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Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu
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Al. Racławickie 14, 20-950 Lublin, Poland

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CONTENTS

Scripta Gilsoniana

Scripta Philosophica

Book Reviews

Scripta Gilsoniana

James D. Capehart

Gilson's Notion of *Theologism* in *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* and *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*

In the following essay I intend to examine in Gilson's own words the meaning of the often misunderstood term which he coined, *viz. theologism*. In order to do so, I will focus on his 1937 *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* and his 1938 *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*. In Chapter 2 of his *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, titled "Theologism and Philosophy," Gilson provides an important further treatment for the *theologism* that he hinted at and treated of but did not name explicitly one year earlier in *Christianisme et Philosophie*.[1] He

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James D. Capehart — Unaffiliated Scholar, USA
e-mail: jimcape73@gmail.com ▪ ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2555-7203

[1] The first instance in which I have found Gilson using the phrase *théologisme pur* is in the essay "La notion de philosophie chrétienne," Session of 21 March, *Bulletin de la Societe française de Philosophie* 31, no. 2 (1931), translated by Gregory Sadler as "The Notion of Christian Philosophy," in *Reason Fulfilled by Revelation: The 1930s Christian Philosophy Debates in France* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 128–140. There he speaks of "pure theologism" as being one attitude toward philosophy which is opposed to the real existence of Christian philosophy as Gilson is intending it: "According to pure theologism, Christian philosophy signifies Christianity without philosophy, and the unity of both terms is produced by confusing philosophy with religion." ("The Notion of Christian Philosophy," 133; French edition, 43.) While he does not go into detail in that work, one can see even here that the phrase is used to signify a kind of conflation or *formal confusion* of philosophy and Christianity. The next major work where I have found the notion is in *Christianity and Philosophy*, where however the actual phrase is absent. Cf. Étienne Gilson, *Christianisme et Philosophie* (Paris: Vrin, 1936), translated by Ralph MacDonald as *Christianity and Philosophy* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1939). In that work Gilson offers several attitudes regarding the relationship between Christianity and philosophy which he re-

will develop this notion of *theologism* additionally in his 1938 *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*. For our purposes, the treatment of *theologism* in these two works is helpful for enlightening how Gilson's doctrine on Christian philosophy continued to develop in the later 1930s. Against the accusation that the phrase "Christian philosophy" implies formally conflating philosophy and theology, Gilson responds by showing precisely what it means to formally conflate them, and also how St. Thomas—the example *par excellence* for Christian philosophy—is not guilty of this either. Furthermore, I hope to show how a better understanding of the phrase will help interpret Gilson's later writings on Christian philosophy more accurately.

As he begins Chapter 2 of *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, Gilson explains how *logicism*—the encroachment of philosophers by means of an overextension of logic upon theology—helped to produce an aversion and reaction against logic. This encroachment of logic upon theology was common in the late 11th and 12th Centuries and led to a reaction against not only logic but against philosophy in general, as philosophy as such was considered to be synonymous with logic by many theologians of the Middle Ages. Theologians held this reduction of philosophy to logic due to the fact that many professors of logic were considered to be philosophers simply speaking without distinction. As he explains,

> The only thing [the theologians] were conscious of on this point was that the men who were teaching logic were also the men whom everybody called philosophers, and who were themselves

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gards to be deficient either for its hostility to philosophy, for its conflation of philosophy within theology, or even for its deprecation of nature. Cf. *Christianity and Philosophy*, 6–13. Though he does not call them theologism in that work, these attitudes are the ones he returns to in *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* and *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* and explicitly refers to them as forms of theologism.

convinced that philosophy is nothing but logic applied to philosophical questions.[2]

Logicism had threatened the destruction of theology, and because of this, it threatened the salvation of souls. Therefore, some theologians felt the need to respond to it by the removal of philosophy as a whole, though, precisely how that was to be done took different forms. Gilson explains the matter in the following way:

> As theologians, their task was not to save philosophy from logicism, but, through faith and grace, to save mankind from eternal perdition. Any obstacle that stood in the way of this had to be carefully removed, be it philosophy itself. But what was the best way for theology to get rid of philosophy was a rather intricate question.[3]

One response to this among theologians, Gilson notes, was to attempt the complete eradication of philosophy, precisely because they regarded philosophy at best to be useless and unnecessary or at worst to be inimical to the Faith:

> Wherever there is a theology, or merely a faith, there are overzealous theologians and believers to preach that pious souls have no use for philosophical knowledge, and that philosophical speculation is basically inconsistent with a sincere religious life. Among those who favour such an attitude, there are some of a rather crude type, but others are very intelligent men, whose speculative power is by no means inferior to their religious zeal. The only difference between such men and true philosophers is that instead of using their reason in behalf of philosophy, they turn their natural ability against it.[4]

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[2] Étienne Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), 32.

[3] *Ibid.*, 32–33.

[4] *Ibid.*, 33.

Though he does not explicitly call this attitude of the "very intelligent men" who have used their reason against philosophy to be *theologism* here in this work or previously where he mentioned this fact in *Christianity and Philosophy*, Gilson here as elsewhere presents it along with specifically *theologistic* doctrines as a kindred reaction against the proper relationship between philosophy and theology by a theologian.[5] In this first case the theologian does violence to philosophy by trying to purge every element of philosophy from Christian speculation, while *theologism proper*, at least as he presents it in *Unity*, does so by formally merging philosophy within theology, as can be seen in the following way.

Recognizing the detriment to theology brought about by the destruction of philosophy, Gilson notes that some theologians sought to reject philosophy not by its direct destruction but by merging philosophy within theology and thereby taming it: "Instead of attempting to kill it by discrediting the work of the philosophers, some divines have thought it better to tame and, so to speak, to domesticate philosophy by merging it in theology."[6] This *tamed philosophy completely within theology* is what he is hinting at to be *theologism* in a rigorous sense. Philosophy in this sense is regarded to be good, but for these thinkers who are guilty of this attitude, absolute truth can only be found in revealed theology. Therefore, philosophy is subsumed into it and made to be shown to be in accord with it. As Gilson explains in the following way, "On the other hand, where the revealed truth is, by hypothesis, absolute

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[5] In a moment, we will see that in *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* he explicitly calls this attitude a form of theologism. For now, we will call it a doctrine *kindred to theologism* as it was a kind of *proto-theologism*. One could say that it is analogous to *theologism proper*, and could also call it *theologism in a loose sense*.

[6] Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, 36. Still, more specific examples of how theologistic doctrines merge philosophy into theology will be provided in a moment in our treatment of *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*. We will pass over that point for right now to focus on other aspects of theologism that Gilson does focus more upon in *Unity*.

truth, the only way to save philosophy is to show that its teaching is substantially the same as that of revealed religion."[7] This is not the same as affirming the unity of truth whereby true philosophy will always be in accord with the truths of Christian theology. Were that the case at hand, there would be no problem at all, and therefore no theologism present. Rather in the theologism in a rigorous sense that he is explaining, it is the *way* in which the theologian uses philosophy that is the problem, as is evinced in what follows.

Gilson then gives not a definition but a description for the *theologism* that is at work in such a situation:

> Owing to the seriousness of their purpose, as well as to their boldness in dealing with the highest metaphysical problems, such doctrines have often been a source of philosophical progress. They look like philosophy, they talk like philosophy, they sometimes are studied or taught in schools under the name of philosophy: yet, in point of fact, they are little more than theologies clothed in philosophical garb. Let us call such an attitude Theologism and see how it works.[8]

However, what it means for theologism to be called a theology "clothed in philosophical garb" will require further clarification based upon common characteristics. A first common characteristic he offers for doctrines maintaining an attitude of theologism is an overly pious feeling which, in the hopes of acknowledging the glory of God, often leads to the annihilation of nature as its furthest consequence:

> The deeper [this religious feeling] is, the better it is; but it is one thing to experience a certain feeling deeply, and another thing to allow it to dictate, uncontrolled by reason, a completely rounded interpretation of the world. When and where piety is permitted to inundate the philosophical field, the usual outcome is that, the

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[7] Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, 36–37.

[8] *Ibid.*, 37.

better to extol the glory of God, pious-minded theologians proceed joyfully to annihilate God's own creation.[9]

Relating this back to Gilson's treatment in *Christianity and Philosophy* (alluded to in note 1), one can see that even if a given thinker does not support an annihilation of nature and philosophy, *theologism* often maintains an attitude which deprecates nature, reason, and philosophy in some way, which plants the seeds for later thinkers to draw out what might have been but unintended consequences in the earlier thinkers.

Gilson notes a common sequence of events for the development and breakdown of these theologistic doctrines:

> In such a case the sequence of doctrines too often runs in the following way: with the best intentions in the world, some theologian suggests, as a philosophically established truth, that God is and does everything, while nature and man are and do nothing; then comes a philosopher who grants the theologian's success in proving that nature is powerless, but emphasizes his failure to prove that there is a God. Hence the logical conclusion that nature is wholly deprived of reality and intelligibility. This is scepticism, and it cannot be avoided in such cases.[10]

Thus, seeking to affirm God's omnipotence, a theologian might overly attribute to God and the order of grace to the detriment of the order of nature and of secondary efficient causality. The next stage is for a philosopher to come along and champion the theologian's devaluing of nature and, seeing philosophy to be useless, they hold to the necessary consequence that there can be no true demonstrations for God's existence. A denuded nature that is empty of intelligibility cannot possibly be a starting point for proving the existence of God, nor can a philosophy that is regarded as useless. Therefore, Gilson sees that *theologistic*

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[9] *Ibid.*

[10] *Ibid.*, 38.

doctrines tend—in the end of the process of development from initiator through disciple or disciples—toward ending in *scepticism*.

The first clear historical example of *theologism* that Gilson provides is the doctrine of the Asharites, who were an Islamic sect of the 9th and 10th Centuries, founded by Al Ashari (873–935). Gilson notes the following of Al Ashari:

> As a matter of fact, were Ashari to be credited with but a small part of the philosophical positions that were held later on in his school, the truth would be that his way of understanding it was to render everything to God and nothing to man. His doctrine is a remarkable instance of what happens to philosophy when it is handled by theologians, according to theological methods, for a theological end.[11]

Careful attention must be paid to this text as it provides three key characteristics or ingredients for this theologism in a strict sense. At first glance the last sentence could be very problematic for considering what Gilson has said previously—*viz.* that Christian philosophy is most properly found, though not exclusively, in service to theology, as he maintained in *Christianity and Philosophy*[12]—but also, for what he *will say* in a few short years in the fifth edition of *Le Thomisme* (1944)[13]—

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[11] *Ibid.*, 39.

[12] Cf. Gilson, *Christianity and Philosophy*, 96–97: "Unless, therefore, the existence of God, His Unity, Creative Power, and all the attributes knowable by natural reason, but revealed by God Himself, which are prescribed to all as things that must be believed, are excluded from those things *quae ad religionem pertinent*, it seems hardly possible to avoid the conclusion that the natural theology of the Christian is at the service of his supernatural theology. But it is precisely in this state of service that it finds itself as philosophy."

[13] Étienne Gilson, *Le Thomisme: Introduction à la Philosophie de Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, 5ed rev. et aug. (Paris: J. Vrin, 1944), translated by L. K. Shook as *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Random House, 1956), 9: "Everything in the Summa is theological, yet, elements of genuinely philosophical nature are part and parcel of Thomistic theology precisely because, according to St. Thomas himself, the distinction between theology and philosophy does not adequately answer the distinction between faith and reason. As will be seen later on, his theology requires the

viz. that Christian philosophy is often found used by the theologian for a *theological end*. Given that Gilson readily finds St. Thomas's Christian philosophy present within his theological works, Gilson is not saying *theologism* occurs merely when a *theologian* uses philosophy for a *theological end*. That second element above is the key ingredient for this poisonous potion—*viz.* using philosophy according to *theological methods*. It is there that *philosophy* is not really at the service of theology but is annihilated by it. Hence, we are not talking about a theologian who, for example, after acknowledging God's existence based upon revelation proceeds to demonstrate it or any other of the preambles of faith. Philosophy may be used in such a case according to the end of the theologian—for example, possibly for the conversion of non-believers—but still according to *philosophical method*, that is, by means of syllogisms that contain open house data in their premises.

Thus, for Gilson's conception of theologism, all three of these ingredients are necessary, but most especially that of using philosophy according to *theological method*. An example of this that Gilson will show later on is when a theologian attempts to demonstrate what is *de iure* indemonstrable, that is, any of the content of the *mysteries* or *articles of faith*, as for example, the Trinity or the Hypostatic Union. Further still, one can see that Gilson also has in mind the following: in theologistic doctrines, while the use of philosophy is for a *theological end*, that notion of end takes on a *radical*, *hyperbolic manner*. It is not just a question of demonstrating preambles of faith—which is perfectly in accord with the theologian's proper use of philosophy—but rather it involves a radical reduction of the *end* at work, that is, that philosophy can be used for apologetical purposes *only*. Thus, in such a scenario,

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collaboration of purely philosophical elements used in view of an essentially theological end."

apologetics is all that philosophy is good for.[14] Yet, it should be noted that to use philosophy for an apologetical purpose is not a problem unless that is *all that philosophy is good for* with no value in addition to the aid it brings to theology.

Additionally, Gilson proceeds by offering a long quotation from Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed*, where Rabbi Moses is commenting upon the common treatment of philosophy by some early Christian and Muslim thinkers such as the Asharites:

> We merely maintain that the earlier theologians, both of the Greek Christians and of the Mohammedans, when they laid down their propositions, did not investigate the real properties of things; first of all they considered what must be the properties of the things which should yield proof for or against a certain creed; and when this was found they asserted that the thing must be endowed with those properties; then they employed the same assertion as a proof for the identical arguments which had led to the assertion, and by which they either supported or refuted a certain opinion.[15]

Based upon what Gilson quotes of Rabbi Moses, certain early Christian and early Muslim thinkers were not just guilty of employing philosophy for apologetical purposes. Rather, they were engaged in an enterprise in which philosophical, inductive reasoning about nature and its causes was replaced with deductive, *a priori* reasoning about the constitution of what nature should have in order to function as a proof for various theological propositions. This sheds further light upon what

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[14] Many of the early Church Fathers may very well have been guilty of such an attitude. In a text where Gilson comments upon the early Church's use of philosophy as noted in the work of Maimonides, he says the following: "In short, as we would say today, the philosophy of these Christians was but that particular branch of theology which we call apologetics." (Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, 40.)

[15] Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, 40–41, quoting from Moses Maimonides, *Guide to the Perplexed*, 2nd ed., trans. M. Friedlander (London: Routledge, 1928), 109–110.

Gilson means by theologism's use of philosophy according to a theo-
logical way of deduction from a revealed datum to what nature should
be. Moreover, what is common among the noted early Christian and
Asharite doctrines is an attitude toward philosophy and toward nature
itself. As Gilson says reflecting upon Maimonides' analysis,

> Accusing their authors of not being interested in the real nature
> of things would have been a cheap criticism, though a true one.
> What Maimonides has clearly perceived, with remarkable in-
> sight, is that even these men themselves were aware of the fact,
> and that, in a sense, their whole doctrine was but a toilsome
> justification of their attitude. Knowing, as they did, that their
> statements were open to that criticism, they assumed that it was
> quite useless to worry about the real nature and order of things,
> because things have indeed neither nature nor order.[16]

Thus, such theologistic doctrines disregarded a philosophy unmerged
with theology that was concerned with the nature of things, because
nature itself, meaning the world of physical things, was disregarded as
lacking *naturae* (i.e., essences ordered toward operation), as well as
lacking the order and intelligibility that would otherwise result from
them.

In an important text that sheds much light upon Gilson's under-
standing of *theologism* and the opposing *proper attitude* toward philos-
ophy and nature, he comments upon G. K. Chesterton's *Father Brown*
series, particularly referring to the first of the series titled "The Blue
Cross:"

> In one of his best novels, G. K. Chesterton introduces a very
> simple priest who finds out that a man, though clothed as a priest,
> is not a priest but a common thief; when the man asks him what
> made him sure that he was not a priest, Father Brown simply an-

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[16] *Ibid.*, 41–42.

swers: "You attacked reason. It's bad theology."[17] Father Brown was obviously a sound Thomist.[18]

Gilson is here referring to a scene in which Father Brown has been attempting to attract the police in order to thwart a heinous crime. The great thief Flambeau is disguised as a priest in the hopes of stealing Fr. Brown's jeweled cross, which the humble, old, priest-detective is taking on his journey to a Eucharistic Congress. As the renowned French detective Valentin catches up to them, he overhears Father Brown and the thief-in-priestly-guise already in a deep discussion. Here Flambeau reveals a kind of popular scepticism in a form of "possible worlds" in which our notion of reason and the reasonable might in fact really be *unreasonable*:

> 'Ah, yes, these modern infidels appeal to their reason; but who can look at those millions of worlds and not feel that there may well be wonderful universes above us where reason is utterly unreasonable?'[19]

In direct response, Fr. Brown replies,

> 'No,' said the other priest; 'reason is always reasonable, even in the last limbo, in the lost borderland of things. I know that people charge the Church with lowering reason, but it is just the other way. Alone on earth, the Church makes reason really supreme. Alone on earth, the Church affirms that God himself is bound by reason.'[20]

For Gilson, Chesterton—a life-trained philosopher if there ever was one—enunciates a popular brand of *theologism* in Flambeau's words, even if not precisely the kind that merges philosophy into theol-

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[17] G. K. Chesterton, "The Blue Cross," in *Father Brown: The Essential Tales* (New York: The Modern Library, 2005), 22.

[18] Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, 48.

[19] Chesterton, "The Blue Cross," 17.

[20] *Ibid.*, 17–18.

ogy. The thief-in-priest's-clothing, like a lion in sheep's wool, speaks as a bad theologian affirming the possibility of the irrationality of reason and of the lack of certitude that can be maintained in reason's findings. This is what Chesterton's Fr. Brown finds to be revealing of Flambeau's true nature and identity. This was the attack upon reason which Chesterton regarded to be "bad theology" and which Gilson highlighted briefly in order to point toward the doctrine of St. Thomas as antidote to it.

Moreover, Gilson then proceeds to speak of St. Thomas on these matters. As he says in the subsequent text:

> [St. Thomas] was too great a theologian to indulge in an attitude in which theology has no less to lose than has philosophy itself; but he took an interest in it, first as an artist, for there is something fascinating in a blunder so consistently executed; and secondly as a theologian, because he knew many good men infected by this same disease, some of whom would have branded him as a pagan for his stubbornness in dealing with philosophical problems in a purely philosophical way.[21]

Notice that Gilson affirms that St. Thomas held interest in philosophy *as a theologian*. Theologism does not merely consist in a theologian's interest in and use of philosophy. The key expressed here is that the proper use of philosophy by a theologian follows St. Thomas's lead in that he solves *philosophical problems in a philosophical way*, that is, through philosophical reasoning based upon first principles and premises which contain open house data from the natural world, objects which do not *de iure* require religious belief in order for acceptance.

Nevertheless, Gilson returns to present another doctrine which he believes to have fallen into a form of *theologism*, at least in some way, and this is none other than the doctrine of the Seraphic Doctor, St. Bonaventure. In this process, Gilson acknowledges that he was a great theo-

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[21] Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, 48–49.

logian (in fact, the greatest Franciscan theologian), but also truly a philosopher:

> A General Minister of the Franciscan Order, St. Bonaventura was, and still remains, the most perfect exponent of Franciscan theology, that is, of a theology thoroughly imbued with the religious genius of St. Francis of Assisi. Besides being one of the greatest figures in the history of speculative mysticism, St. Bonaventura was a philosopher.[22]

In this way, it should *not* be said that Gilson considered St. Bonaventure guilty of theologism *through and through in all respects* of his doctrine, for otherwise, how would such predications as "the most perfect exponent of Franciscan theology" and "philosopher" be merited? Likewise, if Gilson sees St. Bonaventure to have been truly a philosopher—as he does clearly at least from early in his career and even here now in the publication of *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*—Gilson cannot be accusing him of the broad "kindred" form of theologism which denies the possibility of philosophy (i.e., the first type that we discussed above as a reaction to *logicism*). Nor does it seem that he is accusing him of the more "rigorous" sense of theologism which merges philosophy into theology. Rather, what he finds in the great Franciscan's doctrine is the other theologistic tendency spoken of which, in order to exalt the Divine and the order of grace, at times falls into diminishing the order of nature and philosophy. Gilson suggests that in the process of seeking to *reduce* (i.e., *lead back*) philosophy and all of the arts to theology, St. Bonaventure has maintained a diminished

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[22] *Ibid.*, 49. Later Gilson will respond to Pierre Mandonnet by conceding that St. Bonaventure really was primarily a theologian, and will stop calling him also a philosopher. Here in *Unity*, however, this shift has not yet been made. Cf. Étienne Gilson, *The Philosopher and Theology*, trans. Cécile Gilson (New York: Random House, 1962), 92–95.

form of philosophy and of nature.[23] Providing his own response to what he believes to be St. Bonaventure's project, Gilson maintains,

> If you want a theology in order to bring all the other sciences back to God, your first requisite is of course a theology; and if you want to refer your philosophy to God, what you need first is a philosophy—a philosophy, I repeat, that is wholly and exclusively a philosophy, and which, because it is a philosophy, can be related to theology without being reduced to it.[24]

Thus, Gilson is not saying that a theologian cannot make use of philosophy for theological purposes. However, he insists that philosophy will only be of real use to the theologian if it is already properly established *qua* philosophy, maintaining its formal distinction from theology as such.

Gilson goes on to provide an example of what he believes to show St. Bonaventure's diminished view of nature in his doctrine of grace and nature. He contends that Bonaventure felt it the safer path to attribute more to grace and less to nature, in order to avoid a kind of presumption and impiety.[25] However, Gilson rejects this attitude, saying that, if it is permissible to attribute a little less to nature, at what point do we stop in this process of diminution:

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[23] R. E. Houser contends that Gilson's understanding of *reductio* in Bonaventure is in fact a reductionism in the modern sense of the term. In short, as Houser contends, Bonaventure's notion of reduction is, "a positive kind, where analysis of one thing opens the mind to another, not the negative reduction which eliminates one in favor of the other." (R. E. Houser, "Bonaventure's Three-fold Way to God," *Philosophy* 6 [1997]: 97.) Nevertheless, whether Gilson's reading of Bonaventure is accurate or not is entirely tangential to the purpose of this essay. What is of value for our purposes is *why* Gilson regards St. Bonaventure to be guilty of theologism or of theologistic tendencies in light of better understanding Gilson's developing doctrine on Christian philosophy. Still, if Bonaventure is guilty of attributing more to God and less to the nature that He has created, the Seraphic Doctor is at least guilty of a theologistic tendency, even if he was disciplined in this regard and kept these sentiments to a minimum.

[24] Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, 50.

[25] Cf. *ibid*., 51.

> If, on the contrary, you start on the assumption that it is safer to keep a little below the line, where are you going to stop? Why, indeed, should you stop at all? Since it is pious to lessen the efficacy of free will, it is more pious to lessen it a little more, and to make it utterly powerless should be the highest mark of piety. In fact, there will be mediaeval theologians who come very close to that conclusion, and even reach it a long time before the age of Luther and Calvin.[26]

Ultimately, such a position could lead and did lead to similar conclusions regarding nature and free will that were maintained by Luther and Calvin. Still, Gilson acknowledges that Bonaventure would reject such a move and in no way accuses him of it. The question is whether his principles guard against such a move or not: "Nothing, of course, would have been more repellent to St. Bonaventura than such a doctrine; the only question here is: was St. Bonaventura protected against it?"[27]

Additionally, Gilson contends that St. Bonaventure's religious sentiment sometimes affected his philosophy. One example he provides concerns two different ways of viewing efficient causality in Bonaventure. As Gilson explains,

> First, he could favour the view that where there is efficient causality, something new, which we call effect, is brought into existence by the efficacy of its cause; in this case, every effect can be rightly considered as a positive addition to the already existing order of reality. Or St. Bonaventura could maintain, with St. Augustine, that God has created all things present and future at the very instant of creation. From this second point of view, any particular being, taken at any time of world history, should be considered, so to speak, as the seed of all those other beings, or events, that are to flow from it according to the laws of divine providence.[28]

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[26] *Ibid.*, 52.

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] *Ibid.*, 53.

In short, the first notion of efficient causality would be maintained by thinkers such as St. Thomas and preserves the efficacy of secondary efficient causes as real causes of existence in the natural world. However, it is this second notion which diminishes that efficacy of secondary efficient causes—as created things could in no way be called causes of existence of new things—and which he has explicitly attributed to Bonaventure, that Gilson finds to be problematic:

> It is typical of St. Bonaventura's theologism that he always clung to this second interpretation of causality. He never could bring himself to think that efficient causality is attended by the springing up of new existences. To him, such a view practically amounted to crediting creatures with a creative power that belongs only to God.[29]

Furthermore, Gilson asserts that this view of a nature bereft of real efficient causality has much in common with the position of both Malebranche and Al Ashari:

> If, in the beginning, God created, together with all that was, all that was to be, the end of the world story was in its beginning, and nothing can really happen to it; in such a system God is the only efficient cause, and this world of ours is a completely barren world, just as in the doctrine of Malebranche and of Al Ashari.[30]

Further light is shed on Gilson's understanding of theologism in his 1938 *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*—the 1937 Richards Lectures at the University of Virginia. While much of what he said about theologism in *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* is repeated, Gilson provides additional clarity on this topic through his division of the history of Christian thought according to *spiritual families*. Gilson states at the outset of this work that his goal is to provide a sketch of the main spiritual families that influenced the thought of the Middle Ages.

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[29] *Ibid.*

[30] *Ibid.*, 53–54.

As he says, "But we can hope to achieve, if not a description of those seven centuries of abstract speculation, at least a sketch of the main spiritual families which were responsible for the copious philosophical and theological literature of the Middle Ages."[31]

The first family will be categorized as one in which revelation completely replaces philosophy as there is no need for it:

> The first of those spiritual families, and the only one we will now attempt to characterize, was made up of those theologians according to whom Revelation had been given to men as a substitute for all other knowledge, including science, ethics and metaphysics.[32]

In short this position maintains: "[S]ince God has spoken to us, it is no longer necessary for us to think."[33] One can see that Gilson is again presenting, first, the doctrine in which theologians cast off philosophy at least as unnecessary if not as inimical to the Faith. We previously called this a "kindred" doctrine to theologism or *theologism in a loose sense*—though that is not Gilson's term for it—as it historically preceded or accompanied the theologism in the rigorous sense which he spoke of in *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*.

Moreover, members of this spiritual family are characterized as supporting the very self-sufficiency of Christian Revelation, such a position that Gilson notes has had numerous proponents historically speaking: "This absolute conviction in the self-sufficiency of Christian Revelation has always found decided supporters."[34] As he says further, "[I]ts representatives are always there, but it becomes vocal chiefly during such times when philosophy is threatening to invade the field of

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[31] Étienne Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* (New York: Scribner's, 1938), 4–5.

[32] *Ibid.*, 5.

[33] *Ibid.*, 6.

[34] *Ibid.*, 8. Gilson includes in this family Tatian, St. Bernard, St. Peter Damien, and the Franciscan Spirituals. Cf. *ibid.*, 11–14.

