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## **14 Evident Truths from the Organizational Genius of St. Thomas Aquinas: How “Born Again Thomism” Can Help Save the West from Cultural Suicide**

### **The Problem and the First 3 Evident Truths**

Evident to many Westerners today is that contemporary Western culture exists within a condition of severe identity crisis, the West appears to be internally imploding from a lack of sound leadership generated by centuries of consistent application within Western culture, and especially within institutions of higher education and politics, of irrational principles of induction and reasoning. Because we cannot preserve the identity of any being, including that of ourselves, without first admitting that identities other than ourselves exist independently of us, the rational starting point for anyone seeking to solve this problem must consist in admitting three evident truths recognized centuries ago as part of the organizational genius of St. Thomas Aquinas: 1) beings other than ourselves (real natures) exist independently of the human mind; 2) like us, the identity of such beings consists in being organizational wholes (wholes made up of parts); and 3) organizational unity exists in and through the harmonious relationship of the parts of an organiza-

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tional whole to each other and to some chief aim, or act, the organization chiefly seeks to generate or cause that most human beings can know (like building a house, extinguishing a fire, fighting crime or disease, or fostering psychological perfection).

Ever since the modern world began in the seventeenth century, and especially since the inception of the falsely-so-called “Enlightenment,” leading “philosophers” and “scientists” falsely-so-called (like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Sir Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, David Hume, and Immanuel Kant) have celebrated the modern: 1) discovery of an oxymoronic “nominalistic science,” and 2) denial of the reality of what, following Aristotle, St. Thomas referred to as “ends” or “aims” in things.

Since 1) science studies the natures of organizational wholes and organizational wholes cannot exist without the *universal* and unequal *relation* of all their parts to numerically-one, chief aim or end (a single act *universally* transforming a previously-disparate *multitude* into *parts* of a real whole), and 2) *nominalism denies the reality of all universals, including universal relations and causes*, and only affirms the existence of individuals, the idea of a nominalistic science is conceptually incoherent.

Further, since denial of the reality of real aims, or ends, in things denies the existence of a necessary condition for transforming multitudes into parts of a whole, for centuries, leading Enlightenment intellectuals have denied, and continue to deny, a necessary condition for the existence of science and the exercise of real leadership: organizational wholes.

Starting with the eighteenth century, in addition to the existence of the reality of aims, ends, in things, leading Western “philosophers” and “scientists” falsely-so-called have inclined to parade around like peacocks celebrating as philosophically and scientifically evident that what Aristotle and St. Thomas called “forms,” or “natures” (intrinsic

principles of unity and action within things), do not exist. For the most part, they have tended to replace such forms, natures, with external “mathematical laws,” “feelings,” or “blind chance.” (Kant, for example, relegated such forms to principles of systematic logic located in pure reason, while Hume placed them in “feelings of association” in something he nominalistically considered to be a “mind.”)

As anyone who has ever run, or belonged to, a business organization, served in a military unit, or participated in a team activity knows, organizational wholes grow out of harmonious exercise and cooperation of internal parts. They are not proximately generated by external, mental, feelings of association, laws mathematically or logically externally constraining them, or blind chance internally unifying them.

Like such individuals, Aristotle and St. Thomas understood forms, natures, existing within organizational wholes (substances) to be intrinsic causes of unity and action that, through generation of harmonious and unequal relation of organizational parts to numerically-one chief aim, or end, transform a disparate plurality into a parts of a whole.

### **Evident Truths 4 through 7 and Some of Their Evident Consequences**

More. According to St. Thomas (and Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle before him), a *fourth evident truth* is that the knower and the thing known constitute essential parts of the same genus, or organizational whole.

And because the knower and the thing known comprise essential parts of the same genus, or organizational whole, leadership and the thing, or person, led *unequally, but proportionately in power, ability*, belong to the same genus or organizational whole. (Neither can be qualitatively too strong nor too weak in power, ability, to co-exist within the same organization.)

He maintained that the qualities of leadership and being led (having *inequality of abilities, habits, talents, virtues*) only exist within organizational wholes (or what St. Thomas called a real “genus”). Consequently, he also understood what Enlightenment intellectuals tend not to be able to comprehend: Deny the reality of organizational aims and/or wholes and you have to deny the reality of leadership and the ability to be led.

Because leadership in its fully-developed form is a kind of conscious directing activity, and in human beings, in its highest form, is not a chance event, because human reason is its chief directing faculty, human leadership is a kind of knowing and doing (an act of commanding and controlling). More. In its highest form, human leadership consists in a kind of philosophical/scientific way of knowing and commanding and controlling.

