Anyone objecting to bundle theory would therefore object to (A). However, I wish to remain neutral here between the four competing substance ontologies, so I do not wish to reject (A) for that reason.[33] Rather, (A) is problematic because it does not permit a workable model of *atomism*, specifically. If an atom is nothing over and above spatial extension (and thus admits the acquisition of no new properties), then an atom cannot engage in causal interactions with other bodies. And an atom that cannot engage in causal interactions with other bodies (e.g., attraction, repulsion, etc.) can play no role in composing the macro-level physical objects ("mid-sized dry goods") we are familiar with in everyday life. (A) thus cannot be of any explanatory utility in the context of

[32] By "bearing or receiving new properties" I of course mean "bearing or receiving new *intrinsic* properties"—obviously an atom whose being consists of nothing but extension could still have assorted relational and Cambridge properties, e.g., being ten feet from another atom, being nonidentical to Justin Trudeau, etc. Note too that the total inertness of atoms on (A) entails that if there are any governing laws of nature (discussed below in the section on extended simples), those laws will fail to operate on atoms, since atoms lack any capacity to be affected by laws; in other words, there is nothing about an atom that would allow it to be governed by laws of nature, no adequate truthmaker for the applicability of laws. If one instead maintains (problematically) that laws of nature can operate on intrinsically inert objects, like an (A) atom, then presumably there could be a law determining that an atom be divided, under certain circumstances, even if the atom lacks any internal features that would make it, intrinsically, divisible. But that view of laws would then entail that no atom could be necessarily indivisible. Hence all atoms would be merely contingently divisible, their status as divisible or not dependent entirely on what laws of nature happen to obtain. Consequently, once again atomism version 2 would collapse into either the gunky view of matter or the theory of extended simples. And with that we would be back at Premise 2 of the argument currently under development.

[33] For an interesting discussion of how this issue plays out in the context of Cartesian thought (recall that for Descartes, to be a body just is to be extended, arguably entailing a commitment to bundle theory), see Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes,* 135-58.

metaphysical debates concerning the fundamental constitution of material objects, which is the whole point of positing any version of atomism. As such, the advocate of atomism version 2 must reject (A), such that we have established Premise 5.

With that, we come to Conclusion 2 / Premise 6, namely, the truth of option (B), according to which an atom's being is not exhausted by the property of extension, but has an underlying substantial nature or essence or substantial form (hereafter "nature," by way of shorthand) that grounds or entails or otherwise determines its property of indivisibility. This underlying nature must thus ground or entail or otherwise determine both the atom's extension and the fact that this extension admits no division. How exactly that works might be cashed out in different ways. Perhaps the nature determines that the atom be absolutely stable, unbreakable by any metaphysically possible force, and likewise determines that the atom be closed to the acquisition of any properties that could impart divisibility (again, it is usually assumed by advocates of robust natural-kind essentialism that the underlying nature is what ultimately governs the object's ability to acquire new properties). Perhaps it likewise entails that the existence of the whole atom is ontologically prior to the existence of any of its conceptually distinguishable subregions, such that no "part" of the atom could be destroyed while the rest remained in existence (to cover our second model of how division might work, mentioned at the beginning of this section). Unlike (A), this apparently could result in a workable model of atomism, one in which the underlying nature that determines indivisibility likewise determines the possession of causal powers relevant to material composition (e.g., gravitational attraction to other atoms). Thus we have reached Premise 7 and the further premise immediately entailed by it and by Premise 6, namely, Conclusion 3 / Premise 8.

Finally, Premise 9 claims that the robust version of natural-kind essentialism involved in the commitment to (B) is itself in severe tension with metaphysical naturalism, such that as our Final Conclusion we arrive at the claim that (B), and hence atomism version 2, is incompatible with any rationally confident

affirmation of metaphysical naturalism. Premise 9 will, I think, be the most controversial of this argument. Why think there is a tension between robust natural-kind essentialism and metaphysical naturalism?

Historically many physicalists have adopted heavily empiricist epistemologies according to which anything like an underlying, inherently unobservable nature would ipso facto be unknowable, such that the reality of such an entity could not rationally be affirmed, even if its existence would not necessarily be strictly ruled out. (Though on verificationist forms of empiricism, such as logical positivism, a stronger conclusion could be reached, namely that "nature" is meaningless.) Thus from the time of Hume onward many physicalists have in fact denied the truth, or at least the rational affirmability, of any sort of robust natural-kind essentialism. Still, of itself that does not demonstrate incompatibility (even were one to assume that physicalism entailed empiricism, itself disputable).

More important is simply the way that the underlying nature is conceived by the advocate of robust natural-kind essentialism. All such advocates agree that the nature is in some sense a genuine item in ontology, part of the furniture of the world, posited because it fulfills certain necessary explanatory roles.[34] One point that has however been debated is whether the nature is itself the bearer of the properties it entails or grounds or determines, thus basically equating "nature" and "object," or whether instead the nature is not itself properly thought of as

[34] The cited explanatory roles for the nature differ to some extent from one proponent to the next, but they usually include at least (1) grounding or entailing or determining the presence of assorted fundamental properties, thus providing a background ontology for the substance / accident distinction; (2) functioning as the source of unity of the various fundamental properties associated with any particular entity, and any others sharing the same nature (hence providing an explanation both for the unification of otherwise inherently separable properties, and also a rational support for inductive reasoning across individuals belonging to the same kind); (3) functioning as the source of modal facts concerning what new properties the entity is able to acquire; and, (4) determining the limits on possible changes the entity can undergo while still retaining its identity.

an object, but rather as an ontological principle which underlies the object and, together with the various properties, partially constitutes the object. If the nature is itself the property-bearer then of course it must be thought of not as an abstract universal but as a concrete entity, though presumably still the instantiation of an abstract universal. (Substratum theorists have an analogous debate amongst themselves concerning whether, properly speaking, the substratum is the object, or whether the substratum is only a partially constitutive principle of the object, whereas the object is always the compound "substratum + properties.")

There is a further debate concerning whether the priority relation between the nature and its associated fundamental properties (i.e., properties that derive directly from the nature and not indirectly via other properties) is such as to guarantee that, for all natures in all possible worlds, the nature *must* prompt the presence of those fundamental properties, or whether the entailment or grounding or determination relation might in at least some cases leave room for contingency as to whether some or all of those properties are actually manifested by the object. (Of course, if it is literally entailment, then automatically the answer is no, but the whole point of my continued, somewhat tedious use of the multiple disjunction is that strict entailment is not the only way this relationship has historically been conceived.) This issue has not been much discussed in the current literature on natural-kind essentialism (though most authors in the recent analytic literature would, I believe, favor an entailment account of the relation).

The relevance of this to Premise 9 is that, depending on the answers one gives to the two questions just raised, it may turn out that natural-kind essentialism is incompatible with metaphysical naturalism. If one answers the first question by equating nature and object, and the second by answering that the relationship between at least some natures and at least some of their associated fundamental properties is not strict entailment, but instead something weaker and potentially defeasible, then the prospect opens up that at some or all extended indivisible atoms are not *essentially* extended, not extended in

all possible worlds in which they exist. Rather, their underlying nature perhaps merely makes it possible or likely for them to be extended (and indivisible while extended), but does not guarantee it. If that scenario obtained, metaphysical naturalism would be false, since the object would not be essentially extended, hence not essentially spatially located, hence not essentially physical.

One might instead equate nature and object yet adopt an entailment account of the relation between a nature and its associated fundamental properties. With those two answers in place one could then maintain that in the case of an atom what the underlying nature entails is not determinate extension (and, following on that, indivisibility), but rather a *power to become extended* (and in consequence indivisible), the stimulation of which power by an external cause would (like the stimulation of any power) of course be a merely contingent fact about that object. Once again, if that scenario obtained, metaphysical naturalism would be false, since the object would not be essentially extended (though by stipulation here it would be essentially indivisible whenever extended), hence not essentially spatially located, hence not essentially physical.

There is clearly a lot of room to question the lines of reasoning just proffered. One could argue for instance that (1) the natural-kind essentialist should not equate substantial nature and substance (though concerns of parsimony do seem to favor it), and argue further that (2) even if they are equated, nevertheless the only proper way to conceive the relationship between a nature and its associated fundamental properties is strict entailment, and argue still further (3) that this strict entailment either never issues in causal powers—perhaps only geometrical / structural properties, like shape and size, can be so entailed—or, (4) argue that even if it does issue in causal powers, that such causal powers can never be ontologically prior to geometrical / structural properties, such that extension could not possibly be the manifestation of a more fundamental dispositional property.

As a matter of fact, I think that there are good reasons to equate substantial nature and substance, and good reason to

think that spatial extension is best thought of as the manifestation of a power (more on this in the section concerning extended simples below). Regarding entailment vs. grounding vs. determination, and so on, and the force of these relations (at least the nonentailing ones), I am less sure how to adjudicate, especially considering the depth of disagreement surrounding the precise nature of the grounding relation displayed in the recent analytic metaphysics literature. Space does not permit an attempt to defend these claims at greater length. With respect to the defense of Premise 9 I will therefore simply have to point out that robust natural-kind essentialism leaves far too much room for conclusions that physicalists find insupportable. As things currently stand it should be rejected by physicalists, unless and until physicalists formulate a plausible version of natural-kind essentialism that does not allow for the implications just explored.

More simply (and perhaps more importantly), a tension between robust natural-kind essentialism and metaphysical naturalism arises merely from the fact that once it is admitted that an object's spatial extension does not exhaust its nature but rather is rooted in some ontological principle more foundational, something itself lacking extension, we hit upon what must be regarded by the physicalist as a thin end of the wedge: once one admits the reality of such underlying principles (for those who wish to distinguish nature and object) or underlying objects (for those who equate them), how can one confidently affirm that the natures of all real objects, past and present, are such as to ground or entail or determine the property of spatial extension? It starts to look not only logically possible but very much a live option to think that other objects could well have natures that do not include that particular entailment. After all, why would they all include it? And what rational grounds would there be for affirming that they all include it?

My stated justifications of Premise 9 do not, strictly speaking, establish incompatibility between atomism version 2 and metaphysical naturalism—severe tension, yes, but not strict incompatibility. Thus a more accurately stated conclusion is the disjunctive one actually employed: atomism version 2 is

*incompatible with any rationally confident affirmation of the truth of metaphysical naturalism*. The background metaphysics of robust natural-kind essentialism, a background metaphysics required by atomism version 2, is at least in sufficiently great tension with metaphysical naturalism that no one can at present affirm both with rational confidence. Even this weaker conclusion is philosophically significant.

## III. Why the Gunky View of Matter Is Incompatible with Metaphysical Naturalism

Yujin Nagasawa has already provided an important argument for this incompatibility. For reasons of space I will not attempt to summarize his argument here.[35] Instead I would like to pursue a new path to the same conclusion:

*Premise 1:* If the gunky view is true, then all motion is discontinuous.
*Premise 2:* The reality of discontinuous motion is incompatible with metaphysical naturalism.
*Conclusion 1 / Premise 3:* Therefore the gunky view is either incompatible with the existence of motion or incompatible with metaphysical naturalism.
*Premise 4:* The gunky view cannot plausibly be taken to be incompatible with the existence of motion.
*Final Conclusion:* Therefore the gunky view is incompatible with metaphysical naturalism.

The reader will notice the structural similarity between this argument and the initial argument concerning atomism version 1 above. Relying on my previous arguments in support of premises 2 onward, I will focus here on premise 1.

Why think that any motion of gunk must be discontinuous, involving "teleportation"? John Hawthorne and Brian Weatherson have in fact already provided a sophisticated argument for this idea, one I cannot attempt to summarize here.[36] Instead I will put forward a distinct, rather simpler

[35] See Nagasawa, "Infinite Decomposability and the Mind-Body Problem," 357-67.

[36] John Hawthorne and Brian Weatherson, "Chopping up Gunk," *Monist* 87 (2004): 339-50.

argument for the same conclusion: if all physical objects are in fact composites of an actually infinite number of ever smaller objects, then continuous motion on the part of any physical object would have to involve moving an infinite number of parts through space, and doing so in a finite time. That is, if one maintains that a gunky object moves continuously (with no jumps / teleportation) from location L1 to L2 over a finite temporal interval, then one has to maintain that over a finite temporal interval one has moved an infinite number of objects, namely, the constituent parts (themselves objects) composing the gunk. But that is impossible; an infinite task (in this case the moving of an infinite number of objects) can never be completed progressively in step-by-step fashion, let alone completed in a finite time.[37] The only hope for moving an infinite number of objects in a finite period of time is to teleport the whole bunch from L1 to L2, such that the whole collection simply disappears from L1 and reappears at L2 after a temporal interval. Consequently, the reality of gunk would entail the reality of discontinuous motion. And as we saw previously, the affirmation of discontinuous motion on the part of any entity proves incompatible with metaphysical naturalism.[38]

[37] When I discuss this point with my undergraduate students (the issue also arises for discussions of the Kalam argument) I like to use the following illustration. Imagine one were offered $10,000 to wash a pile of dishes. Should one take the offer? Well, what if it were added that the pile is infinitely high? Should one take the offer then? No, because the task could never be completed, not even if an infinite amount of time were supplied for its completion.

[38] An anonymous referee for *The Thomist* has helpfully pointed out an historical parallel to this argument in Leibniz's "Dissertation on the Art of Combinations," in *Leibniz: Philosophical Papers and Letters*, trans. and ed. L. Loemker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 117-33. Leibniz's argument can be (roughly) summarized as follows: the continuous motion of a gunky object (an object composed of an infinite number of actual proper parts, i.e., ever-smaller objects that serve to compose it) would have to be brought about supernaturally by an omnipotent being. Only a being with infinite power could move an infinite number of objects a finite distance continuously within a finite timeframe. And since objects really are gunky and really do engage in continuous motion from one place to another within a finite timeframe, a being with infinite power (God) must exist. Where my argument differs from Leibniz's is that I assume not even an omnipotent being could move an infinite number of objects

## IV. Why the Theory of Extended Simples Is Incompatible with Metaphysical Naturalism

We come now to the third and final theory of fundamental material composition (and the one historically favored by Scholastics). Here I will defend the following argument:

*Premise 1:* If the theory of extended simples is true, then at least some objects (extended simples) are in a state of genuine potentiality, namely, a potentiality for spatial division.
*Premise 2:* Being in a state of genuine potentiality can only be explained by reference to (A) the ontology of dispositionalism or (B) nomic realism.
*Premise 3:* Dispositionalism and nomic realism are both incompatible with metaphysical naturalism.
*Conclusion:* Therefore the theory of extended simples is incompatible with metaphysical naturalism.

Premise 1 can be justified by reference to the idea that spatial extension entails divisibility. According to advocates of this theory, extended simples lack *actual* proper parts (that is, they are not composed of actually existent lower-level objects), but they have *potential* parts in the sense that they are subject to division. By virtue of being extended, an object can be divided; it is at least theoretically possible that its left and right halves (for instance) could be split apart and then exist independently, or that the center of the object be annihilated such that most of the original left and right halves become separated and continue to exist independently. In either case, the two new, smaller objects are composed out of the matter or stuff out of which the original, larger object was composed. Thus an ontology of extended simples, while not acknowledging the reality of lower-level objects composing the original object, does nevertheless recognize an irreducible distinction between two ontological categories: objects and stuff. An extended simple is a portion of

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a finite distance *continuously* in a finite time; that is simply an impossible task to accomplish. Rather, they would have to be moved discontinuously, which discontinuous motion is (for reasons seen in the first argument pertaining to atomism version 1) incompatible with metaphysical naturalism.

stuff or matter that is circumscribed or determinately limited or shaped such that the stuff constitutes an object, a structured whole. That structured whole can be wrecked by being divided (or indeed by being conjoined to another object), but the stuff or matter survives. All material objects are composed of stuff of some kind or other, and all stuff must exist with some determinate limits (shape), such that objects and stuff are equally ontologically fundamental. Moreover (and crucially for our purposes) stuff is genuinely and irreducibly in a state of potentiality for division into new objects: it is able to exist in different modes, whether as a single continuous whole or as split up into spatially disparate, distinct objects.[39]

This gives rise to a question: how should we interpret this potentiality? This brings us to premise 2. There are two main competing realist [40] theories concerning the ontology of potentialities or powers or capacities or dispositions (which terms I will use as synonyms): dispositionalism and nomic realism. According to dispositionalism, objects possess intrinsic dispositions, which are inherently causally potent properties whose identity conditions consist (whether wholly or in part) of stimulus and manifestation conditions, along with any *ceteris paribus* clauses. Fragility, for instance, is an intrinsically causally potent property whose possession by an object determines that it will break when subjected to certain stresses, *ceteris paribus*. The mass of an elementary particle is an intrinsically causally potent property whose possession by that particle determines that it will attract other massive bodies (with a determinate

[39] Markosian, in works cited above (n. 1), emphasizes and develops the "object vs. stuff" aspect of the theory of extended simples. There are interesting parallels here between Markosian's ontology of stuff vs. object and the hylomorphic split between matter and form, though unfortunately I cannot delve into these here (*parallels*, not *equivalences*).

[40] I thus leave aside for present purposes discussion of another major competing theory, Humeanism or regularity theory, according to which there are no powers or laws or any other entities explaining natural regularities. Instead, there is no such thing as causation realistically conceived, and regularities have no explanation. While regularity theory retains important defenders, I would maintain that it is seriously problematic. However, I cannot take up this issue here.

force given a certain distance, along a determinate vector, etc.) *ceteris paribus*.[41] By contrast, nomic realists maintain that objects do not possess intrinsic causal powers. Instead, causal processes arise out of the governance of physical objects by external laws of nature. Objects are inherently inert, and possess potentialities only indirectly, because of the application of laws to those objects.[42]

In my view, the ontology of extended simples accords more easily with dispositionalism than with nomic realism, insofar as spatial extension seems to entail divisibility with a necessity and immediacy that leaves no room for external laws to do governing work.[43] However, I will not defend that point here, as the remainder of the present argument follows on either dispositionalism or nomic realism. (Indeed, arguably it follows even more easily on the latter.)