Revelation."[35] Not specifically referred to in this text in *Reason and Revelation*, Gilson is alluding to what he had mentioned in *Unity*, *viz.* that this doctrine has often been found in response to *logicism's* encroachments upon theology. Consequently, this family maintains a hostility toward philosophy, oftentimes regarding it as the source of error and heresy.[36] Gilson mentions Tertullian to be the primary example of this view of revelation and philosophy, to such an extent that he names this family, the "Tertullian family."[37] In a key text Gilson summarizes what he regards to be the common characteristics of this family:

> Emphasis laid upon three or four texts of Saint Paul, always the same, and exclusion of all his other statements about our natural knowledge of God, and the existence, nay, the binding force of a natural moral law; unqualified condemnation of Greek philosophy, as though no Greek philosopher had ever said anything true concerning the nature of God, of man and of our destiny; bitter hatred, and vicious attacks especially directed against Dialectics, as if it were possible even to condemn Dialectics without making use of it; the tracing back of heresies against religious dogmas to the pernicious influence of philosophical speculation upon theological knowledge; last, not the least, the crude statement of an absolute opposition between religious faith in the word of God and the use of natural reason in matters pertaining to Revelation . . .[38]

Thus, one sees five common characteristics laid out: first, the relying on the authority of and the absolutizing of the few texts where St. Paul seemingly condemns philosophy; second, the condemnation of all Greek philosophy without reservation or qualification; third, attacking the science of dialectical logic, ironically without regard for the need to

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[35] *Ibid.*, 8.

[36] Cf. *ibid*.

[37] *Ibid.*, 10.

[38] *Ibid.*, 10–11.

use logic in order to do so; fourth, focusing upon the erroneous philo-
sophical foundations in numerous theological heresies as a way of
showing that heresy in general was due to the general encroachment of
philosophy upon theology; and lastly, setting up a complete opposition
between religious faith in revelation and the use of unaided reason in
those matters that involve revelation, that is, as a rational component
within theology as *ancilla*. Furthermore, unlike in *Christianity and Phi-
losophy* and *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, Gilson explicitly
refers to the position of this family to be a form of *theologism*, in fact
calling it at one point a "radical theologism."[39]

In addition, Gilson condemns this type of theologism outright as
having produced a "darkness" not only in philosophy and science, but
in the theology which it had so championed:

> Had the Middle Ages produced men of this type only, the period
> would fully deserve the title of Dark Ages which it is commonly
> given. It would deserve the name not only from the point of view
> of science and of philosophy, but from that of theology as well.[40]

Therefore, such a position was not only bad for philosophy, but similar
to the sentiment of Chesterton's Fr. Brown quoted in *Unity*, in attacking
reason it was bad for theology. Not mentioned specifically in *Reason
and Revelation*, the Tertullian family is in a certain sense the realization
of Flambeau's possible world in which reason was regarded to be un-
reasonable—except, it was not some other world but the one we live in.

Gilson moves on to consider the second family of Christian
thought regarding the relationship of revelation and philosophy, which
he notes to be a marked improvement with positive results:

> Fortunately, the history of Christian thought attests the existence
> of another spiritual family, much more enlightened than the first

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[39] *Ibid.*, 13.

[40] *Ibid.*, 15.

one, and whose untiring efforts to blend religious faith with rational speculations have achieved really important results.[41]

In this group, there is an affirmation of the value of philosophy and its fundamental conformity with revelation. However, one should keep in mind that it is presented in a section devoted to spiritual families that assert the primacy of faith, and likewise where he seems to insinuate subtly that the examples given hold that primacy *in an exaggerated way*. He then offers as examples of this family such thinkers as Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, but most especially St. Augustine, because of whom he names the group the "Augustinian family."[42] What then are the general characteristics of this family?

Firstly, one can see in St. Augustine the importance of beginning with an act of faith in Christian revelation before proceeding into philosophy. Referring to the point of Augustine's conversion, Gilson comments the following:

> From that time on, Augustine was never to forget that the safest way to reach truth is not the one that starts from reason and then goes on from rational certitude to faith, but, on the contrary, the way whose starting point is faith and then goes on from Revelation to reason.[43]

Thus, he is alluding precisely to Augustine's conversion-influenced pedagogical principle: *Nisi credideritis, non intelligetis*. While, however, Gilson reveres Augustine and the numerous other proponents of this attitude of compatibility and mutual nourishment of faith and reason and of Christianity and philosophy, this treatment here is presented in such a way that Gilson finds it to be somehow imperfect or deficient without some qualification or correction. As we proceed further, one

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[41] *Ibid.*

[42] *Ibid.*, 16.

[43] *Ibid.*, 17.

will see how Gilson now[44] maintains a hesitancy toward this attitude, even with the many positive advantages to it. In truth, the key characteristic which here sets this family apart from Greek philosophy is *the obligatory character of beginning with an act of religious faith for proceeding into philosophy*: "No Greek philosopher could have ever dreamt of making religious faith in some revealed truth the *obligatory starting point of rational knowledge.*"[45] It is this obligatory character of faith which Gilson has soured upon greatly.

In later works, he will still maintain the importance of faith in Christian revelation having historically influenced the development of philosophy. Yet, against accusations that he has conflated philosophy and theology or that he has fallen into a form of fideism, he must reject the idea that a prior act of faith is *de iure obligatory* for the development of a true philosophy. That true philosophies *have historically developed* under the inspiration of Christian faith, is not a problem for Gilson. It is a statement of fact that it happened, as is supremely evinced in his *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*. However, to say that an act of faith is *necessary* for beginning philosophy as such, is too strong an assertion and thus Gilson shies away from it in this 1938 work. It is one thing to say that Christian faith has in fact positively influenced the development of a true philosophy with certain characteristics due specifically to that influence. It is another thing to say that unless you start with an act of faith you cannot participate in the fruits of that philosophy. Gilson was and remained an advocate of the former, and is setting the record straight that he does not accept the latter.[46]

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[44] Just seven years earlier, Gilson called the similarly formulated Augustinian-Anselmian pedagogical principles, *credo ut intelligam* and *fides quaerens intellectum*, the "true definition of Christian philosophy." (Gilson, "The Notion of Christian Philosophy," 138.)

[45] Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*, 17 [my *emphasis*].

[46] In earlier works Gilson did not endorse the implicit obligatory character of faith implied in Augustine's *Nisi credideritis, non intelligetis* or in Augustine and Anselm's

Still, St. Augustine's attitude of the necessity of faith to precede philosophical activity, led to a new era, as Gilson says, in which theologians were the greatest philosophers: "With St. Augustine, on the contrary, a new age was beginning, in which by far the highest type of philosophical thinking would be that of the theologians."[47] While the fullness of truth could not be obtained by the Christian in this life, a small participation in that truth could be through faith and through the rational understanding of the content of revelation. As Gilson says, explaining St. Augustine,

> [H]ence, already in this life, his passionate effort to investigate the mysteries of Revelation by the natural light of reason. The result of such an effort is precisely what Augustine used to call *intellectus*; *understanding*, that is to say, some rational insight into the contents of Revelation, human reason groping its way towards the full light of the beatific vision.[48]

Hence, the believer in this life seeks as much *intellectus* of the contents of faith as can be attained, as a way of working in this life towards that Truth and Goodness which will be fully attained in the life to come. It is in light of this view of revelation and reason, Gilson explains, that St. Augustine developed the notion of believing in order that one may come to understand: "Such is the ultimate meaning of Augustine's famous formula: 'Understanding is the reward of faith. Therefore seek not to understand that thou mayest believe, but believe that thou mayest

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Crede ut intelligas / Credo ut intelligam. Speaking as a historian, his focus was upon the fact of Christian faith having influenced the development of philosophy. In earlier works he was silent on the possible accusation of fideism for championing these texts of Augustine and Anselm. However, here in *Reason and Revelation* he concedes the validity of the critique and modified his position accordingly.

[47] Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*, 17. Gilson had no problem with this in previous works or in later ones. It is a historical fact that the greatest Christian philosophers have also been theologians, and that their philosophies have been found within theological treatises primarily.

[48] *Ibid.*, 18–19.

understand.'"[49] For Augustine and those of his spiritual family, it is from believing that one comes to understand. Hence, for Gilson, they are in unison regarding this fundamental principle:

> All the members of the Augustinian family resemble one another by their common acceptance of the fundamental principle: unless you believe, you shall not understand. Moreover, being Christians, all of them agree that the only conceivable faith is faith in Christian Revelation.[50]

While the similarities in members of the Augustinian family exist in upholding the same faith and its necessity for attaining philosophical understanding, Gilson notes that the differences among these thinkers lie in how they employ reason:

> You cannot fail to know an Augustinian when you meet one in history, but it is not an easy thing to guess what he is going to say. The reason for it is, that while all the members of the family hold the same faith, in whatever places and times they happen to live, not all of them use their understanding in the same way.[51]

Gilson maintains that all of those whom he is describing as part of the Augustinian family—*viz.* Augustine chiefly, but also St. Bonaventure, St. Anselm, and even Malebranche—agree that, "unless we believe, we shall not understand; and all of them agree as to what we should believe, but they do not always agree as to what it is to understand."[52]

Gilson will then shift to the next great member of the Augustinian family, St. Anselm of Canterbury, who in one sense sought greatly to be a faithful follower of St. Augustine's method. As Gilson notes, "Anselm, not Augustine, is responsible for the famous formula: *credo*

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[49] *Ibid.*, 19, quoting from Saint Augustine, "On the Gospel of Saint John," XXIX, 6, in *Homilies on the Gospel of St. John*, vol. I, trans. H. Browne (Oxford: J. H. Parker, 1848), 410.

[50] Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*, 21.

[51] *Ibid.*

[52] *Ibid.*, 22.

ut intelligam."[53] Indeed, Anselm agreed whole heartedly with Augustine's *nisi credideritis* and his *crede ut intelligas*, so much so that he reformulated them into his own motto—*I believe that I may understand*—all the while keeping that obligatory sense of faith in revelation for coming to rational understanding.[54] Yet, for all he owed St. Augus-

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[53] *Ibid.*, 24.

[54] Gilson had, as we have mentioned before, called both St. Augustine's formula and St. Anselm's reiteration of it first the "definition of Christian philosophy" (cf. "The Notion of Christian Philosophy," 139) and he later called them the "method of Christian philosophy" (cf. Étienne Gilson, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy: Gifford Lectures 1931-1932* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936], 52). However, in a 1934 essay titled "Sens et nature de l'argument de saint Anselme," Gilson explicitly denies that such formulae as *credo ut intelligam* and *fides quaerens intellectum* to be the method of Christian philosophy. In the text of the essay itself, he explains how St. Anselm and like thinkers who necessitate faith for beginning philosophy set limitations upon it: "Let us say, further, that if this knowledge can only be concerned with faith, it is that faith itself, in seeking understanding, gives birth to it. Can knowledge be considered part of philosophy, which, if only to be engendered, demands an act of faith? What if it is knowledge that at each instant of its development, and even if it is not deduced from faith, demands the presence of this act of faith? Finally, what if it is rational knowledge, where the act of faith survives, however necessary that knowledge's conclusions may be? One can try to maintain it, but it will be hard to believe, and I think it is better to renounce it." (Étienne Gilson, "The Meaning and Nature of St. Anselm's Argument," in his *Medieval Essays*, trans. James G. Colbert [Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2011], 76.) Indeed, can something be philosophy if it *de iure* demands an act of faith? Some will find this to be the criticism long missing for Anselm and Augustine's apparent requirement for faith in order to engage in philosophical understanding. Gilson will concede to Van Steenberghen that such a view of Christian philosophy will set too much of a limitation upon philosophy and formally rejects this as the proper *method* for a Christian philosopher: "Thus, with Van Steenberghen ('L'Hommage,' 504), I reject the expressions I have used on occasion, although I no longer know where: Christian philosophers move *within a faith*. There are grounds also to correct the expression in *L'esprit de la philosophie médiévale* (1:37) that seems to admit that *fides quaerens intellectum* defines the method of Christian philosophy. The history of Christian philosophy will never be written without St. Anselm, nor without many other thinkers, the majority of whom were theologians (including St. Thomas Aquinas), but if St. Anselm greatly enriched Christian philosophy, I believe that there is an ambition and an exclusive limitation in his expression that prevent our seeing the definition of the attitude of a Christian philosopher in it. I take this occasion to thank Van Steenberghen for his most courteous criticisms." (Gilson, "The Meaning and Nature of St. Anselm's Argument," 76–77, footnote 65.) However, much of what he calls Christian philosophy is in fact

tine in inspiration, St. Anselm entered philosophical thinking within a different context—not at a time of ascendency for platonic and neoplatonic philosophical thought, and also not after a conversion from paganism, but as a Christian monk in a milieu in which rational knowledge was equated with logic:

> But Anselm wrote his treatises during the last years of the eleventh century; he had not gone through the ordeal of Augustine's conversion and was not indebted to Plato, nor to Plotinus, for his discovery of what intellectual knowledge actually is. To him, as to all his contemporaries, rational knowledge was logical knowledge.[55]

For Anselm and other Christian thinkers of his time and circumstances, many eventually sought after logical demonstrations even for revealed truths, due to the heavy emphasis on logic of the time period:

> In short, in Anselm's own times, the standard science was Logic. Under such circumstances, the same endeavor, to achieve a rational understanding of Christian faith, was bound to result in a new translation of Christian beliefs into terms of logical demonstration.[56]

Even St. Anselm's proof for the existence of God, the so called *Ontological Argument*, is rooted in his capacity as a logician. Ultimately, St. Anselm seeks to prove *a priori* that to conceive of God as not existing involves a contradiction. To do so is enough for him to prove that God must exist:

> As a Christian, Anselm believes there is a God; as a logician, he concludes that the notion of a non-existing God is a self-con-

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developed by theologians who have previously begun with faith and then proceeded to philosophical speculation. Can it be said that Gilson no longer says that Christian philosophy can be found in such cases? I think that is not the case, but much more will need to be said on how he continues to develop on this point later in his career.

[55] Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*, 24.

[56] *Ibid.*, 25.

tradictory notion; since he can neither believe that there is no God, nor conceive it, there follows that God exists. By means of Logic alone, Anselm has achieved a rational understanding of Christian faith—the same faith as that of Augustine, but a different understanding.[57]

With St. Anselm and his followers, it is not just a question of seeking to demonstrate what St. Thomas has called *preambles of faith*—those truths necessary for salvation and therefore revealed, but which are capable of being known and demonstrated philosophically. Rather, they sought even to demonstrate *articles of faith*—those properly revealed truths necessary for salvation which by nature are beyond unaided human reason's capacity to attain. As Gilson explains of St. Anselm and his disciples:

> Once a Christian thinker gets to this point, nothing could prevent him from applying the same method to each of the Christian dogmas. And indeed Anselm of Canterbury, as well as his immediate disciples, remain famous in the history of theology for their recklessness in giving rational demonstrations of all revealed truths. To limit ourselves to Anselm himself, we find him proving, by conclusive dialectical arguments, not only the Trinity of the Divine Persons, as he did in both his *Monologium* and his *Proslogium*, but even the very Incarnation of Christ, including all its essential modalities, as he did in his *Cur Deus homo*.[58]

While one may correctly note a change in Gilson's doctrine regarding St. Anselm, it is even more important to stress how this change is rooted in a continuity of Gilson's principles. As early as *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy* and re-confirmed in *Christianity and Philosophy*, Gilson made clear that where he saw Christian philosophy to exist as the rational treatment and understanding of the contents of faith, he was specifically referring to a rational treatment of those objects which

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[57] *Ibid*., 26.

[58] *Ibid*.

could be known by reason alone but which had also been revealed—*viz.
the preambles of faith*. Where a Christian thinker attempts not just a
better understanding about the articles of faith, but a *demonstration* of
them, this can in no way be an instantiation of Christian philosophy or
of philosophy at all, because philosophy itself has been formally violat-
ed by the theologian. This is precisely what Gilson had referred to in
The Unity of Philosophical Experience as the mode of *theologism*
where the theologian merges philosophy within theology in such a way
as to do violence to philosophy by using it according to theological
method.

Thus, as alluded to in the previously cited text, in those instances
where Anselm attempts to demonstrate such things as the Trinity and
the Incarnation, Gilson contends that he is formally guilty of *theologiz-
ing properly speaking*. Still, by implication, where Anselm respects the
formal distinction of philosophy and theology and seeks to demonstrate
only what is truly subject to undergo the process of demonstration, all
the while correctly following the logical rules of demonstration, there
does remain a philosophy or at least moments of genuine philosophiz-
ing. Moreover, if that philosophy was developed under Christian influ-
ence, it is in fact Christian philosophy. Hence, St. Anselm and others
previously called *Christian philosophers* and producers of *Christian
philosophy simpliciter* are now treated by Gilson as having some key
methodological errors. Those errors are in light of fundamental princi-
ples for the relationship of philosophy and theology that Gilson has
maintained for at least a decade to that point. On the other hand, any
and all of these thinkers do contain Christian philosophy where their
doctrines respect those principles.

Nevertheless, Gilson does not attribute Anselm's main *faux pas*
to his spiritual father, St. Augustine. While St. Anselm follows St. Au-
gustine in maintaining the primacy and necessity of faith for coming to
understand, the great Archbishop of Canterbury is solely responsible

for his *theologistic* mode of procedure due to his own exaggerated use of logical demonstration:

> This bold ambition to procure necessary reasons for the revealed dogmas had never entered the mind of Saint Augustine; but it was bound to follow from a merely dialectical treatment of Christian faith. The original character of the doctrine of Saint Anselm, and the peculiar aspect which it still offers to the investigating historian, have no other source and can be accounted for in no other way.[59]

Though Gilson does not accuse St. Anselm at this specific point in *Reason and Revelation* of theologism, it clearly fits under the description given in *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* of what we have been calling *theologism proper* or *in a strict sense*. In fact, later on in this work he does in fact formally speak of this teaching as St. Anselm's *theologism*.[60] However, it should be noted that not all Christian thinkers will make this encounter between Christian revelation and philosophy—albeit in the imperfect manner of reducing philosophical knowledge primarily to the understanding of faith—as profitably as St. Augustine and St. Anselm do in much of their overall doctrine. As Gilson explains of those who followed after these great doctors:

> What more usually happens is, that instead of using science and philosophy to gain some insight into the rational meaning of Revelation, second-rate thinkers will use Revelation as a substitute for rational knowledge, not without causing serious damage to both Revelation and Reason.[61]

Thus, when the *formal distinction* between philosophy and theology are not maintained properly, the conflation of them leads to the destruction of both.

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[59] Ibid., 27.

[60] Cf. *ibid*., 81.

[61] *Ibid*., 32.

Furthermore, Gilson is not accusing St. Augustine and St. Anselm of being guilty themselves of having destroyed philosophy and theology. Their doctrines contain certain theologistic principles and at *times* they are guilty either of theologism at least *in a loose sense*, that is, of *requiring Christian faith* in order to come to understand—as in the case of both of these men and of all thinkers of their common spiritual family—or of *theologism in a strict sense* in St. Anselm's case when he seeks to demonstrate *articles of faith*.[62] Often times their doctrines contain to the great profit of the world much of what Gilson has already praised in his previous works regarding Christian philosophy. It is because of those doctrines that he had originally called these men

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[62] Here I would like to note the work of Gregory Sadler who admits that St. Anselm is guilty of seeking demonstrations for properly revealed doctrines such as the Trinity and the Incarnation as Gilson explained, but still maintains all the while that even in such doctrines Anselm remains a Christian philosopher without qualification. Sadler says that according to the principles contained in "La notion de philosophie chrétienne"—Gilson's address to the *Societe française de Philosophie* in 1931—and in *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy* that St. Anselm was regarded then and still should be considered a Christian philosopher by Gilson. Nevertheless, Sadler's defense of Anselm is quite problematic for the imprecision with which he treats the principles of Gilson's earlier doctrine in those earlier works. He notes correctly that Gilson changes as early as his 1934 essay "Sens et nature de l'argument de saint Anselme" (*Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 9 (1934): 5–51) in his estimation of Anselm's doctrine as no longer being a model of Christian philosophy. Nevertheless, Sadler makes no mention of the fact that in *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy* Gilson clearly maintains in principle that for Christian philosophy to exist *it must remain philosophy*. This clearly means that if Christian philosophers seek demonstrations for objects they attained previously through faith, such objects must be susceptible of demonstration—at least *de iure*—in order for that activity to be philosophy at all. Sadler thinks that when Gilson writes of this in *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* it is a sign of a "Thomistic shift" in Gilson's treatment of Christian philosophy. In truth, Thomistic it may be, but Gilson held this principle much earlier and only later came to see how Anselm among others violated it. Furthermore, Sadler thinks it unfair of Gilson to apply the "Thomistic" distinction of *articles of faith* and *preambles of faith* in a critique of Anselm, but as a matter of fact are there not really and truly some revealed objects of knowledge capable of demonstration and others which are not? How can it be unfair to question St. Anselm's treatment of *reality* when in fact he is supposed to be a philosopher? Cf. Gregory B. Sadler, "Saint Anselm's *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* as a Model for Christian Philosophy," *The Saint Anselm Journal* 4, no. 1 (Fall 2006): 32–58.

Christian philosophers. However, it is to second rate followers that he says take their principles down paths truly destructive of philosophy. Still, Gilson does not bring himself to say—despite the insufficiencies he sees in their principles—that St. Augustine and St. Anselm are not Christian philosophers in any sense at all.[63]

In summary, in Chapter 2 of *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* and Chapter 1 of *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*, Gilson provides four general tendencies of *theologistic doctrines*, all of which were hinted at in his earlier work *Christianity and Philosophy*, though not so named.

Gilson spoke of the general tendency of what he called the Tertullian spiritual family which regarded theology as the ultimate source of wisdom while rejecting philosophy as either useless or even hostile to Christian doctrine. It is in this sense that many regard *theologism* and *fideism* to be synonymous, but that kind of equation should be held with great caution as can be seen from the second and third general tendencies.

As a second general theologistic tendency, Gilson presented the Augustinian family which sought to blend philosophy within theology, but also saw faith as necessary for doing philosophy, as evinced by St. Augustine's maxim *nisi credideritis, non intelligetis*, and other related maxims. Such a necessity for faith prior to philosophical understanding is indeed a fideistic tendency, though, many doctrines within the Augustinian family can be isolated from their original context and shown to be philosophically rigorous and not to depend *in argument* upon faith in a revealed premise.

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[63] Nevertheless, if they are Christian philosophers in an imperfect, *loose sense* of the term—which I contend they are still in principle in those very doctrines that do not violate Gilson's enunciated principles—we will have to examine what he views to be the *perfect sense* of Christian philosophy, which will come from the proper understanding of the relationship between Christianity and philosophy, and faith and reason. For this, I must wait for a future publication to address more adequately.

The second tendency, however, points to a third general theologistic tendency that Gilson finds to be present in one of the greatest examples of the Augustinian family, St. Anselm of Canturbury. This tendency he had described in *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* to be where, "[i]nstead of attempting to kill it by discrediting the work of the philosophers, some divines have thought it better to tame and, so to speak, to domesticate philosophy by merging it in theology."[64] In *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*, Gilson showed St. Anselm to be guilty of this where he attempted to demonstrate mysteries of faith such as the Trinity and Incarnation. In such cases, the theologian has formally violated philosophy such that neither philosophy nor theology really remain, for he has attempted philosophical demonstrations either from premises containing properly revealed data or aimed at proving *articles of faith*. It is such a doctrine that drove Gilson to write,

> They look like philosophy, they talk like philosophy, they sometimes are studied or taught in schools under the name of philosophy: yet, in point of fact, they are little more than theologies clothed in philosophical garb.[65]

It is this form of theologism—philosophy formally merged into theology in such a way as to compromise both philosophical and theological method—where the formal conflation of philosophy and theology occurs, and which I maintain to be for Gilson *theologism proper*, while these other tendencies given are analogous forms of it.

A fourth theologistic tendency that Gilson mentions—which can be found in varying degrees in those adherents to the first three—is one in which the order of nature is denigrated in order to exalt the order of grace. While Gilson holds St. Bonaventure to be guilty of this theologistic tendency, he in no way accuses the Seraphic Doctor of the ex-

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[64] Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, 36.
[65] *Ibid.*, 37.

treme view of this held by *sceptics* who thought that nature held no intelligibility and order. The end result for those who held this view in an extreme way was not only a return to the denial of any possibility for philosophy, but a complete scepticism about God and nature.

If, however, *theologism* was equally detrimental to the relationship of philosophy and theology, and reason and faith—as was *rationalism*—what then does Gilson regard to be the proper way to engage in both of these correlative pairs? Further treatment should be given by an examination of Gilson's later works from the 1940s onward.[66] Nevertheless, even now armed with this knowledge of Gilson's understanding of theologism, one has gained two important things: (a) a detailed explanation for how *Christian philosophy properly speaking* does not entail the formal conflation of philosophy with Christianity in general or with Christian theology specifically; (b) a hermeneutical tool for the better interpretation of Gilson's later writings on Christian philosophy. Indeed, for where Gilson appears to argue for a "need" for revelation in order to attain certain objects of knowledge about God and about Being, but then proceeds to provide a philosophical grounding to that knowledge, given his doctrine on theologism such a "need" must be interpreted as referring to a *de facto extreme difficulty*, not a *de iure impossibility* for attaining such objects in an unaided manner. Otherwise, the philosophical grounding which often includes seeking to demonstrate such knowledge after revelation has helped attain it would be akin to attempting to demonstrate *articles of faith*, that is, *de iure*

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[66] I have partially done so in my currently unpublished dissertation, "Étienne Gilson and the First Two Stages of His Christian Philosophy." In this account, I treat of Gilson's doctrine on Christian philosophy from its Gestational Stage in the 1920s up through its 2nd Stage ending in the late 1950s. I demarcate the 3rd Stage to include a series of works from the late 1950s to the end of his career, though this 3rd Stage was only touched in brief in my concluding chapter. Cf. James D. Capehart, "Étienne Gilson and the First Two Stages of His Christian Philosophy" (PhD diss., University of St. Thomas [Houston], 2018).

indemonstrable knowledge about God, and would therefore be a case of the theologism in a strict sense which he rejects so vehemently.

In short, I hope that this treatment of Gilson's notion of theologism serves as a launching point for a further discussion of two additional points regarding his Christian philosophy: What is the principle of unity within this Christian philosophical act that maintains a formal distinction between the philosophical and properly theological? What kinds of objects of knowledge does Gilson truly regard *de iure* to require the aid of Christian revelation to attain, and which does he regard *de facto extremely difficult to attain prior to Christian revelation*, but once attained, are susceptible of philosophical grounding, including demonstration? To these points let us return at a later date.

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Gilson's Notion of *Theologism* in *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* and
**Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages*

SUMMARY

The author examines Gilson's development of the term "theologism" from his 1937 *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* and his 1938 *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages.* This term is important for understanding Gilson's developing doctrine on Christian philosophy. The treatment of it helps to show how Gilson's understanding of Christian philosophy does not entail the formal conflation of philosophy with Christianity—as some have accused. In fact, the knowledge of what theologism is—referring primarily to the misuse of philosophy by the theologian—helps to set the stage for seeking an understanding of the proper relationship of Christianity to philosophy, a unity which maintains formal distinction. This knowledge also provides a hermeneutical tool for the proper interpretation of Gilson's later writings on Christian philosophy.

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Scripta Philosophica

Michał Chaberek

Classical Metaphysics and Theistic Evolution: Why Are They Incompatible?

Many Thomists and classically-minded philosophers of our times realize that the evolutionary thinking that dominates contemporary academia generates multiple problems for Christian faith. In response, they try to show how Darwinian thinking trespasses the limits of scientific theories, or how the natural sciences should be enriched by final and formal causality.[1] Most of these scholars are also aware of the destructive influence of the evolutionary paradigm on philosophical ethics in general and Christian morality in particular. The line of division between the atheistic evolutionists[2] and theists of our times is usually drawn (by both parties) along just two big issues: (a) the role of chance in nature—what chance events can accomplish and how it relates to divine providence, and (b) the limits of science versus metaphysics, ethics, and theology.

The general agreement among atheists regarding the first issue is that the interplay of chance and necessity produced all that we see in nature. Atheists concede that an adequate explanation of the origin of species is a combined working of chance events, such as random genetic mutations, and necessity (laws of nature), such as natural selection.