As a kind of knowing, leadership is chiefly a specific organizational habit existing within the highest part, faculty, of organizational knowers through which a leader is able, better than any other organizational part, to communicate a chief organizational aim to the other parts of an organization. *Leadership, in short, is chiefly a communications activity*, an ability to communicate to another or others (in a way that need not initially be verbal or totally rational) specific superiority in command and control (exceeding other organizational parts in organizational strength, through which a leader is able to convey to other parts of an organization: 1) organizational superiority of the leader to the other parts of the organization and 2) the chief aim of the organization as an organization).

Evidently, as St. Thomas well understood, a leader and the beings led belong to the same organization, or genus. Leadership is not an abstraction. It is an essential part of a real relation. As a knowing activity, the leader belongs to the same organizational whole, or genus, that the leader leads. Fire chiefs *belong to (are internal parts of)* fire depart-

ments, police chiefs to police departments, and so on. Abstractly considered, leaders as leaders do not exist.

Nor does an art or science of anything as a generic whole exist apart from its species. Arts and sciences exist in and through their species. Hence, the art of medicine as a real genus did not come into existence and then the art of curing this or that disease. The art of curing this or that disease first arose, imperfectly encompassing the entire genus of medicine.

Strictly considered, experience, art, philosophy, science are not bodies of generically new knowledge added to something a leader already knows. They are qualitatively more or less perfect, or maturely-developed, habits, ways of possessing knowledge a leader already has about some operational, organizational whole a leader leads and what are doable deeds for it, including for the leader.

Experienced leaders *grow out of* knowledgeable leaders familiar with the organizational composition of essentially different, necessary, part/whole relationships, and activities, their intrinsic powers and abilities, and faculties. *By induction*, experienced leaders recognize the external signs of organizational existence, health, and disease. This is because of the evident truth of *principle five*: The way a thing (organizational whole) acts reflects, is a sign of, a relationship of organizational wholeness (unity) existing among parts of a multitude, which possess this wholeness through unequal relation of each part to each other through unequal relation to a leading part through which a common organizational aim is chiefly communicated to all the parts.

The art of leadership (like that of orchestra conducting) essentially grows out of the experienced leadership of different organizational parts (leaders) *inducing* the essential and necessary operational abilities and relationships that, to operate harmoniously (healthily), these or those parts must have to each other and to a chief organizational aim. The philosophy, or science, of leadership essentially grows out of the

art of leadership of different organizational parts increasingly more-precisely *inducing* the specific organizational principles that guide organizational, operational principles in relation to a chief organizational aim.

Put more simply in contemporary business and military terms, experienced leaders: 1) know that this or that is a doable deed that needs to be done at this or that time, under this or that circumstance or condition; and 2) can, when necessary, overcome resistance and induce receptivity within qualitatively different and stronger and weaker organizational parts to do what needs to be done when it needs to be done.

Beyond experiential knowledge, someone who possesses knowledge through an artistic quality of soul resembles a person with the habit of mathematics who has memorized formulas and knows when they can reasonably be applied to solve this or that problem. Similarly, people with the art of leadership know the tactical operational principles at work that cause doing this or that at this or that time, under this or that condition or circumstance, to be reasonable in relation to the internal abilities of an organization and a tactical plan of operation.

People possessed of the philosophy, science, of leadership, however, more perfectly possess what they already know by apprehending it most precisely in relation to the strategic plan and aim articulated in an organizational mission statement that generates the operational principles behind tactical operations in the here and now.

Such people more perfectly than others: 1) know how to overcome resistance and encourage receptivity to taking directions so as to build and preserve organizations; and 2) have the qualities of great discoverers, pioneers, and great teachers. Because such people must constantly instill hope, drive out fear, and communicate a superior ability to know and unify potentially opposing convictions among free and intelligent agents about the right direction to take within an organizational operation to satisfy a chief organizational aim in the here and

now, such people must, best of all, know the first reason why this or that action needs to be done, how to do it, and be able to communicate this to themselves and parts of their organization. As a result, such people can never be absolute skeptics, egalitarians, totalitarians, or anarchists. They must be professionals who merit being called “philosophers”/“scientists.”

Since acts of art and science are proximately generated by habits that these *acts cannot, as their proximate generating principles, qualitatively exceed in existential greatness*, and habits can only exist within natural abilities, or faculties, the existence of artists and scientists indicates the evident truth of *principle six*: An art or science grows out of a human habit *existing within* a human knowing faculty to which a subject known *proportionately in power* relates, that the subject known helps generate and activate within this natural human knowing faculty; and *principle seven*: Every art, science (or philosophical activity) grows out of the experiential, *proportionate*, relationship between the specific, facultative, ability, habit, of an artist, scientist (philosopher) and *a known and improvable, but somewhat resistant, material or subject* (organizational whole) that activates the habit.

### **8 through 14 Evident Truths and Some of Their Consequences**

Since habitually to lead organizations well, to be a great leader, demands that a leader understand (*induce*) the nature of the organization (composite whole) being led, the internal relations and, at times, talents, that compose it, its ability to be led, and its doable deeds, evident are several more truths from the organizational genius of St. Thomas.