[41] For some recent advocates of dispositionalism, see Anjan Chakravartty, *A Metaphysics for Scientific Realism: Knowing the Unobservable* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Jonathan Jacobs, "A Powers Theory of Modality: Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Reject Possible Worlds," *Philosophical Studies* 151 (2010): 227-48; Jennifer McKitrick, "The Bare Metaphysical Possibility of Bare Dispositions," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 66 (2003): 349-69; and Stephen Mumford, *Laws in Nature* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

[42] Advocates of nomic realism include David Armstrong, *What Is a Law of Nature?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Noa Latham, "Are Fundamental Laws Necessary or Contingent?", in *Carving Nature at Its Joints: Natural Kinds in Metaphysics and Science* ed. J. K. Campbell, M. O'Rourke, and M. Slater (Cambridge: MIT Press), 97-112; Stathis Psillos, *Knowing the Structure of Nature: Essays on Realism and Explanation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); and Tim Maudlin, *The Metaphysics within Physics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[43] I take up this point in detail in "MaxCon Extended Simples and the Dispositionalist Ontology of Laws" (forthcoming in *Synthese*), where I argue that at least one major version of the theory of extended simples entails the truth of dispositionalism. It is also worth noting again a point raised in an earlier footnote, in the treatment of atomism version 2 above: there are philosophical problems with a view according to which laws operate on inherently inert objects, insofar as that may involve a contradiction (with objects *having no capacity to be acted upon by laws* nevertheless being acted upon by laws). Still, for present purposes that concern will be set aside, and I will grant for the sake of argument that a robust nomic realism is a viable alternative to dispositionalism.

There is already a substantial literature on why dispositionalism is incompatible with metaphysical naturalism. For instance, David Armstrong's critique of dispositionalism proceeds precisely on the basis of its alleged incompatibility with metaphysical naturalism:

> Consider, then, the critical case where the disposition is not manifested. *The object still has within itself, essentially, a reference to the manifestation that did not occur*. It points to a thing that does not exist. This must remind us of the intentionality of mental states and processes, the characteristic that Brentano held was the distinguishing mark of the mental. . . . [T]here is something here that would appear to falsify Physicalism.[44]

Since Armstrong is himself a metaphysical naturalist, he takes it that showing the incompatibility of dispositionalism with metaphysical naturalism disproves the former. I take it to disprove the latter. Other dispositionalists have reacted in different ways to Armstrong's critique; thus Alexander Bird, in response to Armstrong, argues that dispositions do not really manifest intentionality (properly conceived), [45] while George Molnar argues that they do but in a way this is compatible with physicalism.[46] Others simply accept that dispositionalism entails the falsity of strict physicalism and proceed from there.

The debate surrounding the alleged intentionality of dispositions continues. But that is not the only ground on which this incompatibility has been claimed. In fact there are a variety of routes to the conclusion that dispositionalism is incompatible with metaphysical naturalism. For instance, Richard Swinburne argues that dispositionalism, when combined with the reality of global regularities (regularities applying throughout nature) points strongly to theism, since one needs an explanation for the consistent instantiation of certain dispositions and not

[44] Armstrong, *A World of States of Affairs*, 79.

[45] See Alexander Bird, *Nature's Metaphysics: Laws and Properties* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007).

[46] George Molnar, *Powers: A Study in Metaphysics (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)

others such that certain regularities obtain everywhere.[47] Or consider recent works by myself and Matthew Tugby, who both argue (though on somewhat different grounds) that dispositionalism entails the reality of universals that are uninstantiated in material objects.[48] Several justifications for this are provided, but we may limit ourselves to just one of Tugby's arguments: the stimulus and / or manifestation conditions figuring in the essential identity of an actual disposition can easily involve orientation to universals that are not actually instantiated in our world. For instance, an electron has the power "negative charge," which power includes as part of its identity conditions the manifestation condition "attracts positively charged particles, *ceteris paribus*." In a hypothetical world that, as a matter of fact, contains no positively charged particles, an electron would, by virtue of its negative charge, still have an orientation towards the universal "positive charge," which universal is uninstantiated in that world. The question then becomes, in this hypothetical world, what exactly is this power oriented towards? What is the real relatum making up the other partner in this real orientation-relation? Some such real relatum is needed as a truthmaker for the relevant relational fact. The electron is not a conscious entity, so clearly it cannot be directed / oriented to the universal "positive charge" as a universal concept in its mind. Yet positive charge still figures, irreducibly, in the necessary identity conditions of negative charge, an intrinsic and essential property of the electron. So it must be real in *some* sense. But what kind of reality can this be? Tugby concludes that it can only be an uninstantiated universal, a Platonic form. As he puts it,

[47] Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God,* 2d rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[48] Travis Dumsday, "Laws of Nature Don't *Have* Ceteris Paribus Clauses, They *Are* Ceteris Paribus Clauses," *Ratio: An International Journal of Analytic Philosophy* 26 (2013): 134-47; Matthew Tugby, "Platonic Dispositionalism," *Mind* 122 (2013): 451-80.

> [if] one holds that universals are transcendent (i.e. that they exist uninstantiated), then the requirement that dispositions are always related to something that exists is automatically satisfied. This is because . . . transcendent universals are plausibly necessary existents. Thus, even if no instantiation of a given dispositional universal ever gets around to manifesting, the directedness (and so identity) of those dispositions would still be secured in virtue of second-order relations to the manifestation universals, at the transcendent level.[49]

And this Platonic stance on universals is (at least on my view, if not Tugby's) incompatible with metaphysical naturalism. Not merely because it affirms the reality of nonphysical objects (transcendent Forms); that alone might suffice for the incompatibility, but as noted in the Introduction I want to try and accommodate those physicalists who wish to claim (however implausibly) that physicalism is compatible with Platonism. Rather, it is Platonism in the context of dispositionalism that gives rise to the incompatibility with physicalism. For now Forms are seen as causally relevant to the world, functioning as final causes, as transcendent realities toward which real dispositional properties in the world are directed. And any sort of irreducible teleology is incompatible with metaphysical naturalism.

Moreover, if one affirms that Platonic Forms cannot exist on their own, but are best conceived in Augustinian moderate realist terms as Ideas in a transcendent Mind,[50] an even more obvious route to the relevant incompatibility is established. This point will no doubt call yet another argument to the mind of Scholastic readers: Aquinas's fifth way. The basic idea of the fifth way is that inanimate objects have tendencies to certain sorts of action, in other words orientations to nonexistent, possible future states of affairs. Indeed that is clearly affirmed in any sort of dispositionalism: to say that a piece of sugar is soluble in water is to say (among other things) that if at some future time that piece of sugar should be deposited in water,

[49] Tugby, "Platonic Dispositionalism," 11-12.

[50] Dumsday, "Laws of Nature Don't *Have* Ceteris Paribus Clauses, They *Are* Ceteris Paribus Clauses."

then it will dissolve (*ceteris paribus*). But how does this work in the case of something inanimate like sugar? Sugar has an innate ordering / orientation / tendency to a possible future state of affairs, implying a real relation between the sugar and the future (which real relation implies the existence of at least two real relata). But the future does not exist right now, or at least it does not exist right now in extra-mental reality. So how then can the inanimate, unconscious lump of sugar find itself oriented to it? (This question is of course similar to that raised by Armstrong, though made here without any explicit reference to the notion of intentionality.) Orientation to a currently-non-existent-but-possible-future is an item of everyday human experience; we can think about the future, which does not exist yet, because the future can have an intentional being in our minds. But the sugar does not have a mind; how then can it be really related to a nonexistent future? Aquinas's answer is that the divine mind supplies the otherwise missing relatum. Feser summarizes the Thomistic claim nicely:

> A cause cannot be efficacious unless it exists in some way. But in the case of the final cause of some unintelligent causal process, the cause in question does not exist in the natural order. For instance, the oak is the end or final cause of the acorn, and yet until the acorn develops into the oak, the oak does not actually exist in the natural world. . . . And the same thing is true of all the other final causes operative in the order of unintelligent natural processes. . . . So, there must be an intellect outside the natural order directing things to their ends, where these ends pre-exist as ideas in said intellect.[51]

As a subsidiary argument for the incompatibility of dispositionalism and metaphysical naturalism, one tied in very closely with the specific commitment to extended simples, we may consider the following. Given that extended simples are

[51] Edward Feser, "Existential Inertia and the Five Ways," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 85 (2011): 237-67, at 252-53. Much more could be said here, both by way of defending this interpretation of the fifth way and by way of defending the argument itself. For a further such defense see K. Gallagher, "Remarks on the Argument from Design," *Review of Metaphysics* 48 (1994): 19-31, whose interpretations of the argument accords with that advocated here.

divisible, it makes sense to think that some explanation is required for their coherence, for their stability over time; some answer is needed to the question, What keeps their inherently separable, spatially distinct right and left halves together? Why don't those subregions just fall apart? In a compound object (an object composed of multiple, distinct objects) a dispositionalist would normally explain structural integrity by reference to the activation of bonding powers possessed by those individual constituent objects (e.g., the atoms bound together to compose a molecule). But extended simples have no real parts; what then would account for the stability of their *potential* parts, their spatially distinct subregions? Perhaps the best way to account for this is to refer to an idea already broached in our discussion of atomism version 2 above: maybe an extended simple is extended (at a time and over time) in such a way that the underlying object possessed of extension is only contingently extended; the underlying object has a power-to-become-extended, which power is being actualized by an external cause. On this conception, every extended simple requires external intervention to prompt and preserve its extension both at a time and over time, namely, an external cause stimulating this power-to-become-extended (the continual stimulation of which would entail its *remaining* extended over time). If this is the correct way to think of extended simples, then the theory is automatically incompatible with metaphysical naturalism insofar as the relevant object possesses extension contingently, in consequence of having its power-to-become-extended actualized. Like any object, it will be ontologically prior both to its powers and, even more obviously, to the actualization of those powers by external forces—an object must first exist in order to be acted upon. As such, in principle at least any extended simple can exist in unextended form (hence nonlocated and hence nonphysical) form. And that would be incompatible with metaphysical naturalism.

Yet another, somewhat different and more ambitious argument is as follows. If it is granted that all extended simples require external causal intervention to preserve their extension, and we dismiss the possibility of *infinite regress* (according to

which one extended simple has its extension prompted by a second extended simple which has its extension prompted by a third extended simple etc. ad infinitum) and *circular causation*, which possibilities we should indeed dismiss for well-known (if still controversial) reasons,[52] then the explanation for the extension of extended entities must eventually conclude to an entity that is completely unextended and hence does not need to have its extension explained. That is, there must exist an unextended (hence extraspatial) causal force(s) or agent(s) ultimately accounting for the presence of extension in the physical universe. This results in a fairly standard cosmological argument from contingency (though in this case a contingently possessed *property* rather than outright contingent *existence*), a cosmological argument concluding not to God (not directly anyway) but at least to some non-natural entity or entities sharing at least some of the attributes traditionally ascribed to God (considerable causal power and immateriality).

Much more could be said by way of further explicating and defending the three supporting arguments just provided for the idea that the reality of extended simples is, when combined with dispositionalism, incompatible with metaphysical naturalism.[53] At any rate, what has been provided thus far suffices to show that the first conjunct of premise 3 of this section's argument is defensible and worthy of further consideration.

With respect to the alleged incompatibility between nomic realism and metaphysical naturalism, we can be much briefer, and simply rely on the insights of early modern philosophers like Descartes and Robert Boyle, mechanists who denied the reality of intrinsic causal powers in material objects but still recognized the need to explain the reality of motion and apparently interactive processes in the material realm. If

[52] See Norris Clarke, *The One and the Many*, for some particularly clear, accessible discussions of circular causation and infinite regress in the context of cosmological arguments for theism.

[53] The second and third supporting arguments receive much more detailed attention in my "Spatial Extension as a Necessary Condition for Being a Physical Object (and Why It Matters for Philosophy of Religion" (forthcoming in *Philosophia Christi*).

material objects are inherently inert, devoid of intrinsic passive or active causal powers, what can possibly establish them in motion and other forms of activity and apparent interaction? Obviously this cannot be explained by reference to other equally inert material objects, even an infinite regress of them. No, if the dynamism of material objects is to have an explanation (including their division into parts) it must be made by reference to an incorporeal Being who sets the physical universe in motion and decides on the efficacious operation of those laws by which these motions are governed, including any interactions between inert material objects. Nomic realism (at least when combined with the explicit rejection of dispositionalism) entails the falsity of metaphysical naturalism even more obviously than does dispositionalism.[54] Or, if one thinks that the conclusion to a Lawgiver is too quick, that perhaps autonomous laws transcending and efficaciously governing objects in the material universe can do this explanatory work by themselves, it is still the case that, insofar as these laws will obviously not be physical objects or derivative on physical objects, this sort of robust nomic realism will still be incompatible with metaphysical naturalism.

## CONCLUSION

To recap, the preceding three sections have been put forward with the aim of providing justification for the truth of premise 1 of this paper's overall argument:

*Premise 1:* Each of the four main theories of material composition is either incompatible with the truth of metaphysical naturalism, or at least incompatible with any rationally confident affirmation of the truth of metaphysical naturalism.
*Premise 2:* At least one of those four main theories is true.
*Conclusion:* Therefore metaphysical naturalism is either false or at least cannot be affirmed with rational confidence.

[54] For an updated development and defense of this early modern perspective on laws and theism, see John Foster, *The Divine Lawmaker: Lectures on Induction, Laws of Nature, and the Existence of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

I have not provided airtight defenses of that crucial first premise, and the various arguments presented above are vulnerable to further potential objections. Moreover, much more could be said about the relevance of these arguments to natural theology. While I would maintain that any argument against metaphysical naturalism is of considerable import for the defense of theism (especially since metaphysical naturalism remains the chief competitor to theism in the current intellectual climate in the West), clearly some of the arguments provided above are more directly relevant than others. Even the arguments that point to a transcendent, causally potent intelligence (most obviously my pressing Aquinas's Fifth Way into service in the last section) do not of themselves prove the existence of God. (Though in fairness, most arguments for theism, even if sound, conclude to a being possessed of only a few of the traditional divine attributes; after all, this is why most theistic arguments are meant to function in conjunction as part of a unified cumulative case.)

Nevertheless, I have provided some indication of the heretofore largely neglected import of theories of material constitution for natural theology. For too long those developing arguments against metaphysical naturalism have focused almost entirely on formulating new and better arguments for dualist theories of the mind or direct arguments for theism, as if the only philosophical problems facing metaphysical naturalism are its neglect of the true nature of human consciousness and the reality of God. But there is much more wrong with this theory, so many problems facing it that arise from diverse areas of metaphysics. I have tried here to develop one argument from one such area, the debate over fundamental material composition, but there is much more that can be done along comparable lines starting from other areas.[55]

[55] I would like to extend sincere thanks to two referees for *The Thomist* for their many insightful comments and criticisms on an earlier draft. Work on this paper was completed thanks in part to funding from the Canada Research Chairs program.

*The Thomist* 80 (2016): 273-84

# THE THEOLOGY OF PLAY AND THE PLAY OF THEOLOGY IN THOMAS AQUINAS

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STUDENTS OF THOMAS AQUINAS have argued over many issues in the last 150 years or so; in fact, it is nearly impossible to get out of the very first question of the *Summa Theologiae* without entering into a century-long debate about the status of sacred doctrine as an Aristotelian science. We ponder whether theology meets the requirements of a *scientia* and argue about just how to understand the task of theology in the face of Aquinas's concern about theology as a *scientia*. Part of this ongoing argument is shaped by the philosophical and epistemological needs of theologians attempting to justify their positions in an academic world driven by the secular and scientific norms of the Enlightenment. Additionally, some interest in theology as a *scientia* is driven by the desire to provide a philosophically acceptable alternative to secular forms of reason—thus Leo's XIII's promotion of Thomistic philosophy.

The interest in theology as a science was shaped by the historical work of Chenu in his influential articles on the topic and then by almost every other important Thomist in the last fifty years.[1] Theology as a *scientia* is such a pressing topic that it would almost be fair to say that Thomists have developed their own *scientia* of theology as a *scientia*.

[1] Marie-Dominique Chenu, *La théologie comme science au xiiie siècle* (Paris: Vrin, 1975).

Beyond the modern and, perhaps, postmodern concerns driving this interest, there are good reasons to pay attention to Aquinas on the status of theology. If we focus on theology as a *scientia*, it is because Aquinas invites us to do so by taking up this question in one form or another at the beginning of his major theological syntheses. We are, after all, only following his lead and pondering with him just what we are thinking about, and how we are thinking, when we think about God.

Within the Thomistic corpus there is, however, a minority report with regard to the status of theology. In his prologue to his commentary on Boethius's *Hebdomads*, Aquinas looks at theology in a very different way, one that can supplement our understanding of sacred doctrine in its role as both an intellectual and an affective enterprise. In this commentary Aquinas journeys into a different territory and explores theology, not as a *scientia*, but as a kind of play—a play that evokes delight and pleasure in the one who pursues wisdom.

My approach will be first to describe Aquinas's theology with regard to regular play—the kind of recreational activities we all engage in, whether they are physical or verbal. He takes up the question of the morality of play in several places and in a way that will inform our understanding of what he means when he describes theology as play. With this understanding of regular play in place, we will then explore theology as play, based on the supposition that there is something analogical between regular play and theology as play. I will finish with some reflections on how this might contribute to our present understanding of theological work.