Michał Chaberek, O.P. — Polish Dominican Province, Poland
e-mail: mckop@dominikanie.pl ▪ ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8071-537X

[1] One recent publication very representative of this trend is *God and Evolution? Science Meets Faith* by G. M. Verschuuren (Boston, Mass.: Pauline Books and Media, 2012).

[2] Hereafter, in this paper, referred to simply as atheists.

The theistic response to this claim may be summarized as follows: Evolution may be true, but chance and necessity alone cannot account for all the changes we see in nature. Theists usually do not challenge the idea of universal common ancestry and transformation of species. Instead, they say that evolution must be somehow guided, started or assisted by God. How it happens is a matter of numerous studies, yet the broad agreement among theists is that evolution *per se* can be reconciled with Christian philosophy, theology and the Bible.

Regarding the second issue, atheists tend to say that science is an objective description of material reality which is the only reality that exists. Even if some things seem inexplicable today, like miracles, it is just a matter of time before science finds a natural explanation, because scientific method is unlimited. In response, theists generally call for keeping science in its proper place. Different theists have different opinions as to where the limits of science are. Most of them agree that God, the invisible realm (heaven, hell, spirits) and human consciousness (the soul) transcend the proper object of natural science. Regarding the natural history of the universe, Christian theists agree that science cannot explain the very origin of matter and energy because they were created out of nothing directly by God. However, most theists allow science to explain the origin of different parts of the universe including the origin of life. Thus, theists usually say that scientific theories, like neo-Darwinism, should not be extrapolated to the invisible realm (God, the angels, the human soul), but they can accurately explain the origin of life and species. Theists also say that Darwinism is valid in the animal kingdom, but it should not be extrapolated to human behaviors. The struggle for life and the survival of the fittest are possibly the driving forces of biological development, but when it comes to human morality, these two cease to work and we should appeal to the higher principles originating in the human will.

In this article we would like to propose that the line of controversy between theists and atheists of our times has been set in the wrong place. This regards both issues—the role of chance in nature and the limits of science. Hence, the goal of this paper is to indicate a few essential problems with the "Darwinian metaphysics." Indeed, the problems of Darwinism have their source not so much in stretching the Darwinian theory beyond biology (to ethics and philosophy), but in the very fact that the Darwinian biological theory assumes a mistaken metaphysics (philosophy) and a false theory of nature. As we will argue, the Christian response to the "omnipotent chance" of atheists should not be "guided chance" of generic theism, but rather the direct divine causality of Christianity. However, before we enter the debate, we need to clarify the crucial terms so that a small mistake at the beginning does not turn into a great confusion at the end.[3]

Definitions of Terms

Evolution

By evolution we understand *biological macroevolution*, that is the idea that all living beings come from a single ancestor via natural generation. Three things need to be highlighted in this definition. Firstly, evolution stands for macroevolution, which means that we are talking about changes going beyond biological species. Typically the limits of microevolution are on the level of taxonomical genus or family. Hence, macroevolution concerns the emergence of new families, phyla, kingdoms and ultimately all forms of life that exist and ever existed on earth. Secondly, macroevolution is a natural process, which means that it does not transcend the powers and laws of nature and does not require any supernatural activity of God (or angels) to take place. Thirdly, our

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[3] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *De Ente et Essentia*, Proemium.

definition of biological macroevolution does not include any mecha-
nism that would explain *how* the biological changes happen. The com-
mon stance among evolutionists is that biological macroevolution is
driven by the neo-Darwinian mechanism of random (genetic) mutations
and natural selection. But other mechanisms have been proposed as
well.[4] Our definition does not necessitate any of them and for this rea-
son the scientific debate about the efficacy of an evolutionary mecha-
nism is irrelevant for the argument in this paper.

Biological macroevolution is a theory of origins that has a scien-
tific,[5] a philosophical and a theological layer. On the scientific level,
biological macroevolution boils down to a mechanism of evolutionary
changes because out of many ideas covered by the word *evolution* only
the biological mechanism can possibly be tested and explained by sci-
ence. The grand claims about universal common ancestry and transfor-
mation of species strictly speaking are not scientific. They have been
incorporated into biology, though they constitute more like a paradigm
or a perspective for biological investigation than a conclusion from
experiments. Hence, on the philosophical level, biological macroevolu-
tion boils down to those two grand claims: (a) all life comes from one
living being and (b) species can be transformed into another species by
accidental changes occurring in generation. On the theological level,
biological macroevolution is the idea that God used the evolutionary
process to bring about all forms of life. Biological macroevolution is,
therefore, a secondary cause of creation. This idea is called *theistic evo-*

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[4] For example, M. Ryland points at not less than eight mechanisms of biological macro-
evolution present in contemporary biology. *Idem*, "What is Intelligent Design Theory?"
Second Spring 15 (2011): 46–57.

[5] The words *science* and *scientific* here are used in the modern sense of natural science.
We do not mean by this that theology and philosophy are not sciences in the medieval
sense of the word. For the sake of communicability, we choose to use the word in its
modern meaning. From the fact that philosophy and theology are not sciences in the
modern sense it does not follow that they are not valuable cognitive disciplines, or that
they do not provide true knowledge.

lution. Simply put, theistic evolution is a theological concept saying that God used evolution to create species.

Any concept that excludes the existence of God (or His operation in the universe) would be incompatible with Christian metaphysics by definition. Our goal, therefore, is not to discuss the compatibility of materialistic or atheistic evolution with classical metaphysics. The impossibility of reconciling Christianity with materialism or atheism should be taken for granted. Instead, we will focus on *theistic evolution* alone, that is, the idea that God somehow started the biological process of macroevolution, and since then has always guided or accompanied it.

Species

Since the 19th century, a number of evolutionists has tried to dismantle the notion of species. Darwin himself claimed that "No line of demarcation can be drawn between species."[6] This was a necessary step to introduce the idea of transformation of species. After all, if species exist as natural kinds, they are permanent elements of the universe, whereas the changing element is what characterizes species, not species themselves. In fact, the only way to challenge the stability of species is to deny their very existence. Yet, if species did not exist, there would be no reason to write books on their origin, including the main work by Darwin, *The Origin of Species*. Darwin got caught in a paradox—to introduce evolution he had to deny the stability or the real existence of species, but to claim that he found the explanation to the origin of species he had to reintroduce the notion of species after destroying it at the first step. For this reason Darwin actually accepts the existence of species, even though he believes that species are impossible to define. The

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[6] C. Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (London: John Murray, 1859), 485. Darwin also claimed: "There is no infallible criterion by which to distinguish species and well-marked varieties [*ibid.*, 57] . . . No one can draw any clear distinction between individual differences and slight varieties; or between more plainly marked varieties and sub-species, and species [*ibid.*, 470]."

same difficulty returns in all macroevolutionary thinking—evolutionists are forced to challenge the idea of species while they need to silently assume their existence. This approach stems from the very impossibility of talking about nature (and any reality for that matter) without having abstract notions that are derived from unchangeable elements of the universe. To believe in macroevolution one needs to adopt nominalism.

Since classical metaphysics is not nominalistic, an objective and permanent definition of species is possible. In fact, species, just like evolution, can be defined according to the three levels of knowledge: science, philosophy and theology. In science, there is an idea of biological species.[7] This, however, is not the understanding of species relevant in the debate over origins. The theory of biological macroevolution refers to the origin of new families and higher taxonomical levels. Hence, in the debate about origins we understand species as genera or families according to classical taxonomy. Traditionally they were called natural species, such as dog, cat, horse, elephant, etc. Accordingly, we can set apart microevolution from macroevolution—the first allows an emergence of new varieties, races or biological species, while the second maintains that new natural species and the higher taxonomical groups originate thanks to natural processes operating in the biosphere. Theologically, natural species have similar meaning to the Biblical "kinds" (Hebr. *l'emino*) mentioned in Genesis. Philosophically, natural species are those forms of life that possess the same substantial form. In philosophy we can also distinguish a logical understanding of species. In this sense, species is just a category projected by a mind on a group of objects. Usually, logical species are defined as a term relative to a

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[7] According to the now commonly recognized definition of Ernst Mayr, a biological species signifies all populations in which specimens are prospectively able to interbreed in a natural environment and produce fertile offspring. *Idem*, *Systematics and the Origin of Species from the Viewpoint of a Zoologist* (New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1942).

broader category of genus. Skeptics who claim that species do not exist have only logical species in mind. They do not speak, however, about the metaphysical species.

The Question to Be Answered

We defined *evolution* as biological macroevolution and *species* as natural species. We did this according to the three levels of human knowledge. Biological macroevolution raises its own questions at each of the three levels. On the scientific level, for example, the following are relevant: Can the combination of random genetic mutations and natural selection (as well as genetic drift and possibly other factors) explain the origin of new functional organs, new body plans, and ultimately all species? Is it possible to extrapolate the microevolutionary changes observed *in vivo* and *in vitro* to the macroevolutionary changes that cannot be observed due to the shortage of time available for scientific investigation? These and a number of similar questions have been raised among biologists since the very beginning of Darwinian theory and recently even more seriously by biologists supporting intelligent design.

On the theological level there are questions such as the problem of compatibility between theistic evolution and the Genesis account of creation (interpreted in accordance with the Catholic tradition) or the problem of the human origin—whether the first human was created immediately from the slime of the earth as the Bible, all Tradition and Church documents have it,[8] or perhaps God used "living matter" to create the first man (as theistic evolution holds). As we already noticed,

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[8] For extensive evidence justifying this claim, see M. Chaberek, *Catholicism and Evolution: A History from Darwin to Pope Francis* (Kettering, Ohio: Angelico Press, 2015).

neither theological nor scientific problems of biological macroevolution are of interest for us.

Our goal is to address evolution on the level of philosophy, in particular, classical metaphysics. By classical metaphysics we understand the Aristotelian-Thomistic stream of Western philosophy. It is characterized by moderate realism as the epistemological position and a number of ontological principles such as the division of being into form and matter, substance and accidents, act and potency. In this paper we assume knowledge of classical metaphysics on the part of the reader, so in most cases we will refer to the principles without explaining them.

The question we address, therefore, may be formulated like this: Is evolution (biological macroevolution) possible in light of classical metaphysics? This one general question breaks down to a few more particular: Can the process of generation be the efficient cause of creating new natural species? Is transformation of species (natural species) possible due to an accumulation of accidental changes over time? Is Aquinas's positive teaching on the origin of species (natural species) compatible with theistic evolution?

Evolution and Metaphysics

An answer to these questions may be given in two ways. The first is by showing that theistic evolution contradicts classical metaphysics. This is the explicit answer which we will present in *Part A*. The other way is to show the positive teaching of Aquinas regarding the origin of species which also excludes theistic evolution not explicitly, but implicitly, or *a fortiori*.[9] This will be presented in *Part B*.

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[9] Every thesis may be rejected in two ways. For example, the sentence "Peter is going to the cinema tonight" is denied explicitly by saying "Peter is not going to the cinema tonight." In the second way, the sentence is denied by saying "Peter is working home tonight;" this also excludes Peter's trip to the cinema, though not explicitly but implicitly or *a fortiori*.

We need to notice that the positive doctrine on the origin of species (i.e., how species came about) cannot be known by natural investigations, neither in natural science (biology) nor metaphysics. This stems from the fact that natural reason by its own power cannot reach supernaturally revealed truths. Things like the nature of God, the origins of the universe and the crucial salvific events in human history are unattainable to human natural cognition.

To understand this limitation better, let us refer to a few examples. By natural reason man can know that there is one God, and that He is the first cause of everything.[10] But without divine revelation we cannot know that God is Trinity. We can know from archeology and history that two thousand years ago there was Bethlehem, Jerusalem and King Herod. But we cannot know that the Virgin Mary conceived a child without knowing a husband. In fact, there is massive scientific evidence that virgins do not give birth. Yet, Christians believe in the virginal conception of Jesus based on divine revelation, even against science. The same applies to Christ's resurrection and other miracles. There are many natural theories presented by atheists on behalf of science to explain away miracles and the resurrection, yet Christians believe in those events even against scientific theories.

Similarly, we cannot know scientifically (or philosophically) that the universe is not eternal. But special divine revelation teaches us that the universe had a temporal beginning by God. The truths regarding the formation of the universe, including the origin of species, belong to the same category. The origins cannot be known by natural investigations, and this is precisely why God revealed them in the Book of Genesis. And this is why when presenting the positive doctrine of Aquinas re-

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[10] "The Holy Mother Church holds and teaches that God, the beginning and end of all things, can be known with certitude by the natural light of human reason from created things." The Dogmatic Constitution of the Vatican Council I *Dei Filius*, available online (see the section: References).

garding the origin of species (*Part B*), we need to transit from strict metaphysics (the level of philosophy) to historical theology.

Part A

There are five reasons why metaphysics excludes theistic evolution. The first is that no effect can exceed the power of its cause. In other words, the perfection of the cause cannot be lesser than the perfection of the effect.[11] In theistic evolution the natural process of generation is supposed to create new natures of living beings. This confuses generation with creation. Generation can pass on design, perfectness and the form that already exist, but cannot create any of them. This problem can be also formulated with regard to the opposition between act and potency. No potency can turn into act without previous act. But every distinct nature, as well as every level of life, actualizes new potencies of matter. For example, birds actualize the ability of flying and animals have sensory life which is not present in plants. To bring about these kinds of novelties the power of generation does not suffice because it does not have foresight and lacks the ability of designing. Generation can pass design on. This happens when, for example, posterity inherits the actualizations of its parents, but generation cannot create new design.[12] Hence, the combined working of material causes is not sufficient to produce new species. New natures must come from a high-

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[11] Aquinas adopts this basic principle of being and reasoning many times in different contexts. Cf. *S.Th.* I, 44, 2, ad 2: "Every imperfect thing is caused by one perfect;" *ScG* III, 69, 15: "The perfection of the effect demonstrates the perfection of the cause, for a greater power brings about a more perfect effect;" *S.Th.* I, 45, 8, 2: "The effect is not more powerful than its cause."

[12] A good example of how it works is actually derived from the textbook examples of *evidence for evolution*. The dark and the light peppered moths are present in the population before as well as after industrial melanism takes place. Finches have various sizes of beaks throughout wet as well as dry seasons. Neither of the examples illustrates an appearance of any biological novelty. Instead, there is only a change in the proportions of individuals possessing a given trait but all of the traits exist unchangeably in the population.

er principle which is an intellect capable of producing new forms in matter.

The second reason theistic evolution is impossible stems from the division of being into substance and accidents. Substance refers to what a thing is, accidents account for the qualities of substance—what it has or what it is like. Every natural species is a separate nature or substance. According to theistic evolution, one nature can be transformed into another nature thanks to chance and necessary events occurring in subsequent generations. But all of these changes—whether random mutations, natural selection, environmental influence, selective pressure, genetic drift and such, are accidental—they affect the quality of a substance but not the very nature or a species of a thing. Hence, no matter how long evolution works—how many generations accumulate random changes due to natural selection—it will never produce a new species. In short, accidental change cannot produce substantial change. There are, however, two errors made by philosophers who reject this argument.

The first error stems from confusion between the *substantial* and the *individual* form. Someone can say, "If I destroy a substance, I make a substantial change that is caused by accident." For example, when one kills a chicken, the act of killing is an accidental change, but it results in the substantial change—the substance of a chicken has been annihilated. Apparently, accidental change may result in substantial change. But in this example, killing a chicken annihilates the substantial form only as much as it exists in this particular chicken which is nothing but an individual form. The substance of a chicken as such ("chickeness") is neither destroyed nor anyhow affected. And even if all chickens in the world were destroyed, there still exists the idea of a chicken in the divine intellect which is not affected by accidental change. The problem with macroevolution is even greater, because the accidental change needs not only to destroy an existing substance, but also to create an

entirely new one. But in our example no new substance is created. Chicken meat as a separate species or a substance existed even before this particular chicken was killed. Thus, no accidental change generates a new substance.

The second error thrives on the misunderstanding of what a substance is. If we take salt and dissolve it in water, we create a new substance—salt solution. But adding salt to water is an accidental change. And there are many examples of this kind when accidental changes produce new substance (e.g., wine production, or even water turning into ice or steam owing to the change of temperature, which is merely an accidental change). Apparently, therefore, new substances may be created via accidental changes. In these cases, however, we are not talking about *true substances*, but merely elements, compounds or artifacts. Substance is something that is the most specified, most self-contained, constitutes unity in the highest degree, and simply the most *is*. For this reason the only true substance is God. Everything else is substance only to some degree corresponding to the degree of participation in the divine substance. Hence, among the created things we can speak about the hierarchy of substances. The highest are the angels. Among material beings (composites of form and matter) the highest substance is man, followed by animals, plants, compounds and elements. In fact, elements and compounds should not even be called substances—they are what they are, that is, merely elements and compounds. Artifacts (the products of human ingenuity) are at the level of elements and compounds, because they are merely combinations of parts which themselves are combinations of elements and compounds. For this reason an accidental change may bring about new elements and compounds, but not new substances. Indeed, any philosophy or concept that denies this principle must end up in denying the real existence of species understood as *true* substances, separate natures or natural species. Hence, any such concept including theistic evolution ends up in metaphysical reductionism

called nominalism. This greatly differs from moderate realism constituting the foundation of the Aristotelian-Thomistic approach.

It is worth noting that in the older philosophical reflection the idea of the hierarchy of substances matched the mistaken conviction about spontaneous generation or even spontaneous emergence of new species from putrefaction.[13] Older philosophers allowed spontaneous generation of the so-called lower animals, because they knew nothing about their internal complexity. They thought that lower animals do not constitute perfect natures. Within the same lines of thinking Darwin and his first followers assumed that the difference between "living matter" in the form of primitive organisms and "dead matter" is just the difference of organization that can be easily bridged by the natural powers operating in nature. Since then, however, it has been discovered that nothing like "simple life" exists. Spontaneous generation has been abandoned and today's knowledge about living organisms shows an impassable ontological chasm between life and non-life.

But spontaneous generation does not help to reconcile the older philosophy of nature with theistic evolution. The idea of spontaneous generation boils down to saying that some organisms are generated from living parents and some from putrefaction. It does not tell us anything about the origin of their species. Moreover, even the idea of spontaneous generation of new species is limited to the lower animals only.[14] Hence, there is no room for spontaneous popping into existence of all species. Spontaneous generation does not make room for universal common ancestry or transformation of species. Therefore, even this outdated science does not help to see theistic evolution in philosophy of nature let alone metaphysics.

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[13] *S.Th.* I, 73, 1, ad 3.
[14] See footnote 27.

The third reason is that according to classical metaphysics no perfect being is the cause of its own nature. Aquinas says:

> A perfect thing participating in any nature, makes a likeness to itself, not by absolutely producing that nature, but by applying it to something else. For an individual man cannot be the cause of human nature absolutely, because he would then be the cause of himself; but he is the cause of what human nature is in this man begotten.[15]

In the same way an individual cat cannot be the cause of cat nature, an individual horse of a horse nature, etc. Aquinas refers to the example of man, because human is the most perfect among the composite beings. Since generation of an individual is not the cause of its nature, much less can it produce a new nature—another species. Otherwise one being would be the cause of itself, which classical metaphysics rejects.

The fourth reason is that theistic evolution reduces the four Aristotelian causes to just two. In the evolutionary scenario new species are supposed to appear owing to the power of generation combined with random changes in matter. Hence, in theistic evolution the efficient cause is reduced *down* to material cause. In contrast, according to classical metaphysics (and classic Christian doctrine), the efficient cause of new species is the divine intellect on whose order alone matter is obediently transformed into new substances. The formal cause is the one that makes the thing be what it is. Dog is a dog thanks to the formal cause which is its form, that is, the form of a dog. In theistic evolution, however, every living being tends to be something else and thus it does not embody its own nature: an amphibian tends to become a reptile, a reptile tends to become a bird or a mammal. Hence formal cause is reduced *up* to final cause. Indeed, theistic evolution is not deprived of

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[15] *S.Th.* I, 45, 5, ad 1. Cf. *ScG* II, 21, *ScG* III, 65, 4.

finality, because God somehow guides the evolutionary process. Yet, this overwhelming finality that makes everything tend to the ultimate *Omega* swallows up formal causality. In effect, theistic evolution cannot explain being, because it does not have the two out of the four causes necessary for metaphysical explanation of a composite. In contrast, Aquinas explains that there is a twofold perfection of natural things.[16] The first is the substantial perfection, which was accomplished during the six days of creation. In the work of creation things acquired the completeness according to their natures. The second perfection is acquired by operation, and this refers to the ultimate end of things. For example, man became man in the work of creation, but man is saved through cooperation with grace and achieves the ultimate goal after this life on the way of his operation. Similarly species of living beings achieved their substantial perfection in the work of creation (such as that a cat was made a cat and an ape was made an ape), but their second perfection and goal is to serve humans and nature which they achieve by operation after creation was completed. Theistic evolution conflates these two types of perfection and is thus different from classical metaphysics.

The fifth reason is that according to classical metaphysics nature consists of parts that fit each other and work for the perfection of the whole. Different parts display different degrees of perfection, but they

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[16] "The perfection of a thing is twofold, the first perfection and the second perfection. The 'first' perfection is that according to which a thing is substantially perfect, and this perfection is the form of the whole; which form results from the whole having its parts complete. But the 'second' perfection is the end, which is either an operation, as the end of the harpist is to play the harp; or something that is attained by an operation, as the end of the builder is the house that he makes by building. But the first perfection is the cause of the second, because the form is the principle of operation. Now the final perfection, which is the end of the whole universe, is the perfect beatitude of the Saints at the consummation of the world; and the first perfection is the completeness of the universe at its first founding, and this is what is ascribed to the seventh day." *S.Th.* I, 73, 1, co. Cf. *Super Sent.* II, 15, 3, 1, co.

are perfect with regard to their particular natures. Thus, an amphibian is perfect as an amphibian and changing it into a reptile does not make it more perfect, but rather diminishes the perfectness of the simultaneous existence of amphibians and reptiles. Similarly, a dinosaur does not become more perfect by transforming into a bird and an ape does not become more perfect by changing it into a human. Each nature is perfect on its own terms and cannot become *more perfect* and remain what it is. It is neither desired nor possible for a less perfect thing to become more perfect because then the totality of perfection would be diminished. Aquinas explains:

> We must say that the distinction and multitude of things come from the intention of the first agent, who is God. For He brought things into being in order that His goodness might be communicated to creatures, and be represented by them; and because His goodness could not be adequately represented by one creature alone, He produced many and diverse creatures.[17] . . . It is part of the best agent to produce an effect which is best in its entirety; but this does not mean that He makes every part of the whole the best absolutely, but in proportion to the whole; in the case of an animal, for instance, its goodness would be taken away if every part of it had the dignity of an eye. Thus, therefore, God also made the universe to be best as a whole, according to the mode of a creature; whereas He did not make each single creature best, but one better than another.[18]

Hence, the intention of God is not to bring all things to greater perfection by an evolutionary process. Instead, all things are to remain on different levels of perfection in order to reveal divine goodness in a more complete way. According to theistic evolution, however, the order of perfection among living beings is in a constant state of flux, by which particular beings acquire more and more perfection in the strug-

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[17] *S.Th.* I, 47, 1, co.
[18] *S.Th.* I, 47, 2, co, and ad 1. Cf. *S.Th.* I, 65, 2, co.

gle for life and the survival of the fittest. Thus the supposed increase of perfection in each particular being diminishes the order and beauty of the totality of nature. And this is not what God intends and what classical metaphysics accepts.

Part B

By now we have shown why classical metaphysics excludes the possibility of theistic evolution. But the question of how species emerged remains open. As we noticed above, the positive answer to this question must be theological. There is, however, a connection between the theological explanation of the origin of species and the metaphysical principles which render theistic evolution impossible. Aquinas explains this connection in two places in his *Commentary to Sentences*. In one of them he says:

> According to the faith, one cannot say that something is a cause of something else after God, except by way of movement or generation. Hence, all things that do not begin by generation must have God as their immediate (direct) cause. And these are the Angels, the souls, the heavenly substances, the matter of elements and the first hypostases in every species.[19]

In another place Aquinas is more explicit regarding what the *first hypostases* are:

> [These are those things that require] a generator (parent) similar according to species to the thing generated. And for this reason first hypostases were created directly by God. This includes the

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[19] "Secundum fidem non potest poni aliquid esse causa alterius post Deum, nisi per viam motus et generationis; et ideo omnium eorum quae per generationem non inceperunt, oportet Deum immediatam causam ponere, ut sunt Angeli, animae, substantiae caelorum, et material elementorum, et primae hypostases in omnibus speciebus." *Super Sent.* II, 18, 2, 2, co.

first man, the first lion and other of this kind, because man can-not be generated otherwise but from man.[20]

Let us now reconstruct Aquinas's argument. First, he confirms that there are just two ways of emergence of things: one is by creation and another is by a change, that is, generation or alteration (mutation). Creation is not a change, because before a thing is created there is noth-ing to change. Creation presupposes nothingness, whereas a change presupposes the existence of a thing which is changed. Creation begins being in an absolute way and cannot be performed by any being but God.[21] Hence, creation is always a direct act of God.[22] Claiming other-wise would fall into heresy, because it would ultimately mean that there is another being besides God that is not created. This is why Thomas says that we need to maintain the creation of those things that cannot emerge by change according to faith (*secundum fidem*).

Many things in the universe come about by change—either by generation, like when a lion generates another lion, or by alteration (mutation), like when a new statue is made by shaping marble or a nest is built by a bird putting twigs together. Yet, there are other things that cannot be produced by change. Thomas provides a complete list of those things, which includes the first hypostases of living beings.[23] He

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[20] *Super. Sent.* II, 1, 1, 4, co.

[21] Creation is not just making matter or form, but "creation is the production of a thing in its entire substance [Creatio est productio alicuius rei secundum totam suam substan-tiam]." *S.Th.* I, 65, 3, co. Cf. *S.Th.* I, 45, 4, ad 3.

[22] "The action which is creation is the one that does not rest upon an action of any prec-edent cause. And this kind of action belongs only to the first cause, because any action of a secondary cause rests upon the action of the first cause. Hence, as much as the first cause cannot communicate to any creature being a first cause, similarly it cannot com-municate to it to create." *Super Sent.* II, 1, 1, 3, co.

[23] Thomas's use of the word *hypostasis* (instead of *form*, *nature* or *substance*) enables us to avoid two mistaken interpretations. According to the first one, Aquinas speaks about the form alone and not a whole being. Evolution could work on living beings transforming matter over generations and once in a while God would create immediate-ly a new form. In this scenario, evolution would create the visible species and God

gives an example of a lion and a man, two instances of the so-called perfect species. Other examples would include a dog, an ape, a snake, etc. Since created being can only work by way of change, it is impossible that any created being would produce those things. The first hypostases must have been produced immediately by God, which excludes any secondary causes, such as evolution.

It is important to realize that Aquinas here advocates the metaphysical (not theological) necessity of creation, that is, immediate production of the first individuals in each species. This stems from healthy philosophical reasoning (*sana philosophia*), not the Biblical message alone. Consequently, this teaching is independent from any particular interpretation of Genesis. For example, Aristotle who did not know the Biblical message, believed in the eternal existence of species along with the eternal universe. Philosophically, species are either created or exist eternally because no created power can produce them. Christian faith narrows down the two philosophical options (creation vs. eternal existence) by establishing the creation of species. This faith is independently confirmed by the paleontological evidence showing that species are not eternal.