Since organizational unity constitutes organizational truth (what kind of real identity [ontological truth] an organization has), *an eighth*

*evident truth* is that human knowing faculties of sense and intellect are generally reliable and, most of the time, can adequately apprehend (sometimes with, and sometimes without, the help of technology) truth (organizational unity, ontological truth) within things (organizational wholes).

Since organizational leaders and organizational members (people who belong to an organization led by a leader) really exist, evident is the truth of *principle nine*: An analogous unity (*qualitative proportion*) of truth (*adaequatio*) exists among things (externally-existing organizational wholes) and human knowing faculties (at least, that of a leader, such as an artist, philosopher, scientist). And *principle ten*: Truth in the human intellect chiefly consists in analogously relating in an act of judgment (mental organization) the part/whole relationships (organizational unity, ontological truth) that exist within organizational wholes.

From the truth of principle ten evidently flows the truth of *principles eleven and twelve*. *Eleven*: Eliminate one of the essential parts of this *proportionate* relationship, and the leadership, artistic, or scientific (philosophical) activity can no longer exist. *Twelve*: The *proportionate* relation existing between the leadership, artistic, or scientific (philosophical), habit and the led, artistic, scientific (philosophical), subject (organizational whole) known generates the habits and act of leadership, art, and science (philosophy); the habit and externally existing organizational whole are essentially connected, related, as extreme terms of the same real genus.

Following from principle twelve is the evident truth of principle *thirteen*: We take the nature, divisions, and methods, of all experience, art, science (philosophy), and leadership, from an essential relationship between human habits existing within human faculties and a known and somewhat resistant material, or known subject (organizational whole), that activates these human abilities.

By unpacking implications from the first thirteen principles given above, evident becomes the truth of concluding *principle fourteen* (as a chief, or leadership principle, aim, or end, generated by all the preceding principles and arguments): Scientific (philosophical) sense wonder about real organizations in relation to their essential parts is a chief first principle of all science (philosophy) for everyone for all time.

### **Why All Philosophy, Science, and Leadership Starts, for Everyone and Always, in Sense Wonder<sup>1</sup>**

As I think most people familiar with any of the human qualities of experience, art, science/philosophy, or leadership implicitly, if not explicitly, realize (at least in our saner moments), all these principles articulated above chiefly grow out of an essential relationship among the human faculties of intellect, will, and emotions and an organizationally and operationally deprived body (an incompletely developed organizational and operational whole, one that can be receptive to or resist further organizational and operational development) and a chief action that parts of that deprived body naturally and cooperatively incline to produce, or aim (end) they incline to realize.

The first beginnings of my explicit realization of this reality came to me decades ago while I was reading Book 1 of Plato's *Republic* in which Socrates gives Polemarchus examples of people ancient Athenians reasonably considered to be artists: cooks, physicians, pilots of ships, money makers, traders, and so on. In each case, Socrates made evident to Polemarchus that: 1) to be an artist or scientist, a person has to work with some kind of essentially improvable body; and 2) an artistic or scientific subject, body, or organization an artist or scientist, in

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<sup>1</sup> This part is a revised version of the excerpt of my article: "The Essential Connection between Common Sense Philosophy and Leadership Excellence," *Studia Gilsoniana* 3, supplement (2014): 606–610.

some way, improves has to be essentially deprived, impoverished, but improvable; and somewhat resistant to taking direction from an artist.<sup>2</sup>

Subsequent reading of different works of Armand A. Maurer showing that St. Thomas understood: 1) the genus, or subject, of the philosopher to be essentially different from the genus of the logician; 2) philosophy to be chiefly a habit of the human soul, not a body of knowledge;<sup>3</sup> and 3) analogy to be “above all . . . a doctrine of a *judgment* of analogy or proportion rather than an analogous *concept*”<sup>4</sup> caused me to start to realize that *none of the leading twentieth-century students of St. Thomas, including Jacques Maritain and Étienne Gilson, had adequately understood his teaching about many of St. Thomas’s most fundamental principles, including his understanding of induction, analogy, and philosophy, science.* At that point, I decided that I had better start to investigate these issues on my own.

Spending more than two decades studying these matters, among other things, this is what I discovered. For St. Thomas Aquinas, philosophy, science (leadership activity in its highest form) is, just as for Aristotle before him, chiefly an intellectually-virtuous, habitual knowledge born of sense wonder. This philosophical, scientific, wonder is essentially about a multitude of beings already generically known to be

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<sup>2</sup> Plato, *Republic*, bk. 1, 331D–334B, in *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, vols. 5–6, trans. Paul Shorey (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969). Available online—see the section *References* for details.