## I

While he scatters comments about play across his corpus and mentions it in all of his theological syntheses, Aquinas gives sustained attention to play in two places: first, in his commentary on Aristotle's *Ethics*, and second, in question 168 of the *Secunda secundae* (in the treatise on temperance) of the *Summa theologiae*. From the outset one will notice that one of

the difficulties in thinking about play with Aquinas is that the Latin word for play, *ludo*, is multivalent, difficult to translate, and so can sometimes mean recreational games, sometimes word play, and sometimes making fun of or deriding someone.[2] Even the context does not always make it clear exactly how Aquinas is talking about play.

In these two sustained treatments of play Aquinas is concerned with two main issues: first, the purpose of play; second, the morality of games and how they can be approached virtuously—with proper order. That is, he is concerned with the why and the how of games.

Aquinas pursues these issues in his commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where he takes up the question of play in book 4, lecture 16 and book 10, lecture 9.[3] He first seeks to establish that it is fitting for there to be a virtue with regard to play and argues that if something has a concept of good in it, then it can be the subject of virtue. If it is useful for human life, then it is good, therefore there is a virtue with regard to play.[4]

As Aquinas reads Aristotle in the first passage, it would appear that Aristotle is a bit inconsistent in his understanding of the purpose of play. Aquinas understands Aristotle to say that the purpose of play is to rest our soul from mental efforts—the focus seems to be on playing with language and humor, more than physical activity.[5] We often experience this kind of play during academic conferences, when many of us engage in just this kind of play after a long day of concentrating on presentations, laughing and relaxing over playful conversations together over dinner. With regard to these playful conversations, Aquinas suggests that the two opposing extremes with regard to this kind of play are those who only want to joke—buffoons—

[2] This is true not just for Aquinas, but also for any discussion of medieval games. On this ambiguity, see John Marshall Carter, *Medieval Games: Sports and Recreations in Feudal Society* (Greenwood Press, 1992), 17-18.

[3] Aquinas, IV *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 16 (Leonine ed., 47.2:255-58); and X *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 9 (Leonine ed., 47.2:578-81). English translation from *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C. I. Litzinger (Notre Dame, Ind.: Dumb Ox Books, 1993).

[4] IV *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 16 (Leonine ed., 47.2:256).

[5] Ibid.

and those dour souls with not a bit of wit in them, whom we call boors.[6] Aquinas observes that these external actions reveal our interior dispositions.[7] That is, how we go about play is revealing of our inner dispositions—we learn something about other people by the way that they play. As the sportswriter Heywood Hale Broun is reported to have said, "Sports do not build character. They reveal it."[8]

While in book 4 of the *Ethics* commentary Aquinas says that the purpose of play is for us to relax from our mental efforts, in book 10 he argues that there are two kinds of activities: those necessary for another end and those desirable for their own sake. That is, we engage in some activities so that we can accomplish other goals—the way many of our students approach their educations—and we engage in some activities because they are sufficiently desirable in themselves—for instance, just spending time with a loved one. Aquinas calls this latter set of activities, which cause happiness, activities "in which nothing further than the activity itself is sought."[9] He goes on to argue that we do not play for the utility of play, since our games are as likely to be harmful as they are helpful[10]—anyone who has nursed an injury as a weekend warrior understands what Aquinas is driving at here. On the other hand, he suggests that if true happiness were found in play then we would focus only on our own amusement, and so we would be working only for the purpose of playing, whereas in fact we play for the sake of working. That is, we engage in play to rest from our work, so we can work harder later.[11] So Aquinas, as he reads Aristotle, seems to be of two minds: we play so we can work harder, yet play is also intrinsically delightful and done for its own sake. It

[6] Ibid. (Leonine ed., 47.2:257-58).

[7] Ibid. (Leonine ed., 47.2:257).

[8] James A. Michener and Steve Berry, *Sports in America* (New York: Dial Press Trade Paperback, 1987), 18.

[9] X *Nic. Ethic.*, lect. 9 (Leonine ed., 47.2:580)

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid. (Leonine ed., 47.2:581).

is this latter perspective that he takes with regard to theology as play.

There is also virtue with regard to how we approach our playful activities. Whether we play so we can work harder or because play is intrinsically delightful, how we go about our play matters. For our play to be virtuous it must meet two criteria. First, it must freely accord with reason. Here Aquinas seems to be arguing that an overindulgence in play or a lack of play is problematic, so for play to accord with reason it is required to achieve a virtuous mean. Second, the play we engage in must not corrupt our minds.[12] By this Aquinas means that it must not be vulgar or demeaning of ourselves or other people. If our play causes us to sin or to harm others by word or deed, then we are not engaging in virtuous play.

Aquinas also takes up the theology of play in the *Summa theologiae*, which further develops his Aristotelian commentary and allows us to see what he says about play when not bound by the constraints of commentary on Aristotle. In the *Summa* the virtue of play is discussed in the treatise on temperance and is considered under the umbrella of virtues surrounding modesty, the virtue dealing with bodily movements and action.[13] In this passage, Aquinas is first interested in establishing that there is a virtue concerning our exterior actions, about how we move our bodies. He focuses on the idea that anything that is directed by reason has the possibility of virtue associated with it and again argues that our exterior actions reflect our interior dispositions. [14] Having established the possibility of a virtue associated with play, he turns to a description of that virtue.

In article 2 he dispels the confusion that appeared in his commentary on Aristotle. He argues that the primary purpose of play and recreation is to rest our soul from the difficult work of contemplation. Intellectual work wearies the soul and just as the body needs rest from hard physical labor, so too does the

[12] Ibid.

[13] *STh* II-II, q. 160, a. 2 (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 3d ed. [Turin: San Paolo, 1988]).

[14] *STh* II-II, q. 168, a. 1, ad 1.

soul need rest from intellectual work. The soul rests in things that bring it pleasure, which reduces the tension of study. So in this sense play serves another end: it allows us to work more effectively. But later on Aquinas argues that even though the pleasure of our soul is the goal of play, the playful actions themselves are not directed toward an end.[15] What he seems to be arguing is that the games we play typically are not oriented to anything productive or extrinsic to the game itself, especially in nonofficial or noncompetitive games. If I pick up a tennis racket to go hit the ball with a friend, it is the pleasure of the game that is the goal. Even games that involve keeping an official score are generally played for the pleasure of playing, and elsewhere Aquinas argues that in competitive games, where there is a contest and possibility of victory, there is maximal delight.[16] Those who have won a hotly contested competitive event have likely experienced this maximal delight. Even if we recreate for the purpose of going back to our work, when we are in the midst of play there is only the game.

The caveat to all of this is that our conduct in play matters with regard to the virtue of play. A nonvirtuous expression of play comes from either undue circumstances, when we engage in play at the wrong time and place, especially in a way that draws us away from God, or when we do something harmful to our neighbor. If, to return to our tennis example, I verbally abuse or seek to hurt my opponent, I am now no longer behaving virtuously with regard to play. In fact, Aquinas says that if one's intention is to injure one's opponent, then one is not really playing at all, since the point of playing is pleasure, not pain.

To summarize, Aquinas argues that the purpose of play is to provide us pleasure that refreshes the soul, while the games we play have no other purpose than the games themselves. With this understanding of play in place, we may turn to the idea of theology as a form of play.

[15] *STh* II-II, q. 168, a. 2.

[16] *STh* I-II, q. 32, a. 6, ad 3.

## II

Aquinas takes up the idea of theology as play in just one place, in the prologue to his commentary on Boethius's *Hebdomads*. It is true that in this particular commentary Aquinas never actually uses the phrase we associate with his understanding of theology: *sacra doctrina*. Instead, he talks about the contemplation of *wisdom* as a form of play. Likewise, the relevant scriptural quotations are all from what we now call biblical Wisdom literature. The principal quotation is from Sirach 32:15-16: "first run into your house, and there call them in, and there play and work out your conceptions"; there are also quotations from Wisdom 8:16, Proverbs 8:30 ("I was delighted every day, playing before him"), and Sirach 24:7. Aquinas, then, is not only discussing wisdom, he is also pulling from Wisdom texts to make his case.[17]

Nevertheless, in spite of the neglect of the term *sacra doctrina*, the case that, by referring to the contemplation of wisdom, Aquinas is addressing the work of theology is straightforward. As he argues in article 6 of the first question of the *Summa*, sacred doctrine is itself wisdom, because it deals with the highest cause, God, and he quotes Augustine to the effect that wisdom is the knowledge of divine things.[18] This wisdom is a gift of God's own self-knowledge to humans,[19] and, as Aquinas says elsewhere, is given by the Son, as the Wisdom of God, in the teaching of the Incarnation,[20] most especially on the Cross. Aquinas even makes a distinction between wisdom

[17] *De Ebdomadibus*, c. 1 (Leonine ed., 50:267-68) (Thomas Aquinas, *An Exposition of the On the Hebdomads of Boethius*, trans. Janice L. Schultz and Edward A. Synan, Thomas Aquinas in Translation [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001], 2-7.

[18] *STh* I, q. 1, a. 6.

[19] Ibid., ad 1.

[20] *In Ioan*., c. 1, lect. 1 (34). Thomas Aquinas, *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis Lectura*, ed. Raphael Cai (Rome: Marietti, 1952). Parenthetical numbers in references to this work refer to paragraph numbers in the Marietti edition. English translation *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, ed. Daniel A. Keating and Matthew Levering, trans. James A. Weisheipl and Fabian R. Larcher, 3 vols. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010).

and *scientia* in his article on the gift of knowledge, where he argues that wisdom is about the knowledge of divine things and *scientia* is knowledge of human things.[21] The highest wisdom is God, so when Aquinas is referring to the contemplation of wisdom in this prologue, we should understand that he is speaking of the contemplation of God, most especially the Wisdom of God found in the Son.[22]

Also of immediate note is that there is no reason that Aquinas needs this particular quotation or prologue for his commentary. As is the case with most of his prologues, he is not bound tightly to the text for his opening, but could have chosen just about any scriptural verse for his opening reflection, yet in choosing this text from Sirach he chose one that allowed him to reflect on the possibility of the contemplation of wisdom—of God—as play.[23] As Torrell suggests, Aquinas seems to be developing some kind of program or model in this prologue.[24]

Aquinas begins his reflection on this verse by describing how one prepares for the study of wisdom. In his reflection upon Sirach 32:15-16, he suggests that studying wisdom is a self-

[21] *STh* II-II, q. 9, a. 2.

[22] Aquinas also begins his other two major theological syntheses with reflections on theology as a form of wisdom. Each is also accompanied by a quotation from a scriptural wisdom text. See *ScG* I, c.1; and I *Sent*., prol. In the latter text, Aquinas also uses Proverbs 8:30, where he makes the connection between wisdom and the Son explicit.

[23] There is another possibility that would explain the selection of this verse. Aquinas thinks the purpose of the *Hebdomads* is to identify fundamental conceptions that are shared in any understanding of the world. The end of the verse from Sirach tells us to "work out our conceptions," so one possibility is that Aquinas found the verse in a medieval concordance under the word for *conception*. In fact, Hugh of St. Cher's concordance of the Vulgate does cite Sirach 32 under the listing for *conceptio*, though the snippet of the verse quoted by Hugh does not include the reference to play (*ludo*). However, because we do not know where Aquinas was when he wrote this text, we can only speculate that he might have used Hugh's concordance. See Hugh of St. Cher, *Sacrorum bibliorum vulgatae editionis concordantiae*, XIVe siècle (2e quart), 40. (downloaded from gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France).

[24] Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol.1, *The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 69.

sufficient project; while we may need texts to reflect upon, when we consider our basic conceptions we do so by ourselves, in our minds, where they are more efficiently understood. More importantly, Aquinas calls for us to withdraw from the cares of the world and the varieties of external things that distract us. When we enter into contemplation, our entire attention must be drawn interiorly and singularly, so that we are focused rather than being drawn to diverse things.[25] Only when all of our attention is drawn within and we are totally present can we begin to play at theology.[26]

With our attention focused in contemplation, wisdom becomes like play in two ways. First, play is intrinsically delightful and pleasing and the contemplation of wisdom is maximally delightful. Second, things done in play are not ordered to anything else, but are done for their own sake; likewise the delights of wisdom are not done for any other purpose. Aquinas argues that when we take delight in external things they can become the cause of suffering, rather than delight, as we struggle to attain what we desire or there is a delay in receiving it. On the other hand, the delight in contemplating wisdom has within it, according to Aquinas, the cause of the delight.[27]

With respect to play in general, Aquinas argues that it is primarily for the purpose of recreation, rather than for its own sake. In the case of theology he finds a way to unite the two because of the unity of the subject of theology, that is, of God. In our regular forms of play, when done virtuously, while the game has no purpose outside of itself, the purpose of engaging in play is to rest from work. The two purposes are distinct and are not united. To take a metaphysical cue from Aquinas, the essence of a game and its existence are two separate things. But in the contemplation of wisdom, in the work of theology, the two are united because the subject is united. That is,

[25] *De Ebdomad.*, c. 1 (Leonine ed., 50:267-68; Schultz and Synan, trans., 3-5).

[26] Those who have played sports at any competitive level will recognize that the importance of concentration and focus for the athlete parallels the focus and concentration needed for the play of theology.

[27] *De Ebdomad.*, c. 1 (Leonine ed., 50:268; Schultz and Synan, trans., 5).

contemplating wisdom, understood as God, unites the idea that this form of play is done for its own sake and it is also done for the purpose of rest. As Aquinas points out elsewhere, we can only truly rest when we come to our final good and this is where we will find our final delight.[28] When we contemplate the wisdom that is God, we are given a foretaste of the beatific vision, where we will engage in the eternal contemplation of God and where we will also finally rest and find delight. In this sense, earthly play is a kind of participation in and foretaste of the rest and delight of the beatific vision.[29]

To root this a bit more theologically, the model for the play of theology is both Christological and Trinitarian. Christologically, Aquinas notes in his commentary on John that love causes joy (*gaudium*) and since God loves himself and creatures, "to whom he grants an infinite good," Christ "rejoices in two things from all eternity, first his own good and that of the Father." The quotation he uses to illustrate this is Proverbs 8:30, "I was delighted every day, playing before him,"[30] one of the same texts that he uses in his discussion of the play of wisdom in his commentary on the *Hebdomads* where he compares divine wisdom to play. The suggestion seems to be that Christ, in his beatific knowledge of God, contemplates God in a way that brings delight akin to the delight of play. We can participate in this playful gaze by uniting ourselves to Christ, who as the head of the Church brings us into his own vision.

From a Trinitarian perspective, theology as play would suggest first that when we engage in theology we are participating in God's own knowledge and love of himself. The Trinitarian relations of the Father's own knowledge of himself and love of himself through the Son and the Spirit are accomplished for no other reason that God's own delight in God. God knows and loves himself because of his own goodness, not for

[28] *STh* I-II, q. 2, a. 8; *STh* I, q. 12.

[29] A point also made by Gilles Emery, O.P., in "Trinitarian Theology as Spiritual Exercise in Augustine and Aquinas," in *Aquinas the Augustinian* (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 24.

[30] *In Ioan.*, c. 15, lect. 2 (2004).

any further purpose. Second, the nature of God means that God is not necessarily productive of anything. God does not need to create or produce anything in order to be God; God would still be God regardless of whether anything exists at all. [31] Nevertheless, because the nature of the good is to share itself, God does create. Likewise, then, theology as play cannot be primarily about being productive, but rather about contemplation of God for the sheer delight in thinking about God. This idea, of course, would not go over well at a major research university, but that is not to say that theology as play would not lead to intellectual productivity; Aquinas's massive output would indicate otherwise. Rather, it suggests that Aquinas was so productive because of the depth of his love for God and that sheer delight led him to teach and write. In fact, the language of productivity, with its assembly-line intimations of modern capitalism, is inimical to the theological enterprise. The biblical language, which Aquinas uses, is that of fruitfulness, which suggests a sweetness to the work of theology as well as a paradigm of leaving seeds in our work that will result in future fruits. But whatever our fruitfulness may be, it cannot be the primary purpose of theology, at least not if it is going to participate in the love and knowledge of God.

What this minority report from within Aquinas's work tells us is that theology cannot be only about the acquisition of knowledge, of *scientia*. Rather, it is about knowledge that leads to delight and a delight that leads to further knowledge.

Theology as wisdom is primarily about God and we should pursue wisdom about God for the sheer delight that is found in thinking about God. When we pursue wisdom for the sake of something else—for advancement in our careers, for financial gain, for a political or ecclesiastical agenda, for tenure, or for self-aggrandizement, to name a few—we are not pursuing wisdom for the right reasons. Aquinas might even say we are not pursuing wisdom at all, as all of those goods are proximate

[31] Herbert McCabe, *God Still Matters*, ed. Brian Davies (London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002), 75.

goods in relation to the only good that counts, God.[32] Raw knowledge of God is not the purpose of theology, for, as Aquinas points out, by nature the demons have better knowledge of God than do humans, but they do not have love.[33] In order to be wisdom, the contemplation of God and of everything as it relates to God must lead to the love of God for God's own sake, just as play is done for its own sake and the delight of the game.

But it is not enough for us to pursue wisdom for its own sake. Theology is also the subject of virtue, both because it is compared to play and because it pursues a human good that accords with reason. Aquinas is quite clear that there are a whole set of intellectual virtues that allow us better to ascertain the truth of the world around us, but theology as play also suggests that there are emotional and motivational virtues that accompany the pursuit of divine wisdom. If our motives for doing theology are other than the delight of contemplating God and what God has done, then they may lack an order to the good necessary for all virtue. Additionally, theology done for the wrong reason is not a foretaste of our final end in the beatific vision, so this would also suggest that there is something disordered about our approach to theology. In particular, theology done with the intention of harming or deriding one's opponents, no matter how wrong they may be, lacks the necessary playfulness and delight that is part of the pursuit of theology. This is not to diminish the need to confront wrong ideas, but rather to suggest that when there is conflict it must be addressed with charity—what Aquinas calls fraternal correction. When we seek to harm, we are no longer playing.