After having presented Aquinas's philosophical doctrine regarding the origin of species, we need to refer to his theology. Thomas teaches that there are three stages of the universe. First is the creation out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) that begins time, the spiritual and the material

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would create the invisible form. This error is denied by the fact that the word *hypostasis* refers not to a form alone, but the composition of matter and form. The other wrong interpretation is that God created species as such, but not individuals of given species. Then individuals would have an evolutionary origin (would be generated) and only after they are generated they fall into a category of independently created species. This error is excluded by the fact that hypostasis is an individual being, not a species (which could be a case if Thomas used the word *substance* or *nature*). The first of these two erroneous interpretations can be found in: Michael J. Bolin, "*And Man Became a Living Being*: The Genesis of Substantial Form," A lecture delivered at Wyoming Catholic College (Oct. 25, 2013), available online (see the section: References).

realms. The second stage is the divine work of formation described in Genesis as the six days. The formation of the universe Aquinas divides into two parts: (a) the work of distinction (*opus distinctionis*) to which he attributes the creation of planets and plants on earth, and (b) the work of adornment (*opus ornatus*) in which earth is adorned with distinct creatures, like animals. The last act of adornment is the creation of man.[24] After creation is completed on the sixth day no new natures can appear anymore. The universe has passed on to the third stage consisting of the ordinary operation of nature and the history of salvation.

Now, the important message for our topic is that Aquinas understands the formation of the universe as the direct and supernatural work of God that adds new things to the totality of creatures which could not be produced by any secondary causes. Thus, the work of formation belongs to God alone:

> In the first production of corporeal creatures no transmutation from potentiality to act can have taken place, and accordingly, the corporeal forms that bodies had when first produced came *immediately* from God, whose bidding alone matter obeys, as its own proper cause. To signify this, Moses prefaces each work with the words, "God said, Let this thing be," or "that," to denote the formation of all things by the Word of God, from Whom, according to Augustine, is "all form and fitness and concord of parts."[25]

And similarly about the origin of the first human body:

> The first formation of the human body could not be by the instrumentality of any created power, but was immediately from

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[24] The explicit distinction between first creation and the formation of the universe can be found in two places: *De Potentia* 3, 18, 12, and ad 11. In his commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, Aquinas defends the necessity of the work of adornment that succeeds the work of creation (*opus creationis*)—*Super Sent.* II, 13, 1, 1, co. On the work of distinction, see *Super Sent.* II, 14, 1, 5. Creation preceding distinction and adornment is without any preceding matter (potency): *Super Sent.* II, 17, 2, 2, ad 3.

[25] *S.Th.* I, 65, 4, co.

God. . . . God, though He is absolutely immaterial, can alone by His own power produce matter by creation: wherefore He alone can produce a form in matter, without the aid of any preceding material form. For this reason the angels cannot transform a body except by making use of something in the nature of a seed. . . . Therefore as no pre-existing body has been formed whereby another body of the same species could be generated, the first human body was of necessity made immediately by God.[26]

This teaching of Aquinas poses several difficulties for theistic evolution. First, it is clear that according to Thomas, God created many different things immediately by His direct act—specifically new species of living beings. This contradicts the main tenet of theistic evolution that God created directly only first being (the universe) and then He used secondary causes such as evolutionary processes to form species. Second, creation has been completed once for all with the creation of man.[27] But in theistic evolution new species can constantly appear as long as the evolutionary processes work in nature.[28] Third, we learn from the first quoted fragment how Aquinas understands the words from the Genesis account of creation "Let there be." For him they signify the immediate exercising of divine power working on matter.[29] This

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[26] *S.Th.* I, 91, 2, co.

[27] "Something can be added every day to the perfection of the universe, as to the number of individuals, but not as to the number of species." *S.Th.* I, 118, 3, ad 2. Cf. *Super Sent.* II, 15, 3, 1, co, and *S.Th.* I, 73, 1, co.

[28] Sometimes Thomistic evolutionists quote *S.Th.* I, 73, 1, ad 3, to show that Aquinas speaks about new species emerging naturally after creation was completed. But in that particular fragment Thomas speaks only in a conditional way (if any new species appear) and he gives an example of a mule, which is not a natural species, but only a combination of a horse and a donkey remaining within the horse family. But the appearance of new variants and even biological species due to natural causes after the work of creation was completed is not the point of controversy. It is neither excluded by classical metaphysics nor the Bible.

[29] Aquinas says: "In the first works nature was instituted and for this reason it was necessary that those works were effected *directly* by the *supernatural* principle. But

obviously excludes any secondary causes, such as generation, genetic mutations, natural selection, or even the active help of angels.

A Response to Three Arguments

Having presented the metaphysical reasons why biological macroevolution is impossible and after explaining the origin of species according to Aquinas, we now move on to answer three arguments presented by the proponents of theistic evolution. The first two are aimed at reconciling macroevolution with metaphysics and the third is aimed at explaining away Aquinas's (and the traditional Christian) understanding of the origin of species. Of course, these are not all arguments in this debate, but the limited space of the paper does not allow us to respond to more of them.[30]

God Uses Chance

Even though there are different mechanisms of evolution, virtually all of them speak about random events as the source of novelty necessary for biological progress.[31] For example, the most commonly adopted, the neo-Darwinian mechanism, consists of random genetic mutations and natural selection. Mutations, according to biologists, are unguided and unpredictable. This core claim of neo-Darwinism poses a difficulty for theistic evolution. For if genetic mutations are completely random and natural selection is just a necessity (a law) of nature, it follows that everything that we find in the biological realm is a product of the combined workings of chance and necessity. This starkly contrasts

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afterwards, when nature is established it can achieve its proper effects through the natural operation." *Super Sent.* II, 20, 1, 1, ad 4.

[30] In the paper "Thomas Aquinas and Theistic Evolution" (available online, see the section: References), I respond to the total of twelve arguments by theistic evolutionists against Aquinas's understanding of the origin of species.

[31] Cf. Ryland, "What is Intelligent Design Theory?" 48.

with the Christian teaching about the universe being a product of divine intellect. Species must be somehow planned and intended by God. Thus, theistic evolution encounters a difficulty—an incompatibility between, on the one hand, the Christian belief in creation according to the divine will and plan, and, on the other, the biological claims about the complete randomness of evolutionary processes. The answer to this problem, as presented by a great number of Christian scholars, is that God guides the unguided process. In other words, while natural mutations are biologically random, they are non-random from the theological perspective, because God somehow works in nature on a deeper (*theological*) level.

Thomists who support theistic evolution find this solution in the Thomistic concept of divine providence. Aquinas indeed teaches that in nature some events are planned (non-random), but there are also truly random events—things that happen by chance. Nevertheless, those chance events do not evade divine providence. God is omnipotent and omniscient and uses chance events to bring to completion His intended goals. Hence, whether an event is chance or planned it always falls under divine providence.[32] We can even say that God works through random events as much as He works through those manifestly planned. Theistic evolutionists believe that this explains how evolution can be random and at the same time guided by God.[33] There are, however, a few reasons to doubt that Thomas would agree with the Thomists.

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[32] *S.Th.* I, 103, 7, ad 2 and 3.

[33] This idea has been proposed recently by many Thomists. Among them: M. George, "On Attempts to Salvage Paley's Argument from Design," in *Science, Philosophy, Theology*, ed. J. O'Callaghan (South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2002), available online (see the section: References); *idem*, "What Would Thomas Aquinas Say about Intelligent Design?" *New Blackfriars* 94, no. 1054 (Nov., 2013): 676–700; N. P. G. Austriaco, J. Brent, Th. Davenport, J. B. Ku, *Thomistic Evolution: A Catholic Approach to Understanding Evolution in the Light of Faith* (Tacoma, Wash.: Cluny Media, 2016), 83–101, 200; M. Dodds, *Unlocking Divine Action* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 221; S. M. Barr, "Chance, by Design," *First*

First, Thomas says (as mentioned above) that the origin of species belongs to the work of supernatural formation which was finished once and for all with the creation of man. After divine supernatural activity was accomplished, God chose to change the mode of operation in the universe. He does not create new things (new natures) anymore, but works through ordinary and extraordinary providence. Thomists take one mode of divine operation (providence) and project it onto the formation of the universe, which is clearly not the case with Aquinas (and Christian tradition altogether). The argument, therefore, stems from the confusion introduced between the order of providence and the order of creation. As a consequence, the proponents of this argument end up in an entirely systematic approach to the question of origins. They assume that God operates in essentially one mode throughout the whole history of the universe. They dismiss the *history of creation*, which is recounted in Genesis and independently supported by scientific evidence from cosmology and paleontology. The Biblical narrative becomes irrelevant—in fact, it does not matter what the Bible teaches, because the knowledge about the origin of species comes from scientific theory (note *the theory*, not scientific *evidence*). If the Bible contradicts the theory, it is just a matter of a *proper reading* of the text. But this is not how Aquinas sees the problem. For him, the Bible tells not only *that* species were created, but also *how* it happened. When Thomas speaks about the origins in his "sed contras," he repeatedly confirms the sufficiency of the authority of Scripture (*Sufficit auctoritas Scripturae*).[34] His certitude comes from the very fact that origins cannot be known otherwise than by revelation. Natural science cannot explain the

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Things (Dec., 2012): 25–30; W. Newton, "A Case of Mistaken Identity: Aquinas's Fifth Way and Arguments of Intelligent Design," *New Blackfriars* 95, no. 1059 (Sept., 2014): 569–578. The same argument has been proposed by theologians from the International Theological Commission in *Communion and Stewardship: Human Persons Created in the Image of God*, no. 69 (July 23, 2004), available online (see the section: References).
[34] *S.Th.* I, 69–72.

origin of nature, just as physics cannot explain the origin of physics, chemistry cannot explain the origin of chemistry, and biology cannot explain the origin of biology. Thomists are right that random genetic mutations do not evade divine providence. They are also right that natural selection and random variation change the living beings over time. But they are not right when they assume that the same process accounts for the emergence of species.

Interestingly enough, the idea of God using secondary causes in creation was not strange to Aquinas himself. He found it in the philosophical system of Avicenna. Yet, he decisively rejects it:

> It happens, that something participates in the proper action of another, not by its own power, but instrumentally, inasmuch as it acts by the power of another; as air can heat and ignite by the power of fire. And so some have supposed that although creation is the proper act of the universal cause, still some inferior cause acting by the power of the first cause, can create. . . . [And thus Avicenna and the Master say] that God can communicate to a creature the power of creating, so that the latter can create ministerially, not by its own power. But such a thing cannot be, because the secondary instrumental cause does not participate in the action of the superior cause, except inasmuch as by something proper to itself it acts dispositively to the effect of the principal agent. If therefore it effects nothing, according to what is proper to itself, it is used to no purpose; nor would there be any need of certain instruments for certain actions. Thus we see that a saw, in cutting wood, which it does by the property of its own form, produces the form of a bench, which is the proper effect of the principal agent. Now the proper effect of God creating is what is presupposed to all other effects, and that is absolute being. Hence nothing else can act dispositively and instrumentally to this effect, since creation is not from anything presupposed, which can be disposed by the action of the instrumental agent. So

therefore it is impossible for any creature to create, either by its own power or instrumentally—that is, ministerially.[35]

In reply to Avicenna's claim that the distinction of things into different species is due to secondary causes, Thomas writes:

> This cannot stand . . . because, according to this opinion, the universality of things would not proceed from the intention of the first agent, but from the concurrence of many active causes; and such an effect we can describe only as being produced by chance. Therefore, the perfection of the universe, which consists of the diversity of things, would thus be a thing of chance, which is impossible.[36]

We see that Aquinas excludes both secondary causes and chance as a possible factor in the first production of things. He is even more explicit when it comes to the origin of species:

> Those things whose distinction from one another is derived from their forms [and these are different natural species—M.Ch.] are not distinct by chance, although this is perhaps the case with things whose distinction stems from matter. Now, the distinction of species is derived from the form, and the distinction of singulars of the same species is from matter. Therefore, the distinction of things in terms of species cannot be the result of chance; but perhaps the distinction of certain individuals can be the result of chance.[37]

Again, healthy metaphysical reasoning (*sana philosophia*) brings Aquinas to the conclusion that species cannot be produced by chance even though chance events affect individuals. Thus, a cat may generate a white cat, or a deaf cat due to accidental genetic mutation. The a-

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[35] *S.Th.* I, 45, 5, co.

[36] *S.Th.* I, 47, 1, co.

[37] *ScG* II, 39, 3. In another place Aquinas rejects the general evolutionary idea that random events play a role in the origin of the universe: "That God acts for an end can also be evident from the fact that the universe is not the result of chance, but is ordered to a good" (*ScG* II, 23, 6).

mount of possible chance differences in posterity is virtually infinite. However, those differences in individuals cannot account for the emergence of a new species. A new substantial form must be induced directly by God.

There Are Only Four Substances

Apparently some Thomistic proponents of theistic evolution are aware of the problem described above, namely, that accidental change cannot bring about substantial change. To overcome this serious difficulty rendering macroevolution impossible they reduce the number of *real* species or substances. Consequently, in order to save the metaphysical possibility of biological macroevolution they (similarly to Darwin) challenge the very notion of species. For example, Charles De Koninck believes that: "The ensemble of beings constituting nature is divided into four species: men, animals, plants, and the inorganic. . . . These four species are the only ones philosophically definable. The canine species is not a species in the philosophical sense."[38]

Different authors propose different numbers of *true* species.[39] Nevertheless, their common point is to reduce them to just a few. Fol-

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[38] Ch. De Koninck, "The Cosmos. The Philosophical Point of View," in *The Writings of Charles De Koninck*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. R. McInerny (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 258.

[39] For example, N. Luyten suggests that the only distinct and definable essence among living beings is human. Thus, in his view there would be three essences: inanimate, animate and human (see *idem*, "Philosophical Implications of Evolution," *The New Scholasticism* 25, no. 3 [July, 1951]: 303–304). M. J. Adler, even though skeptical of macroevolution, defends the idea that there are only five irreducible species: man, animal, plant, mixture and element (see his *Problems for Thomists: The Problem of Species* [New York: Sheed & Ward, 1940]). According to the Polish Thomist, M. A. Krąpiec, supernatural creative acts must have taken place at least in the transitions between inanimate and animate matter, then between vegetative and sensory life, and then between sensory and intellectual life (see M. A. Krapiec, *Wprowadzenie do filozofii* [*An Introduction to Philosophy*] [Lublin: RW KUL, 1996], 256–265). E. Feser defends macroevolution by claiming that "every species is essentially just a variation on the same basic genetic material." If this were the case, there would be only one species

lowing the De Koninck's opinion, an evolutionist can agree that an accumulation of accidental changes over time will never produce a new species. However, since there are only four species, everything within them can be produced by evolution. Once the vegetative life is present, all plants are like variation within the plant species. Once an animal is present, all animals are just variants of animal species. In this way the direct action of God is not needed to create different species within the plant and animal kingdoms. Instead, evolution (accidental changes) can do the job.

As much as the reduction of species to just four (alternatively one, three or five) may seem attractive for those who strive to save biological macroevolution, yet it is far from Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics. Moreover, it is also far from what the evolutionary theories of origins actually postulate. In De Koninck's scenario, for example, God would need to produce supernaturally inanimate beings, then the first plants, first animals, and first humans. The *physical continuity* of the whole evolutionary story would be interrupted at least three times. And this is already unacceptable to epistemological naturalism which underlies all evolutionary theories of origins such as neo-Darwinism. *Species reductionism*, therefore, does not resolve the conflict between classical metaphysics and biological macroevolution. It only makes it less apparent. At the same time it sets apart *species reductionists* from classical metaphysics.

Interestingly, the attempts to reduce the number of substances were not unheard of in Aquinas's times. Avicebron, for one, maintained that no body acts on its own, but rather God acts directly in each change. In order to save his idea of causality, Avicebron assumed that

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of living beings, namely the one containing the genetic material. For Feser, this is also evidence that in evolution lower cause does not produce higher effect (see E. Feser, *Scholastic Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction* [Piscataway, N.J.: Transaction Books, 2014], 158).

all material beings constitute one substance. But Thomas disagrees and says that Avicebron's assumption "would make an end of generation and corruption, and many other absurdities would follow." Thomas also says that this idea is "frivolous" and "manifestly fallacious."[40]

It is obvious that neither Aristotle nor Aquinas consider all plants, or all animals, one substance. After all, their entire metaphysical project was aimed at explaining how it is possible that, while every individual being around us changes, something remains unchanged. Aristotle discovered the divisions between form and matter, and between substance and accidents, and originally used them to reconcile Heraclitus (for whom, being is changeable) with Parmenides (for whom, being is unchangeable). The Aristotelian concept of species explains why lion begets lion and nothing else, and only man begets man (and nothing else), even though one man differs from another man and one lion differs from another lion, and each of lions and men changes over the entire time of their existence. Thomas says that reducing all bodies to one substance leads to many absurdities. Saying that all bodies constitute three or four substances is only slightly "less frivolous," and still many absurdities follow, for example, that the difference between an elephant and a snake is only accidental, or that a reptile may change into a bird through natural generation, or that all animals constitute one family literally speaking (are connected by a long chain of natural generations). Unfortunately, many Thomists in their struggle to reconcile biological macroevolution with metaphysics *nolens volens* give in to the absurdities that Aristotle and Aquinas would never allow.

Classical Metaphysics Has Been Overturned by Modern Science

It happens that Thomistic proponents of theistic evolution encounter an insurmountable obstacle in Aquinas to defend biological

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[40] *De pot.* 3, 7, co.

macroevolution. This, however, does not turn them away from believing in macroevolution.[41] A careful reader cannot avoid an impression that an incoherency harms their argument. First, they advocate the actuality of Thomistic principles and try to reconcile them with—what they call—*modern science*. But when they apply the same Thomistic principles to the origin of species, they propose that the principles are not actual anymore and have to be modified in the light of *modern science*. By advocating this, Thomistic evolutionists confuse two things: (a) scientific data, on the one hand, and (b) a theory presented in science, which is intended to explain the data, on the other. Consequently, they want Aquinas's principles to be compatible with the theory, even though the compatibility with the data is enough to defend the principles.

Scientific data tell us that species appeared subsequently over immense periods of time, and remained essentially unchanged during the whole period of their existence (*stasis*). Aquinas believes that plant and animal species appeared during the two stages of the formation of the universe—the work of distinction and the work of adornment. But he does not define how long these stages lasted. Even if he believed in a short age of the universe (six natural days for creation events) this teaching is not essential to his doctrine.[42] Moreover, this teaching (the

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[41] For example, according to M. George, modern evidence shows that the emergence of species occurs thanks to natural causes rather than through "direct divine intervention." But, according to her, Aquinas should not be blamed for that "ignorance that elicited his categorical rejection of Empedocles." See George, "What Would Thomas Aquinas Say about Intelligent Design?" 690–691. B. Ashley acknowledges that Aquinas excludes secondary causation in creation and (in this respect) he explicitly distances himself from Aquinas's doctrine. He also believes that Aquinas's (and classical) metaphysics is static and therefore does not make room for evolution. Only after it is redefined in historical categories, it embraces the true evolutionary concept of nature. See B. Ashley, "Causality and Evolution," *The Thomist* 36, no. 2 (April, 1972): 228–230.

[42] Aquinas distinguishes between two types of truths present in the Bible. The first are the truths essential to the faith and these cannot be modified by a Biblical interpretation. The other are the truths accidental to the faith. There can be a disagreement about them

short age of the universe) is irrelevant to the question regarding the origin of species—one thing is *how* species emerged (whether by evolution or by creation) and another is *when* it happened. The latter question is not the object of controversy that is of concern to us here. But modern scientific data modified only the latter issue, namely the time-scale of the creation events. Modern data do not contradict Aquinas's essential teaching about the supernatural origin and the direct creation of species. Hence, Aquinas's teaching does not contradict any data, although it does contradict the theory of biological macroevolution. It is, therefore, possible that not *Aquinas's metaphysics*, but rather *Darwin's theory* has to be modified when a conflict is apparent.

In order to understand the fallacy of the argument *from modern science*, we need to refer to one more distinction. There are two types of questions we can ask about any physical object: (a) the first is *how* it works, how it is built, what its parts are, how old it is, etc., and (b) the second is *where* it comes from, what its origin is, how it started to exist. In short, the two questions are: *What is the thing?* and *Where does the thing come from?* If we look into the history of science, all theories and facts that rightly modified our understanding of nature address the first question.

For example, people believed that there is a fixed sphere of stars. But with the progress of science astronomy proved that stars are not fixed, but are distributed unevenly in space and rotate around different centers of gravity than the earth. People believed in a stationary cosmos—it turned out that the universe expands. People believed that the earth is in the center of the Solar System and sits stable—it turned out that neither is true. The list could be continued, but the common de-

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even among the saints. The accidental truths include many historical details (*multa historialia*). In the contemporary context the category of historical details covers the question when species were created and how long each of them lasted. See *Super Sent.* II, 12, 1, 2, co, and *S.Th.* II–II, 1, 6, ad 1.

nominator of all theories of nature is that they modify our understanding of *how* things are built or work (e.g., geocentrism vs. heliocentrism), but not *where* things come from. Darwin, however, addressed the second question—he asked where species came from. It is even more apparent when we compare the title of his book with that of Copernicus's. Copernicus wrote the book *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres*. He tried to explain how the planetary system is built and what the relative movements and positions of planets in this system are. The same is true about Kepler, Newton and all other founders of modern science—they tried to explain how things work. But Darwin wrote *The Origin of Species* by which he addressed a different question—the question of origins. The same word, *origin* (*genesis*), was used as the title of the first book of the Bible in the Septuagint. Darwin, therefore, proposed an alternative genesis. He asked about the origins and thus he violated the limits of scientific method. For science cannot address the question of origins.[43] And this is why he, as well as the entirety of modern biology, provides only the evidence of natural *changes of species* over time, but not the natural *origin of species*. As much as the former is scientifically provable (and no reasonable person questions it), the latter has never been proven and cannot be proven in principle. This is also the reason why biological evolution (whether based on the Darwinian mechanism or not) strictly speaking is not a scientific theory, but a

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[43] A typical objection to this claim is that science actually explains things like the origin of stars or planetary systems. It is not quite clear whether scientific theories explain those phenomena, but even if so, these are not examples of the origin of new distinct natures. Similarly geology explains the origin of mountains and river beds, but these are not examples of distinct natures. Big Bang theory, on the other hand, speaks about the expansion of the universe from the first moment that can be addressed by science (singular point), but not from the very beginning. Thus, Big Bang theory is not a theory of origins in the sense we employ, but a theory of development of a thing that already exists.

metaphysical postulate, a paradigm of doing modern biology.[44] For the same reason, philosophers who question biological macroevolution making use of classical metaphysics do not commit any methodological error—biological macroevolution is as much philosophical as are the principles of metaphysics. The difference is that metaphysical principles are confirmed by common experience and common sense, whereas Darwinian postulates stray from both. And this is why when a conflict between these two philosophies arises, Thomists are not called to modify Aquinas's metaphysics, but rather to show how it is actual in what it says about the origin of species, and how it disproves Darwinian postulates of universal common ancestry and transformation of species.

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Classical Metaphysics and Theistic Evolution: Why Are They Incompatible?

SUMMARY

This paper explores the arguments against the compatibility of classical metaphysics (Aristotelian-Thomistic) and theistic evolution. It begins with presenting the line of division between theists and atheistic evolutionists regarding the origin of the universe. Next, it moves to definitions of the terms *evolution* and *species*. The core of the paper consists of the five reasons why theistic evolution is excluded by Thomistic metaphysics. Among these are the problem of sufficient cause, accidental changes generating substantial changes, the reduction of causality in theistic evolution and the problem of the order in the universe. This is followed by a presentation of the positive teaching of Aquinas on the origin of species. Finally, the article responds to the three common arguments put forward by theistic evolutionists who seek to either accommodate or dismiss classical metaphysics.

KEYWORDS

Thomism, Darwinism, classical metaphysics, theistic evolution, creation, evolution.

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[44] Cf. Karl Popper, *Unended Quest: An Intellectual Autobiography* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 200.

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Edward Macierowski

Philosophical Considerations for Fruitful Dialogue between Christians and Muslims

This essay expresses an attempt to go beyond the study of the history of Islamic philosophy, a study which in Western circles was largely initiated in the context of the study of the history of medieval Christian philosophy, to the larger theme of religious dialogue between Christians and Muslims. To explore this broader issue, I propose to explore first some of the conditions that might be required for any successful conversation. After that, I should like to turn to some of the central issues specific to dialogue between Christians and Muslims. In addressing these themes I should like to point to resources that could be particularly useful to those trying to teach introductory courses on this complex matter, and to give students an inkling of where they might look for further training to embark upon more advanced types of dialogue. By way of conclusion, I propose to return to our starting point and consider various levels at which dialogue can be begun, even at an elementary stage.

What, in General, Might Be Needed for Any Successful Conversation?

First, the title, as I originally proposed it, offered something of a straw man: "Christianity and Islam in Dialogue."[1] There can be no dia-

Edward Macierowski — Benedictine College, Atchison, Kans., USA
e-mail: edwardm@benedictine.edu ▪ ORCID: no data

logue between abstractions.[2] Dialogue or conversation is possible only between persons. An insufficiently noticed prerequisite of conversation is that both parties need to use a common language. More is hidden in this presupposition than is immediately obvious. In a conversation or dialogue, in general, there must be at least two interlocutors, but they cannot both be talking at the same time. One must be listening while the other talks, but both should be willing to talk with each other, and, correspondingly, both must be willing to listen to each other. In the conversation we propose, one of the participants should be somehow recognizable as a Christian and the other should somehow be identifiable as a Muslim.

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[1] A version of this paper was presented at Rockhurst University (Kansas City, Mo., USA) as the LaCroix Memorial Lecture delivered on Apr. 18, 2018. I should like to thank Professor Brendan Sweetman, the Chairman of their Department of Philosophy, for the invitation and the audience for their valuable questions. In revising the lecture for publication I have changed the original title from "Dialogue between Christianity and Islam" to the more precise "Philosophical Considerations for Fruitful Dialogue between Christians and Muslims." In the notes, I have provided pointers to further study both of the challenges and of some promising efforts in such dialogue. I owe an important debt to Mrs. Jane Schuele, our interlibrary loan specialist at Benedictine College, and to the cooperating libraries and librarians.

[2] For some of the hazards of "the spirit of abstraction," see Etienne Gilson, *Elements of Christian Philosophy* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1960), 229–230: "In speculative matters, it invites the substitution of the definition for the defined, which is a sure way to render definitions sterile. It also invites the illusion that one can increase knowledge by merely deducing consequences from already coined definitions, instead of frequently returning to the very things from which essences and definitions were first abstracted. In the practical order the spirit of abstraction probably is the greatest single source of political and social disorders, of intolerance and of fanaticism. Nothing is more uncompromising than an essence, its quiddity and its definition. The reason for this fact lies in a characteristic common to all abstract notions and remarkably described by Thomas Aquinas in the second chapter of his commentary on the *De Hebdomadibus* of Boethius; namely, that the characteristics of the abstract are exactly opposed to those of the concrete. Now reality is concrete, and this is the reason that abstract descriptions of it are liable to deform it." This does not mean that definitions are useless or unhelpful, as we shall see later, but that we need always to return to that which exists concretely to stay well-grounded.

Second, we need something to talk about. Tourists might just want to buy a plane ticket or take a tour. Travellers could talk about the weather or their families. Businessmen could talk to try to make a deal. Mathematicians might talk about geometry. Historians can talk about what happened in the past. Educators could talk about curriculum. Statesmen can talk about international relations, war, peace, or trade. In such transactions, there is a certain give and take, a certain reciprocity. What happens when the topic of conversation is something very dear to us, something we are committed to? Is there not a virtue of piety in religion something like the virtue of patriotism in politics? This is the situation in dialogue between those who profess themselves to be Christian and those who profess to be Muslim, especially when each is talking about how he or she is committed to God.