<sup>3</sup> Armand A. Maurer, “The Unity of a Science: St. Thomas and the Nominalists,” in *St. Thomas Aquinas, 1274–1974, Commemorative Studies*, vol. 2 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974), 269–291. See, also, Maurer, “Introduction,” in *St. Thomas Aquinas, The Divisions and Methods of the Sciences, Questions V and VI of His Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius*, trans. with an intro. and notes Armand A. Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1963), 75, fn. 15. See St. Thomas Aquinas: *In I Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1; *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, lect. 12, nn. 2142–2144; and *S.Th.*, I, 66, 2, ad 2 and 88, 2, ad 4.

<sup>4</sup> Armand A. Maurer, *The Philosophy of William of Ockham in Light of Its Principles* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1999), 278.

one or a whole and the memory of the way an individual has been able to acquire much memory of this multitude as one or a whole.

Just as no human being can become morally virtuous without much psychological practice, habitually choosing what is right in the right way, no human being can become intellectually virtuous (scientific, philosophical, a great leader) without much psychological practice, habitually judging specifically and individually about what he or she has already rightly conceived and generically judged; habitually engaging in right reasoning about already existing, *and rightly induced*, generic orders of truths, things (organizational wholes) known.

More precisely, according to St. Thomas, all philosophy, science, starts in sense wonder essentially involving: 1) a complicated *psychological state of fear*; 2) intellectual confidence about the unity of truth and the essential reliability of our sense and intellectual faculties; and 3) personal *hope* to achieve intellectual, volitional, and emotional satisfaction though resolving the wonder and putting the fear to rest.

As St. Thomas recognized even before the historical birth of some later, mistaken notions of philosophy's first principle of generation, philosophy does not start in faith seeking understanding, absolute skepticism, universal method doubt, impossible dreams of pure reason, Absolute Spirit's urge to emerge, historical economic dialectic, veils of ignorance, or any of the other false starting points that Western intellectuals, mistaking themselves to be doing philosophy, have *wrongly induced* over the centuries. *Philosophy, science, starts in a psychological opposition between fear and hope within the human soul in which the act of philosophizing, pursuing science, essentially constitutes an act of hope of success based upon an essential conviction about the unity of truth and the essential reliability of our human sense and intellectual faculties.*

St. Thomas maintained that sense wonder is a species of fear that results from ignorance of a cause.<sup>5</sup> Because the formal object of fear (what essentially and externally stimulates this emotion to arise) calls to mind a difficulty of some magnitude and a sense of dissatisfying personal weakness (an immediate psychological sense of opposition, dependency, privation, and moderate amount of doubt related to personal ability), the desire to philosophize, engage in science, can only arise within a person who can experience a complicated psychological state involving: 1) a *prudential* desire to escape from the fear we experience of the real difficulty, danger, and damage ignorance can cause us; 2) *personal self-confidence* that our sense and intellectual faculties are reliable enough to help us put this fear to rest by overcoming an initial, moderate doubt related to knowing the truth of things (organizational wholes) as expressed in the truth of our intellectual and sensory judgments; and 4) some *hope* in our personal ability to use our intellectual and sense faculties to put this fear to rest by rationally resolving an apparently irreconcilable contradiction; and 5), by so doing, achieving a state of intellectual, volitional, and emotional satisfaction that we have done so.

St. Thomas explained that this initial sense of fear grips us in two stages: 1) initial recognition (*induction*) of partial intellectual weakness and fear of failure (some doubt about the strength of our personal abilities) causes us to refrain immediately from passing judgment; and 2) *induction* of *hope* of possibility of understanding an effect's cause and confidence in our ability to effect this understanding prompts us intellectually to seek the cause.<sup>6</sup>

Actually, this fear appears to include an intervening third stage between fear and hope in which we *induce* intellectual, volitional, and

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<sup>5</sup> *S.Th.*, I-II, 41, 4, ad 5.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

emotional dissatisfaction with being in a state of fear and a determination to eliminate it. Thomas added that, since philosophical investigation starts with wonder, “it must end in or arrive at the contrary of this.”<sup>7</sup>

St. Thomas maintained that we do not, and cannot, wonder about the answer to questions we already know, about what is evident, nor about what we consider *impossible* to know; and, strictly speaking, when working as philosophers, scientists, we do not seek to remain in a state of wonder.<sup>8</sup>

We seek to put wonder to rest by discovering the causes that have generated the wonder. Since wonder is a first principle of all theoretical, practical, or productive philosophy, science, for everyone and all time (the wonderer being another), initially all philosophical, scientific, first principles arise from a pre-philosophical, pre-scientific, experientially-based knowledge—a generic induction involving: 1) human senses, emotions, intellect, will; 2) some personal self-confidence about the reliability of our sense and intellectual faculties and the unity of truth as expressed in things and in the human intellect; and 3) something that causes in us an induction of real opposition, possession and privation (not simply difference): contrary (not contradictory) opposition.