In the end, we play the games we love because they challenge us, bring us into communion with others, and bring us delight. When we enter into the work of theology, we attain wisdom when we approach the task in a playful spirit, done for its own sake, for the love and knowledge of God.

[32] *STh* I-II, q. 2.
[33] *STh* I, q. 64, a. 1.

*The Thomist* 80 (2016): 285-300

# MYSTERY ON THE MOVE: AQUINAS'S THEOLOGICAL METHOD AS TRANSFORMING WISDOM

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CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES to the thought of Thomas Aquinas have begun to recover its character as a "wisdom practice" aimed at the transformation of persons and sociocultural situations.[1] The wise person helps others move along a path through the mysteries of faith toward a wisely ordered life for themselves in a justly ordered society. The starting point of this essay is the supposition that Aquinas's theological method in the *Summa theologiae*, rooted in the practice of the three arts of language (grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric) is itself a wisdom practice that proposes an ordered series of exercises that must be performed by the student, leading him or her to a greater participation in divine wisdom. I will show that Aquinas's use of the tools of rhetoric, particularly the enthymemes known as arguments of fittingness, are a set of practical instructions that facilitate an affective response to divine mystery in order to enable a judgment by connaturality.

[1] For a perspective on the wide range of studies in this area, see for example Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Thomas d'Aquin, maître spirituel*; Mark D. Jordan, *Ordering Wisdom: The Hierarchy of Philosophical Discourses in Aquinas*; Anselm K. Min, *Paths to the Triune God: An Encounter between Aquinas and Recent Theologies*; Matthew Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics: Aquinas and the Renewal of Trinitarian Theology*; R. J. Snell, "Connaturality in Aquinas: the Ground of Wisdom," *Quodlibet Online Journal of Christian Theology and Philosophy* 5.4 (2003): accessed November 2015.

Thus, we can learn from Aquinas how fruitfully to order affect and reason in the exercise of the theological craft.

The essay proceeds in three parts. First, a thought experiment will help us understand (a) how a medieval text works as a guide to performance, and (b) how intellect and affect interact in both artistic performance and aesthetic appreciation. Second, I will trace the role of affect and reason in knowledge for Aquinas, specifically in knowledge of the beautiful, of the good, and of divine mysteries. Third, I will show how Aquinas's use of rhetorical enthymemes, specifically the argument of fittingness, promotes an affectively founded judgment whose fruit is true knowledge of the divine mysteries.

## I. A Thought Experiment

The image below reproduces the sheet music for "O nuit d'amour," a duet for tenor and soprano between Faust and Marguerite in Gounod's opera *Faust*. A person with absolutely no training in music, looking at this page, will be able to glean only a small amount of information from it: the content of the text itself; the fact—indicated by the names "Faust" and "Marg." listed above the score—that there are two singers; possibly, if he or she is enterprising and looks up a translation of "andante," the fact that this piece of music is sung at a walking pace, moderately slow and mellow. But he or she is unlikely to be able to sing the duet without memorizing it from a performance he or she hears.

Now, someone with singing experience in a choir, though without training in solfège, will be able to get a bit more information from the page: he or she will likely be able to recognize the time signature and the sequence and value of the notes and rests, as well as the ascending and descending patterns of the melody, so that given solid accompaniment and competent direction, and enough practice time, he or she could sing the duet. But this performance will not rely so much on the sheet music as it will rely on the external supports, and the nuances of the performance will be minimal.

Finally, two singers with training in solfège will be able to notice a number of things about the duet: first, that it is in D flat major, but that Faust's part shades at bars five and six into B flat minor, adding a mysteriously ambiguous quality to his declaration of love; second, that Marguerite's part remains always in a major key, though it shifts between D flat major and G flat major, adding a kind of temporary "lift" at key points in

her melody; that some of the chords in the accompaniment, at key points in the duet, are not played in their root positions, but in their second or third inversions, thus transforming the quality of the sound; they will also note instructions for holding notes. All of this information will allow a well-trained singer to sight-sing the duet and supply the necessary nuances from the very first performance.

Our thought experiment has brought to light an additional element: the sheet music is not merely a source of intellectual information, it is a set of instructions for performance. There is no actual duet unless two singers, following the instructions on the page, perform it. The instructions on the page do not merely communicate the rhythm and pace of the duet, the height of the notes to be sung, the rests to be taken, but also the affective coloring of the performance, so that a competent singer can make use of his or her own affective register as an instrument. It goes without saying that neither singer nor listener will actually know the duet except as it is performed; listeners without musical training, it should be added, will mainly know the duet through its effects on them, through the various ways that the music moves them.

Coming to know "O nuit d'amour" is the fruit of exercising both intellect and affect. Though theory is involved in the understanding of the sheet music, the information on the page aims at engaging the practical intellect and will to produce a performance. Finally, the particular combination of intellect and affect involved in both performing and appreciating this duet will be a function of the expertise of the performer or listener. These three points can help us understand what Aquinas means by his distinction between "knowing by a cognitive process" and "knowing by inclination."

## II. Intellect and Affect in Human Knowing

In the *Secunda secundae,* Aquinas writes:

> Wisdom denotes a certain rectitude of judgment according to the Eternal Law. Now rectitude of judgment is twofold: first, on account of perfect use of

reason, secondly, on account of a certain connaturality with the matter about which one has to judge. Thus, about matters of chastity, a man after inquiring with his reason forms a right judgment, if he has learnt the science of morals, while he who has the habit of chastity judges of such matters by a kind of connaturality.

Accordingly it belongs to the wisdom that is an intellectual virtue to pronounce right judgment about Divine things after reason has made its inquiry, but it belongs to wisdom as a gift of the Holy Ghost to judge aright about them on account of connaturality with them: thus Dionysius says (Div. Nom. ii) that "Hierotheus is perfect in Divine things, for he not only learns, but is patient of, Divine things."[2]

Scholars' understanding of what Aquinas means by a judgment from connaturality that is distinct from a judgment that is the term of a process of discursive reasoning has developed over the course of the twentieth century to the present day. The best way to present the notion of a judgment from connaturality is to tell the story of this development.[3]

At the beginning of the twentieth century, interest in Aquinas's psychology was flourishing, particularly interest in his cognitive psychology. A number of scholars turned their attention to the question of knowledge from connaturality: the work of Noble, Simonin, and Rolland-Gosselin is representative of the mainstream of research at this time. Though these scholars differed on particular points of interpretation, their work converged in two specific areas: first, any account of judgment in Aquinas must privilege judgment as the term of a process of discursive reasoning; second, knowing from connaturality cannot be the result of a form of judgment separate from or autonomous with respect to discursive

[2] *STh* II-II, q. 45, a. 2.

[3] I am relying here on two sources: Rafael-Tomas Caldera, *Le jugement par inclination chez saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Vrin, 1980); and Kevin E. O'Reilly, *Aesthetic Perception: A Thomistic Perspective* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007). A fuller treatment would need to acknowledge the recent work on emotion and connaturality in the field of ethics of such scholars as Romanus Cessario, O.P., Simon Harak, S.J., Paul J. Waddell, Diana Fritz Cates, and Edward Vacek S.J. See the recent article by Thomas Ryan, S.M.: "Revisiting Affective Knowledge and Connaturality in Aquinas," *Theological Studies* 66 (2005): 49-68.

reasoning. Thus, for Noble, knowing from connaturality adds nothing to the content of a judgment reached discursively, but merely adds an affective dimension to cognitive process, a dimension that focuses perception, motivates reasoning, and intensifies the subjective commitment to the judgment made. All genuine knowing is the result of the exercise of intelligence and reason; affect supplies motivation and density, but nothing more.[4]

In 1920, Jacques Maritain published his famous *Art and Scholasticism* (which was followed in 1952 with the A. W. Mellon lectures in art and poetry, published in 1953 as *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*), in which he re-examined the question of knowledge by connaturality in light of an understanding of the beautiful as *id quod visum placet* (what gives pleasure on sight).[5] His speculative proposal, influenced by his reading of the work of Bergson, was that knowledge of the beautiful is an intuitive and experiential knowing by connaturality that does not require a judgment; rather, the objectivity of this knowing is immediately given in the conforming of the mind to the beautiful thing, without the mediation of a discursive process of reasoning. Knowledge of the beautiful is thus in principle autonomous from knowledge of the true, and the unity of the true and the beautiful is preserved in the knower because the one subject knows both objects.[6]

Umberto Eco, in his *Il problema estetico in San Tommaso*, published in 1956, responded forcefully and critically to Maritain's proposal by engaging in a close and wide-ranging

[4] Caldera, *Le jugement par inclination*, 12-27.

[5] This definition, as Umberto Eco points out (*Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, trans. Hugh Bredin [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986] 128), is an attempt by Maritain to pin down Aquinas's meaning: "What Aquinas actually wrote was *pulchra dicuntur quae visa placent*. The difference is considerable. Maritain's proposition is a dogmatic attempt to define once and for all the ontological character of beauty. Aquinas' is more like a sociological finding. It means 'things which give pleasure when they are perceived are called beautiful', and this is to introduce the problem, not solve it." I am indebted to a reviewer from *The Thomist* for this reference.

[6] O'Reilly, *Aesthetic Perception*, 12-15 and 51-59.

textual reading of Aquinas's writings on the question of aesthetics. In many ways, Eco's study is still the standard text on the question. His critical study of the relevant texts led him to affirm that, for Aquinas, there can be no question of knowing the beautiful without the positing of a judgment. He found no evidence to support an interpretation or development of Aquinas's cognitive psychology that would allow for the kind of separation and autonomy between the principles for knowing the beautiful and the principles for knowing the true. But in the process of affirming the unity of knowing by means of judgment, Eco's study did not take up the question of knowing by connaturality.[7]

It was not until the publication of Rafael-Tomas Caldera's *Le judgement par inclination chez Thomas d'Aquin* in 1980 that the question of knowing by connaturality was again taken up. Caldera's concern, however, was not knowledge of the beautiful but knowledge of the good. Starting from Eco's defense of the unity of knowing by means of judgment, Caldera posed the question of knowing by connaturality in a new way: what kind of judgment corresponds to knowing by connaturality? After a careful exegesis of *connaturalis* and its cognates in Aquinas's corpus, Caldera concludes that:

1. The basic distinction between acquired and infused wisdom, articulated in the *Secunda secundae* (*STh* II-II, q. 45, a. 2), rests on a distinction in the manner of reaching judgment: *per modum scientiae* and *per modum inclinationis* or *connaturalitatem*.
2. Judgment *per modum inclinationis* must be understood according to an analogy from the judgement of the virtuous person with respect to the particular good that is the proper object of virtuous willing. It is thus a judgment of value about particular goods presented to the will in the concrete.

[7] Umberto Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Hugh Bredin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), 190-201; see also O'Reilly, *Aesthetic Perception*, 31-33.

3. This judgment of value is rational in two ways: first, it is a rooted in the response of the will to a good understood and presented to it by the intellect; second, it is the function of a properly ordered loving, which means that the inclination of the will towards the particular good is truly intelligible, that is, it is a rational measure of the specific good as corresponding (or not) to the genuine flourishing of this virtuous person here and now.
4. The inclination or interior shift of the will (*affectus*) is not only a motive force, but mediates to the judgment the experienced sense of the conditions under which this good is a genuine good for me, and the fact that these conditions are fulfilled here and now. The judgment from inclination is thus not the result of discursive operations, but it rests nevertheless on rational grounds, namely, the authentic inclination of the rational appetite responding to a genuine good or evil.[8]
5. While this affective knowing is distinguished by Aquinas from judgement *per modum scientia*, it is important to notice that in the actually operating subject both kinds of judgment interpenetrate and interact, such that judgment *per modum scientiae* can be enriched and confirmed by affective knowing, and judgment *per modum inclinationis* can be more intentionally exercised by one who understands the principles of ethics.[9]

Caldera's study represents a genuine breakthrough in understanding the role of affect in knowing according to Aquinas. The work of Kevin O'Reilly on aesthetic perception in Aquinas takes up this breakthrough and extends it to affective knowing of the beautiful. O'Reilly's concern is to pick up the

[8] Here it might be helpful to turn to the practice of Ignatian discernment of consolation and desolation as a reference: discernment of consolations and desolations is rooted in (1) noticing the inclinations of will; (2) recognizing the qualitative difference in affect between self-transcending and self-centered inclinations of the will, without resorting to theoretical explanations or analyses; and (3) making judgments about courses of action that correspond to God's will by trusting the evidence of these interior shifts in themselves.

[9] Caldera, *Le jugement par inclination*, 130-35.

question left unanswered by Eco's critique of Maritain: granted that for Aquinas the beautiful is known in a judgment, can we nevertheless speak of a connatural knowing of the beautiful? Using Caldera's exegesis and returning to the key texts studied by Maritain, O'Reilly posits that just as there is a judgment of value with respect to the good, so also we can recognize in Aquinas's fragmentary account of the beautiful a judgment of aesthetic value *per modum inclinationis*. The experience of pleasure upon seeing a beautiful object (or hearing a beautiful piece of music, or tasting a great dish, and so on) is a resting of the will in the intelligible conditions of the beautiful, namely, proportion (*proportio*—fitting arrangement of parts and fitting correspondence to our perception), integrity (*integritas*—possession of all that is formally necessary for being itself in the world), and clarity (*claritas*—communicativeness of itself to a perceiver). The person of taste, like the virtuous person in the case of the good, is the measure of the rationality of this affective shift.[10]

Caldera's breakthrough, and O'Reilly's application of it to the question of the beautiful, do leave a question open, however: if it is only the judgment *per modum connaturalitatem* of the virtuous, the person of taste, and the wise that can be truly rational in itself, what is the status of the affective knowing of most of us? Can judgment *per modum inclinationis*, whether of the good or the beautiful, be trained and developed? It is to this question that we now turn.

## III. The Place of Affect in Aquinas's Theological Method

In a question on Christ's teaching, Aquinas writes:

> It was fitting that Christ should not commit His doctrine to writing. First, on account of His dignity: for the more excellent the teacher, the more excellent should be his manner of teaching. Consequently it was fitting that Christ, as the most excellent of teachers, should adopt that manner of teaching whereby

[10] O'Reilly, *Aesthetic Perception*, 60-90.

His doctrine is imprinted on the hearts of His hearers; wherefore it is written (Mt. 7:29) that "He was teaching them as one having power." And so it was that among the Gentiles, Pythagoras and Socrates, who were teachers of great excellence, were unwilling to write anything. For writings are ordained, as to an end, unto the imprinting of doctrine in the hearts of the hearers.

Secondly, on account of the excellence of Christ's doctrine, which cannot be expressed in writing; according to Jn. 21:25: "There are also many other things which Jesus did: which, if they were written everyone, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written." Which Augustine explains by saying: "We are not to believe that in respect of space the world could not contain them . . . but that by the capacity of the readers they could not be comprehended." And if Christ had committed His doctrine to writing, men would have had no deeper thought of His doctrine than that which appears on the surface of the writing.

Thirdly, that His doctrine might reach all in an orderly manner: Himself teaching His disciples immediately, and they subsequently teaching others, by preaching and writing: whereas if He Himself had written, His doctrine would have reached all immediately. [11]

Question 42 of the *Tertia pars* of the *Summa theologiae* is part of Aquinas's theological interpretation of the mysteries of Christ's life. If we are fully to understand his response to the question of whether Christ should have produced a written doctrine, we need to insert his response into the cultural context of the thirteenth century. More specifically, we need to understand recent developments in the history of the medieval university, in book and manuscript studies, and in the study of the arts of the trivium in the Middle Ages.

Medieval scholars have, in recent decades, pursued a deeper and more complete understanding of the evolution of the role and responsibilities of the teacher in the Middle Ages, comparing the status and functions of the teacher in Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, as well as exploring the teacher-student relationship.[12] What emerges from this research is the

[11] *STh* III, q. 42, a. 4.

[12] Much of this research is well summarized in the *catalogue raisonné* for the exhibit *Lumières de la sagesse: Écoles médiévales d'orient et d'occident* co-hosted in the fall of 2013 by the Institut du monde arabe and the Bibliothèque de la Sorbonne in Paris. See, for example, Remy Gareil, "La fabrique des maîtres" (ibid., 55), citing the work of Georges Schoeler, *Écrire et transmettre dans les débuts de l'islam* (Paris: PUF, 2002); also Yann Dejugnat, "Voyager en quête de savoir à l'âge califal," in *Lumières de la*

significance of the figure of the master as a wise transmitter of a living knowledge; the privileged status of his discourse over written texts;[13] the significance of the interpersonal relation between master and pupil as a mediating structure of knowledge. Though the written text gains in importance in university education throughout the twelfth to fourteenth centuries as an independent source of knowledge, texts continued mainly to be "authorities" that were commented upon by masters in the context of the oral transmission of knowledge on their own "authority."[14] As Aquinas says, "the more excellent the teacher, the more excellent should be his manner of teaching. Consequently it was fitting that Christ, as the most excellent of teachers, should adopt that manner of teaching whereby His doctrine is imprinted on the hearts of His hearers; wherefore it is written (Mt. 7:29) that He was teaching them as one having power" (*STh* III, q. 42, a. 4).

These findings correspond to developments in book and manuscript studies which highlight the role of texts as supports

*sagesse*, 82, pointing to the importance of the *ijâza,* the personal licenses to teach passed on from master to master; see also Antoine Destemberg, *L'honneur des universitaires au Moyen Âge* (Paris: PUF, 2013).