Third, we need to be willing to learn from each other. This third point is particularly important: for if each party had nothing in common, they could at best talk past each other without mutual understanding; indeed, could they even disagree? Again, if each of the two parties already understood everything identically, there would be little to say. If there are differences with each other, it might be possible at least to identify precisely where, and if there are points of agreement, what exactly are they?[3]

Fourth, one historical complication in the relation between Muslims and Christians has been military hostility and, on occasion, conquest.[4] In such transactions, there is always a tacit threat and a tendency

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[3] Exemplifying an effort in this direction, *Theoria ⇨Praxis: How Jews, Christians, and Muslims Can Together Move from Theory to Practice*, ed. Leonard Swidler (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), includes papers on notions of the good in Judaism (chapter 8), among Christians (chapter 10), and in Islamic sources (chapter 11), with an effort at a "synthesis" (chapter 12).

[4] In his Easter 1991 "Urbi et Orbi" address Pope John Paul II alludes to "men: when they have chosen aggression and the violation of international law; when it was purported to resolve the tensions between peoples with war, a sower of death." For Ugo Villani's scholarly discussion of the Bush doctrine of "preemptive action" or "anticipa-

for a background relationship of commanding and obeying, of master-
ship and slavery. Those who are aware of history will know something
about coercion, conquest, or various forms of imperialism[5] or colonial-
ism.[6] Most of us Americans, however, will not have tasted the fear,
anger, or bitterness of having been conquered or occupied by foreign-
ers.

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tory action" in the light of international law, see his "Il disarmo dell'Iraq e l'uso della
forza nel diritto internazionale," *Jura Gentium* (2003), available online (see the section:
References), and the discussion paper by Carlos Corral Salvador, "Actitud y acciones
de la Santa Sede y Juan Pablo II ante la guerra de Iraq," *UNISCI Discussion Papers*
(Mayo de 2003), available online (see the section: References). See also "Crusades," in
Wikipedia, available online (see the section: References), and for more recent events:
"2003 Invasion of Iraq," in *Wikipedia*, available online (see the section: References),
"Jus ad bellum," in *Wikipedia*, available online (see the section: References), "Invest-
ment in post-2003 Iraq," in *Wikipedia*, available online (see the section: References).
La Civiltà Cattolica, no. 154 (18 gennaio 2003): 107–117, published "No a una Guerra
'preventiva' contro l'Iraq," rejecting as immoral the proposal of the younger President
George W. Bush to engage in a *preventive* war against Iraq. Interestingly, as of May
2018, there is no Wikipedia article on the devastation in "Post-invasion Iraq, 2003–
2011." The missing years are discussed in the final chapter of Fernando Cardinal Filo-
ni's *The Church in Iraq*, trans. Edward Condon (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic Uni-
versity of America Press, 2017), which gives a bird's-eye view of the history of the
Church in Mesopotamia from Apostolic times. More recently, see "Syria," in *Wikipe-
dia*, available online (see the section: References). On the other hand, see the 759-page
compendium edited by Andrew G. Bostom, *The Legacy of Jihad: Islamic Holy War
and the Fate of Non-Muslims* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2005). So far, I have
found no Muslim scholarship corresponding to the Christian doctrine of just warfare.
Though versions of just war doctrine seem to have entered international law, it is not
always clear that even Western attackers have taken this teaching seriously.

[5] Cf. Thucydides, *History of the Pelopennesian War*, available online (see the section:
References).

[6] See *Muslim-Christian Perceptions of Dialogue Today: Experiences and Expectations*,
ed. Jacques Waardenburg (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), with a valuable bibliography or-
gainized under 10 headings (*ibid.*, 305–323). Karel Steenbrink's essay "The Small Talk
of Muslims and Christians in the Netherlands" (*ibid.*, 201–231) begins by recalling the
Netherlands' trade mission in 1596 to the Indonesian archipelago and concludes that
"[t]he great aspirations of the colonial empire to found a cohesive and solid society,
also by including a majority of Muslims in a modern and Westernized state, are dreams
of the past" (*ibid.*, 230).

Fifth, most readers of this paper are probably Christians, and for most Christians in the Americas Islam is hardly more than a word. Most of us would have had this horizon of ignorance broken open only recently, if at all, and chiefly in a negative way.[7] Nor, if we read only domestic sources, are we likely to be aware of how others perceive what we do.

Sixth, most of us, Catholic Christians included, have been born and bred within a largely secular liberal horizon. Many people operating within this horizon still regard the Middle Ages as what Gibbon called "the triumph of barbarism and religion."[8] I wonder, therefore, whether today our own intellectual horizon is more effectively Catholic or more effectively secular. Over the past century or so, however, greater awareness has arisen in academic circles of the philosophical and cultural achievements of the Middle Ages, first in the Christian, and then in Jewish and Islamic thought.[9]

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[7] But the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon shocked public opinion in the United States at a level probably not felt since the attack of Japanese forces on the American Navy in Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941.

[8] Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 12, ed. J. B. Bury with an introduction by W. E. H. Lecky (New York: Fred de Fau and Co., 1906), Chapter 71, available online (see the section: References).

[9] Even the task of getting accurate information offers challenges. I'd like to start by surveying a few books in English within the field of philosophy, since that has marked my own entry-point to the discussion. Once upon a time, in a second-hand bookshop I chanced upon Will and Ariel Durant's 1926 book *The Story of Philosophy: The Lives and Opinions of the Greater Philosphers*. In this story, philosophy falls unconscious with the death of Aristotle and, after a blank page, re-awakens with the thought of Francis Bacon some two millennia later. Was this an intellectual coma? What miracle brought about the sudden change? A generation later, Etienne Gilson's 1955 *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* runs over 800 pages, spanning from St. Justin Martyr in the first century to Nicholas of Cusa in the fifteenth century. Again, H. A. Wolfson takes medieval philosophy to begin with Philo Judaeus (d. ca 50 CE) ending with Spinoza (d. 1677). Clearly, the criteria of definition are important to deciding the question whether Jewish or Christian thought counts as philosophy. We might wonder whether the rationalist criterion excluding religious thinkers from the realm of philosophy might not have been mistaken: 1500 to 2000 years of human thought seem to have been reclaimed for philosophy. Since the official end of the Soviet empire in 1991, we

If it is not inappropriate for me to make a personal remark, my entry into the study of the Middle Ages began through philosophy. As an undergraduate, I heard the exchange of reminiscences between two Jewish scholars, Jacob Klein and Leo Strauss. Strauss called my attention to a Persian philosopher named Avicenna, who turned out to be the counter-point figure in my doctoral dissertation comparing Avicenna with Aquinas on the origin of the world from the stand point of the divine simplicity.[10] The philosophical vocabulary of medieval Jews, Christians, and Muslims developed out of an Aristotelian tradition.[11] One key lesson to be learned from Aristotle is the importance of defining the topic to further good discussion.

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have seen the collapse of a powerful regime based upon collectivist materialism; it remains to be seen whether individualist materialism or something else will serve as a basis for current globalization.

For our purposes, Gilson devotes Part V of his *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* to "Arabian and Jewish philosophy" (*ibid.*, 179–231; notes on 637–655), totaling around 70 pages, including notes.

In 1996, Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman edited a two-part *History of Islamic Philosophy* containing more than 1200 pages. It would appear, then, that over the last three generations, philosophy within the explicitly religious context of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam has established itself as academic discipline in English-speaking universities.

A look at the bibliographies of these histories is illuminating: for Gilson, almost all the primary sources are in Greek or Latin. What about the secondary literature? Let's sample just Gilson's sources for the single author Avicenna (Ibn Sina) starting on page 641 footnote #11; I count 18 items in French, 6 in Latin, 3 in Arabic, 5 in English, 6 in German, and 1 in Spanish. In Shams Inati's chapter 16 on Ibn Sina, I count 13 items in Arabic, 3 in English, 1 in Persian, and a book-length annotated bibliography on Ibn Sina by Janssens (1991).

[10] "A Giving of Accounts: Jacob Klein and Leo Strauss," St. John's College, Annapolis, Maryland (30 January 1970), available online (see the section: References).

[11] See Francis E. Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs: The Aristotelian Tradition in Islam* (New York: New York University Press; London: University of London Press, 1968) and *idem*, *Aristoteles Arabus: The Oriental Translations and Commentaries of the Aristotelian Corpus* (Leiden: Brill, 1968). It is worth remembering that the expressions *Arabic* and *Islamic* are not co-extensive terms. There are Christian Arab-speakers, for example, and Persian-speaking Muslims.

Can We Provide a Definition of
Jews, Christians and Muslims?

To delimit the scope of our discussion, we should provide some sort of a definition,[12] while bearing in mind the hazards of the "spirit of abstraction" that we mentioned above. I propose to consider three generic features that these three "religions"[13] have in common: (1) they all

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[12] Here are five types of definition, drawn from a standard textbook by John Oesterle, *Logic: The Art of Defining and Reasoning* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 2nd ed., 1963), 64–71, applied to the current topic: (1) Ideally, to do that we should present the proximate genus and specific difference(s) of what we are concerned with if we are to isolate the *essence* of Judaism, Christianity, or Islam. Today, however, we will probably need to be satisfied with something looser than an essential or real definition. Let me explain. A real definition of man, without being complete, tells us what its basic nature is: an animal that talks. (2) A looser definition would be in terms of some feature that belongs only, necessarily, and always to a nature. Such a definition would be by property. Since, however, the same thing can have several properties, man could be defined as an animal with a sense of humor, or an animal that can laugh. (3) Another way to differentiate man from the other animals might be in terms of one of its intrinsic or extrinsic causes, as an animal created to know, love and serve God in this life and to share with Him eternal happiness in heaven. (4) Still looser is definition by accident, e.g., taking man as the animal that wears clothing. Since the incidental features a thing can possess can be almost infinite, it often requires a basket-load of accidents to distinguish the thing even for purposes of discussion. (5) Even looser is definition by name: here we examine what a dictionary would say about the word *man*—its meaning, usage, and etymology. Though loose, nominal definitions can be useful to point us in the right direction to find the nature of the thing we want to understand. Furthermore, nominal or dictionary definitions are the ones most familiar to most of us even before we aim for philosophical precision of the things we try to talk about. They have one unfortunate limitation, however: if we had only nominal definitions, each dictionary entry would lead us to another, and to another, till eventually we might end up merely where we began. Some dictionaries help us to escape this circle by providing a picture of the thing we need to identify. In any case, we need to keep words, thoughts, and things properly coordinated.

[13] The very task of defining what counts as a religion is difficult and complex. Some, like Timothy Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (Oxford: University Press, 2000), claim that "the word as used in modern departments of religious studies is really the basis of a modern form of theology, which I will call liberal ecumenical theology, but some attempt has been made to disguise this fact by claiming that religion is a natural and/or a supernatural reality in the nature of things that all human idividuals have a capacity for, regardless of their cultural context" (*ibid.*, 4–5); the author focuses on the

profess monotheism; (2) they all claim, in one fashion or another, to be related to the Patriarch Abraham; (3) they all claim to have been revealed to man in some fashion or other by God. You will doubtless have noticed that this description fits Judaism as well as Christianity and Islam. Even these general observations call for further clarification. One important difficulty in this conversation is that some people claiming to be Christians claim also that the New Christian Covenant simply supercedes the Old Covenant. Another difficulty is that Muslims claim not only that the prophetic revelation of Islam supercedes those of Judaism and Christianity, but also that the Christians and the Jews engaged

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uselessness of the notion of *religion* as an analytic category especially in the setting of Japan and India. Others, like Zofia J. Zdybicka, in "Man and Religion," which appears as Chapter X of Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, O.P., *I-Man: An Outline of Philosophical Anthropolog*y (New Britain, Conn.: Mariel Publications, 1983), 271–312, are less pessimistic, holding that "the 'religiousness' of man (religious dimension of the human person as a manner of 'being-toward-God') is not a variable, accidental and historically conditioned trait, but it constitutes a property rooted in the very nature of the personal being, viewed both in itself and in relation to God" (*ibid*., 311–312). See Michael L. Fitzgerald and John Borelli, *Interfaith Dialogue: A Catholic View* (London: SPCK; Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2006); Archbishop Fitzgerald was one of the Missionaries of Africa, whilst Dr. Borelli provides the perspective of a lay theologian. A tidy English summary of Massignon's article on the three prayers of Abraham can be found *ibid*., 231–232. See also *Mission in Dialogue: Essays in Honour of Michael L. Fitzgerald*, ed. Catarina Belo and Jean-Jacques Pérennes (Louvain & Paris: Peeters, 2012), with bibliography *ibid*., xxi–xli.

Timothy Fitzgerald is certainly correct that the term *religion* has many meanings, but I wonder whether trying to clarify that problem by appealing to a notion of *ideology* may prove even more problematic: might this method not involve the fallacy of *ignotum per ignotius*? The multiple meanings of *religio* are explored in the multi-volume survey by Ernst Feil (Göttingen 1986ff), cited by Peter Henrici, "The Concept of Religion from Cicero to Schleiermacher: Origins, History, and Problems with the Term," in *Catholic Engagement with World Religions: A Comprehensive Study*, ed. Karl Josef Becker & Ilaria Maorali, with the collaboration of Maurice Borrmans & Gavin D'Costa (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2010), 1–22, and ch. 24 by Maurice Borrmans, "Islam as It Understands Itself," *ibid*., 487–508. Part 3 presents "the grounding for why this Catholic-Christian *theology of religions* is necessary" (*ibid*., xxix; the author's own italics; note the plural and the unabashedly theological character of the project). See the bibliography of Borrmans's works in the *Recueil d'articles offert Maurice Borrmans par ses collègues et amis* (Rome: P.I.S.A.I., 1996), 1–10.

in altering their original scriptures; this allegation of alteration or *taḥrīf* complicates hermeneutical discussions based upon the authority of scripture.[14] Still another important problem is that the terms used in the

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[14] "Tahrif," in *Wikipedia*, available online (see the section: References). Thomas Aquinas (1224/5–1274) gives two reasons why it is hard "to proceed against individual errors." (1) "The sacrilegious remarks of individual men are not so well known to us so that we may use what they say as the basis of proceeding to a refutation of their errors" (*Summa contra Gentiles* I, 2, 3, trans. Anton C. Pegis [Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975], 62). (2) "Some of them, such as the Mohammedans and the pagans, do not agree with us in accepting the authority of any Scripture, by which they may be convinced of their error" (*ibid.*, I, 9, 1, 77). Aquinas divides his treatise into books corresponding to the distinction between the divine truth that "the reason is competent to reach" (Books I–III) and the divine truth that "surpasses every effort of the reason" (Book IV). For a recent survey, see James Waltz, "Muḥammad and the Muslims in St. Thomas Aquinas," in *The Routledge Reader in Christian-Muslim Relations*, ed. Mona Siddiqui (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 112–121.

Note that Aquinas calls *Mohammedans* those who prefer to call themselves *Muslims*; if the term *Mohammedan* is taken as strictly symmetrical with *Christian*, it might lead people erroneously to think that Mohammad is claimed as a divine person, which neither Christians nor Muslims would ever admit, or that Jesus Christ is merely a prophet, which Muslims hold but Christian believers would never admit. If the words *Christian* and *Mohammadan* are taken generally to designate any sort of following a leader, the words tend to lose any specific religious content, like *Kantian* as the name of someone who follows the philosophical principles of Immanuel Kant. Followers of the prophetic authority of Mohammad call themselves *Muslim*, an Arabic word meaning one who submits (to God). The verbal noun from which this adjective is drawn is *Islām*. The Arabic root for the word is SLM (i.e., peace); the form is causative: to bring about peace. Ironically, the 1961 English translation of Louis Gardet's valuable little book *Connaître l'Islam* (1958), which literally means *Getting to Know Islam*, appeared in English under the still polemical title *Mohammedanism*. Gardet teamed up with Chikh Bouamrane and published another effort of high-level popularization under the title *Panorama de la pensée islamique* (Paris: Sindbad, 1984).

For a survey of scholarly and polemical engagement of Christians with the Islamic Scriptures, see Thomas E. Burman, *Reading the Qur'ān in Latin Christendom, 1140-1560* (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). The chief translators under consideration were Robert of Ketton (active mid-12th century), Mark of Toledo (late 12th–early 13th century), Juan de Segovia (d. ca. 1458), Flavius Mithridates (fl. 1475–1485), and Egidio da Viterbo (1472–1532). Robert was the first to render the Qur'an into Latin; it was subsequently published by Theodore Bibliander in 1543. The acts of one conference commemorating the tercentenary of the publication of the Latin version of the Coran by Ludovico Marracci were edited by Giuliano Zatti as *Il Corano: Traduzioni, traduttori et lettori in Italia* (Milan: IPL, 2000). For more recent work, see Ulisse Cecini, *Alcoranus latinus: Eine sprachliche und kulturwissenschaftliche Analyse*

early councils on the Incarnation and other discussions of Christology in Greek and Syrian communities were hard for Christians speaking the Arabic of their conquerers to translate into Arabic terms that had not already been pre-empted with settled Islamic meanings.[15] Most recently, in the wake of the 2003 American invasion of Iraq, Syrian Christians, who have, since the time of the Apostles, been living in what we,

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der Koranübersetzengen von Robert von Ketton und Marcus von Toledo (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2012). And for current research on Latin versions of the Qur'ān, see *Islamolatina. La percepcion del Islam en la Europa latina*, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, available online (see the section: References).

The Maronite Bishop Nematallah Carame, O.A.M. (1851–1931) was one of the pioneers in laying down a foundation for philosophical dialogue: he translated from Arabic into Latin the metaphysical portion of Avicenna's *Kitāb an-Najāt* and from Latin into Arabic the first book of Aquinas's *Summa contra Gentiles*, which has been reprinted (Beirut: Dār wa Maktabah Byblion, 2005), including long quotations from Arabic philosophical sources.

[15] On the important role of the Syrian Christians, see Sydney H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008), 94–95: "Special efforts were expended to find an appropriate Arabic vocabulary in terms of which to translate the technical expressions of Christian theology as they had been deployed earlier in Greek and Syriac. This enterprise often involved the further effort to define certain Arabic terms in a technical way for the purpose of theological discussion, even when the ordinary connotations of the terms in common Arabic-speaking usage militated against the senses intended in doctrinal contexts. This was to remain a major problem for Christian theology in Arabic; by the time of the earliest Arabic-speaking Christian apologists, all of the religious vocabulary in Arabic had already been co-opted by Islamic religious discourse, which often systematically excluded the very meanings wanted by Christians, or at the very least Muslims islamicized the terms in a way contrary to Christian teaching." In note 68, Griffith observes that the Greek word *ousia* (substance) was rendered into Arabic as *jawhar* (i.e., a concrete nugget like a jewel, or an atom); the Arabic *jawhar* is transliterated from the Persian *gawhar*.

Even in recent times, problems with common vocabulary persist. For example, though the Arabic word *Allāh* is related to Hebrew and other Semitic languages in the sense of *God*, and had been used in Arabic translations of the Bible and for some four centuries by Malayan Christians in that sense, the secular government of peninsular Malaysia in 2007 outlawed the use of the term except in explicitly Muslim contexts (see "Allah," in *Wikipedia*, available online [see the section: References]). Other discriminatory policies of civil governments impede dialogue in other ways; see for example "Jerusalem: Latin Patriarchate Issues Statement About New Israeli Nation-State Law," *Zenit. The World Seen from Rome* (July 30, 2018), available online (see the section: References).

using a 19th-century European imperial term, call "the Middle East,"[16] are being driven out of their homes by radicalized elements of the dominant Muslim majority.[17] In short, there are many challenges to fruitful dialogue.

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[16] The "name for the region between the 'Near East', based on Turkey, and the 'Far East', based on China" seems to have been coined in British military circles and popularized by an American naval strategist. See Clayton R. Koppes, "Captain Mahan, General Gordon, and the Origins of the Term 'Middle East'," *Middle East Studies* 12, no. 1 (1976): 95–98. See "Near East," in *Wikipedia*, available online (see the section: References). Similar ambiguities are found in the earlier geographic term *the Levant*. For background on the concept of geopolitics, see my "Geopolitics and the Persian Gulf: Some Philosophical Reflections," in *Sztuka i realizm. Art and Reality*, ed. T. Duma, A. Maryniarczyk, P. Sulenta (Lublin: PTTA & KUL, 2014), 691–702. Iranians designate the Gulf *Persian*, whereas the Arabs call it *Arabian*.

[17] For a brief survey, see *Syriac Churches Encountering Islam: Past Experiences and Future Perspectives*, ed. Dietmar W. Winkler (Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2010). The first essay on "Islam in Syriac Sources" is by Mar Louis Sako, whom Pope Francis I created a cardinal on June 28, 2018. Professor Winkler is the Research Director of the *Pro Oriente* Studies of the Syriac Tradition in Salzburg. Joseph Yacoub's "Christian Minorities in the Countries of the Middle East: A Glimpse to the the Present Situation and Future Perspectives" (*ibid.*, 172–218) provides a sober description of the aftermath in Iraq after the American invasion: "Christianity faced with daily violence" (*ibid.*, 184), "Massive Exodus and Resettlement" (*ibid.*, 186), "bloody persecutions of Iraqi Christians" (*ibid.*, 191). Alleging a close cooperation between fundamentalist Protestants, the Republican party, and the U.S. Congress, he claims that "A neo-evangelical American Christianity, radical and ultraconservative, has has taken hold in this country, backed by the military support of Washington" (*ibid.*, 191–192). That groups of fundamentalist American Christian missionaries receive protection from the invading American forces while native Christians are driven from their homes, suffer the destruction of their churches, and have no security, must be reminiscent of the First Crusade, when the invaders killed Christians along with Muslims. See Richard Cimino, "'No God in Common': American Evangelical Discourse on Islam after 9/11," *Review of Religious Research* 47, no. 2 (December 2005): 162–174. Archbishop Sako's concluding statement (Winkler [ed.], 219–221) sees the November 2007 visit of His Majesty King Abdullah of Sa'udi Arabia to the Holy See as a hopeful sign. For details, see "Apostolic Vicar in Arabia: affinity and convergence between Pope and Saudi King," *AsiaNews.it* (Aug. 11, 2007), available online (see the section: References). More recently, His Majesty King Abdullah II Ben Al Hussein of Jordan is conferring with Pope Francis; see Fr. Rif'at Bader, "This is why His Majesty King Abdullah II is heading to the Vatican," *Vatican Insider* (Dec. 18, 2017), available online (see the section: References).

As to point #1 (monotheism), each of these religions professes
the being and unity of God. The Hebrew Torah presents the prayer
Shema' Yisra'el YHWH 'eloheinu YHWH 'ehad—"Hear, o Israel, the
LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deut. 6:4). The Nicene-
Constantinopolitan Creed (A.D. 325) of the Christians reads: "I believe
in one God, the Father . . . one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the
only begotten from the Father, i.e. from the essence (*ek tes ousias*) of
the Father . . . the same in essence (*homoousion*) with the Father . . .
and in the Holy Spirit." The *shahāda* or Muslim profession of faith[18]
consists of two basic claims: *lā ilāha illā allāh* ("there is no god but
God")[19] and *muḥammadun rasūlu-llāh* ("Muhammad is the messenger

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[18] "Shahada," in *Wikipedia*, available online (see the section: References). The *shahāda*
is the first of the five pillars of Islam, the others being prayer, alms-giving, fasting, and
making a pilgrimage to Mecca. There is some variation amongst adherents of Shi'ite
Islam. See "Five Pillars of Islam," in *Wikipedia*, available online (see the section: Ref-
erences).

[19] One central point of comparison is addressed in a collection of studies at the Centre
d'Études des Religions du Livre: *Dieu et l'être: Exégèses d'Exode 3,14 et de Coran
20,11-24* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1978). The Hebrew text of Exodus 3:14 offers
a response to Moses's question about the identity of the Speaker from the Burning
Bush: *'ehyeh 'asher 'ehyeh.* Two grammatically possible, but distinct Greek versions
have been offered: the Septuagint *egō eimi ho ōn* (i.e., I am the [masculine, singular,
nominative] being); the other is the version of Aquila: *esomai hos esomai* (i.e., I shall
be Who I shall be), or Theodotion's *esomai* (i.e., I shall be). See K. J. Cronin, "The
Name of God as Revealed in Exodus 3:14. An Explanation of Its Meaning," A webside
dedicated to the interpretation of Exodus 3:14, available online (see the section: Refer-
ences). The Latin Vulgate of St. Jerome follows the Septuagint: *ego sum qui sum* (I AM
WHO AM). The former interpretation can be taken as a kataphatic answer giving the
Divine Name to Moses; the latter, can be taken as an apophatic refusal: "I am going to
be Who or What I am going to be" (so make the best of it). In the New Testament at
John 8:58, when Jesus is asked how he, being less than 50 years old, could claim to
have known Abraham, He responds: *prin Abraám genésthai, egō eimí* (i.e., "before
Abraham came-to-be [or was born] I AM"). The reaction of the crowd was to pick up
stones to stone him to death. As for the Qur'ān, Sura Ṭā Hā (20), verse 14, it reads
innani anā-llāhu lā ilāha illā anā (i.e., "Verily, I am Allah: There is no god but I,"
trans. 'Abdullah Yūsuf 'Alī).

of God"). Shi'ite Muslims add a third claim: *wa 'alīyyu walīyyu-llāh* ("and 'Alī is God's friend").[20]

Even this point of convergence, however, is not free from controversy. In Arabic, the profession of God's unity is called *tawḥīd*. This is a causal verb form derived from the root *wḥd* meaning 'one'. How would one describe the profession of the Trinity of Persons within the unity of essence? The analogous form *tathlīth*, derived from the root *thlth* 'three', would be heard as professing a triplicity of gods. When the Arabic-speaking Christians began conversation with the Muslims, one problem they faced is that the language had already been preempted with terms weighted with Islamic theology.[21] Thus, too, there is

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[20] For a brief but authoritative introduction, see Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabatabai, *Shi'ite Islam*, trans. Sayyid Husayn Nasr (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975). Over 98% of Iranians are Shi'ite. A useful survey featuring the turn from the policy of "dialogue amongst civilizations" pursued under President Khatemi toward a more polemical attitude after the 2009 election of President Ahmadinejad can be found in the work of Presbyterian scholar Sasan Tavassoli, *Christian Encounters with Iran: Engaging Muslim Thinkers after the Revolution* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011). See the "Annexe: L'Institut d'Études iraniennes," in *Louis Massignon et le Dialogue des Cultures*, Actes du colloque organisé par l'Organisation des Nations unies pour l'Éducation, la Science et la Culture, l'Association des amis de Louis Massignon et l'Institut international de recherches sur Louis Massignon (Maison de l'UNESCO, 17 et 18 décembre 1992) à l'occasion du 30ᵉ anniversaire de la mort de Louis Massignon (1882–1962) (Paris: Cerf, 1996), 331–339; the tributes in this volume, however, exhibit a vast range of Massignon's accomplishments in intercultural and interreligious dialogue. During my studies in Iran in 1976–1977 under Seyyid Hussain Nasr, Henri Corbin, and Toshihiko Izutsu at the then-Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, I had occasion to visit the superb library at the Franco-Iranian Institute housed in the French Embassy. Through the good offices of a certain Mr. Rahbar, I had the privilege of having an audience with the illustrious 'Allameh Tabatabai in Qom, a holy city devoted to the education of thousands of Shi'ite clergy in Iran. The continuing importance of philosophy in Iran with Shi'ite Muslims was underscored through the 1999 World Congress on Mulla Sadra.