*Consequently, since, in their nature and origin, philosophy, science, and the art and science of leadership, presuppose knowledge of the existence of several things and complicated psychological states, including something we fear can hurt us, and the hope of overcoming this fear, the psychological attitude of complete skepticism is a contradictory opposite, and cannot simultaneously co-exist with, the psychological states of philosophy, science, and real leadership.*

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<sup>7</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, bk. 1, lect. 3, no. 67.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

No matter what modern confidence men like René Descartes and his historical descendants, posing as philosophers and scientists, tell us, philosophy, science, cannot pre-exist knowledge in the form of some vague state called “thinking” or “consciousness.” “Thinking” and “consciousness” are species of knowing.

Philosophy, science, presupposes knowledge, including knowledge of evident truths, and is born of sense wonder. *People who cannot wonder lack an essential psychological quality necessary to become philosophers, scientists, leaders in the most perfect form.* And people who think they have the one philosophical method finally to put all wonder to rest are delusional. Only God has the one method to put all wonder to rest.

Since only people who fear ignorance philosophically wonder about how to escape from it, strictly speaking: 1) none of us is born a philosopher, scientist, or great leader; 2) seeking to become a philosopher, scientist, or great leader is not something that all human beings explicitly desire to do; and 3) engaging in philosophical, scientific, reasoning in general or for the chief aim of becoming a great leader, is not something all human beings do, can do, or even want to do.

People who are content to be in a state of ignorance cannot become philosophers, scientists, or the greatest of leaders. As Plato and Socrates emphasized, people cannot pour philosophy, science, into us like water into an empty jug. Only those who have the proper psychological disposition, some knowledge and experience of this initial sort of fear accompanied by the appropriate desire to put it to rest, can become philosophers, scientists, the greatest of leaders.

For this reason, absolute skeptics cannot become philosophers, scientists, and the greatest of leaders; cannot even start the journey to become these. Hence, when Socrates confronted people who were content to be ignorant, he attempted to jolt them out of their blissful ignorance by publicly shaming them, by driving them through Socratic iro-

ny into an *aporia* (an intellectual dead end), into becoming aware of the dangers of their ignorance.

Aside from the first principle of sense wonder, then, philosophy's, science's, specific, or *proximate*, evident first principles include: 1) habits of knowing faculties; 2) existing things, real natures (organizational wholes); 3) prior knowledge of these existing things (organizational wholes); 4) the existence and knowledge of fear, hope; 5) desire to escape from fear and possess hope; 6) convictions of certainty about the: a) unity of truth; b) reliability of human sense and intellectual faculties; c) and the existence and knowledge of real, but apparently contradictory, opposites.

Since philosophy's, science's, first principles, and those of the greatest of leaders include human knowing faculties, and since sense wonder must exist in sense wonderers, the existence of philosophy, science, and leadership in its greatest form essentially depends upon an understanding of human nature such as had by St. Thomas Aquinas: one that involves human beings possessed of a human soul (or some identical, if differently named, psychological principle) that can generate human knowing faculties capable of possessing human habits. We cannot be wrong about human nature and its essential powers and abilities and expect to be right about the nature of science, philosophy, and wise/prudent leadership.

Since denial of the existence of a human soul and of a faculty psychology involves an essential misunderstanding of human nature and denial of one of philosophy's, science's, essential principles of wonder (the wonderer), no human being can rationally affirm the existence of philosophy/science and wise/prudent leadership and simultaneously deny the existence of the only human knowing principle capable of essentially producing philosophical/scientific activity: human knowing faculties. (As St. Thomas recognized, what we human beings chiefly admire and find praiseworthy about science and leadership is not that

a human intellect contains a body of facts, or knowledge of exceptional worth. It is the quality, or habit, of soul capable of producing such a great good.)

More. As St. Thomas well understood, none of us can deny the existence of a moral culture and hope to develop philosophy, science, or become the greatest of leaders (people possessed of wisdom and prudence).

As Mortimer J. Adler has well said, all philosophy, science, is the product of conscious cultural effort, is a cultural enterprise, a great conversation. Philosophy, science, is not, as Descartes mistakenly thought, the product of the strong will of a single individual. Its generation presupposes a moral culture capable of producing the moral virtues of justice and prudence that enable generation of a culture of teamwork.

As Plato maintained, not even a band of thieves can cooperate successfully to treat other people unjustly unless this group has the ability, while so doing, to act justly (apply a moral culture of teamwork) toward each other. Justice (not injustice) and prudence (not imprudence) are essential principles of teamwork. And individual excellence working within an educational organization (genus) of one form or another is a necessary condition for generating art, philosophy, science, and the greatest forms of leadership.