[13] On this point, see especially Gareil, "La fabrique des maîtres," 55. Also Antoine Destemberg on the authority of the master, "Enseigner dans les universités médiévales," in *Lumières de la sagesse*, 225.

[14] Jonathan Berkey, "Enseigner et apprendre au temps des madrasas," in *Lumières de la sagesse*, 245: "But the idea that only persons could convey genuine learning endured through the texts passed on from one generation of scholars to another. On both sides of the Mediterranean, intellectual activity in the Middle Ages . . . consisted largely of reproducing and commenting on iterative productions of previous generations. . . . The general attitude towards writing and the book remained ambivalent. Personal reading and note-taking did not release students from comparing their reading of a text with that of their sheikh" ("Mais l'idée que seuls les individus pouvaient véhiculer un véritable savoir a perduré à travers les textes transmis d'une génération de savants à une autre. Des deux côtés de la Méditerranée, l'activité intellectuelle au Moyen Âge . . . consistait largement à reproduire et commenter les productions itératives des générations précédentes. . . . l'attitude générale envers l'écrit et le livre demeurait ambivalente. La lecture personnelle et la prise de note ne dispensait pas les étudiants de comparer leur lecture d'un texte avec celle de leurs cheikh") For a similar point from a strictly Christian context, see Destemberg, "Enseigner dans les universités médiévales," in 225.

for oral discourse and memorial exercises. Texts were still being written in the thirteenth century in order to be read aloud, whether privately or in groups.[15] The literary structure of texts is thus still marked by the needs and conventions of oral discourse, with its necessarily temporal progression. Texts are thus to be likened more to itineraries of thought than to systematic maps, and to instruments of transmission of oral discourse in all of its cognitive and affective dimensions. In themselves they have no value; as Aquinas says above, "writings are ordained, as to an end, unto the imprinting of doctrine in the hearts of the hearers," and "if Christ had committed His doctrine to writing, men would have had no deeper thought of His doctrine than that which appears on the surface of the writing."

These findings converge with recent developments in the study of the arts of the trivium, namely, grammar, dialectic and rhetoric.[16] The arts of the trivium represent, not primarily a set of norms for structuring and evaluating written texts, but rather practical rules for the responsible performance of tasks of reading for understanding (grammar), making and promoting judgments of truth in dialogue and debate (dialectic), and constructing and evaluating convincing discourse (rhetoric). Thinking is truly *artisanal*, a responsible performance of crafting thoughts for oneself or with and for others.[17] A second important conclusion flows from this: written texts are encoded with instructions for enacting operations of knowing and

[15] See, for example Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, eds., *Histoire de la lecture dans le monde occidental* ( Paris: Seuil, 2001), 115-52.

[16] Studies of the role of the trivium in the middle ages have blossomed in recent years, so that an exhaustive list of even the most significant works in just English and French would detain us for quite some time. I will suggest only a few useful examples. On rhetoric, see the works of Mary Carruthers, esp. *Rhetoric Beyond Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); for grammar, see Rita Copeland and Ineke Sluiter, eds., *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); and S. Reynolds, *Medieval Reading: Grammar, Rhetoric and the Classical Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); for dialectic, see Alex Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation: Pedagogy, Practice and Performance* (Philadephpia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

[17] On this point see, for example, Mary Carruthers's milestone *The Craft of Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

willing as one reads aloud or listens to an oral reading of the texts. Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* thus functions more like a page of sheet music—indeed, even more, like the lead sheet in jazz[18]—than a modern book or article.

We are now in a position to answer the question with which we ended part II. It is the role of the master, exercising the office of the wise, to form the knowing and willing of his students in the context of a personal relationship with them, so that they will become wise, virtuous persons and persons of taste. They will thereby be capable of making judgments of truth and judgments of value regarding the true, the good, and the beautiful, both *per modum scientiae* and *per modum inclinationis*. To this end, the master makes use of the tools provided by grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric. Dialectic is particularly ordered to develop the operations that correspond to discursive reasoning. Rhetoric, as Aristotle points out in his *On Rhetoric*, promotes connaturality with the good and the beautiful in a particular situation: persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal character, by appeal to the affect of the audience, and by the ability of the truth to communicate itself by itself.[19] These are all modes of inclining the will to promote a judgment by inclination or connaturality.

My own study of the text of the *Summa theologiae* has brought to light the significance of this role of rhetoric in Aquinas's theological method: at key points in the *Summa*, Aquinas proposes rhetorical arguments and strategies, particularly *exempla* and arguments of fittingness, to make his theological points.[20] As Aquinas points out in question 1 of the

[18] I am grateful to a reviewer from *The Thomist* for suggesting this further analogy, which captures the more "inventive" (in the rhetorical sense) activity of the reader or teacher working from a written text.

[19] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*1.1.1356a1-35, in Richard McKeon, ed., *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941), 1329-30.

[20] See my *Embracing Wisdom* (Toronto: PIMS Press, 2015). For a similar study of the role of narrative and dramatic meaning in the *Summa contra Gentiles* see Thomas Hibbs, *Dialectic and Narrative in Aquinas* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995). For an in-depth study of the cognitive and ontological status of the

*Prima pars*, rhetorical strategies such as the use of metaphor, far from being weak forms of argument, function in theology as one of the highest forms of instruction on the mysteries of faith, corresponding to the manner in which God teaches us in salvation history.[21] Given that the mysteries of faith are rational, since they are expressions of God's wisdom, but that their truthfulness is out of proportion to our cognitive capacities, it is often the case that the theologian's judgment must be on the basis of the connaturality provided by the theological virtue of faith; rhetorical arguments, in this context, bring that connaturality to act by promoting a judgment *per modum inclinationem* on the particular beauty or goodness of the mystery under consideration.

The best way to show this is by means of an example taken from the third part of the *Summa*, as Aquinas strives to elucidates the fittingness of the Incarnation as a means for our salvation:

> Now [the fittingness of the Incarnation] may be viewed with respect to our "furtherance in good." First, with regard to faith, which is made more certain by believing God Himself Who speaks; hence Augustine says (De Civ. Dei xi, 2): "In order that man might journey more trustfully toward the truth, the Truth itself, the Son of God, having assumed human nature, established and founded faith." Secondly, with regard to hope, which is thereby greatly strengthened; hence Augustine says (De Trin. xiii): "Nothing was so necessary for raising our hope as to show us how deeply God loved us. And what could afford us a stronger proof of this than that the Son of God should become a partner with us of human nature?" Thirdly, with regard to charity, which is greatly enkindled by this; hence Augustine says (De Catech. Rudib. iv): "What greater cause is there of the Lord's coming than to show God's love for us?" And he afterwards adds: "If we have been slow to love, at least let us hasten to love in return." Fourthly, with regard to well-doing, in which He set us an example; hence Augustine says in a sermon (xxii de Temp.): "Man who might be seen was not to be followed; but God was to be followed, Who could not be seen. And therefore God was made man, that He Who might be seen by man, and Whom man might follow, might be shown to man." Fifthly, with regard to the full participation of the Divinity, which is the true bliss of man and end of human life; and this is bestowed upon us by Christ's humanity; for

arguments of fittingness, see Gilbert Narcisse, *Les raisons de Dieu* (Fribourg: Presses Universitaires, 1997).

[21] *STh* I, q. 1, a. 9.

Augustine says in a sermon (xiii de Temp.): "Go was made man, that man might be made God." [22]

In this passage, Aquinas gives five reasons for the fittingness of the Incarnation from the perspective of our furtherance in the good, but none of the reasons given is presented in the form of a dialectical syllogism. Instead, in each case the reason is presented by means of a citation from Augustine. The first reason appeals to the experience of trusting a teacher; the second appeals to the experience of hope that arises in us when we are truly loved; the third to the experience of the birth of love in us in response to being shown love, and to the urgency of responding generously to the invitation to enter into friendship; the fourth appeals to the experience of beholding an attractive example for our own behavior; and the fifth appeals to our own experience of our desire for communion with God. Each of these reasons promotes an inclining of the will to a genuine good or a true beauty; it thus constitutes an appeal to make a judgment from inclination, to give assent to the wisdom of God in rescuing us by means of the Incarnation on the basis of a judgment of value whose basis is the experience of the affect or interior shift of the will elicited by the rhetorical strategy employed. In addition, the sequence of reasons is structured according to the rational itinerary of the *Secunda secundae*: faith, then hope, then love, then virtuous living according to the example of Christ, and finally fulfillment of our vocation to communion with God. Aquinas's reply is thus a well-proportioned, whole, and communicative poetic re-presentation of the wisdom one has been formed into by the itinerary of the *Summa*; it invites a further judgment *per modum inclinationis* of the beauty of God's choice to rescue us by means of the Incarnation.

[22] *STh* III, q. 1, a. 2.

## Conclusion: What Aquinas Can Teach Us about Affect in Theology

Aquinas understands theology as a practice of the office of the wise that participates in God's teaching activity in history; this wisdom practice is aimed at the transformation of persons and sociocultural situations. Within this larger context, the *Summa theologiae* is a handbook and textbook for the ministerial formation of young Dominicans to be wise preachers and confessors in the rapidly changing context of thirteenth-century Europe. Like any good teacher in the Middle Ages, Aquinas promotes the exercise of both judgments *per modum scientiae* and *per modum inclinationis* as practices that form his students (and, remotely, his colleagues) into persons of virtue, taste, and wisdom. He promotes the exercise of the first by means of dialectical syllogisms and Aristotelian demonstrations; he promotes the exercise of the second by means of rhetorical strategies, particularly arguments of fittingness and *exempla*. The principles of rhetoric can thus serve as principles of theological method and theological understanding.

Contemporary systematic theology has become very much interested in the question of beauty and its role in the experience and knowledge of God; pastoral theology has for many years now been raising the question of the place and role of affect in theological reflection. Aquinas's theological practice can serve as a masterful example of and a useful resource we can draw upon to learn how to appropriate the role of affect in theology in our own day.

# BOOK REVIEWS

*Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth: An Unofficial Catholic-Protestant Dialogue*. Edited by BRUCE L. MCCORMACK and THOMAS JOSEPH WHITE, O.P. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2013. Pp. viii + 304. $36.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-0-8028-6976-0.

The essays collected in *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth: An Unofficial Catholic-Protestant Dialogue* are the fruit of a conference held at Princeton Theological Seminary in 2011. As presented in this volume, they form five pairs, one each by a Catholic and a Protestant theologian, focused on the topics of (1) the being of God, (2) the Trinity, (3) Christology, (4) grace and justification, and (5) election, providence, and natural law. Thomas Joseph White provides a lengthy introduction, and Bruce McCormack concludes with a brief epilogue. All of the essays at least touch on both Barth and Thomas, though in varying degrees. It must be noted that, with the exception of the essays by White and Wawrykow, the Catholic interlocutors generally engage Barth less deeply than the Protestant interlocutors engage Thomas. Why this might be the case is a point to which I will return.

Under the topic of the being of God, Robert Jenson begins with a brief, reflective essay focusing on the radical implications of Barth's account of God's "being" or "reality" as "event," "I," and "decision" (*Ereignis*, *ich*, *Entscheidung*), and on the content of God's essence as "the loving One." Jenson argues that if we follow Barth's trajectory, we arrive at the paradoxical view that "God's being is an *im*plosion of freedom, so sheerly contingent that it is not contingent *on* anything and so is the one necessity. *And* it is an *ex*plosion of love, so sheerly a commitment to the other that it is freedom" (51). Thomas gets only a brief mention, though presumably he stands as the conventional account of God's being that provides the background against which the true radicalism of Barth's account can appear. Richard Schenk offers a Catholic counterpoint, engaging not so much with Barth himself as with Jenson and other post-Barthian thinkers such as Ebeling. His essay responds to Jenson's paradoxes of imploding freedom and exploding love by educing from Thomas's writings "a theodicy-capable theology of the cross" (57) that operates within a commitment to God's impassibility as traditionally understood. Implicit in Schenk's argument is the wager that a God who is, *qua*

God, beyond all suffering is a richer resource of hope for suffering humanity than is a God who suffers with us in his divinity.

Under the topic of the Trinity, Guy Mansini's essay launches something of a preemptive strike on Bruce McCormack, who, in a widely discussed essay ("Grace and Being," in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, 92-110) and in subsequent writings, has developed Barth's notion of Christ's obedience on the Cross as the manifestation in time of his "intra-trinitarian obedience" to the Father in order to argue against traditional notions of divine being and in favor of something like the view Jenson sketches in his essay. Mansini draws on the patristic and monastic traditions as well as Thomas to explore the humility and obedience of Christ, arguing that obedience can only be a virtue of a created will: "'To obey,' like 'to be caused' or 'to be moved,' belongs exclusively to the created order" (82). Thus, Christ is humble and obedient *qua* human, not *qua* divine, and therefore one cannot sensibly speak of an intra-trinitarian obedience but only of the obedience of Christ's human will to the one divine will that is common to the Father, Son, and Spirit. McCormack's essay, which follows, seeks to show that the position he has developed by way of Barth's theology can also be grounded in Thomas's theology of the relation of divine processions and missions, at least as this has been interpreted by Matthew Levering. McCormack reads Thomas with notable ecumenical generosity, seeing in Thomas's view that the processions and missions are but two aspects of the one act of God something akin to Barth's notion of God's being as the event of God's self-determination to be our God in Christ. One might ask, however, whether McCormack, in his desire to bring Thomas and Barth together, does not too closely identify Thomas's "act" with Barth's "event" in a way that pays insufficient attention to the Scholastic distinction between "first act"—in this case the divine *actus essendi*—and "second act." In light of his elision of this distinction, McCormack's transposition of Thomas into a Barthian, actualist key is not fully convincing.

In the section on Christology, Keith Johnson leads off with an essay that, like McCormack's, underscores the similarity of Thomas and Barth, in this case on the issue of "natural revelation." He shows that Thomas has a much stronger account of the need for divine revelation than is sometimes recognized, and that Barth, at least in his later thought, allows for greater knowledge of God from creation than has often been acknowledged. The real difference between them is that whereas Thomas "understands the saving work of Christ as an element *within* a more basic order of creation and return[,] . . . Barth sees God's relationship with humanity as the outworking of God's eternal decision to enter into covenant with humans in Christ, and creation is an element within *this* more basic divine order" (152-53). In other words, Thomas locates redemption within creation whereas Barth sees creation as always already the act of the God who saves us through Jesus

Christ. For Johnson, Barth's position has the strength of always having natural knowledge of God governed and determined by our knowledge of Jesus Christ. Thomas Joseph White's essay approaches the topic of Christology from the perspective of the *communicatio idiomatum* and is in many ways, like Mansini's essay, in dialogue with McCormack's interpretation of Barth, specifically the attribution of Christ's human attributes to the divine being such that "there is an analogue to the mystery of the Incarnation and the humanity of Christ in the eternal life of God itself" (161). White employs Thomas to argue that this departs from classical Chalcedonian Christology by attributing the properties of Christ's human nature to his divine nature (and thus to the Godhead) rather than to his divine Person. White further argues that this departure is rooted not, as Barth (and most Barthians) would have it, in fidelity to the biblical narrative but in the presumptions of the modern German philosophical tradition.

Of all the contributions to this volume, the essays in the section on grace and justification by Joseph Wawrykow and Amy Marga most closely complement and supplement each other. Wawrykow offers very clear expositions of Thomas and Barth on grace, noting their common insistence on the absolute nature of God's initiative in salvation while recognizing points on which they diverge. For example, Thomas, unlike Barth, does not hold that human beings after justification are *simul justus et peccator*, though he does hold, like Barth, that Christians in a state of grace are constantly in need of God's help to remain in a state of grace. Marga, not unlike Johnson, sees the principal difference between Thomas and Barth in the latter's relentless focus on "Jesus Christ as *the one, singular* point into which all reality is absorbed, both sinful and reconciled" (228). As Marga describes it, for Barth the "alien righteousness" of the Reformation is radicalized so that in the justification of the Christian, "grace *destroys* in order to make alive. . . . [It] does away with sin in a manner that is fatal, radical, even annihilating, in order to create a completely new subject on a daily basis" (231-32). If this occasionalist reading of Barth is correct—and I am not entirely convinced it is; Barth sometimes speaks this way but not consistently—then Barth surely is quite far from Thomas theologically, denying Thomas's basic insight that grace perfects and does not destroy nature, and making a project such as Thomas undertakes in the *Secunda pars* of the *Summa theologiae* into a quixotic (if not idolatrous) quest for a stable subject in whom virtue develops over time.

The essays by John Bowlin and Holly Taylor Coolman on election, providence, and natural law treat what could be described broadly as questions of ethics or moral theology. In what may be the single strongest essay in the collection, Bowlin undertakes to explore the logic of "relationship and requirement," that is, "how social relationships generate binding obligations" (241 and 246). He is less interested in offering an exposition or comparison of Barth and Thomas than in employing them for constructive purposes. In the course of doing so, however, he manages to make interesting

observations about both thinkers, particularly concerning Barth's rootedness in Kantian thought and his employment of "Nietzschean suspicion" (251) against the Thomist account of how natural goods and natural law can be taken up and transformed by grace (in this way, he supports White's claim concerning the importance of Barth's philosophical commitments). Bowlin points to the same occasionalism that Marga does, but assesses it more negatively as generating a troubling ethical voluntarism in Barth. While noting that Thomas's moral theology has its own difficulties, he argues that it does not have *this* difficulty, precisely because the "imperfect and dependent constancy of habit" (259) provides Christians, in Thomas's account, a place to stand in assessing the affairs of the world and allows for a certain natural set of relationships governed by natural requirements. Coolman's essay focuses on law as a lens through which to view Thomas's account of the relationship of divine and human action. After the focus on virtue that has so dominated accounts of Thomas's ethics in recent decades, Coolman's essay suggests that the time may be ripe to return to what Thomas has to say about law. Both Bowlin and Coolman note as a strength of Thomas's approach to ethics its relative openness to "outsiders": Bowlin in terms of "forbearance across difference" in the context of fraternal correction, and Coolman in terms of differing degrees of participation in eternal law.