[21] See Ida Zilio-Grandi, "Le opere di controversia islamo-cristiana nella formazione della letteratura filosofica araba," in *Storia della filosofia nell'Islam medievale*, vol. I, ed. Cristina D'Ancona (Torino: Einaudi, 2016), 101–179 (esp. 126ff), on problems of language and logic: "In lingua araba, Trinità è triteismo, non triplicità" (*ibid.*, 127), i.e., "In Arabic, Trinity means not threefoldness, but tritheism." See, more generally, Risto

a veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary shared by Muslims and Christians, albeit with divergent interpretations.[22]

As to point #2 (the *Abrahamic*[23] character of the three religions), Jews, Christians, and Muslims all claim Abraham as somehow their father.[24] Though each claims him as their own, each group does so in its own way.[25] This has not only spiritual and religious implications, but also involves matters of justice. Failure at the level of political settlements can degenerate into attempts at military efforts, whose unintended consequences are often not improvements. Let's merely mention the complexity involved in the geo-politically neuralgic piece of real estate

Jukko, *Trinity in Unity in Christian-Muslim Relations: The Work of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2007).

For a study of apologetics, see Diego R. Sarrió Cucarella, *Muslim-Christian Polemics across the Mediterranean: The Splendid Replies of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2015). For a sampling of six important Muslims engaged in contemporary dialogue, see Ataullah Siddiqui, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in the Twentieth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

[22] See the beautiful plates in Luigi Bressan, *Maria nella Devozione e nella Pittura dell'Islam* (Milan: Jaca Book, 2011). Key points of comparison and contrast are tabulated in parallel columns with scriptural references.

[23] Louis Massignon seems to have coined the expression "Abrahamic religion" (in *Dieu vivant*, 1949). It rapidly won currency in ecumenical religious efforts. For example, St. Abraham's Church in Tehran, where I was a parishioner from 1976–1977, run by the Irish Dominicans, addressed the spiritual needs of English-speaking Roman Catholics living in Iran in a very low-key manner. Under Archbishop William Barden, O.P., the celebration of the main weekly Eucharist was shifted from Sundays to Fridays, the day when Muslims have off from work to gather for public prayer.

[24] For example, see "Abraham in Islam," in *Wikipedia*, available online (see the section: References).

[25] For a general overview, see Francis E. Peters, *The Children of Abraham: Judaism, Christianity, Islam* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press 2010), with rich notes (*ibid.*, 173–212) and basic glossary (*ibid.*, 213–225), and David B. Burrell, *Towards a Jewish-Christian-Muslim Theology* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011). For one specific topic, see *The Sacrifice of Isaac in the Three Monotheistic Religions*, proceedings of a Symposium on the Interpretation of the Scriptures Held in Jerusalem, March 16–17, 1995, ed. Frédéric Manns (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1995).

today known as the city of Jerusalem[26] or the neighborhood of the Sinai peninsula, providing a land bridge between Africa and Asia and sea links via the Suez Canal between the Americas and Europe with Asia. Who gets to collect the tolls?

As to point #3 (the revelatory claims of the three religions), each tradition claims that God has somehow communicated His message to man through prophecy. Jews speak of the *Dabar* of God, Christians of the *Logos*, and Muslims of the *Qur'ān.* In each of these religious traditions there are theological disputes about whether and, if so, how the divine word is or is not eternal or temporal, how it is communicated to men, and so on.

Permit me to make some general remarks about some key similarities and differences in the way in which these three religions understand the content of what is revealed. To speak plainly, Judaism and Islam agree in claiming that God revealed a Law to guide human action. The Hebrew *Torah* and the Muslim *Sharī'a* are expressions of this Law. Catholic Christianity tries

> to read the sacred Scriptures within the Apostolic Tradition, while reading holy Scriptures with the scholarly tools of modern historical-critical method, to read the Scripture as diffusely pointing to one central reality, the divine Person of Jesus Christ, using the many *logoi* of its many inspired human authors under the principal authorship of its divine Author to help us be joined to the condensed *Logos* Who is being eternally uttered by the Father and has been made incarnate in Mary through the power of the

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[26] For an accessible survey on this city, which is claimed as a holy site by Jews, Christians, and Muslims, see "Jerusalem," in *Wikipedia*, available online (see the section: References). Among the many controversies over Jerusalem is the recent one between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Here is a sketch of one proposed solution: "Two-state solution," in *Wikipedia*, available online (see the section: References).

Holy Spirit, and to accept the mission, going forth to teach all peoples what we have seen and heard.[27]

This understanding assigns the primary reference of the Word of God not to the text of Scripture, but to the divine Person of Jesus Christ. The Muslim understanding of Jews, Christians, and other "people of the book" (*ahlu-l-kitāb*) would seem to put the primary reference on the written text rather than the Person, and then to take the written text often in a strongly literalist sense.

Why might these tedious preliminary remarks be important? Well, for a successful conversation, both parties need to be talking about the same thing. Why is that? Let's consider two situations, one where we are hunting for animals and the other where we are hunting for dates. Let's consider the *first* situation. Someone brings you a snake and asks 'Is it an animal?' If you say 'Yes' and the donor is intellectually curious, he might ask 'Why do you say that?' You might say 'Since it's alive'. If the donor brought you a tulip, however, you would probably say 'No'. 'Why not? It's alive, isn't it?' 'Yes', you might admit, 'but it doesn't move when I touch it'. It would probably not take too much effort for both parties to agree that snakes, worms, birds, butterflies, cats, and even humans deserve the name animal, but that tulips do not. When several things are called by the same name and have the same characteristic, let's call them *univocal*. Now let's turn to the *second* situation. Has any of you ever taken a date to the dinner table? Was the date sweet? Was the date animal, vegetable, or mineral? If you were bringing your girl-friend to the table, she was an animal. If you were bringing the fruit of a palm tree to the table, it was a vegetable. If you brought a stone dodecahedron with a month on each face, each calendar

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[27] See the conclusion of my essay "Go Teach All Nations: Some Reflections on the Role of St. Thomas Aquinas in the New Evangelization," in *Thomas Aquinas: Teacher of Humanity*, ed. John P. Hittinger and Daniel C. Wagner (London, U.K.: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 466–477.

date would be inscribed in a mineral. If the calendar entry were on your smart phone, it would not even be a mineral. Where several things are called by the same name but do not have the same essential characteristic, let's call those things *equivocal*. In this situation, if someone said 'Please hand over your date', would you surrender the stone calendar, the sticky fruit, or your girl friend? This comic example shows, on a small scale, the dangers of misunderstanding between Christians and Muslims trying to have a conversation about religion.

At this point, I should like to call attention to a philosopher known in the Middle Ages to Jews, Christians, and Muslims. This philosopher drew an important distinction that can, I believe, be helpful to advance more fruitful conversation between philosophically educated Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Let's consider the three dates in relation to each other. Can you learn anything about the human date by studying the nature of palm trees? I think not; nor do you learn much about the fruit of palm trees by examining a human date. Such efforts at comparison are useless, because not only are the natures in question distinct, but also they have no clear relationship to each other. Let's call things of this sort, *pure equivocals*. On the other hand, when you have a date with your friend, do you not take your bearings by the calendar? To be sure, you do not care whether your calendar is made of stone, paper, or plastic, but you can at least know when and perhaps even where to meet. Where one nature is primary, we can say that the other meanings or natures are related to that primary nature. In this way, we could call a degree, an instrument, a condition, a person, a habit of mind, and a diploma all by the same name *medical*; the medical art, the habit of mind, would be the central nature toward which all the other equivocals would be related. This single nature would provide the point of unity toward which the other focally related equivocals would look. *Such focally related equivocals* can provide at least limited information about the things related to them, and so, in contrast to pure equivocals, are not

utterly worthless from a scientific point of view. Thus, what is called *healthy* in the primary sense is an animal in good condition; a urine sample or a cup of apple juice would be called *healthy* if it is a sign of health or a cause of health in a healthy animal. In Latin scholasticism, terms designating focally related equivocals came to be called *analogous terms*.[28] I believe that these preliminary distinctions can prove helpful to advancing fruitful conversation between Christians and Muslims as we advance to touch upon our main question.[29]

Let me now review these three issues in reverse order, calling attention to a few of the more important topics calling for discussion, identifying some resources that address the points in question. Then, I propose to call attention to some of the key players in the dialogue between Catholic Christians and Muslims, with special attention to opening the door to further research and discussion.

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[28] For a fuller discussion, see Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1978), 107–131, "the Aristotelian equivocals," especially *ibid.*, 123–125, differentiating Aristotelian "*pros hen* equivocals" from what the Scholastics later call "analogous terms." More generally, consider the statement of the American Catholic Philosophical Association of 1 June 2018 on "The Integral Place of Philosophy in Catholic Higher Education," available online (see the section: References).

[29] There is a massive literature on the topic; e.g., in general, see *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*, ed. Catherine Cornille (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), and more specifically, see High Goddards, *A History of Christian-Muslim Relations* (Chicago, Ill.: New Amsterdam, 2000). Documentary collections include: Jean-Marie Gaudeul, *Encounters and Clashes: Islam and Christianity in History*, 2 vols. [vol. I: Survey; vol. II: Texts] (Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Studi Arabi e d'Islamistica, 2000), the English rendition of *Disputes? Ou rencontres? L'islam et le christianisme au fil des siècles* (Rome 1998); N. A. Newman, *The Early Christian-Muslim Dialogue: A Collection of Documents from the First Three Islamic Centuries (632-900 A.D.): Translations with Commentary* (Hatfield, Pa.: Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1993); Cardinal Franz König, *Open to God, Open to the World*, ed. Christa Pongratz-Lippitt (London & New York: Burns & Oats, 2005); Fitzgerald and Borelli, *Interfaith Dialogue*; *Muslim-Christian Perceptions of Dialogue Today: Experiences and Expectations*, ed. Waardenburg. From the perspective of communication studies, see *Interfaith Dialogue in Practice: Christian, Muslim, Jew*, ed. Daniel S. Brown, Jr. (Kansas City, Mo.: Rockhurst University Press, 2013).

Judaism and Islam seem to understand revelation principally as a law (#3.1), whereas the Christian view that Christ fulfills the Law may leave more room for alternative political systems than classical Islam.[30]

Further complicating factors in the theopolitical revelatory claims of Islam (#3.2) have to do with the internal juridical differences between Sunni and Shi'i Islam and external differences with Jews, Christians, and members of non-monotheistic traditions. As to the internal divisions within Islam (#3.2.1), one may ask who has charge of the Muslim community? Does it derive from the consensus of Muslims or is it especially and mystically conveyed through the tradition of an Imamate? As to the external divisions (#3.2.2), we might begin with the Second Vatican Council's *Nostra Aetate*, paragraph 3:

> The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth,(5) who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honor Mary, His virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the day of judgment when God will render their deserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

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[30] As political philosopher Leo Strauss noted, though Plato's political writings seem to have been available in Arabic to medieval Muslims and Jews, Aristotle's *Politics* was not; in the medieval Latin West, the situation was the reverse: Plato's *Republic* was not available in Latin till the Renaissance, but Aristotle's *Politics* was available to Aquinas. As an example of the difficulties involved in empathic dialogue, we might wonder how contemporary secular political liberals would be able to take seriously the political claims of what is perhaps the only regime on earth where the leaders might plausibly claim to be philosopher-kings: the Shi'ite Islamic Republic of Iran. On the other hand, from an Iranian point of view, the post-Soviet neo-Orthodox Russia might look more attractive than the materialism found in either Soviet communism or in contemporary individualistic capitalism.

> Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities
> have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod
> urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual un-
> derstanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the
> benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as
> peace and freedom.[31]

The challenge of *Nostra Aetate* has been addressed in various ways,
some extraordinarily irenic.[32] It is one thing "to forget the past" and

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[31] *Nostra Aetate*, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to non-Christian Religions
(proclaimed by Pope Paul VI on Oct. 28, 1965), available online (see the section: Ref-
erences).

[32] Georgetown University Professor of Religion and International Affairs John L. Es-
posito's *Islam: The Straight Path* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)
declares: "Five centuries of peaceful coexistence elapsed before political events and an
imperial-papal power play led to centuries-long series of so-called holy wars that pitted
Christendom against Islam and left an enduring legacy of misunderstanding and dis-
trust" (*ibid*., 58). One might wonder whether this retrojection of the Soviet category of
"Peaceful Coexistence" (in *Wikipedia*, available online [see the section: References])
might be at least anachronistic and the description of the first five centuries of Islam as
"peaceful" un-historical. That, at least, is the contention of the 759-page compendium
edited by Andrew G. Bostom, *The Legacy of Jihad: Islamic Holy War and the Fate of
Non-Muslims* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Press, 2005). Similar doubts might arise
independently from reading the Winter 2006–2007 issue of *Parameters: Journal of the
U.S. Army War College* (*ibid*., 108–121), Joseph C. Myers reviews Pakistani Army
Brigadier General S. K. Malik's 1979 book *The Quranic Concept of War*. In my view,
much work needs to be done by Muslim scholars to articulate anything corresponding
to the Christian doctrine of *jus ad bellum* or *jus in bello*.
The first part of Bostom's study "Jihad Conquests and the Imposition of *Dhimmitude*"
(Bostom, *The Legacy of Jihad*, 24–124) surveys actions in those first five centuries that
would seem to deserve a description quite different from *peaceful*. Thus, Bostom sees
dhimmitude only in terms of a juridical status imposed by the conquerers who allowed
Jews and Christians who did not convert to Islam not to be killed in exchange for a
payment called *jizya*, sometimes characterized as a *poll tax* or, by opponents, as *protec-
tion money*.
On the other hand, see Mahmoud Ayoub's "*Dhimma* in the Qur'an and Hadith," in *A
Muslim View of Christianity: Essays on Dialogue by Mahmoud Ayoub*, ed. Irfan A.
Omar (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2007), 98–107, which sketches the shift from
"the divine *dhimmah*, which must not be violated" to the lower "human *dhimmah*,"
where, "as the term became reified into a technical legal concept, it lost its dimension
of transcendence" (*ibid*., 105); this shift had "complex" implications for "how well or
badly the Muslims treated their Jewish and Christian subjects," a question to "be an-

quite another to misconstrue it; even the Council Fathers recognize that there really have been "not a few quarrels and hostilities."

Continuing our count-down (#2), let us turn our attention to Aaron W. Hughes's book *Abrahamic Religions: On the Uses and Abuses of History*,[33] which calls attention to "the tensions between the so-called historical and the theological" presentations of the three religions.[34] If the expression *Abrahamic religions* is taken as designating some univocal essence, it runs the risk of leveling the differences in an ecumenical syncretism: "the term flattens and levels numerous and important differences between not just three discrete religions, but also . . . *within* these three traditions;"[35] if, on the other hand, each of the three claimants to Abrahamic authority is taken historically, the risk seems to be disintegration into at least three equivocally named *Abrahamic religions*, a fourth being used "to denote a liberal essence" that one Georgetown scholar then uses as the yardstick by which to measure the "other, less savory, Islams" that "can be compared."[36]

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swered from within the historical realities of all three communities" (*ibid.*, 106). This important collection of essays addresses many of the most important topics of controversy between Muslims and Christians from the standpoint of a serious Muslim scholar.

[33] Aaron W. Hughes, *Abrahamic Religions: On the Uses and Abuses of History* (Oxford: U. Pr., 2012). Note the allusion to Nietzsche. See Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche's *Complete Works. The First Complete and Authorised English Translation*, ed. Oscar Levy (New York: Russell & Russell, 1909–1911). Adrian Collins's English version of Nietzsche's essay *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben* was reprinted by Hackett in 1957 under the title *The Use and Abuse of History*, and subsequently reissued with a translation and introduction by Peter Preuss in 1980 (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Publishing Company) under the correct title *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*. Nietzsche offers two "antidotes to history . . . the 'unhistorical' and the 'superhistorical'. . . . By the word 'unhistorical' I mean the power, the art, of *forgetting* and drawing a limited horizon round oneself. I call the power 'superhistorical' which turns the eyes from the process of becoming to that which gives existence an eternal and stable character—to art and religion" (*ibid.*, 69). These descriptions seem to describe the "forgetting" mentioned in *Nostra Aetate*, n. 3.

[34] Hughes, *Abrahamic Religions*, 95.

[35] *Ibid.*, 98.

[36] *Ibid.*, 109.

Though we grant that all three religions claim that God is one and that all three, in one fashion or another, claim Abraham as their founder, and though I have been shaped in the Socratic tradition that seeks to define whatever it is that we are talking about, I must admit that artefacts and other products of human activity are notoriously hard to define, except perhaps extrinsically in terms of cause or accident. I have already pointed to the massive development of scholarship just in the field of philosophy. Let's now close in on our specific charge: to consider Christianity and Islam in dialogue.

Conclusion

I should make a few comments about the activity of dialogue. As mentioned at the beginning, the key element in a fruitful dialogue is conversation between persons. To that end, it is important to become a good person and seriously committed to living as best we can in the path to God. What this means, at an elementary level, is not only to take seriously the religious and spiritual tradition in which we find ourselves, but also to become knowledgeable and well-informed about it. Most of the readers here will be Roman Catholics, and that means not only normal practice of the faith, but also careful efforts to become better informed about the truths of the faith. It goes without saying that a serious Catholic should at least be familiar with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Uninformed chatter is not dialogue. Through dialogue with a committed Muslim, one can come to appreciate other serious efforts to walk in the path of God. This requires a certain intellectual and spiritual hospitality, or even almost an exchange of places, or— even more, a mystical substitution of oneself for the good of the other, what the Arabs might call *badaliyyah*.[37]

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[37] On the Badaliyyah prayer movement, see Dorothy C. Buck, "A Model of Hope," available online (see the section: References). On one of its founders, see *Louis Mas-*

We have named a few of the modern pioneers in Christian-Muslim dialogue and have given a few hints where those who want to learn more about it might do so. Here let me call attention to concrete features to bear in mind. To start with, it might be helpful to seek out some guidelines for formal dialogue. Here are a handful of issues to consider: Who are the partners? There are diverse Christian churches and communities. There are also Muslims of the working class, those of various modes of religious training, the modernists, fundamentalists. What places, times, attitudes are suitable? Do we recognize the values of others? What are the present obstacles to dialogue? How do we address them? Are there areas of cooperation available? If so, what are they, and how can we cooperate with each other? Can we identify potential areas of religious agreement? Such was an agenda of Father Maurice Borrmans,[38] whose many books provide a useful orientation

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signon: A Pioneer of Interfaith Dialogue, ed. Dorothy C. Buck (Clifton, N.J.: Blue Dome Press, 2017). See Massignon's letters to members of the Badaliya in the original French and in English: Louis Massignon, *Badaliya: au nom de l'autre (1947-1962)*, ed. Maurice Borrmans and Françoise Jacquin (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2011).

[38] Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, *Interreligious Documents I: Guidelines for Dialogue between Christians and Muslims*, prep. Maurice Borrmans, trans. R. Marston Speight (New York; Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1981). In 1964 Pope Paul VI set up a Secretariat for Non-Christians, which in 1970 issued a first edition of the guidelines. In 1974, he established a special Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims. After many consultations, Fr. Borrmans prepared this 1981 edition. See also *Evangile, moralité et lois civiles. Gospel, Morality, and Civil Law*, proceedings of the Colloquia at Bologna (2012) and Klingenthal (2014), ed. Joseph Famerée, Pierr Gisel, Hervé Legrand (Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2016), for Borrmans's papers, "Éthique, Loi divine et lois civiles en pays d'Islam" (*ibid.*, 147–165) and "Sharīʿa et lois civiles en cohabitation: tensions ou conflits?" (*ibid.*, 287–306), with English abstracts (*ibid.*, 9–10). It is often very useful to get a cross-section of who teaches what and to whom: Kenneth Cragg, "Islamic Teaching and the Muslim Teacher," *Studia Missionalia* 37 (1988: *Teachers of Religion: Christianity and Other Religions*): 77–102, and Maurice Borrmans, "L'Islam de certains manuels et catéchismes contemporains," *ibid.*, 103–140. See also the juxtaposed articles on legal issues in *Studia Missionalia* 39 (1990: *Human Rights*): M. Borrmans, "Les Droits de l'Homme en milieu musulman" (*ibid.*, 253–276), and his literal French translation of the "Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme en Islam" issued by the Islamic Council of Europe (*ibid.*, 277–302).

for those undertaking serious dialogue.[39] Scholarship is important, but not enough. Let me close by mentioning a center of study that has been active in this field for almost three generations: The Pontifical Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Rome,[40] which has been operated by the White Fathers (Society of the Missionaries of Africa). What to me looks like the most promising approach is to combine spirituality and scholarship, trusting in the God of Mercy.

Philosophical Considerations for Fruitful Dialogue between Christians and Muslims

SUMMARY

The author attempts to go beyond the study of the history of Islamic philosophy to the larger theme of religious dialogue between Christians and Muslims. He explores first some of the conditions that are required for any successful Christian-Muslim conversation. Next, he turns to some of the central issues specific to dialogue between Christians and Muslims. In addressing these themes he points to resources that are particularly

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[39] Maurice Borrmans, *Prophètes du dialogue islamo-chrétien: Louis Massignon, Jean-Mohammad Abd-el-Jalil, Louis Gardet, Georges C. Anawati* (Paris: Cerf, 2009), provides not only a biographical sketch of these figures, but also bibliographies (*ibid.*, 147–248) of their work. See also Roger Arnaldez, *Aspects de la pensée musulmane*, 2ème éd. (Paris: J. Vrin, 2015), with preface by M. Borrmans, and Maurice Borrmans, *Louis Gardet: Philosophe chrétien des cultures et témoin du dialogue islamo-chrétien, 1904-1986* (Paris: Cerf, 2010). Other notable figures are mentioned in Christian W. Troll and C. T. R. Hewer, *Christian Lives Given to the Study of Islam* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012).

[40] For the 50-year report of their work, see *Le PISAI: Cinquante ans au sevice du dialogue* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Studi Arabi e d'Islamistica, 2000). This 161-page survey includes lists of the topics for licentiate theses and doctoral dissertations, as well as descriptions of their publications and research library. Their website is http://en.pisai.it/. Among the more recent studies in the Collection "Studi arabo-islamici del PISAI" is no. 18—Michel Younès, *Révélation(s) et Parole(s): La science du "kalām" à la jonction du judaïsme, du christianisme et de l'islam* (Rome: PISAI, 2008)—focusing on three major figures in dialectical theology (*kalām*), St. John of Damascus, al-Ash'ari, and Moses Maimonides.

useful to those trying to teach introductory courses on this complex matter, and to give students an inkling of where they might look for further training to embark upon more advanced types of dialogue. In conclusion, the author returns to his starting point and considers various levels at which dialogue can be begun, even at an elementary stage.

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Claudio Marenghi

El oscurecimiento del ser y su sustitución por la existencia

En nuestro anterior artículo publicado en *Studia Gilsoniana* abordamos la cuestión de la distinción real entre 'ser' y 'esencia' en el seno del 'ente' de acuerdo a la doctrina de Tomás de Aquino, haciendo notar la primacía que en su ontología tiene el ser sobre la esencia y estableciendo entre estas nociones una relación trascendental de acto y potencia.[1] En el presente escrito pretendemos mostrar a través de un escueto recorrido histórico el modo en que la noción fundamental del 'ser' tomista ha sido paulatinamente distorsionada y oscurecida, hasta llegar a ser sustituida por la noción misma de 'existencia'. Para ello, nos remontaremos a lo ocurrido en los años siguientes a la muerte del Aquinate, cuando esta cuestión pasó a ser discutida por sus discípulos, pasando luego revista por los autores más significativos que han tratado el tema en la modernidad y en la contemporaneidad filosófica.

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En 1277, tres años después de la muerte de Tomás de Aquino, el obispo de París, Etienne Tempier, y el arzobispo de Canterbury, Robert Kilwardby, condenan 219 tesis averroístas, dando punto final a la armonía que venían llevando filosofía y teología en la Alta Escolástica, en virtud de no avalar estos prelados la inserción de la razón en

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Claudio Marenghi — Universidad Católica de La Plata, Buenos Aires, Argentina
e-mail: claudiomarenghi@yahoo.com.ar ▪ ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3151-4410

[1] Claudio Marenghi, "La originalidad de la ontología tomista y su giro en torno al ser," *Studia Gilsoniana* 7, no. 1 (January–March 2018): 33–67.

temáticas de la fe. Comienza, entonces, el gran divorcio entre 'fides et ratio', que se consumaría en el siglo XVI con el advenimiento de la ruptura protestante de Lutero y Calvino. Hay que advertir, empero, que no todas las tesis condenadas son averroístas, sino que algunas de ellas son de origen tomista, como el caso de la tesis sobre la composición real en el 'ens' entre 'esse' y 'essentia'. Esta acusación provoca como reacción una reivindicación del tomismo, protagonizada por franciscanos y dominicos, en torno a la interpretación de su pensamiento ontológico, aunque ninguno de los bandos comprende adecuadamente su originalidad.

Esta cuestión de la composición y la distinción real de ser y esencia en el seno mismo del ente, punto neurálgico de la ontología tomista, pasa a primer plano de los intereses especulativos ya en vida del Aquinate, por su controversia con Siger de Brabante. Después de haber leído a Avicena y a Averroes, este sacerdote parisino se pregunta "si en el ente, el ser pertenece a la esencia o si es algo que se adiciona a la esencia."[2] En opinión del averroísta latino, el 'esse' es la actualización de la 'essentia', es un estado de la esencia, concretamente el estado que resulta de tener la esencia el ser en acto y que el tomismo denomina 'existentia', en consecuencia, no lo concibe como un coprincipio entitativo diferente de la 'essentia'.

Para superar esta postura, hay que concebir al 'esse' como un acto radicalmente distinto de la 'essentia', esto es, hay que llegar a poner a la 'essentia' como 'en potencia' respecto del 'esse' o 'acto de ser'. Haciendo esto se supera el esencialismo y se llega a una ontología del ser como fundamento absoluto. "El ser es lo más perfecto de todas las cosas, pues se compara a todas las cosas como acto, ya que nada tiene actualidad sino en cuanto que es. De ahí que el mismo ser sea

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[2] Martin Grabmann, "Neuaufgefundene *Quaestionen* Sigers von Brabant zu den Werken des Aristoteles," en *Miscellanea Francesco Ehrle*, vol. 1 (Roma: Biblioteca Ap. Vaticana, 1924), 103.

actualidad de todas las cosas y también de todas las formas."[3] Es por el 'esse' que todo el resto es algo real y puede contribuir a la constitución del 'ens'. Es verdad que el ente designa la esencia y el ser conjuntamente, pero la 'essentia' no tiene realidad más que por el 'esse' mismo que tiene. Nada puede, por ende, compararse en importancia al papel del ser del ente, ya que sin él, propiamente hablando, no hay nada.

Si bien en vida del Aquinate algunas de estas cuestiones se aclaran, lo más profundo de su mensaje filosófico se oscurece inmediatamente después de su muerte, en manos de autores como Egidio Romano y Enrique de Gante, quienes protagonizan la disputa en torno a la estructura última del ente finito, concretamente en relación a la cuestión de la distinción real entre 'essentia' y 'esse', disputa que queda reflejada parcialmente en las obras 'Theoremata de esse et essentia' (1280) y 'Quaestiones disputatae de esse et essentia' (1286).

<div align="center">*</div>

Tomás de Aquino habla en su obra de 'composición real' entre 'esse' y 'essentia' en el 'ens'. En rigor, jamás habla de 'distinción real', sino que simplemente dice que el 'esse' es otro respecto de la 'essentia'. Fue su alumno Egidio Romano el primero en hablar de 'distinción real' y el primero también en haberla reificado, al concebirla como una distinción entre una cosa y otra cosa: "La esencia y el ser son dos cosas realmente diferentes."[4] Más que las palabras, importa aquí la semántica de las mismas, porque los términos tomistas 'essentia' y 'esse' asumen una nueva significación, ya no son algo 'del ente' sino 'entes', esto es, ya no se los concibe como 'entis' sino como 'entia'. Dicho de otro modo: los coprincipios entitativos se sustancializan, estableciéndose entre ellos una distinción 'inter-res' en vez de una distinción 'intra-rem'.