Only a moral culture imbued with a minimal level of justice and prudence can act as the midwife for the cultural conditions (such as peace that generates leisure time) capable producing art, philosophy, science, and highest forms of human leadership. An oxymoronic “totally barbaric culture” completely at war with every part of itself can produce no harmonious cooperation and, consequently, can generate no effective teamwork. As a result, it cannot generate an educationally-friendly culture that can produce the circumstances and conditions in which people can develop the moral habits of justice and prudence ca-

pable of generating philosophical, scientific, sense wonder and the greatest forms of leadership that follow from such a condition of soul.

### **One of the Greatest Mistakes of the Modern “Enlightenment”**

Not understanding the moral and psychological complexity needed to generate and sustain a philosophical, scientific, culture, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century “modern” and “Enlightenment” intellectuals naively thought that: 1) no human beings before them had properly understood the nature of induction and 2) they could reduce the whole of philosophy and science to one systematic, logical method that no one prior to them had ever discovered.

As a result, they passed on to subsequent generations in the West and globally faulty notions of induction and philosophical, scientific, reasoning that still dominate in the world today that, for centuries, have wreaked havoc upon Western culture and internationally and now threaten to cause global war and the West’s total demise.

Because logical reasoning is only so true as the induction upon which its premises rest, Sir Francis Bacon was right to criticize the tendency in his time of university *scholastics* to reduce philosophy, science, to syllogistic logic and to attack their misunderstanding of the nature of induction. Nonetheless, Bacon’s understanding of induction was not superior to theirs.

During Bacon’s time, just as in our own, scholastic thinkers tended to understand induction to be chiefly a form of logical reasoning that proceeds from knowledge of some individual concept or premise to form a general idea or premise. As Bacon rightly understood, *induction is not chiefly a logical act of reasoning from particulars to generalities*. It is chiefly a knowledge about the natures of things that precedes logical reasoning.

Like scores of thinkers prior to him, Bacon was convinced that “nature loves to hide” and that, properly understood, induction is an act by which human beings have to force nature to reveal her secrets. As a result, following Bacon’s mistake, over the centuries since Bacon lived, Western students enamored by positivistic “science” have tended to reduce the whole of science to a process sometimes used to generate induction of practical and productive scientific principles and subsequent deductions: what they call “empirically testing hypotheses.”

As Aristotle and St. Thomas understood better than Bacon, forcing nature to reveal secrets is not essential to induction; but it is sometimes necessary to act as a starting point, first principle, in some forms of practical and productive reasoning. For example, in the case of a lawyer like Bacon threatening a witness to induce a confession; or in the case of a chemist heating materials to determine their chemical composition.

Since: 1) empirically testing hypotheses is chiefly related to productive and practical knowledge; 2) productive knowledge is chiefly directed to making products (tools); 3) practical knowledge is mainly related to perfecting this or that facultative activity through perfecting use of tools; and 4), by uniting all our organizational parts (faculties) through our whole person (whole individual human nature), through our qualitatively highest faculties of knowledge and love (the human intellect and will) with perfect truth and goodness, only “speculative,” “theoretical,” or “contemplative knowledge” (in the sense that St. Thomas used these terms) chiefly aims at, and succeeds in, achieving perfecting our person as an organizational and operational whole.

Consequently, 5) neither productive nor practical sciences can ever qualitatively be the highest, most psychologically-satisfying, happiness-generating, human science; and 6) empirically testing hypotheses can never be the highest form of human knowing: science.

More. Empirically testing hypotheses mainly aims at securing an induction of a truth (the nature of an organizational whole and the part/whole relations that cause its operations). This procedure is actually short-hand for empirically inducing premises from which deductive testing can confirm a scientific conclusion.

All science, always and everywhere, terminates its activity in a deduction (a deduction from a true induction). And some sciences (such as mathematics, which induces and tests in the imagination) have no need to use empirical testing for inducing or verifying their premises.

In fact, as Aristotle and St. Thomas comprehended (once again, far better than Bacon), the nature and complexity of induction depends upon the nature of the inducer (his or her intellectual powers) and the organizational part/whole relationships and causes being induced. Induction in physical science is chiefly an act of intellectually sensing (intellectually seeing through this or that sense, or conjunction of senses) principles, causes, that generate organizational effects: parts that generate, cause, wholes.

Depending upon the complexity of the organizational whole involved and the experience of a person familiar with the organization, the act of induction need involve no research or testing at all. A simple example is that of a skilled medical doctor who, through simple observation, immediately induces the nature of a disease a person has and precisely what kind of organic dysfunction, disharmony, is causing it.

Unhappily for the West, since the time of Sir Francis Bacon, most Western intellectuals (including even many leading theologians) have inclined to reduce the whole of induction, and with it, the whole of scientific reasoning, to what, today, is popularly called “empirical science.” Since truth is chiefly an intellectual activity, since, in and of themselves, the human senses grasp no truth, the notion of empirical science is one more oxymoron generated by “Enlightenment science” falsely-so-called.