Any collection of conference papers will have a certain unevenness. In this case, the unevenness is not so much one of quality—none of the essays is poorly done—but of intention. That is to say, some essays set out primarily to offer an exposition either of Barth or Thomas or of both; others seek to effect a reconciliation between the two theologians; and still others aim at a constructive theological exploration of a topic that makes use of Barth and Thomas as resources. As I noted at the outset, the essays are also uneven in the depth and breadth with which they treat Thomas and Barth. While most of the Protestant contributors seem to have done their Thomas homework (even if I do not always agree with their reading of him), similar engagement with Barth is not always evident on the part of the Catholic contributors: they may well have done their homework, but it simply does not show up as obviously in their essays.

This latter unevenness prompts speculation as to why this might be the case. Certainly it is true that no mainline Protestant theologian can receive a theological education and avoid Thomas entirely, whereas the Catholic theologian who has read Barth is still a fairly rare bird (even many Balthasarians, at least in America, seem largely to ignore the influence of Barth on Balthasar's thought). But all of the Catholic contributors to this volume clearly *have* read Barth, and so the unevenness of engagement is not simply a matter of unfamiliarity. Perhaps it is a matter of the different roles that each thinker is seen to have with regard to his tradition. Thomas is seen by most Protestants and many Catholics as *the* representative thinker of Roman

Catholic theology (Marga refers to him as "the Father of Modern Catholicism" [212]) in a way that Barth is not with regard to Protestant theology, even among devoted Barthians. Despite the subtitle of this collection—"An Unofficial Catholic-Protestant Dialogue"—Thomas has picked up over the years something of an "official" air. The impression one can get is that to engage Thomas is to engage Catholicism and its theology as a whole, whereas to engage Barth is simply to engage Barth, one theologian among many. To vindicate or refute Thomas is to vindicate or refute an entire tradition, whereas no one thinks that Protestantism stands or falls with Barth (though McCormack's conclusion to the collection does seem to turn Barth's actualism/occasionalism into something like a Protestant Principle). So, Protestant's engagement with Thomas has, in a sense, a much bigger payoff than Catholic engagement with Barth, and consequently gets a lot more invested in it.

One might ask, however, whether this disparity in the roles assigned to Thomas and Barth vis-à-vis their respective traditions actually fosters the ecumenical understanding across traditions that the contributors to this volume seek. Have theologians, both Catholic and Protestant, perhaps *over*invested in Thomas? Would some diversification of the theological portfolio help matters by bringing Bonaventure, Scotus, Suarez, Scheeben, Newman, Rahner, and others into the fray? (Mansini's essay does this somewhat with its patristic and monastic *ressourcement*.) At the very least, it would allow Thomas and Barth to meet on more even ground, as two theologians who speak *from* their respective traditions but do not necessarily speak *for* their traditions, at least not in any authoritative way. Of course, no conference and no collection of essays can do everything, but in almost every essay in this collection, there are at least moments when Thomas and Barth come together in genuine "unofficial" theological dialogue. In that regard, this volume is a hopeful sign for the future of theological discussion across Christian traditions.

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*Thomas Aquinas's "Summa Theologiae": A Guide and Commentary*. By BRIAN DAVIES, O.P. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. xv + 454. $105.00 (cloth), $31.95 (paper). ISBN: 978-0-19-938062-6 (cloth), 978-0-19-938063-3 (paper).

The purpose of this book is to provide guidance to a nonspecialist reader of Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*. It is not meant as a substitute for the text itself, but rather as a companion for a reader in order to offer explication for the most important arguments, a sense of the context of the whole, a quick survey of the terrain of a treatise, some historical context when necessary, and a prod to critical thinking. Davies's ambition is daunting. As the subtitle indicates, he intends the book to be both a guide and a commentary. If it were only a guide, it would focus on the truly critical themes in some depth in order to aid the reader through the various parts without commenting on everything. If it were only a commentary, its purpose would be largely expository and exegetical. It is hard to do both functions well on a work as large and complex as the *Summa theologiae*.

After a brief overview of Aquinas's life and a short commentary on the meaning of *sacra doctrina*, Davies turns to the topic of God. Given his previous work on Aquinas, it is not surprising that the strongest and longest section of his book concerns the *Prima pars*. Davies does a nice job of parsing the existence of God and mapping out the Five Ways in a manner suitable to his audience. He then turns to the question of how God does not exist, and makes it plain that the main thrust of Aquinas's treatment is apophatic, or negative. It is surprising that Davies never mentions the influence of Pseudo-Dionysius on Aquinas and generally downplays the Neoplatonic strains in Aquinas's theology. I would have thought that divine simplicity and goodness deserve more consideration, and I would have liked to see Davies give more insight for the reader on how to parse some of Aquinas's metaphysical terms (especially the real distinction in created beings and how this is the main marker of the ontological gap between God and creation). When Davies turns to how we name or use language about God, he signals to his readers that he is entering into an area that has been much debated. Not surprisingly, while he does a reasonable job of trying to explain how analogical predication works to a nonspecialist reader, specialists will have much to quibble about. At the heart of his explanation of analogy is the claim that analogy is primarily "a linguistic phenomenon in which one and the same word is used to speak of different things with connections of meaning that can be traced in each use of the word" (69). Analogy in Aquinas is more than a theory about language; it is embedded in a metaphysics of participation and creation that needs to be adumbrated to understand how analogy works. The subsequent treatment of God's knowing and willing is reliable, though more attention might have been paid to the practical model of divine knowing. When it comes to the Trinity,

Davies does a solid job of trying to explain that most complicated doctrine of Aquinas to a nonspecialist.

Davies misses the opportunity to explore the fundamental contrast that Aquinas draws between God's causal immanence in all things as Creator and his special, interpersonal, Trinitarian indwelling through grace, as the treatise on the Trinity segues into the treatise on creation. When turning to creation, Davies notes that the fundamental metaphysical principle behind Aquinas's account is that "the existence of something that does not exist by nature has to be caused" (110), although he seems diffident about its validity ("like it or not") and never mentions participation. Sometimes he speaks about God's causality in creation as "causally accounting for their *esse*" (ibid.) even as he notes that God is the ultimate and final cause of all that is in any way. Davies does a nice job on Aquinas's basic account of evil as a privation, but a stronger articulation of the Augustinian strains in his treatment of evil would be helpful to the reader. Davies provides understandably brief treatment in the chapter entitled "Angels and the Days of Creation," although I would argue that the treatise on the angels provides a handy primer on the fundamental distinction between the Creator and rational creation (as well as an important discussion on the origin of evil).

Davies's concluding consideration of the *Prima pars*—"Human Beings and Divine Government"—contains some flaws. The most glaring of these is how he explains the distinction between the agent intellect and the possible intellect. Davies follows Anthony Kenny's account whereby the agent intellect "is 'the human capacity to abstract universal ideas from particular sense-experience'" and the possible intellect "is 'the storehouse of those ideas'" (385 n. 18, quoting Kenny, *Aquinas* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980], 69). Davies describes the agent intellect as "a power we possess by which we make language, by which, in a sense, we create it"; it is what "accounts for actual understanding occurring" (136). But this is not what Aquinas thinks. For Aquinas, the agent intellect's activity is the abstraction of the form from the phantasm, while the possible intellect is what exercises the act of knowing. When Davies turns to Aquinas's account of the creation of the human person, I wish that he had spent less time on Adam and Eve and more time on question 93, where Aquinas probes the meaning of *imago Dei*. It would not be possible to overemphasize how central this is to the *Summa*.

As Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., has commented, the prologue to the *Secunda pars* divides the rest of the *Summa* into two topics: the end of human life (qq. 1-5) and the means to the end (the rest of the work). Davies covers the first five questions in four pages of text, as the pace of the book quickens considerably. What is astonishing to me is that there is no mention, not even in a footnote, of the endlessly debated problematic of the natural desire for the supernatural vision of God. Thomas Gilby, O.P., once described the textbook diagrams of the twelve acts of the mind as a "baroque swirl" of delicate interplay that is hard to convey in a few pages. So is the complex and

much-debated question of what the moral object of an act is for Aquinas. Davies provides an overview of Aquinas's account of emotions that might have spent more time on the nature of love. When he turns to the topic of habits and virtues, he begins by saying that "Aquinas distinguishes between two kinds of happiness" and what we need to achieve each kind of happiness is virtue: "To be happy in this life we need virtues that we can bring about in ourselves; to be happy in the next life we need virtues or gifts that only God can bring about in us" (188). Aquinas's talk of a twofold happiness is notoriously debated. The possibility of acquired natural moral virtue, its relationship to infused moral virtues, and how they operate in graced life topped off by the theological virtues is likewise debated. Davies does not seem to know some of the land mines that he is stepping on as he moves farther away from the doctrine of God and into the moral theology of Aquinas. Sin (three volumes in the McGraw-Hill *Summa*) is outlined in ten pages. Natural law merits one paragraph; grace gets eight pages. What is lacking in the treatment of Aquinas's moral theology is a sure sense of what is critically important to linger on and what can be passed by.

When Davies turns to the theological virtues at the head of the *Secunda secundae*, one wishes that he would have spent even just a page on what it means to say that God is the formal object of the theological virtues. The import of that claim for Aquinas's treatment of faith is not made clear by Davies, who begins instead by characterizing Aquinas's position on faith as "explicit belief in a series of propositions" (230). He then turns to the more important point of Aquinas that faith is primarily believing God precisely as First Truth and is a sharing in God's own knowledge. More attention is needed on the inner act of faith, and especially on the role of the will in belief, because the first two questions set up everything else that follows. Davies's treatment of charity in Aquinas is nicely done, though I wish he would have grappled more with the consequences of saying that there is no true virtue without charity and emphasized more what it means to say that charity is the form of all the virtues. The cardinal virtues and their opposing vices dominate the rest of the *Secunda secundae*. The one cardinal virtue that Davies raises a critical concern with is temperance, particularly as it has to do with sexual activity. Davies's main problem is that he does not think that Aquinas has provided "a precise account of what 'natural' means when it comes to thinking about sex" (275). What Davies especially objects to is Aquinas's claim that the natural *telos* of human sexuality is procreation.

Davies's treatment of Christ in the *Tertia pars* is strong on the metaphysical side but weak on the theological side, mainly because he does not seem to understand the meaning of Aquinas's arguments from fittingness (*ex convenientia*). So the first question on the motive of the Incarnation is not of great interest. But once we turn to the metaphysics of the Incarnation all the way through to the hypostatic union, Davies is a sure and clear expositor of

Aquinas. He flags a bit, however, as he moves towards Christ's mediation. His account of the life of Christ is severely hampered by his inability to understand Aquinas's method. He does a good job of explaining what Aquinas means by describing Christ's death as a kind of satisfaction, but not how it is also a sacrifice. The account of the *Summa* concludes with a fine overview of Aquinas's treatment of the sacraments.

Brian Davies took on a herculean task in this book. In the Preface, he stresses that his "aim . . . is to consider the *Summa* as a whole" (xiv). As indicated in this review, I think Davies has done a fine job on many parts of the *Summa*, especially the *Prima pars*. But there are too many moments in the moral and Christological parts of the *Summa* where the account is lacking a sure and magisterial hand at explaining what Aquinas is trying to do. I do not know who could have been asked to comment on the *Summa* as a whole with enough familiarity with all of its parts to confidently take a reader through this cathedral-like text. I have only met one person who I know could have done this: the late Thomas C. O'Brien, who coedited the McGraw-Hill *Summa* with Thomas Gilby. I was blessed to have sat at the feet of O'Brien for many years poking around the *Summa*. He was a rare and wonderful man who was so familiar with the *Summa* that you thought he might be channeling Reginald of Piperno.

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*Freedom, Truth, and Human Dignity: The Second Vatican Council's Declaration on Religious Freedom: A New Translation, Redaction History, and Interpretation of "Dignitatis humanae."* By DAVID L. SCHINDLER and NICHOLAS J. HEALY, JR. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2015. Pp. xiv + 477. $45.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-0-8028-7155-8.

"I fear that you are going to give the inaccurate impression that this document was exclusively the work of the Americans at the Council, or nearly so," wrote Ernest Primeau, an American bishop who helped revise *Dignitatis humanae* (*DH*) at Vatican II, to a priest-journalist. "The truth is . . . that many others from other nations played an important role in the writing and passage of the declaration." Despite Primeau's warning, popular and scholarly interpretations of *DH* have often hewed closely to John Courtney Murray's juridical approach, usually in contrast to the integralism of Cardinal Alfredo

Ottaviani and the Spanish episcopate. Yet "many others" did not fit into those two groups, for a large contingent of bishops favorable to religious liberty nonetheless sought to undergird the juridical reasoning for the right with an ontological foundation.

David L. Schindler and Nicholas Healy promote these other voices in *Freedom, Truth, and Human Dignity*. Indeed, they argue that the other voices—the "French" or "ontological" school comprised of bishops such as Alfred Ancel and Karol Wojtyła—provide the true key to *DH*'s meaning and significance. The book thus responds from the perspective of *Communio* theology to Murray-ite political theologies that are critical of John Paul II's emphasis on truth as the basis for freedom. Accompanying Schindler's and Healy's essays are conciliar texts charting the origin and influence of this ontological school: the six conciliar drafts, the oral and written interventions of Wojtyła, and an oral intervention of Ancel. These texts, transcribed from the *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II* (*AS*), have been translated by Patrick T. Brannon, S.J., and Michael Camacho. Also included is a side-by-side comparison of the third and sixth drafts that displays the changes made to the juridical position in response to the ontological school.

Schindler's 170-page essay, "Freedom, Truth, and Human Dignity: An Interpretation of *Dignitatis Humanae* on the Right to Religious Freedom," is the heart of the work. Schindler recapitulates in a fresh way themes from his prior analyses of liberalism and Murray. In section 1, he summarizes how Wojtyła's interventions influenced the evolution of *DH* such that Murray's juridical approach became subordinated to an emphasis on truth as the foundation and *telos* of freedom. He conveys Wojtyła's concern that *DH* not divide reason and revelation, but that reason be presented as capable of knowing that religion is "nature's crown and summit" (50). Section 2 outlines Murray's postconciliar objections to *DH*'s final version, namely, that it assumes that the American juridical approach leads to relativism and that its insistence on truth as religious liberty's foundation undermines the universality of the right by degrading the liberty of those in error. To the first, Schindler replies (in section 3) that Murray's juridical approach necessarily entails what Servais Pinckaers, O.P., called the "freedom of indifference," Murray's denials of relativism notwithstanding. The juridical approach leads to the conception of civil space as something neutral to truth-claims about God, but finally results in a state-enforced indifferentism that limits the religious liberty of those who hold that all of existence, prior to human freedom, is intrinsically ordered to God. "The human act, considered from the perspective of the juridical order, is first empty; and truth thus becomes, *from that same juridical perspective*, adventitious, something that, as such, cannot but logically burden the free-intelligent human act by arbitrarily limiting and closing what is considered by government, for legal purposes, to be simply open, or abstracted from all (metaphysical-religious) content" (79). This

abstracted civil order entails a hidden metaphysical commitment, then. By leading to an agnostic legal order, Murray's juridicalism cannot universally protect the right of religious liberty because it forces those with a proper conception of the human relation to truth and God into a legal framework abstracted from that truth. The reader may think of the view of freedom's relation to truth contained in recent U.S. Supreme Court cases. To Murray's second objection, Schindler argues (in section 4) that the intrinsic relation between freedom and truth in *DH* is capable of affirming a universal right to religious liberty precisely because of the intrinsic link between human interiority and God. This section contains a metaphysical argument about the nature of human interiority and freedom in relation to truth, drawing upon Aristotle, Josef Pieper, and Kenneth Schmitz. Section 5 clarifies the nature of the right to religious liberty as a negative immunity from coercion based on the prior positive duty to the truth. Section 6 draws from John Paul II and Benedict XVI to support the argument for *DH*'s inner coherence, and section 7 summarizes Schindler's argument. Section 8 discusses the argument's ramifications for a host of related theological issues, such as the state-society distinction and government competency in religion. Here, Schindler advances, against Murray's interpretation of secularity, a *Communio* theology of the Church's indirect power in society through the laity in communion with the hierarchy (131-51). Section 9 concludes with an intervention into debates about modern subjective rights based on the foregoing exposition of *DH*.

The contribution of Schindler's essay is not to show the process by which the ontological school modified Murray's juridical approach. That story is well-known to scholars of the document, even if they disagree about its significance. Rather, Schindler's contribution is to elicit from "the key elements . . . in the text itself" a theological argument for the coherence of the position articulated in *DH* and amplified by John Paul II and Benedict XVI. Schindler is clear that he "does not mean to suggest . . . that *DH* developed a fully integrated theory in defense of this ontological unity of freedom and truth characteristic of the person in relation to God" (93). Instead, he offers his own powerful metaphysical argument for the development of the Church's teaching on religious liberty as "*an expression of her understanding of the nature of truth in its inner relation to freedom:* of the nature of truth as open to freedom, and freedom to truth, in the *inmost ontological structure of each*" (109). In contrast, thinkers such as Murray and Marcel Lefebvre share the assumption of an extrinsic relation between truth and freedom (80-82); so does, apparently, Pius IX in his magisterial teaching (188 n. 118). Any doctrinal discontinuity in *DH* stems from continuity in the Church's ancient emphasis on truth, now better understood in its relation to freedom through the modern emphasis on interiority.