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[3] Tomás de Aquino, *Suma Teológica*, I, 4, 1, ad 3.
[4] Egidio Romano, *Theoremata*, Th. XIX.

Por un lado, la noción de 'essentia' no es la misma. En Tomás de Aquino la 'essentia' designa la cosa misma existente que, antes de ser actualizada por el 'esse', no tiene ningún status ontológico propio. Sólo existe la 'essentia' con el 'esse' que hace de ella un 'ens' real y existente: "La esencia es aquello por lo que y en lo que la cosa tiene el ser."[5] Para su alumno agustino, en cambio, antes de existir, la 'essentia' goza de cierta actualidad o realidad: la 'essentia' es, de algún modo, sin el 'esse'. Por otro lado, la noción de 'esse' tampoco es la misma. El 'esse' tomista es aquello que actualiza la 'essentia' y hace de ella un 'ens' real y existente: "El ente se deriva del acto de ser."[6] Para Egidio, en cambio, lo que hace que un ente sea un ente resulta la forma, en sintonía fina con Aristóteles: "La forma hace que la cosa sea un ente."[7] Y dado que la actualidad de la esencia no basta para que ella exista, precisa de algún elemento complementario que supla esa indigencia de actualidad, y eso es, precisamente, el 'esse'.

El 'esse', por ende, ya no es, como para Santo Tomás, el acto primero en virtud del cual la cosa existe, sino un suplemento de actualidad en la misma línea que la 'essentia'. De acuerdo a la doctrina tomista, 'essentia' y 'esse' se distinguen en el seno del 'ens' real, concreto y existente: "El ser del ente es otro respecto de su esencia."[8] Según su discípulo Egidio Romano, en cambio, 'essentia' y 'esse' no son principios constitutivos de lo real, sino que parecen más bien designar grados ontológicos. La esencia poseería un grado mínimo de realidad que, al recibir su complemento existencial, alcanzaría su grado máximo. La noción de 'esse' designa así la perfección última de la 'essentia', que se le agrega a ésta para que pueda existir, pero en ningún

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[5] Tomás de Aquino, *De Ente et Essentia*, I, 2.

[6] Tomás de Aquino, *De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 1.

[7] Egidio Romano, *Theoremata*, Th. XIII.

[8] Tomás de Aquino, *In Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, L. IV, 1.2, n. 558.

caso el acto primero que actualiza la esencia y sin el cual ella no es absolutamente nada.

Así comienza, en pleno siglo XIII, la historia de la distorsión sufrida por la auténtica cupla tomista 'essentia-esse', que pasa a ser paulatinamente sustituida por el binomio 'essentia-existentia', en el sentido inaugurado por Egidio, es decir, una distinción entre una esencia posible y una esencia actualizada. El problema consiste en concebir a la 'essentia' preexistiendo a la actualidad definitiva que logra merced al 'esse', ya que la 'essentia' sin el 'esse' no es nada. Ciertamente, la causa primera del universo es el 'Esse' absoluto e infinito, siendo su primer efecto en la creatura, precisamente, el 'esse' relativo y finito que se contrae, en cada caso, en un modo de ser que recibe tradicionalmente el nombre de 'essentia'.[9]

<center>*</center>

Enrique de Gante, quien polemizó con Egidio Romano, también contribuyó al eclipse del 'esse' tomista como 'actus essendi'. La raíz última de los entes creados es la esencia, que según él se identifica con la idea divina. Pero esta esencia o idea divina tiene un ser propio que Enrique denomina 'esse essentiae'. Si bien en la obra de Tomás de Aquino una esencia creada expresa una idea infinita en la mente divina, a modo de causa ejemplar extrínseca, ella no posee un 'esse' propio con el cual subsistiría de algún modo y sería distinto del 'Esse' simple y puro de Dios. "En todo ente limitado, el ser y la esencia son realmente diversos, porque tal ente sólo puede tener ser participado, ya que únicamente en Dios, que es el Ser mismo, son realmente idénticos el ser y la esencia."[10]

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[9] Esta distinción entre esencia y existencia ha terminado por dominar la historia de la filosofía occidental, como bien lo señala Martin Heidegger en *Los problemas fundamentales de la fenomenología* (Madrid: Trotta, 2000) y en *Introducción a la metafísica* (Buenos Aires: Nova, 1972).

[10] Tomás de Aquino, *In Anal. Post.*, II, lect. 6.

Según este sacerdote belga, en cambio, las cosas que serán creadas o posibles, resultan conocidas por Dios en sus ideas y poseen un ser pequeño o 'esse diminutum', siendo que este ser diminuto de la esencia o 'esse diminutum essentiae' podrá convertirse en un ser de existencia actual o 'esse existentiae', sólo si Dios decide crearlo.

> Si en verdad hablamos del ser de existencia de la creatura, aunque esto no difiera en nada del ser de la esencia de la creatura, sin embargo, no difiere por esa sola razón por la que el intelecto capta diversas concepciones de lo que ella es, ya sea tal cosa sustancia o accidente. Empero, también difiere según la intención, porque en cuanto tal ser de existencia, su misma esencia de creatura puede ser o no ser. Por lo tanto, de tal ser de existencia de la creatura no se puede conceder que la esencia de la creatura sea su propio ser, porque el ser de la esencia ahora existente en acto puede no ser, ya que primero llegó a ser lo que es.[11]

Esta postura de Enrique no implica ninguna composición real de esencia y ser en el ente, aunque supone una distinción de razón no tomista: dado que una esencia posible no es una esencia actualizada, media entre ellas una distinción conceptual. "Puesto que una esencia como tal es algo distinto de una esencia existente, su distinción en nuestra mente no es sólo de razón, sino que es la de dos nociones. Esto quiere decir que ella emplea dos conceptos distintos para significar una esencia y una existencia."[12] Aquí el 'esse' no es un principio constitutivo de lo real, sino un estado de la 'essentia', designa simplemente a una esencia posible que ha sido actualizada por Dios, pasando de su estado de universalidad en la mente divina a un estado de individualidad en el mundo creado. De nuevo, la auténtica cupla tomista 'essentia-esse' pasa a ser virtualmente reemplazada por el binomio 'essentia-existentia'. El

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[11] Enrique de Gante, *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*, parte 3, cuestión 9.
[12] Etienne Gilson, *La filosofía en la Edad Media* (Madrid: Gredos, 1960), 761.

'esse' como algo distinto del 'ens' (diferencia ontológica) y de lo que él es, o sea su 'essentia' (distinción real), está aquí ya bastante oscurecido.

<center>*</center>

Duns Escoto toma una postura en relación al tema 'essentia-esse' que desobedece a Egidio Romano y sigue más de cerca lo dicho por Enrique de Gante, aunque radicaliza la cuestión. Este pensador escocés niega de entrada la distinción real entre 'essentia' y 'esse': "Es absolutamente falso que el ser sea algo distinto de la esencia."[13] A su entender, una esencia creada actualmente existente se distingue solamente de una esencia posible. Esto significa que una esencia, al ser creada por Dios, abandona su condición de posible, para asumir un nuevo modo de ser, el de esencia existente. Pero es la esencia la que pasa de esencia posible a esencia existente, siendo el acto de ser, en este caso, el agregado que favorece ese cambio de estado.

Dejando de ser el 'esse' el "acto del ente en cuanto ente,"[14] se aprecia claramente cómo queda reducido a la 'existentia' como fáctica realización del posible, en tanto que la 'essentia', completa en sí misma, no tiene ninguna necesidad, por así decirlo, de recurrir al 'esse'. En efecto, la existencia se comporta con respecto a la esencia como una nueva modalidad que ella adquiere al ser creada por Dios, pasando a ser un mero estado de la esencia misma: 'existentia' en contraposición a la 'possibilitas'. Incluso, el ser de la esencia es considerado más perfecto que el ser de la existencia, porque la existencia es algo accidental que

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[13] Duns Escoto, *Opus Oxoniense*, IV, d. 13, q. 1. Empero, dice Gilson: "Duns Escoto no ha negado, hablando con propiedad, la distinción tomista de esse y essentia, porque para él, la noción de esse, de actus essendi o acto de ser, no presentaba ningún sentido distintamente apresable. Por lo tanto, él ha transpuesto el problema sobre un plano en el que sus datos le resultaban inteligibles: no ya el de la distinción entre esse y essentia, sino aquél de la distinción entre la esencia y su ser de existencia actual." (Etienne Gilson, "Cayetano y la existencia," *Tijdschrift voor Philosophie* 15 [1953]: 274).

[14] Tomás de Aquino, *Quodlibet*, IX, II, a. 3.

adviene extrínsecamente a la esencia y que no le agrega ninguna nota constitutiva nueva. Por eso, comentando sus textos, uno de sus discípulos puede decir que "entre el ser real de la esencia y el ser de la existencia hay cierto orden de perfección, porque el ser de la esencia es más perfecto que el ser de la existencia, ya que el ser de la existencia es como cierto accidente que adviene a la esencia."[15]

La esencia posible es perfecta en sí misma, porque está totalmente constituida con los atributos correspondientes a su contenido eidético. Cuando Dios la hace pasar de su estado de posibilidad a su estado de actualidad, adquiere la esencia una nueva modalidad o un nuevo grado ontológico, esto es, la existencia como algo que le sobreviene accidentalmente. Por eso, la existencia es un accidente o un apéndice de la esencia, la cual le inflige un nuevo modo de ser al actualizarla. Esto hace que en la ontología de Escoto toda formalidad pueda reivindicar para sí su propia existencia, por la estratificación de las formas que atraviesa el ente hilemórfico, desde el género, que es la formalidad más general, pasando por la especie, la diferencia y las propiedades, hasta llegar a la 'haeccitas', que es la última formalidad del ente que hace posible su individuación en un aquí y ahora: "La haeccitas es aquella forma por la cual el todo compuesto es este ente."[16] También los accidentes poseen su propio 'esse', independiente del 'esse' de la sustancia en que inhieren, y lo mismo sucede con la materia, que tiene su propio 'esse', independiente del 'esse' de las formalidades. En cambio, en la ontología tomista, el 'esse' en sentido estricto le compete exclusivamente a la sustancia, ya que su modo de ser es la subsistencia o ser en sí, en tanto que a los accidentes sólo le es propio el 'inesse', ya que su modo de ser es la inherencia o ser en otro:

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[15] Brindisi, *Scotus dilucidatus in II Sent*., 724. Contra esto: "El ser de la esencia no es un peldaño preliminar inferior al ser real." (Edith Stein, *Ser finito y ser eterno* [Madrid: Trotta, 2010], 80).

[16] Duns Escoto, *Opus Oxoniense*, I, d. 3, q. 4.

"La sustancia completa es siempre el destinatario correcto de su propio ser."[17]

Existir, entonces, en este planteo escotista es algo que le puede suceder a la esencia si Dios decide crearla.

> Así, por ende, aunque la existencia sea realmente idéntica a la esencia real, la esencia de un hombre resulta formalmente distinta de su existencia. En tanto que esencia, ella no incluye su existencia. Por ello, retomando la terminología de Avicena, habla Duns Escoto de la existencia como de un accidente de la esencia, lo cual quiere decir que la existencia se agrega a la esencia como una determinación complementaria no incluida en su definición.[18]

Entre esencia y existencia hay, entonces, una distinción formal, porque lo que una cosa es (essentia) no se identifica con el hecho de que ella exista (existentia), pero no media ninguna distinción real, pues la esencia actualizada coincide totalmente con su existencia de hecho en sus notas constitutivas. En definitiva, no hay distinción entre 'essentia' y 'esse' en el 'ens', porque la esencia posible pasa a ser esencia existente, sin que el ser agregue nada nuevo a la esencia, tan sólo actualizarla y llevarla a una situación de individuación mundana a través de la 'haeccitas'.

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El ente en el que está pensando Duns Escoto es el ente concebido previamente a todas sus determinaciones concretas, en su estado de posibilidad, en tanto que el ente de la filosofía de Tomás de Aquino es el ente existente, en su estado de actualidad. Así Escoto se asocia con Avicena, quien ya había caracterizado el ser del ente como un accidente o un apéndice de la misma esencia. Este filósofo árabe tiene el mérito de haber advertido con claridad el carácter no analítico del ser del ente

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[17] Tomás de Aquino, *Suma Contra Gentiles*, L. II, c. 55.
[18] Etienne Gilson, *Juan Duns Escoto* (Navarra: EUNSA, 2007), 203.

por primera vez en la historia del pensamiento. Esto quiere decir que, de la inspección del contenido inteligible de la esencia, es imposible encontrar el ser como un ingrediente constitutivo de la misma, quedando en evidencia que la esfera del ser desborda la de la esencia, distinguiéndose así el plano trascendental del predicamental. Indudablemente, este aporte fue significativo para el posterior descubrimiento del 'esse' como 'actus essendi' de la mano de Tomás de Aquino, aunque el 'esse' tomista es el acto primero gracias al cual el ente existe y el 'esse' aviceniano es un accidente que adviene a la esencia como algo preexistente. Dice el Aquinate, comentando la 'Metafísica' de Aristóteles: "El ser de un ente, a pesar de ser algo diferente de su esencia, no ha de entenderse que sea algo sobreañadido al modo de los accidentes, sino más bien como algo constituido como principio de la esencia."[19]

Avicena inaugura la concepción del carácter neutro de la esencia: la 'essentia' como posible es anterior al 'esse', el cual por no entrar en la definición se transforma en un accidente extrínseco, cuya función no es otra que poner al ente fuera de su causa y fuera de la nada.

> Las causas de la existencia son distintas de las causas de la esencia. Así, por ejemplo, la humanidad: ésta tiene en sí misma una esencia que no tiene por constitutivo el existir de los individuos ni el existir en el espíritu, al contrario, esto le es correlativo. Si la existencia fuese un constitutivo de la humanidad, sería imposible representarse la idea de ésta en el espíritu desprovisto de lo que sería una parte constitutiva suya.[20]

Que la esencia posible aviceniana es neutra quiere decir que no es ni individual ni universal, sino que adquiere el primer estado por la multiplicación que produce la materialidad en los entes reales y el segundo estado por la universalización que produce la intencionalidad al ser

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[19] Tomás de Aquino, *In Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, L. II, 24, 467.

[20] Avicena, "Libro de los Teoremas y Avisos," en Clemente Fernández, *Los Filósofos Medievales*, selección de textos, vol. 1 (Madrid: BAC, 1979), 618.

conocida por el entendimiento humano. La metafísica, empero, sólo puede tratar de la esencia en cuanto es, porque si se la enfoca en su individualidad es física y si se la enfoca en su universalidad es lógica, ninguna de las cuales nos acerca al ser metafísico divino, que no es ni material ni ideal.

La existencia del posible aviceniano no es, por lo tanto, el acto de ser en virtud del cual este posible existe, sino el mismo posible puesto por su causa como existente. En efecto, ninguna esencia incluye la existencia, sino que "la existencia le viene de afuera o de algo ajeno a la esencia."[21] Si existiese un ser cuya noción incluyese necesariamente la existencia, tal ser no tendría esencia, como sucede con el Ser Absoluto: "El Primero, por lo tanto, no tiene esencia."[22] No obstante haber concebido al 'esse' como algo que se añade a una 'essentia' para hacerla existir, Avicena ve con claridad que todo ente existente, durante el tiempo que existe, se comporta como potencia respecto al acto en virtud del cual existe. En efecto, la doctrina de la creación establecida en el Corán conduce a Avicena a distinguir entre ser necesario y ser contingente: Dios es el ser necesario, porque es su propio ser, en cambio las creaturas pueden ser o no ser, su existencia es recibida desde otro y no la poseen por sí misma, en otros términos, son seres contingentes. Tomás de Aquino, quien debe tanto a Aristóteles como a Avicena para la elaboración de su propia síntesis filosófica, sigue de cerca estas enseñanzas:

> Si el mismo ser de la cosa es distinto de su esencia, es necesario que el ser de esa cosa o bien sea causado por algo exterior o bien por los principios esenciales de la misma cosa. Ahora bien, es imposible que el ser sea causado solamente por los principios esenciales de la cosa, porque ninguna cosa es suficiente como para ser causa del ser para sí misma, si tiene un ser causado. Por lo

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[21] Avicena, *Metafísica*, IX, 1, 4 a.

[22] *Ibid.*, VIII, 4, 99 b.

tanto, es necesario que aquello cuyo ser es otra cosa que su esencia tenga el ser causado por otro, pero esto no se puede decir de Dios, porque de Dios decimos que es la primera causa eficiente, por lo tanto es imposible que en Dios sea una cosa distinta el ser respecto de su esencia.[23]

Creemos que el problema que presenta el planteo de Avicena consiste en confundir el orden lógico con el ontológico, el orden de los predicables con el de los predicamentos, porque, si bien es cierto que la existencia de todo ente contingente pertenece desde el punto de vista de la predicación al quinto predicable, esto es, a la predicación accidental, sin embargo es falso que la existencia del ente individual real sea un accidente predicamental como la cualidad, la cantidad y la relación, sino que conforma más bien un estado del ente mismo actualizado por la esencia y su acto de ser respectivo. Dicho de otro modo, su error consiste en haber puesto la distinción en el plano predicamental y no en el plano trascendental, lo cual será subsanado por Tomás de Aquino.[24]

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

El resurgimiento del tomismo durante la Segunda Escolástica tiene al español Francisco Suárez entre sus protagonistas. Este filósofo y teólogo jesuita parte de la noción de 'ens', distinguiendo entre 'ens finitum' y 'ens infinitum', para separar, ante todo, el orden creado del increado. Pero el 'ens' suareciano no es estrictamente el 'ens' tomista, ya que se distingue entre 'ens' como nombre y 'ens' como participio: el 'ens' como nombre designa la esencia real sin existencia actual y el 'ens' como participio designa la esencia real con existencia actual.

En efecto, tomado en el sentido de un nombre, 'ens' significa lo que tiene una esencia real, prescindiendo de la existencia actual,

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[23] Tomás de Aquino, *Suma Teológica*, I, q. 3, a. 4, c.

[24] Esta línea de pensamiento esencialista, que va de Avicena a Escoto y atraviesa gran parte de la modernidad para llegar hasta la misma fenomenología de Husserl y planteos posmodernos como el de Deleuze, termina reduciendo el ser a la esencia, la esencia al concepto, el concepto a lo inteligible y lo inteligible a la subjetividad.

es decir, no excluyéndola o negándola, sino apartándola simple-
mente por abstracción; al contrario, en tanto que participio, 'ens'
significa el ente real mismo, que posee la esencia real con la
existencia actual y, de esta manera, él la significa como más con-
traída.[25]

En tanto que para Tomás de Aquino 'ens' designa lo que tiene
'esse', para Suarez 'ens' indica, ante todo, lo que tiene 'essentia'. Así,
el ente resulta actual o posible, pero en los dos casos se trata de una
esencia real, pues la palabra 'real' no significa ahora 'lo existente' sino
lo que pertenece a 'la cosidad de la cosa', aunque ésta no exista
efectivamente. En efecto, lo real deja de designar lo actual, para
referirse al contenido eidético de una esencia o la suma de sus notas
inteligibles, aun cuando esa esencia sea meramente posible. Una
esencia real posible es un modo de ser no contradictorio que puede ser
llevado por Dios a la existencia efectiva: "Si tomamos el significado de
ente en el sentido fuerte en que se toma esta palabra, su razón de ser
consiste en esto: que tenga una esencia real que no sea una farsa o algo
quimérico, sino una esencia con genuina aptitud para existir realmen-
te."[26] Por ende, se exige al ente, para que sea ente, que disponga de una
esencia con notas constitutivas coherentes y no contradictorias.

A pesar de esto, Suarez sabe que una esencia real puramente po-
sible carece de existencia y para existir efectivamente resulta necesario
que Dios la haga llegar a ser a partir de la nada. Como buen cristiano,
admite que ninguna esencia finita posee el ser de pleno derecho, sino
que cada una lo tiene por un acto divino creador. Y es por eso que
Suarez plantea la cuestión del siguiente modo: no se trata de distinguir
entre una esencia real posible y una esencia real actualizada, cosa ya

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[25] Francisco Suárez, *Disputaciones metafísicas* (Madrid: Tecnos, 2011), II, 4, 8. Suárez
desarrolla este asunto en la amplia Disputación XXXI, que lleva por título: "La esencia
del ente finito en cuanto tal, su existencia y la distinción entre una y otra."

[26] *Ibid.*, XXXI, II, 4, 4.

aceptada como de suyo, sino que se trata de saber si en el seno mismo de la esencia real actualizada, media una distinción entre la esencia y la existencia. Dicho de otro modo, Suarez se pregunta "si esencia y existencia son cosas diversas" y dice taxativamente que no: "se hace una comparación entre la existencia actual y la esencia actual, afirmándose esta sentencia: existencia y esencia no se distinguen en la cosa misma."[27] A lo sumo sólo cabe hablar de una distinción de puntos de vista sobre una sola y misma realidad, esto es, "una simple distinción de razón con fundamento en la realidad."[28] Teniendo en cuenta estas declaraciones suarecianas, muchos autores sostienen que, mientras Santo Tomás establece una distinción real entre esencia y existencia, Suarez admite que esta distinción es solo de razón. Sin embargo, hay que aclarar que no están hablando de lo mismo, porque el Aquinate distingue 'realmente' entre la esencia de una cosa (essentia) y el ser que la actualiza (esse), en tanto que Suárez solo distingue 'conceptualmente' entre lo que la cosa es (essentia) y el hecho de que ella sea aquí y ahora (existentia).

En la doctrina tomista el ente debe su actualidad y su existencia al 'esse', el cual, al actualizar la 'essentia', que de suyo no es nada más que un modo o una contracción del ser mismo, hace de ella y con ella un 'ens' existente, componiéndose con ella y distinguiéndose de ella realmente, porque no es lo mismo en el ente 'lo que' es (quod est) y el 'es' (quo est). "Es necesario que el mismo ser se compare con la esencia, que es algo distinto de él, como el acto respecto de la potencia."[29] En la obra suareciana, en cambio, no hay en lo real concreto ningún acto que sea realmente distinto de la esencia y con la cual se componga para forjar un ente. En efecto, si se define el ente "como un verdadero

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[27] *Ibid.*, XXXI, 1, 13.

[28] *Ibid.*, XXXI, 3, 6.

[29] Tomás de Aquino, *Suma Teológica*, I, q. 3, a. 4, c.

ser actual por su ser real de esencia,"[30] ¿por qué va a necesitar otra actualidad ulterior distinta para poder existir? Una vez definido el ente de este modo, es manifiesto que está completo y que no requiere nada para existir de pleno derecho más que su propia esencia.

De esta manera, Suárez favorece el esencialismo, porque supone reducir el ser a lo que se puede representar mentalmente. Habiendo negado todo aspecto no conceptualizable del ser, Suárez favorece la actitud que llevará a realizar una derivación analítica de lo real a partir de un acervo determinado de esencias. En este tipo de planteo, el 'esse' termina excluyéndose del 'ens': en efecto, si se reduce el 'esse' a la actualidad de la 'essentia', negándose su mutua distinción, por la que la esencia es actualizada y puesta fuera de su causa y de la nada, entonces termina resultando insignificante, desde el punto de vista de la consideración especulativa, que ese ente exista o no. La negación suareciana de todo ser distinguible de la esencia, no es sino el revés de una afirmación integral de la esencia pura de cualquier elemento no conceptualizable que la razón no es capaz de asimilar integralmente.

Este esencialismo influye fuertemente en la modernidad e impulsa la aparición de una filosofía abstracta, conceptual y racionalista, que se inicia metódicamente con el cogito en Descartes, se desarrolla en la filosofía de autores como Spinoza, Leibniz y Kant, para terminar coherentemente con Hegel y la eliminación total del ser considerado como acto de la esencia. "Es un hecho de una importancia histórica considerable que Descartes, por ejemplo, alumno de los alumnos de Suárez, no haya heredado más que una filosofía primera cortada de su raíz existencial y sin autoridad para regir una ciencia de lo existente."[31] Tanto en Descartes como en Spinoza y en Leibniz, se concibe la 'exis-

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[30] Francisco Suárez, *Disputaciones metafísicas*, XXXI, V, 3, Punctus contraversiae.

[31] Etienne Gilson, *El ser y la esencia* (Buenos Aires: Desclée, 1951), 158.

tentia' solo como la actualización de la 'essentia' y nada más, el 'esse' tomista ha quedado olvidado.

<div align="center">*</div>

Christian Wolff marca un hito en la historia del esencialismo y del oscurecimiento del 'esse' tomista. En efecto, este representante de la Ilustración alemana del siglo XVIII se propone dar rigurosidad y cientificidad a lo que iniciaron los escolásticos y continuaron los racionalistas. Comienza definiendo al ente como lo que puede existir: "Se dice ente a lo que puede ser, por consiguiente, a lo que la existencia no repugna."[32] Mientras que para Santo Tomás el ente no es ente sin el 'esse': "el ente es aquello que participa del ser, de acuerdo a cada modo de ser,"[33] para Wolff, en cambio, el ente es ente sin la 'existentia', aun cuando la existencia no le repugna al ente que no encierre ninguna contradicción interna: "Es posible aquello que no envuelve contradicción, esto es, aquello que no es imposible," o dicho más brevemente, "lo que es posible, es ente."[34]

El ente posible posee ciertos ingredientes esenciales que Wolff denomina 'essentialia', que no son otra cosa que el contenido eidético, esto es, las notas constitutivas que definen el concepto. La esencia no se refiere ahora a algo que es, sino a una mera posibilidad, por eso el concepto de un objeto real en nada difiere del concepto del mismo objeto pensado como simplemente posible: "La esencia no es otra cosa que la posibilidad de aquello que se propone."[35] Pero ocurre que un ente posible no existe de hecho, porque no contiene en sí mismo la razón suficiente de su existencia, como sucede en Dios. Para existir, esa

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[32] Christian Wolff, "Philosophia prima sive ontología," en *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. J. École y H. W. Arndt (Hildesheim: Olms, 1962), 134.

[33] Tomás de Aquino, *Suma Teológica*, I, q. 4, a. 2 ad 3.

[34] Wolff, "Philosophia prima sive ontología," 135.

[35] Gottfried Leibniz, *Nuevos Ensayos sobre el entendimiento humano* (Madrid: Nacional, 1983), 346.

esencia posible necesita algo más, esto es, la existencia: "Aquí defino la existencia como el complemento de la posibilidad."[36] En esto Wolff es fiel a su maestro Leibniz: "Nosotros entendemos la existencia como algo actual, o sea, como algo sobreañadido a la posibilidad o esencia."[37] Como se ve, es total el paralelismo con la línea esencialista que viene de Avicena y Escoto: Dios otorga ese complemento llamado 'existentia' a la 'essentia' si decide crearla.

La ontología de Wolff es una ontología sin ser, porque el ente se define al margen de su existencia y porque ésta juega sólo un papel accesorio de simple complemento ontológico.

> Analícese la esencia, es decir el ente, hasta el extremo que se quiera, y nada se hallará en ella fuera de aquello que la constituye como tal, es decir, la simple posibilidad de existir. Y dado que el ente se reduce a la esencia, que a su vez se reduce a lo posible, la ciencia del ente en tanto ente u ontología, en modo alguno puede explicar por qué, en ciertos casos, ciertos posibles gozan del privilegio de estar dotados de existencia.[38]

De esta manera, la ontología se convierte en lógica, dado que ya no versa sobre lo que existe sino sobre lo que puede existir. Y como lo que puede existir no es una realidad sino una posibilidad, la filosofía se reduce a una mera consideración de esencias que refieren a simples

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[36] Wolff, "Philosophia prima sive ontología," 174.