The reduction of the whole of induction and scientific reasoning to empirically testing hypotheses has had, and continues to have, devastating cultural consequences for the West, especially in relation to generating great cultural leaders, including great politicians.

Absent real art and science (art and science that improve, perfect, human life), no real culture and higher forms of human leadership can exist. Cultures and higher forms of human leadership grow out of arts and sciences and cultural justice and prudence; and more perfect cultures and forms of human leadership grow out of more perfect arts, sciences, and cultural justice and prudence. Arts and sciences, and cultural justice and prudence, in turn, grow out of habits of the human soul. Consequently, denial of the reality of the human soul necessarily involves essential denial of human faculties out of which human arts, science, and cultural principles of leadership (great as well as flawed) grow.

## Conclusion

Comprehending *the personalistic and psychologically-complicated nature of philosophy/science*, St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI both sought revival of a *proper, personalistic, psychologically-fitting* understanding of *logos* to halt Western cultural decline and promote global peace. In so doing, while they had both recognized, admired, and had learned much from the organizational genius of St. Thomas Aquinas, and while they had admitted studying his teachings had been extremely valuable for them, they had recognized something (*a personalistic element*) had been missing from the “Systematic Thomism” they had been taught in their “manual” and “commentarian” seminary training, which they had attempted to add by reading other authors.

I think the current Pope Francis has a somewhat similar attitude as John Paul II and Benedict. He notices this problem of a lack of a personalistic element within centuries-old Thomism of thinkers like Francisco Suárez and the manual neo-Thomistic tradition of the twentieth century to which he was exposed as a seminarian. And he has also tried to make up for this lack in his education by supplementing his knowledge through study of other authors.

At the same time, I think Francis's seminary exposure to the manual and commentarian scholastic pedagogies and his seminary instructors in the commentarian Thomistic tradition and manual neo-Thomism left a deep emotional scar on him, and resentment within him, which he carries to this day. Viscerally, this exposure appears to me intensely to anger him. Nonetheless, despite the fact that some Catholic intellectuals tend to think, in a spirit representative of some post-Vatican II Church hierarchy, that Pope Francis is totally anti-Thomistic, totally hostile to the thought of St. Thomas, that portrait does not appear to be accurate.

In part, what makes me draw this conclusion is something he said in the review for the Jesuit periodical *America*:

The church has experienced times of brilliance, like that of Thomas Aquinas. But the church has lived also times of decline in its ability to think. For example, we must not confuse the genius of Thomas Aquinas with the age of decadent Thomist commentaries. Unfortunately, I studied philosophy from textbooks that came from decadent or largely bankrupt Thomism. In thinking of the human being, therefore, the church should strive for genius and not for decadence.<sup>9</sup>

And this conclusion is also supported by what Francis recently said in Cartagena, Columbia, on 10 September 2017, in defense of what

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<sup>9</sup> Antonio Spadaro, S.J., "A Big Heart Open to God: An Interview with Pope Francis," *America. The Jesuit Review* (September 30, 2013). Available online—see the section *References* for details.

he called his “Thomistic,” apostolic exhortation on the family entitled *Amoris Laetitia*:

“In order to understand *Amoris Laetitia*, you must read it from the beginning to the end,” reading each chapter in order, reading what got said during the synods of bishops on the family in 2014 and 2015, and reflecting on all of it, he said.

To those who maintain that the morality underlying the document is not “a Catholic morality” or a morality that can be certain or sure, “I want to repeat clearly that the morality of *Amoris Laetitia* is Thomist,” that is, built on the moral philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, he said.

One of best and “most mature” theologians today who can explain the document, he told them, is Austrian Cardinal Christoph Schonborn of Vienna.

“I want to say this so that you can help those who believe that morality is purely casuistic,” he said, meaning a morality that changes according to particular cases and circumstances rather than one that determines a general approach that should guide the church’s pastoral activity.

The pope had made a similar point during his meeting with Jesuits gathered in Rome for their general congregation in 2016. There he said, “In the field of morality, we must advance without falling into situationalism.”

“St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure affirm that the general principle holds for all but—they say it explicitly—as one moves to the particular, the question becomes diversified and many nuances arise without changing the principle,” he had said. It is a method that was used for the Catechism of the Catholic Church and *Amoris Laetitia*, he added.<sup>10</sup>

As someone who, in his youth, had done much reading of manual neo-Thomists like Richard P. Phillips and Celestine N. Bittle and the renaissance “commentarian tradition,” and had learned much from them, I find Pope Francis’s statements about the “bankrupt” and “decadent” Thomism he was forced to study as a seminarian excessively harsh,

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<sup>10</sup> Carol Glatz, “*Amoris Laetitia* Is Built on Traditional Thomist Morality, Pope Says,” *TheBostonPilot.com* (Posted: 9/28/2017). Available online—see the section *References* for details.

somewhat historically inaccurate, indelicately put, and somewhat disrespectful of the yeoman-like recovery and revival work scholars had done during the post-Reformation renaissance and neo-Thomistic revival of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Nonetheless, the main points I take from his critique are: 1) during his youth and today, Thomistic studies have not been as qualitatively excellent as they were during the time of St. Thomas; 2) the Thomism he had studied came largely from textbooks that did not reflect genius; 3) he has no problems with the teaching of St. Thomas; 4) he does have problems with bad pedagogy and boring readings.