Schindler's treatment of the Church's position is preferable to Murray's positing of moral-religious and legal orders so distinct that civil freedom is abstracted from religious truth. At the same time, Schindler's entirely

metaphysical approach to the issue is not without its own weakness in that it lacks a theology of law that can relate his theocentric ontology of the human act to the human power to order national and international societies by law. That nexus between the moral and juridical orders was a significant consideration in Pius XII's and John XXIII's social teachings, which prepared the way for *DH*. While this reviewer agrees with Schindler that Murray badly construed that nexus, Murray did not invent the juridical concerns of those popes nor the changes in the twentieth-century political fabric. Schindler overwhelmingly succeeds in illuminating the errors entailed by Murray's position. But if one were to adopt Schindler's neglect of the juridical order, one would have to wonder why any juridical elements remained in *DH* and why the ontological school instead worked to place them on a better foundation.

The principle of selection for the historical and textual elements of the book is to provide evidence of the ontological school's influence on the final draft. Healy's redaction history, "The Drafting of *Dignitatis Humanae*," aims "to provide a brief overview of each successive draft, and to call attention to the some [*sic*] of the important changes introduced into the final text" (213). (The book could have benefitted from another round of editing. For example, "of law by society" should be "of society by law" [5]; M. Dubois was an archbishop [219]; *claris recalit* should be *clarius recolit* [232]; and there is a double entry in the bibliography [471-72].) Drawing upon conciliar histories, journals, and documents, Healy charts *DH*'s development on topics such as the limits to religious liberty and the competency of the state in religious matters. The changes arose from a desire among many bishops, including Pope Paul VI, for a richer anthropological grounding of religious freedom and a better harmonization of the juridical approach with traditional doctrine. These changes were important for the passage of *DH* and expressed the mature mind of the council. One example is the textual connection between Ancel's intervention (given in the name of more than a hundred French bishops and many others) and the insertion in the fifth draft of his *fundamentum ontologicum* for the right to religious freedom—namely, man's natural inclination and duty to seek the truth (227-29). This became *DH* 2 § 2 (Latin) and displaced Murray's reasoning as the primary grounding for religious liberty. Strange in light of the inclusion of all of Wojtyła's interventions, the editors included only Ancel's oral one, when *DH* 2 § 2 comes almost verbatim from Ancel's written remarks (*AS* IV/2:18-20; Appendix, 608-9). At times, Healy states changes without giving the rationale behind them (e.g., the conditional establishment of religion in *DH* 6 § 3 [230]). Although he unearths little new historical material, his draft summaries and compilation of changes are thorough and illuminate *DH*'s development in a helpful way.

Brannon and Camacho's translations open the conciliar drafts and Wojtyła's interventions to a wider readership. Outside of *AS*, the only more

comprehensive compendium of documents pertaining to *DH* is Francisco Gil Hellín's Latin *Synopsis*. The texts have been transcribed accurately, with one curiosity: what is presented as the final form of *DH* is a slightly modified form of the sixth and final draft (1-37; see *AS* IV/6:703-18). Unlike the other documents, there is no indication of this text's provenance. Since the body of the sixth draft is nonetheless identical to the promulgated version (*AS* IV/7:663-73; *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 [1966]: 929-43), there is no loss of accuracy in that regard. Schindler and Healy's text has the final text's punctuation and omission of the sixth draft's textual apparatus, but has the sixth draft's paragraph headings and more numerous endnotes. Publishing this version of the sixth draft yields the tremendous benefit of conveying *DH*'s original notes with their substantial source quotations. Prior to promulgation, these notes were reduced to citations, and the nonecclesiastical sources were expunged. Readers can therefore see exactly which quotations comprise the lengthy patristic-papal florilegium accompanying *DH* 12, or which lines of Leo XIII's *Officio sanctissimo* are cited in *DH* 13.

The English translation of *DH* is an improvement over other versions in several places, as indicated by a helpful apparatus. There are a few very minor translation mistakes (e.g., *recentiorum* rendered "of the recent" [4-5]). The translation appears to avoid Murray's renderings whenever possible, even when the drafting committee's *relationes* support him in particular instances. One example is whether the concept of public order in *DH* 7 § 3 is, as *partem boni communis fundamentalem*, "a fundamental part of the common good" (Brannon-Camacho) versus "the foundational part" (cf. Murray: "the basic component"). The distinction between public order and common good—already in use in civil and canon law—was introduced by Murray into the third draft to avoid problems arising from the argument for the limitation of abuses taken from the common good understood in its fullest amplitude. The *relationes* of the final drafts explain that public order, which is comprised of the essential conditions for society's existence as such, is the common good's foundational part and thus provides the principle for state limitation of religious liberty (*AS* IV/4:194-95; IV/5:155; IV/6:722 [*in sua parte fundamentali*], 740). The ontological school did not demur but, as Schindler and Healy show, was led by Wojtyła to ground public order in the "objective moral order." Schindler's comments about the public order's intrinsic relation to the common good are apt (119-21), and using the translation "a fundamental part" ostensibly ensures the openness of *ordo publicus* to the same common good. Given the *relationes*, however, this translation is unnecessary and tends to muffle, rather than clarify, a key juridical note in *DH*. This is perhaps a minute criticism, but in a book very critical of Murray, such a choice seems to deny every contribution of the American Jesuit, down to the smallest indefinite article.

In sum, Schindler and Healy have provided a convincing and needed corrective to taking Murray's approach to religious liberty as the primary

hermeneutical key to *DH*. The book is at its best in connecting human interiority and freedom to the truth about God, both in the conciliar and postconciliar magisterium and in *Communio* theology. All the same, without clearly relating the human inclination to the truth to the juridical concerns that animated Murray from the beginning, the corrective passes over the nature of those concerns. The danger is a dissolution of the juridical order into the ontological in the attempt to articulate an intrinsic connection between the two, rendering less intelligible the path to *DH* from prior stages of Church teaching.

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*Christ in the Life and Teaching of Gregory of Nazianzus*. By ANDREW HOFER, O.P. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xi + 270. $105.00 (cloth). ISBN 978-0-19-968194-5.

Fr. Andrew Hofer has written a cleverly conceived treatise on Gregory Nazianzen, one whose main focus is Gregory's vision of his own life (and the life of Christians more generally) as both *imitatio Christi* and *participatio Christi*. Hofer grounds his account of this *imitatio* and *participatio* in Gregory's core dogmatic account of the person of Christ. The book thus offers us a study, focusing on one central author, of the ways in which a Nicene Christology could shape and stimulate (as well as be shaped and stimulated *by*) an account of the Christian life.

The first chapter is an extended meditation on the nature of the "word" in Gregory. Here, Hofer begins by exploring how Gregory situates himself in the ancient battle—or at least the ancient literary *topos* of such a battle—between philosophy and rhetoric. Not surprisingly, Hofer emphasizes that Gregory sees himself as a philosopher, but one for whom the Christian life offers the true form of a philosophical life. The discussion then turns toward ways in which Gregory sees the Scriptures as providing a basis for discussing and modeling virtually all aspects of the Christian life. Hofer offers a little discussion of the manner in which Gregory adapts ancient rhetorical traditions of, for example, the *paradeigma* (see 44), but these debts are acknowledged mostly *en passant*.

The second chapter takes us to the heart of the book and does an excellent job of setting up the author's theme. Considering Gregory's poetic auto-

biographical writing, Hofer argues that Gregory not only "blends Christ into the troubles, fears, and joys of his own life" but that he also "makes present the baptismal mysteries of one's life immersed in Christ's life" (56). In chapter 5, this extra dimension will receive a foundation in an account of the ways in which Gregory sees Christians drawn into the very events of Christ's life (156-60, commenting particularly on Gregory's *Or.* 40). There, Hofer emphasizes that Christ's life is itself "a mimesis of ours" (160), creating realities that may be models for ours, models into which we are then drawn. But, in chapter 2 itself, Hofer's main concern is to show the sheer variety of ways in which Gregory interweaves the scriptural account of Christ's life and ministry with his own. This complex set of reference styles is termed Gregory's "autobiographical Christology."

Chapter 3 pursues this agenda by turning to the ways in which Gregory uses the terminology of "mixture" to describe Christ—and to describe Christ's relationship to Christians. It is this chapter that Stanley Hauerwas, were he endorsing the book, would say is "worth the price of the book alone." Two things are particularly noteworthy. The first is the helpful discussion of the philosophical traditions that lie behind the terms Gregory uses. Hofer wishes us to take seriously traditions of thought on this theme that run between Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias, rather than to place most weight on the Stoic tradition. Hofer advocates for his thesis in a sensitive fashion, emphasizing the difficulty in distinguishing distinct traditions in late antiquity. Second, there is much to be learned from the manner in which Hofer stretches discussion of Christ himself as "mixture" so that it provides insight into Gregory's account of the Christian's relationship with Christ.

Chapter 4 follows a similar pattern, showing that a discussion of Christ's person in Gregory's writings (in this case, the famous sequence *epp.* 101, 102, and 202) has repercussions for wider themes. This chapter is less successful, in large part because of the sheer scale of the exercise attempted by Hofer. The largest section of the chapter (123-47) offers an extended discussion of Gregory's *ep.* 101. This famous letter gives an extended critique of Christological error. Hofer begins by situating the rhetoric of the latter within Gregory's wider antipolemical rhetoric and then focuses on the ten anathemas found within the letter. Hofer's purpose is to offer support for that long-standing strand of scholarship that argues that Apollinaris is the target (or one of the main targets) of Gregory's polemic. Another strand—and the one that has received more extensive support in recent years—argues that Gregory is mainly attacking the dualistic Christology of Diodore of Tarsus. Hofer certainly scores some points, even as he wisely admits that Gregory likely has a number of positions in view. But this question will undoubtedly remain disputed. Only, however, toward the end of the chapter (147-51, but see also 145-46) does Hofer get to that which is really central for his book's argument. If Gregory's concern in *ep.* 101 really is with Apollinaris's mind-less Christ, then once again we see Gregory using mixture language to show how the

character of Christ's person enables Christ to redeem and transform Gregory's own mind. It is because the Word "mixes" with the whole of the human that Gregory may see the Word as mixing with or assuming his own personal mind. The sheer extent of the space spent on *ep.* 101, attempting to make a case that (in the light of recent scholarship) would require a full commentary (including more overt treatment of the scholarly arguments opposed to Hofer's perspective), seems to leave underdeveloped that which most clearly concerns the core of Hofer's argument.

I have already mentioned chapter 5. Here, Hofer turns to the manner in which Gregory treats the mysteries of Christ's life and ministry. After treating *Or.* 38, 39, and 40, Hofer looks in some detail at the very interesting way in which Gregory treats the stoning of Christ (175-81). Hofer shows that Gregory expends considerable energy conforming his own experience of adversity to Christ's experience of stoning. In this fascinating discussion, a tension appears to which I will return at the end of this review. Sometimes Hofer highlights texts that speak of Christ's suffering as a paradigm for Christians undergoing suffering. But then, in other cases (e.g., his discussion on 177 of *or.* 37.4), Hofer points us to texts that "frame" (Hofer's term) such discussions of Christ as a paradigm whereby we are blended or mixed with Christ. Here, given the course of the book, I wanted more precision: where are we imitating, where are we participating, precisely what difference does it make that our imitation is "framed" by participation, and how far does the account of Christ's life as sacramental govern all of the exemplary material Hofer highlights? Hofer is most certainly onto some very important themes, but there is still more to be said, I think.

Chapter 6 turns, finally, to the manner in which Gregory speaks of Christ in his portrayals of Christian ministry. Again, Hofer offers us a very good discussion. Gregory portrays the exercise of ministry as a participation in Christ through the Spirit aimed at bringing to birth the same in those to whom the priest ministers. Hofer (concentrating particularly on *or.* 2) shows how Gregory presents Christ's life as a series of examples illustrating how the passions may be subdued. Gregory situates this within an account of his own ministry as taken up by Christ as a vehicle for Christ's action. Once again, the language of mixture serves multiple purposes. Because God takes up a human life in Christ and more broadly takes up human lives through Christ, it is possible for Gregory to offer human models for emulation. This is the context in which Hofer situates Gregory's praise of Athanasius and Basil (though, with reference to 206 n. 53, showing that Gregory praises Athanasius is not at all at odds with the claim that he was not intellectually influenced by the Alexandrian bruiser!). By the time I reached this point in the book, I had also begun to notice the frequency of references to—both praising and dissenting from—Christopher Beeley's recent synthetic treatment of Nazianzen. At a number of points, it would have been better to have engaged more directly

and extensively the classic secondary texts on Gregory's work.

This is a good and clever book. In particular, it opens for us new ways of looking at Gregory's theology and asks questions about how Nicene dogmatic positions shaped accounts of the Christian life. At the same time, there are certainly questions one may ask of it. I have already suggested that some of the directly dogmatic discussions could have been trimmed: the thesis from which this book stems perhaps threw its net too broadly. In the place of those discussions, I would have liked to see a more extended account of how Gregory engages and transforms traditional Greek rhetorical and philosophical discussions about the nature of the exemplary. Hofer nods toward discussions of the *paradeigma* (to reference one appropriate piece of terminology), but he does not do very much with it. As a consequence, I think Hofer sometimes reads too easily together (1) texts where Christ's life serves purely as an example for emulation with (2) places where the more richly theological vision of a sharing in those events is in view. A little more differentiation of these types and a little more accounting for their various backgrounds would have honed the discussion and enabled Hofer to penetrate even further into a fascinating discussion.

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*The Father's Will: Christ's Crucifixion and the Goodness of God*. By NICHOLAS E. LOMBARDO, O.P. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. ix + 270. $99.00 (cloth). ISBN: 978-0-19-968858-6.

The centrality that Christ's death by crucifixion has in Christian life, doctrine, and culture is scarcely in need of elaboration. Nevertheless, the relation between the will of the Father and the violent and humiliating manner of Christ's death raises substantive questions concerning the internal coherence of Christian claims about the love, goodness, and justice of God. In *The Father's Will*: *Christ's Crucifixion and the Goodness of God*, Nicholas E. Lombardo, O.P., confronts these questions, openly acknowledging their difficulty and seriousness, and provides a philosophically precise and theologically fresh response to the challenges they pose to the credibility of the Christian message.

The ten chapters of *The Father's Will* are divided into tripartite units that progress in logical sequence from "philosophical prolegomena" (part 1) to "New Testament evidence" (part 2), culminating with a "theological

evaluation" (part 3). The question at the heart of the book is how to reconcile the Christian doctrine that God and evil are incompatible with the theology of the Cross, which seems to require that God's will is implicated in the evil actions that bring about Christ's death.

The first five chapters (part 1) provide a philosophical analysis of intention (chap. 1), value and obligation (chap. 2), double-effect reasoning (chap. 3), the ethical problems associated with self-sacrifice (chap. 4), and God's will in relation to the crucifixion (chap. 5). Drawing on his analysis of intention and employing the principle of double effect, Lombardo establishes that it is not necessary to conclude that God wills the evils that are attendant on Christ's death. "Actions performed by rational intentions," Lombardo explains, "are not only intended; they are also willed. Rational intending implies rational choice, and rational choice is an act of the will" (32). This understanding of intention and willing, as distinguishable from intentional action, provides a foundation upon which the moral goodness of actions can be determined. "For an action to be good," Lombardo argues, "it must do more than simply advance our natural inclinations: it must also avoid frustrating them. Only actions that both advance our natural inclinations and avoid frustrating them are morally good" (49). When moral actions have good effects and nonintended bad effects that do not outweigh the good effects—as in cases of self-defense or the use of medicine and medical procedures—these complex actions retain their moral goodness, notwithstanding the bad effects. The reason for this is that the bad effects are not included in the agent's intention. Lombardo presents the crucifixion of Christ as one of these complex cases in which the bad effects can be separated from the agent's intention. Chapter 3 explores the reasoning associated with the principle of double effect to clarify how actions implicated in bad or evil effects can be judged to be morally good. Lombardo is hesitant to identify double effect as an isolated principle that is applicable within unique circumstantial cases. Rather, he presents double effect as "merely an algorithm for applying basic concepts to morally ambiguous actions" (72). For example, in addition to affirming that the intended effects of the action are consistent with our natural inclinations, in cases of double-effect reasoning "the action's positive, intended effects [must] outweigh the action's negative, nonintended effects" (73). This material, in turn, connects logically with the conclusion of chapter 4 on the ethics of self-sacrifice: "double effect reasoning shows that it can be acceptable, and even heroic, to cause our own death non-intentionally for the sake of some greater good" (79). The last chapter in part 1 applies these distinctions to the problem of God's will and the moral evil involved in Christ's crucifixion. Here, the basic dilemma that the book addresses is succinctly restated: "Being all good, God never wants moral evil, and even *cannot* want moral evil. Sound Christian theology, therefore, must keep a clear distance between God's will and the moral evil of Christ's crucifixion" (80). What then is to be made of

the value that Christ's death is assigned in the economy of salvation? To this question, Lombardo brings the progression of the first portion of the book to fruition: "we can rule out any theological narrative in which God wills the actual crucifying of Christ, or Christ intends his own death. Theological narratives in which Christ knowingly causes his death, or even provokes it, can nonetheless be philosophically viable" (92).