St. Thomas Aquinas had similar problems with bad pedagogy and boring readings in Catholic universities. (So have I.) As St. Thomas tells us in his prologue, his dissatisfaction with the way theology had been taught to him had prompted him to write his magisterial *Summa Theologiae*.<sup>11</sup>

Since the work of philosophy, science, is a cultural enterprise, we cannot expect the scholarship done during periods of recovery and revival to match in excellence scholarship and writing style done during a cultural golden age. While the post-Reformation Spanish commentaries might have been extremely boring for him as a youth to read, as Pope Francis knows, the work of John of St. Thomas (John Poinset) of the same period is one of genius.

Similarly, even though they contain some mistakes, the early “systematic Thomisms” of Jacques Maritain and Étienne Gilson during the second, *humanistic* (in the sense made popular by Paul Oskar Kristeller) wave of neo-Thomism are marked with genius. The “manual” neo-Thomistic period preceding Maritain and Gilson lacked the same measure of scholarly genius and great writing for the simple reason that it was chiefly an *initial research and apologetical period* during which

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<sup>11</sup> See *S.Th.*, Prologue.

scholastic thinkers were trying to: 1) engage in recovery of some basic understanding of the teaching of St. Thomas and 2) produce an apologetical defense of the Faith to stop the bleeding that the Church found itself suffering during the post-Reformation and post-French Revolution periods. Maritain, Gilson, and many other great twentieth-century Thomistic scholars had to stand upon the shoulders of some nineteenth-century “boring” (but still quite intelligent) manual authors and older commentarians to see further than those authors had been able to do.

At present, Thomism is entering into a neo-*Thomistic third wave* designed to reinterpret in a properly personalistic way the teachings of St. Thomas in light of essential principles (and ways of working with these principles and previously-discovered principles) not previously employed within the prior waves of neo-Thomism and centuries of post-Reformation Thomism prior to that. I call movement the period of “Born Again Thomism” or “Ragamuffin Thomism.”

Among other reasons, I have written this paper to articulate in summary form essential principles and some necessary consequences related to this *third period of neo-Thomism*.<sup>12</sup> Without application of the principles described above to the Church’s “new evangelization” program started by St. John Paul II and continued by Popes Benedict and Francis, I am certain that program cannot succeed. And, if it fails, I am convinced that the Church will be unable to halt the cultural suicide in which the West is presently engaged.

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<sup>12</sup> I describe in detail this new and, hopefully, improved understanding of St. Thomas’s teachings in the following books: *A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics: Written in the Hope of Ending the Centuries-Old Separation between Philosophy and Science and Science and Wisdom*, vol. 1 (St. Louis, Mo.: En Route Books & Media, 2015); *A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics: An Introduction to Ragamuffin Thomism*, vol. 2 (St. Louis, Mo.: En Route Books & Media, 2016); and *The Moral Psychology of St. Thomas Aquinas: An Introduction to Ragamuffin Ethics* (St. Louis, Mo.: En Route Books & Media, 2017).

Instead of being anti-Thomistic, while he appears not explicitly to realize it, for decades, Pope Francis seems to me to have been on a restless intellectual journey to become a “Born Again,” or “Ragamuffin,” Thomist. Up until this time, however, he has not been able completely to figure out how most fully to realize this quest.



**14 Evident Truths from the Organizational Genius of St. Thomas Aquinas:  
How “Born Again Thomism” Can Help Save the West from Cultural Suicide**

SUMMARY

This paper is written to articulate in a summary form 14 evidently-known essential and personalistic principles from the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas needed, especially by Pope Francis, to understand a *third period of neo-Thomism* we are now in: *Born-again*, or *Ragamuffin*, *Thomism*. It maintains that, without application of these principles to the Church’s “new evangelization,” this movement will fail. With that failure the Church will be unable to halt the cultural suicide in which the West is presently engaged.

KEYWORDS

Thomas Aquinas, Thomism, West, Enlightenment, neo-Thomism, Pope Francis, new evangelization, culture, end, communication, experience, genus, habit, induction, leader, leadership, nominalism, organization, part, philosophy, principle, proportionality, ragamuffin, science, sense, species, truth, unity, whole, wonder.

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