In part 2, comprised of chapters 6 and 7, Lombardo offers a very satisfying account of the New Testament teaching on Christ's death. This account creatively examines Christ's death from the perspective of Jesus's own words and prophesies, his ethical teachings about persecution, his own experience of persecution, and his own interpretation of his death in events such as the Last Supper. From this analysis, Lombardo concludes that "the gospels portray Jesus knowing in advance that he will be killed, and seeing his death as advancing his objectives" (131). Lombardo also provides an impressive synthesis of the New Testament presentation of the crucifixion as an integral element of the divine plan of salvation. This synthesis takes up the key teachings in the Pauline corpus and the Acts of the Apostles concerning the place of Christ's death in the divine plan. Lombardo explains in summation of this material: "God sends his Son to redeem us, and he gives him over to those who would crucify him. The crucifixion is also somehow integral and necessary to God's plan of salvation. In this way, the crucifixion happens according to both God's will (θέλημά) and God's plan (βουλή). At the same time, the New Testament always stops short of claiming that God wants, intends, or wills the actual crucifying of his Son. It places the full weight of moral responsibility on the shoulders of those who crucify Christ, and it does not sanitize the violence of the crucifixion or diminish its injustice" (142).

The third part of the book begins with chapters devoted to the theologies of Anselm and Abelard. Anselm's theory of satisfaction and Abelard's presentation of the Cross in terms of love give Lombardo occasion to examine two paradigmatic attempts to explain the will of the Father in relation to Christ's death. Within his presentation of the strengths and weaknesses of Anselm's approach in *Cur Deus homo*, Lombardo unearths a theological concern that is important for the remaining portions of the book. This concern is Anselm's rejection of the so-called devil's ransom theory. Anselm's theory of satisfaction is a replacement of this dominant narrative because, Lombardo explains, Anselm rejects the idea that "God could . . . have been obligated to respect demonic jurisdiction" (146). Lombardo's summary of the movement of Anselm's argument is extremely helpful. He highlights many original and laudatory aspects of Anselm's theology of the Cross, but in the end concludes that "Anselm cannot avoid implying that God wills the actual crucifying of Christ, nor thus imputing injustice to God. He replaces the devil's ransom with the Father's ransom: a theory of redemption that solves some problems, but creates others, and ultimately is much less flattering to God" (167). Abelard's theory, on the other hand, cannot account for why the

crucifixion is necessary to God's plan of salvation. Lombardo concludes that Anselm and Abelard are not advocates of opposing positions, with Anselm's satisfaction being objective and Abelard's theory of love being subjective. Rather, Lombardo argues, "both theories are subjective: Anselm's being concerned with the subjectivity of the Father, and Abelard's with the subjectivity of fallen humanity" (179). The result is that Anselm merely replaces the devil's ransom with the "Father's ransom" and Abelard rejects ransom completely and replaces it "with a prophetic spectacle" (ibid.).

As a consequence of the inadequacies of the attempts of Anselm and Abelard, Lombardo sets forth a proposal in the final chapter that affirms the integrality of the Cross in the plan of salvation without implicating the Father in evil. Central to Lombardo's proposal is a return to the theology of ransom, which has been surpassed by the dialectic between the poles represented by Anselm and Abelard. "It is not at all evident, however," Lombardo notes, "that the eclipse of ransom constitutes theological progress" (181). The advantage of returning to ransom, in his view, is that it better integrates the basic soteriological data of the New Testament and the most common patristic approaches to the Cross. Because of this, ransom is an underappreciated theological resource. To defend his claim, Lombardo delivers a significant historical presentation of a loose family of ransom theories in the Fathers, noting the areas in which an internal critique helps a coherent view to emerge. In particular, his reading of Gregory of Nyssa provides important clarifications. "For Gregory," Lombardo explains, "God does not offer the devil a ransom in a literalistic sense. . . . It does not refer to an actual commercial transaction. . . . The devil does not even play the role of God's primary adversary; it is rather death and all the attendant miseries of fallen human condition that God is striving to overcome" (228). The advantage of this approach is that "by giving a role to evil in the drama of salvation . . . the devil's ransom interpretation makes it possible to affirm the redemptive character of Christ's crucifixion, without implying that the Father wills the crucifying of anyone, let alone his own beloved Son" (239).

It is hardly fair or helpful to raise questions about what is not included in a book, especially when it is as well organized as this volume. However, given the logical precision on display throughout *The Father's Will*, one wonders why the claim that the crucifixion necessarily implies a malevolent moral intention is merely assumed and not more clearly established. Lombardo seems to take for granted that the evil intention of Christ's betrayers and executioners is the only intention at work in the crucifixion, and thus double-effect reasoning must be employed to avoid the conclusion that God willed evil. Could not Christ's death include two coinciding intentions: an act of malevolence on the part of his executioners, and an act of sacrificial offering on the part of Christ, which is received as such by the Father? Affirming that God cannot will evil is not the same as establishing that Christ's death by

crucifixion is something that God cannot will. It would have been interesting, too, if Lombardo had taken account of nonpenitential approaches to satisfaction. Questioning the standard reading of Anselm, Guy Mansini has argued that the use of "satisfaction" in St. Benedict's *Regula* is not derived from medieval penitential theory. He maintains that satisfaction in the *Regula* identifies a free act of humility and not an assigned penance. These acts are supererogatory precisely because of their free, nonimposed nature.

These questions are nitpickings that in no way detract from the lasting value of this work. In addition to the obvious importance that the book has for scholarship in Christology and soteriology, Lombardo's arguments will be of interest to philosophers of religion and critics of Christian doctrine. *The Father's Will* is a refreshing work of logical precision and striking originality that commends itself to anyone who wishes to wrestle with the Christian message about God in light of the violence of the crucifixion.

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*Learning Christ: Ignatius of Antioch and the Mystery of Redemption*. By GREGORY VALL. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013. Pp. xii + 401. $69.95 (cloth). ISBN: 978-0-8132-2158-8.

In the first decade of the first Christian century, the bishop of Antioch found himself surrounded by imperial guards under order to drag him back to Rome to face the consequences of his supposed atheism and traitorous leadership in Christ's Church. Eusebius's episcopal list places Ignatius as the third bishop of Antioch, after Saints Peter and Evodius, reigning in Antioch from ca. 70 to 107. Ignatius was a larger-than-life character; even as a child he was supposedly the little boy whom the Lord embraced and held up as an example of heavenly simplicity (Matt 18:2-4). In ten clear and illuminating chapters, Gregory Vall brings the reader through the many legends and apocryphal assumptions surrounding Ignatius and his thinking. Vall's purpose in writing this work is to show contemporary scholars the levels of richness and theological insight in Ignatius's relatively small epistolary corpus.

The first two chapters treat Ignatius's use of Scripture and how his reading of the canon plays out in his theology of salvation. "Scripture and Economy" (chap. 1) and "Issues in Ignatian Scholarship" (chap. 2) show not only the massive amount of scholarly attention such a relatively small amount of writing has generated over the centuries, but also why the way Ignatius read and

used Sacred Scripture is still important today. The five guiding loci Vall would have the reader keep in mind are how Ignatius consistently assumes (1) the necessary connection between "theology" (God's very self) and God's economy in creation, (2) the link between creation and redemption, (3) the relationship between the Old and New Covenants of God and his chosen ones, (4) the sending of the Son who comes to impart the Spirit, and (5) the life of the pilgrim-sojourner who simultaneously is a future beholder of eternal glory.

With these guiding principles in place, Ignatius proves to be a Christian thinker who understands that mystical transformation, and not moral achievement, is what saves us. Accordingly, here we become the students of one who sees himself teaching on behalf of Jesus Christ. This is *ecclesia* for Ignatius, a place where those called out of the world come together as one so as to be illumined into true Christ-bearers. For Ignatius, therefore, "theology is properly an ecclesial activity and not merely the function of isolated individuals. Our place, then, is to sit alongside Ignatius and contemplate the mystery of redemption with him" (86), thereby developing a visceral sympathy for the things of Christ, drawing near to God and to the people of God in truth and in love. Theology and all Christian activity are consummated in nothing other than Love himself, charity being the only true mark of the theologian.

The next three chapters thus turn to Ignatius's theology of the Godhead: "Jesus and the Father" (chap. 3), "Flesh and Spirit" (chap. 4), and "Faith and Love" (chap. 5). Here, the fundamental theology of Ignatius is handled masterfully. A true contrast to the starts and attempts and to the Gnostic leanings, as well as to the fundamental errors, of the second century, Ignatius amazingly proves to be a loving pastor as well as a sophisticated theologian anticipating accurately later Church formulae. Vall takes care to show how Ignatius advances Pauline insights faithfully while never being afraid to adapt scriptural terms and traditions to meet the challenges of his own flock.

Especially important in this middle section is how Ignatius saw the Christian life as teleologically unifying earth and heaven, anticipating Augustine of Hippo's wordplay of living *in spe* but not yet *in re*. Since the Logos is the first and last principle (ἀρχή) of reality, but has now even taken on flesh and revealed the fullness of the Father to those still on their way, "the person of Christ, his deeds, and the confessional content of faith (expressed in words) are not strictly identical, but the person is truly present and manifest in the deeds, and by grace the confession of the true faith terminates not simply in propositions but in realities, that is, in the person of Christ and in the deeds by which he has saved us" (189). Furthermore, under the proper ecclesial authority, those lifesaving deeds continue and are therefore economically available unceasingly to the Church, the espoused temple who is never

without access not only to the Christian mysteries but therewith to Christ himself.

In "Judaism and Christianity" (chap. 6), Vall shows how Ignatius was in no way a supersessionist, but relied on the Old Testament to ground the New, indicating "a significant degree of continuity and interpenetration between Judaism and Christianity, and between Israel and the church" (253). One of the more fruitful and provocative images in Ignatian Christology is the Word as "silence" (σιγή). While this image was one of the classical Gnostic emanations, chapter 7 illustrates how, instead for Ignatius, silence is an aspect of the Trinitarian mystery, the locus from where the Word finally speaks and how he continues to speak through his hierarchy. Chapter 8 is entitled "A Luminous Mystery," and here Vall uses the Lord's baptism not only to provide a rich instance of Ignatius's exegetical theology, but also to show how Ignatius understands that the mysteries of Christ's life continue to unfold in the mystagogia of the Christian believer. In "Christ and the Church" (chap. 9), the ecclesiology of Ignatius, bishop and martyr, is approached, this subject certainly being the one in which these letters have had the most far-reaching influence on Christianity. While there may be only one true *episcopus*, this divine leader demands that he be represented visibly and virtuously. The last chapter is appropriately entitled "Unity and Eschatology," a relatively brief examination of how Ignatius undertook his treatment of the four last things.

While this reviewer is usually leery of modern-day monographs that are exponentially longer than the ancient author they seek to explicate, Vall justifies the heft of his work here by excellent and thorough analysis of Ignatius's own writings and theology. He leaves hardly any commentator on Ignatius untouched. He rehearses some of the major disputes in Ignatian studies and helps the reader understand the issues at stake. A comprehensive ten-page bibliography, as well as a helpful index of Greek terms, rounds out this lengthy monograph. Vall specializes in matters where the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers converge, and his latest is a welcome contribution in just such a field.

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*Introduction to the Mystery of the Church*. By BENOÎT-DOMINIQUE DE LA SOUJEOLE, O.P. Trans. by MICHAEL J. MILLER. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014. Pp. xxviii + 640. $75.00 (cloth). ISBN: 978-0-8132-2607-1.

La Soujeole intends his work to be a textbook in an introductory course in ecclesiology. While this is a review of the English translation, the book was first published in French in 2007, and the preface to the original edition stated, "The present volume is a course in ecclesiology that has been taught regularly at the Dominican House of Studies in Toulouse" (xxv). As a textbook, it is well structured and should be accessible to a wide variety of students. The writing style in translation is clear and straightforward, with explanations given for any terms of art which are used, making it accessible to an audience with some theological training.

The tone of the book is theological, that is to say, it is focused on an ordered view of the Catholic faith. It is not apologetic or polemical as is sometimes the case with books on ecclesiology, particularly those preceding the Second Vatican Council. On the other hand, it is certainly not a relativistic, blandly Christian study of various notions of church. Each of the topics within the book is situated within Scripture, and the author provides ample bibliography, though—not surprisingly, considering his religious order and background—the work leans heavily upon St. Thomas Aquinas. The book gives a very balanced view of the teachings of Vatican II.

The author begins his work with a general introduction that provides a brief historical overview of important moments and trends in the theology of the Church, as well as a review of ecclesiology as a separate theological subject. One point is that the study of ecclesiology per se is relatively new, beginning only in the fourteenth century, but that questions concerning the *ecclesia* are found within all major areas of theological study. Ecclesiology cannot neatly be divorced from the study of the doctrine of God, Christology, or the sacraments. Issues regarding sacramental theology and Christology are prominent in the second portion of the book.

Explanations are full and show a certain rigor. Some might consider them at times pedantic. For example, the distinction of belief in God from belief in the Church in the Nicene Creed is more than four pages in length, rehearsing difficulties of translation (296-301). More substantially on this point, over these four plus pages the author does not manage to make what would be to many theologians the obvious distinction between the absolute God and the created reality referred to as the Church. In fact, it is not clear that this is a distinction the author would want to make, as the second part of the book, containing his speculative theology, eschews a distinction between a visible and invisible church, the body of the Church and the grace of Jesus Christ. A

too-cursory reading of the second part could tend toward conflating the Church and the inner life of God.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part is subdivided into thematic descriptions of the Church. The several themes explored are "Images of the Church and the Kingdom of God," "the Church [as] the Body of Christ," "the Church [as] the Temple of the Spirit," and "the Church [as] the People of God." The discussion on the Kingdom of God is the most limited. The first part of the book concludes with a section entitled "Recapitulation: The Church Is a Mystery."

The presentations on the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Spirit, and the People of God are done thoroughly. They follow a standard pattern of reviewing Scripture, patristic developments, the medieval period (mostly St. Thomas), and developments from Vatican II, which the author characterizes as *the* council on the Church. Following a thematic approach, particularly in teaching ecclesiology, seems most appropriate since the typical student may lack the needed background to follow an approach that simply traces historical development. The themes of the Church as the Body of Christ and the People of God are well balanced—a welcome feature, as they have sometimes been presented as being at odds with one another. The section titled "Recapitulation: The Church Is a Mystery" is the *situs* for a discussion concerning the sacramentality of the Church, which leads into the second part of the book.

The author considers the first part of this book to be a descriptive amassing of data (339). The second part of the book deals with the question of what this accumulation of positive theology will mean. He describes this as speculative theology and begins with the not-insignificant task of answering the question, "What is the Church?". The Reformers had raised this as the preeminent question connected to justification and answered with a bright line between a visible and an invisible church. The author rehearses various Catholic responses that he describes as "binomial" (378). He contends, and I think rightly, that Vatican II must be read as maintaining a unity of the elements of the Church—visible and invisible—going beyond the merely physically visible church of Bellarminian ecclesiology. He also contends that this must go beyond a binomial distinction, common enough after Vatican II, between the Church as an external society and the Church as an internal communion of grace. To this end, he proposes a definition of the Church as "the sacrament of communion" (438).

The sacramentality of the Church is explored through what the author calls "Eucharistic ecclesiology" (440). While the other six sacraments *bring about* what they signify, only the Eucharist *is* what it signifies. The Eucharistic community is the community gathered together by Christ, who is the author of salvation. This raises for the author the issue of the interconnectedness in this sacramentality between "the sign—the human ecclesial community—and the reality—the communion of saints" (445). He proceeds by an examination of

the significance of the word "community," *communio* in Latin and *koinōnia* in Greek. Both the Latin and the Greek reflect three related meanings: to communicate, to partake, and to be/have in common. God communicates his plan of a participation in the life of Christ, the partaking in the life of grace that in the multiplicity of individuals reflects the fullness of grace in Christ, and the state of being in the community that is the Body of Christ (462-63). The reality of this life of grace is visibly expressed in the social community through the diaconal communion (teaching, preaching, and sacraments) and the theological virtues mediated thereby (481). While already lengthy, this portion of the book on "Eucharistic ecclesiology" would perhaps have benefited from including some elements of the Eastern Church's emphasis on the Church as the community gathered around the bishop in the celebration of the Eucharist.

The second half of the author's speculative theology defining the Church concerns "the personality of the Church." It begins with a rehearsal of some basic philosophical concepts of "person." The author asks if the Church as a whole can be considered a person as we so consider human beings, angels, and God. After some comparison to civil society, the conclusion is reached that the Church is a mystical person, combining the unity of the Body of Christ with the distinction of the Bride of Christ. The Church as a unique mystical person is animated by the Holy Spirit.

The third part of the book treat the properties of the Church as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. The chapter "The Church Is One" focuses exclusively upon the ecumenical movement, discussions of the unity of the Church being found in other segments of the book. This chapter provides a good, brief overview concerning divisions within the Church and the various attempts to bring about unity. It also provides a good technical discussion of topics such as the hierarchy of truths and concludes with a brief presentation of the development of dogma and its impact upon attempts at unity.

The chapter titled "The Church is Holy" focuses naturally upon the question of how the Church can be holy while her members are both sinners and saints. At one point, the author juxtaposes the Protestant "theory of two Churches[,] one that is holy and spotless . . . and the other that is sinful," and the Catholic position concerning the indefectibility of the holiness of the Church (560-61). I hesitate to say that a book that is 640 pages long should add more content, but in this case it would have been appropriate. It is too cursory a statement to simply write that faults are "said to be the faults of *Christians* and not of the *Church*" (561). Might even the author's speculative theology that the Church is a "mystical person" come into play regarding personal responsibility?

The chapters regarding the Church as catholic and apostolic provide extensive and well-documented expositions of these two necessary properties

of the Church. The chapter on the Church's apostolicity also includes a section regarding the primacy of Peter and the question of papal infallibility.

La Soujeole has done an excellent job of emphasizing the mystery of the Church, separating it from what is considered in a merely sociological investigation. Overall, he has done a great service in putting into one volume a very thorough treatment for an introductory course in ecclesiology. This book would serve well either as a text for a course or as a source for supplemental reading in the study of ecclesiology.

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