[37] Gottfried Leibniz, "Investigaciones generales sobre el análisis de las nociones y las verdades" (en *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, ed. Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften [Darmstadt-Leipzig-Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1923-] VI, 4, 739), traducido por Alejandro Herrera Ibañez y Julián Velarde Lombraña, *Revista de Filosofía y Teoría Política* 33 (1999): 167–199.

[38] Gilson, *El ser y la esencia*, 162. Wolff simpatiza con la explicación que da Leibniz al respecto, esto es, entre los infinitos posibles que hay en la mente de Dios, pasa a la existencia la combinación óptima, por una necesidad moral divina de crear el mejor de los mundos posibles. "Poseyendo Dios la sabiduría suprema e infinita, obra de la manera más perfecta, no solamente en sentido metafísico sino también moralmente hablando." (Gottfried Leibniz, "Discurso de metafísica," en Ezequiel de Olaso, *G. W. Leibniz Escritos Filosóficos* [Buenos Aires: Charchas, 1982], 302).

ideas universales y abstractas, en ningún caso de esencias de cosas reales existentes, que era el punto de partida de Santo Tomás. La postura de Wolff es clara:

> Entre todas las cosas atribuidas a un ente cualquiera, hay de ordinario una que consideramos como lo primero, lo principal e íntimo de la cosa, que en cierto modo envuelve a todo lo demás, o es al menos como su raíz y fundamento, que es lo que llamamos esencia de la cosa.[39]

Como el 'esse' no es concebible fuera de una 'essentia' cualquiera, sea ésta de tipo mineral, vegetal, animal, humana, angélica o divina, el 'esse' no puede entrar en composición con la 'essentia' porque en sí mismo no es nada. Así piensa en líneas generales el esencialismo, para el que lo que no es concebible, no es pensable, y lo que no es pensable, no es. "Reducida al conocimiento de la esencia, la filosofía primera no es más que una lógica de las quididades."[40] En este tipo de ontología no cabe lugar para el 'ser del ente', a lo sumo queda reducido a la 'existencia' como complemento de la 'posibilidad'.

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A través de Suárez y de Wolff, hereda Immanuel Kant esa ontología de la esencia neutral, presente ya en las obras de Avicena y Escoto, en la que el ser sobreviene a la esencia asumiendo la función de un accidente, es decir, actuando como un complemento de la posibilidad esencial en su estado puro. Incapaz de deducir un contenido concreto de los conceptos abstractos de que se nutre, una ontología como la

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[39] Wolff, "Philosophia prima sive ontología," 169.

[40] Gilson, *El ser y la esencia*, 184. Cf. Parménides, frag. 3: "Pues es lo mismo ser y pensar;" Platón, *República*, 477 a: "Lo absolutamente ente es lo absolutamente cognoscible;" Spinoza, *Ética*, II, prop. VII: "El orden y la conexión de las ideas es el mismo que el orden y la conexión de las cosas;" Hegel, "Prefacio" a la *Filosofía del derecho*: "Todo lo racional es real y todo lo real es racional;" Husserl, *Investigaciones Lógicas*, II, 23: "Lo que no podemos pensar, no puede ser, lo que no puede ser, no podemos pensarlo."

de Wolff, que contrapone las verdades de razón a las verdades de hecho, se ve obligada a dirigirse a la experiencia a través de un salto epistemológico, para salir del mundo de las idealidades universales y llegar al mundo de las singularidades existentes.

La matemática puede proceder deductivamente, a través de los conceptos puros, porque la inteligibilidad de sus objetos es indiferente a la existencia material de los mismos. Las leyes que definen la esencia de un punto geométrico, por ejemplo, no dependen de la imagen que el geómetra traza en la pizarra del mismo. Por el contrario, esta representación y sus propiedades dependen de aquellas leyes, porque el punto ideal por definición es inextenso y es atravesado por infinitas rectas, lo cual, sin embargo, no puede ser representado empíricamente en la pizarra. Pero no ocurre lo mismo en la física y en la metafísica, porque son ciencias que tratan de cosas pretendidamente existentes. El empirismo de Hume no tiene dificultad en poner en evidencia la infinita multiplicidad y variedad de esas individualidades mundanas, pero le es imposible elevarse desde ahí hasta lo auténticamente universal, porque al concepto predicamental no se llega por una generalización de casos semejantes, así como al concepto de conexión necesaria tampoco se llega por la observación de regularidades en el comportamiento de fenómenos concomitantes en el espacio y el tiempo. Lo que en el fondo inspira el empirismo de Hume es una reivindicación de los derechos de la existencia sacrificada por Wolff y otros tantos metafísicos racionalistas, lo cual considera el Kant maduro como un legítimo reclamo cuando dice: "Hume me despertó del sueño dogmático."[41]

En su etapa pre-crítica, Kant ha demostrado que la existencia no puede deducirse a partir de la esencia en su obra 'El único fundamento

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[41] Immanuel Kant, "Prefacio," en *Prolegómenos* (Buenos Aires: Istmo, 1999), 17. "Si desde alrededor del año 1755, se aparta Kant cada vez más de Wolff, para reconocer más y más explícitamente la irreductibilidad de lo real a lo puro lógico, se debe esto en gran parte a la influencia de Hume." (Gilson, *El ser y la esencia*, 175.)

posible de una demostración de la existencia de Dios' (1763). Allí deja en claro que del concepto de Dios como ser infinitamente perfecto no se sigue necesariamente que Dios exista. Esto es así porque la existencia no es un predicado, es decir, no es una determinación lógica del sujeto en el juicio en cuestión. "Ser no es evidentemente un predicado real, es decir, el concepto de algo que pueda añadirse al concepto de alguna cosa. Es simplemente la posición de ciertas determinaciones entre sí o la posición de una cosa."[42] La 'posición relativa' implica la utilización copulativa del verbo ser, ya que vincula la cosa referida con uno o más conceptos, como en la proposición 'Dios es todopoderoso'.

> En el uso lógico el verbo ser no es más que la cópula de un juicio. La proposición 'Dios es todopoderoso' contiene dos conceptos que tienen sus objetos: 'Dios' y 'todopoderoso'. Aquí la palabra 'es' no significa aún un predicado, sino solamente aquello que pone el predicado en relación con el sujeto.[43]

En cambio, la 'posición absoluta' implica la utilización existencial del verbo ser, ya que vincula la cosa referida con la percepción de la misma, como en la proposición 'Dios es'. "Si yo tomo el sujeto y digo 'Dios es', no añado ningún predicado al concepto de Dios, pues no hago más que poner el sujeto en sí mismo con todos sus predicados y a la vez el objeto que corresponde a mi concepto."[44] A entender de Kant, el origen de la existencia de todo objeto tiene un vínculo directo con la percepción de un sujeto, sea que lo esté percibiendo, que lo haya percibido o que al menos haya oído hablar de él a través del relato de otros sujetos que lo hayan percibido. Y es por eso que no puede aseverarse que Dios exista, simplemente porque Dios no puede ser percibido.

Análogamente, podemos pensar en el concepto de un billete de 100 dólares con todos sus atributos y totalmente constituido, sin embar-

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[42] Immanuel Kant, *Crítica de la razón pura* (Madrid: V. Suarez, 1928), B 626.

[43] *Ibid.*

[44] *Ibid.*, B 627.

go, como ente mentado simplemente posible, todavía no existe. Su noción, empero, está completamente determinada, lo cual significa que, en el caso de existir y que emitamos el juicio 'El billete de 100 dólares existe', la existencia atribuida en el predicado no le añadiría al sujeto ningún contenido esencial. Dicho brevemente: ya que la noción de cualquier posible incluye por definición la totalidad de sus predicados, es imposible que la existencia sea uno de ellos. Entonces, lo que se pone en los juicios de existencia es la esencia que designa a un posible realizado y susceptible de ser percibido. Pero, si atendemos a su contenido inteligible y no tenemos en cuenta que existe de hecho, este posible permanece idéntico en todas sus determinaciones.

> Ambos deben tener el mismo contenido y, en consecuencia, nada puede añadirse al concepto que expresa simplemente la posibilidad por el solo hecho de que yo, por la expresión 'es', concibo el objeto de este concepto como dado absolutamente. Y así lo real no contiene más que lo meramente posible.[45]

Al atribuir la existencia a alguna cosa, no añadimos al sujeto ningún predicado, sino que ponemos absolutamente al sujeto con todos sus predicados en vinculación directa con la percepción.

Vista de cerca, esta posición kantiana reedita la vieja postura de Avivcena y Duns Escoto, que ve en la existencia una nueva modalidad de la esencia, es decir, concibe la 'existentia' como un modo de la 'essentia', a saber, el modo que la pone de una vez como real con la totalidad de sus determinaciones y en vínculo directo con la percepción subjetiva o intersubjetiva. La esencia agota ontológicamente lo real, ya sea potencial o ya sea actual, siendo que la existencia no se distingue realmente de ella porque no es un predicado. De este modo, el análisis conceptual no encuentra diferencia alguna entre nuestra noción de una

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[45] *Ibid.*

cosa afirmada con la existencia y nuestra noción de la misma cosa afirmada sin la existencia. Kant lo plantea de la siguiente manera:

> Cien táleros reales no contienen más que cien táleros posibles. Porque, como los táleros posibles expresan el concepto y los táleros reales el objeto y su posición, en el caso de que aquellos contuvieran más que éstos, mi concepto no expresaría el objeto completo y, por consiguiente, no sería el concepto adecuado de aquél. Pero yo soy más rico con cien táleros reales que con su simple concepto, es decir, que con su posibilidad. En la realidad, efectivamente, el objeto no está simplemente contenido analíticamente en mi concepto, sino que se añade sintéticamente a él, sin que por esta existencia fuera de mi concepto los cien táleros reales concebidos sean aumentados en lo más mínimo.[46]

Sin embargo, hallamos cierta analogía entre estos planteos kantianos y la consideración tomista de la existencia. En efecto, desde el punto de vista de la predicación, el ser del ente no es ni un género, ni una especie, ni una diferencia, ni una propiedad, sino un accidente lógico, porque sólo de Dios, en quien esencia y ser se identifican, se predica el ser esencialmente: 'Esse Ipsum'. "En todo ente limitado, el ser y la esencia son realmente diversos, porque tal ente sólo puede tener ser participado, ya que únicamente en Dios, que es el Ser mismo, son realmente idénticos el ser y la esencia."[47] Dicho de otro modo, en todo ente "el ser se recibe desde afuera de su esencia y no entra en su definición."[48] No obstante, el ser del ente pertenece al ente mismo como lo más propio en tanto existente y, por lo tanto, no es desde el punto de vista ontológico un accidente, dado que es la actualidad misma de la esencia realmente constituida, la cual es inexpresable conceptualmente y es tan sólo remedada en nuestros juicios existenciales.

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[46] *Ibid.*, B 628.

[47] Tomás de Aquino, *In Anal. Post.*, II, lect. 6.

[48] Tomás de Aquino, *Suma Contra Gentiles*, II, 53.

En su etapa crítica, Kant piensa la existencia como una síntesis entre los datos empíricos provenientes de la cosa en sí, organizados espacial y temporalmente, y la aplicación de una categoría a priori del entendimiento, que corresponde a la modalidad asertórica de los juicios, es decir, al caso en que la relación significada por la cópula es puesta como real. "El concepto de ser es un concepto de ser puro de la razón, cuya realidad objetiva está bien lejos de ser probada, por el sólo hecho de que la razón necesite de ella."[49] La existencia la pone la conciencia a través de un acto judicativo en el que hay un acuerdo entre las condiciones formales del entendimiento y las condiciones materiales de la sensibilidad. En este contexto, no puede haber conocimiento si los conceptos no se refieren a intuiciones sensibles, pero al mismo tiempo las intuiciones sensibles no pueden ser conocidas sino por medio de los conceptos, ya que "conceptos sin intuiciones son vacíos, intuiciones sin conceptos son ciegas."[50]

La existencia, entonces, no remite al ente o a un modo del ente, sino a la modalidad de un juicio. Si los datos de la sensibilidad no se ofrecieran a las categorías del entendimiento, éstas serían tan vacías como las ideas de la razón pura. Estos datos irreductibles que inhieren en la sensibilidad justifican que podamos hablar de la existencia de las cosas, pero el ser profundo de las cosas kantianas no es el que se percibe en los 'fenómenos', sino que detrás de estos fenómenos están los 'noúmenos' que le sirven de fundamento y que existen, supuestamente, de modo independiente del sujeto percipiente. "La existencia de la cosa que aparece no queda suprimida, como lo está en el verdadero idealismo, sino que solamente queda demostrado así que nosotros no

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[49] Kant, *Crítica de la razón pura*, A 592.

[50] *Ibid.*, 173.

podemos absolutamente conocer por los sentidos la cosa como es en sí."[51]

Sin embargo, dado que el noúmeno nos es totalmente incognoscible, no es legítimo postular su existencia y resulta más coherente decir que no es nada, como harán Fichte, Schelling y Hegel. La negación de la posibilidad del conocimiento del ente implica la negación de la posibilidad de un intelecto intuitivo formando parte de nuestra estructura cognitiva, clausurándose así toda posible indagación ontológica: la metafísica ya no es ciencia, se puede 'pensar' en los objetos que tradicionalmente consideró la ontología especial, como el alma, el mundo y Dios, pero ya no se los puede 'conocer' en absoluto. Tampoco, claro está, se puede tener conocimiento de los temas de la ontología general, como el ente, la esencia y el ser, nociones todas que han sido oscurecidas y eclipsadas.

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El saber milenario que Kant pretende haber sepultado es súbitamente resucitado y de un modo totalmente renovado por Hegel, para quien la metafísica pasa a ser la ciencia que considera las determinaciones conceptuales del pensamiento como si fueran determinaciones fundamentales de las cosas mismas. "La metafísica de antaño, tal como existía entre nosotros antes de la filosofía de Kant, sigue siendo en sí misma ese asunto siempre presente, a saber, la simple consideración por el entendimiento de los objetos de la razón."[52] Pero la metafísica que Hegel alaba, que se remonta a Parménides y que culmina en Wolff, tiene la peculiaridad de ser dogmática, lo que quiere decir en este contexto que, dadas dos proposiciones opuestas, una debe ser considerada verdadera y la otra necesariamente falsa. Esta ontología dogmática se puede definir como "la doctrina de las determinaciones abstractas de la

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[51] Kant, *Prolegómenos*, 84. El principal problema trascendental.

[52] Georg W. F. Hegel, *Enciclopedia de las ciencias filosóficas* (México: Casa Juan Pablos, 2008), art. 27, 60.

esencia"[53] y, si trata del ser, su única preocupación consiste en buscar los sujetos a los que se puede predicar sin contradicción. Reducida a un simple juego de conceptos abstractos y regida por el principio de identidad, la ontología racionalista no es, en el fondo, otra cosa que una variante de la lógica.

Hegel advierte que Kant fue más allá del racionalismo dogmático de Wolff y del empirismo escéptico de Hume, para terminar postulando la existencia de un 'en sí' absoluto que no podemos conocer por estar fuera de nuestro alcance, al margen de lo que la sensibilidad y el entendimiento pueden captar fenoménicamente. Sin embargo, diga lo que diga Kant al respecto, para el pensamiento todo sucede como si esa cosa en sí no existiera, porque "el noúmeno kantiano no es otra cosa que lo abstracto total, el todo vacío, determinado solamente aún como un más allá."[54] Al igual que Wolff y Kant, también Hegel plantea una filosofía conceptual, pero hay una diferencia radical: sus conceptos no son universales y abstractos sino universales y concretos, captados con la riqueza de la totalidad de sus autodeterminaciones. Kant sostuvo que la existencia no es un predicado, sino la subsunción de un dato empírico en una categoría a priori del entendimiento, por lo cual era imposible derivar analíticamente la existencia de una noción cualquiera, ni siquiera de la noción misma de Dios que, supuestamente, identifica esencia y existencia. Hegel, en cambio, plantea que el concepto de todo ente, sea finito o infinito, incluye su ser. "Dios es expresamente algo que no puede ser pensado sino como existente, algo cuyo concepto incluye en sí el ser. Esta unidad del concepto y del ser es lo que constituye el concepto de Dios."[55] A pesar de esta defensa del argumento ontológico, el ser del que habla aquí Hegel es el más pobre de los conceptos, el más abstracto y el más indeterminado: "No hay para el espíritu cosa que

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[53] *Ibid.*, art. 33, 63.

[54] *Ibid.*, art. 44, 70.

[55] *Ibid.*, art. 47, 75.

encierre menos contenido que el ser."[56] Esta doctrina que no conoce
cosa más ínfima que el ser y que lo considera como un concepto univer-
sal, abstracto e indeterminado sin correlato real, concreto y determinado
que le corresponda, viene a coronar el oscurecimiento del lejano 'esse'
tomista.

La filosofía de Hegel parte, entonces, del ser como la noción más
general, abstracta, uniforme e indeterminada. En efecto, si preguntamos
qué es el ser, no podemos responder absolutamente nada sin determi-
narlo y, por ende, entificarlo, dejando de ser el ser para pasar a ser un
ente. Del ser que es puro ser no se puede decir nada, precisamente
porque se identifica con la nada. Y si preguntamos por la nada, sucede
lo mismo, no podemos responder absolutamente nada, sin determinarla
y, por ende, entificarla, dejando de ser la nada para pasar a ser un ente.
"El ser puro es la abstracción pura y, por consiguiente, lo negativo ab-
soluto que, tomado también él de modo inmediato, es la nada."[57] Hegel
es plenamente consciente de que el punto de partida de su filosofía ne-
cesariamente ha de ser el concepto universal de ser, ya que todas las
ulteriores determinaciones del pensamiento se aplicarán al concepto de
ser como diferenciaciones internas.

Hegel resuelve esta primera oposición binaria entre el ser y la
nada en una superación dialéctica de ambos en el concepto de devenir,
que es la primera síntesis concreta que reúne la oposición abstracta ori-
ginal y que indica, precisamente, el traspaso del ser a la nada y de la
nada al ser. "A decir verdad, el devenir es el primer concepto, por ser
un pensamiento concreto, mientras que el ser y la nada no eran sino
abstracciones."[58] Si la primera noción concreta no es el ser, porque el
ser es concebido como la abstracción indeterminada y absoluta, no cabe
otra posibilidad de que esta primera noción sea el devenir, porque sien-

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[56] *Ibid.*, art. 51, 80.
[57] *Ibid.*, art. 87, 109.
[58] *Ibid.*, art. 88, 111.

do a la vez ser y no ser, aparece como la primera noción dialéctica sintética. De este modo, se llega a plantear el devenir como primer concepto del pensamiento especulativo sin suponer la existencia, sino solamente una noción de ser tan alejada de todo dato existencial que, como vimos, llega a identificarse con la nada misma. Tomado en sí mismo, el devenir no es la unidad del ser y del no ser, sino la superación de ambos, que representa más bien "la inquietud en sí misma que caracteriza a la realidad en su totalidad."[59]

Hegel propone considerar el devenir más allá de la dualidad interna que le es esencial, como un concepto ya determinado, que es lo que ocurre cuando se hace del devenir un devenido, esto es, un ser determinado al que Hegel denomina ser ahí o 'Dasein'. "El ser en devenir, es decir, el ser uno con la nada y la nada uno con el ser, no son sino algo que se desvanece. El devenir se sumerge, por su contradicción en sí, en la unidad en que el uno y el otro son superados, su resultado es, de este modo, el ser ahí."[60] El ser ahí de Hegel representa lo individual y concreto, pero este concepto no surge de un encuentro experiencial indeliberado entre la inteligencia humana y el ente existente, sino que se lo deriva trascendentalmente a partir de una dialéctica del pensamiento puro. "El ser ahí es el ser con una determinación tal que, como siendo y como inmediato, es un ser ya cualificado."[61]

El ente concreto es, entonces, un objeto determinado y cualificado por el pensamiento que, en vez de existir por la riqueza de un ser que se multiplica en variadas esencias genéricas, específicas e individuales, se configura a partir de sus propias contradicciones internas. Como se parte del pensar puro e indeterminado en correlación originaria con el ser puro e indeterminado, que no es otra cosa que la nada pura e indeterminada, a diferencia de lo que sucede en la ontología de

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[59] *Ibid.*, art. 88, 113.

[60] *Ibid.*, art. 89, 114.

[61] *Ibid.*, art. 90, 115.

Tomás de Aquino, en la que el ser fundamenta la esencia en una relación trascendental de acto y potencia, aquí la esencia se manifiesta como una determinación posterior del ser, en tanto que la existencia aparece como una delimitación ulterior de la esencia. En efecto, la esencia representa para Hegel la relación de identidad del ser ahí consigo mismo, por la cual se diferencia de todo otro ser ahí: "La esencialidad es el ser en cuanto ser y, además, la simple relación consigo mismo."[62]

La esencia incluye al ser, pero este ser que incluye no es sino lo que aparece en la esencia, lo aparencial o lo inesencial, lo que equivale a decir que la esencia no es esencial, sino en cuanto contiene en sí la negación de lo que es. Dicho de otro modo, la esencia es identidad y es diferencia, es decir, la identidad de sí consigo mismo y la diferencia que esta identidad supone por ser la identidad de la esencia y de la apariencia. La esencia no es ni pura mismidad ni pura alteridad, sino el reflejarse de lo mismo en lo otro y de lo otro en lo mismo, recíprocamente: "La esencia es lo que tiene su ser en sí y su ser en otro."[63] El término que utiliza Hegel para sintetizar la oposición entre esencia y apariencia es existencia o 'Existenz'. Así, pues, "la esencia es la razón de ser de la existencia,"[64] por lo que la existencia se opone a la razón de ser que la sustenta y justifica como ser salido a partir de otra cosa, con lo cual Hegel acerca su noción de existencia a la 'existentia' de los filósofos de los siglos XIII y XIV no tomistas: "La realidad efectiva es la unidad devenida e inmediata de la esencia y de la existencia."[65]

El universo hegeliano se ofrece como una multitud de esencias que son existencias en relación a sus razones de ser y razones de ser en relación con las existencias que de allí se derivan. Y cuando se captan la existencia y su razón de ser en unidad se llega al concepto de cosa o

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[62] *Ibid.*, art. 112, 126.

[63] *Ibid.*, art. 121, 134.

[64] *Ibid.*, art. 115, 128.

[65] *Ibid.*, art. 142, 145.

'das Ding', alcanzándose por fin el noúmeno kantiano, esto es, lo realmente real con la totalidad de sus determinaciones. Vemos que el ser, la esencia, la existencia y la cosa son conceptos que, en el seno de la filosofía hegeliana, aparecen como progresivas determinaciones de una noción que se autoconstruye en el pensamiento, desligándose absolutamente de la experiencia, de manera que lo concreto de lo que habla Hegel no es más que una autoconcreción de abstracciones, que parte de la más abstractas de las nociones: el ser.

La filosofía de Hegel prescinde de la experiencia y pretende explicar la totalidad de lo real a partir de puros conceptos del pensamiento. Los tres momentos dialécticos que componen el ámbito de la lógica que venimos desarrollando son el ser, la esencia y el concepto respectivamente, como tesis, antítesis y síntesis. Esto quiere decir que el concepto incluye en su interior, como instancias suyas constitutivas el ser y la esencia, que son sus momentos abstractos. Ser y esencia, pues, no son los coprincipios constitutivos del ente, como sucede en Tomás de Aquino, sino momentos abstractos superados y subsumidos por el concepto, verdadero elemento en que se desarrolla el pensamiento puro, despojado de todo dato empírico opaco de racionalidad. Sin embargo, creemos que la paradoja de la propuesta hegeliana reside en que, habiendo eliminado de antemano toda cuestión empírica para estar seguro de que ningún dato irracional contradiga la obra de la racionalidad pura, termina introduciendo la irracionalidad dialéctica, que afirma la identidad de los opuestos, en la misma racionalidad, para evitar que la razón funcione en el vacío.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

Martin Heidegger ha advertido y denunciado que en la determinación kantiana del ser como posición, es decir, como aplicación de una categoría 'a priori' del entendimiento sobre los datos de la sensibilidad, habla la tradición metafísica que ve en la existencia el acto por el cual la cosa se factualiza y sale de su estado de posibilidad. Pero esta tradi-

ción de la que habla el filósofo de Friburgo no es la genuina tradición tomista fundada en el 'esse', sino la tradición de la escolástica tardía fundada en la 'essentia': Egidio Romano, Enrique de Gante, Duns Escoto y Francisco Suárez, quienes definen la existencia como un pasaje o tránsito del ente desde su estado de posibilidad a su estado de actualidad. En esta tradición, como hemos visto a lo largo de todas estas páginas, el 'esse' es eclipsado por la 'essentia' y reemplazado unidireccionalmente por la 'existentia'.

El pensamiento actual le debe a Martin Heidegger la restauración de la cuestión del ser y su relación con el ente, pues como bien apunta: "Si el ente se dice en múltiples significaciones, ¿cuál es, entonces, la significación fundamental de todas ellas? ¿Qué significa ser?"[66] Sólo por plantear la pregunta por el ser como su cuestión central, el pensamiento de Heidegger se vincula directamente con la metafísica de Tomás de Aquino. En ambos casos, el esfuerzo se dirige a destacar la primacía del ser (esse-sein) sobre el ente (ens-seiende). El 'esse' tomista, al actualizar la 'essentia', hace que el 'ens' sea: "El ser es aquello por lo cual algo es."[67] Análogamente, el 'sein' heideggeriano trae el 'Seiende' a la presencia del 'Dasein', sacándolo del estado de oculto o de latencia en el que se encontraba: "El ser es aquello a partir de lo cual el Dasein da a significar respecto de qué ente puede comportarse y cómo puede hacerlo."[68] Es importante señalar que, en tanto para Husserl la reducción fenomenológica pone entre paréntesis el ser de los entes que comparecen ante la conciencia, para el filósofo de Friburgo, en cambio, el sentido de la reducción fenomenológica consiste en redireccccionar la

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[66] Martin Heidegger, *Mi camino hacia la fenomenología* (Tubinga: Niemeyer, 1969), 81. Allí, la famosa frase aristotélica, το ον λεγεται πολλακως, la traduce Heidegger: "el ente se manifiesta, con respecto a su ser, de diversos modos."

[67] Tomás de Aquino, *Suma Teológica*, I, q. 75, a. 5.

[68] Martin Heidegger, "De la esencia del fundamento," en *Ser, verdad y fundamento*, trad. Eduardo García Belsunce (Caracas: Monte Avila, 1968), 34.

mirada desde el ente hacia el ser. "Para nosotros, la reducción fenomenológica significa el retroceso de la mirada fenomenológica desde la captación del ente, como quiera que esté determinado, a la comprensión del ser de este ente."[69]

Tanto Tomás de Aquino como Martin Heidegger postulan la diferencia ontológica, esto es, la distinción radical entre ente y ser. Por este motivo, la doctrina tomista escapa al reproche heideggeriano del 'olvido del ser' (Seinsvergessenheit), dirigido en bloque a toda la historia de la metafísica, porque el 'esse' tomista es el acto de la 'essentia', siendo ambos principios constitutivos y fundantes del 'ens'. Santo Tomás no puede ser más claro al respecto: "El ser no es el ente, sino que es aquello por lo que el ente es."[70] Tal noción sustrae también a la ontología tomista del carácter 'onto-teo-lógico' de la metafísica denunciado por Heidegger, porque Dios no es ente según el Aquinate sino el ser mismo que trasciende el ente y sus configuraciones.

> La metafísica se mueve en el ámbito del ὂν ῇ ὄν. Su representar vale para el ente como ente. De tal modo, la metafísica representa por doquier el ente como tal en totalidad, la entidad del ente. Pero la metafísica representa la entidad del ente de dos maneras: por un lado, la totalidad del ente como tal en el sentido de sus rasgos más generales; por otro lado, la totalidad del ente como tal en el sentido del ente supremo y, por ello, divino.[71]

Y es justamente hacia esa noción inagotable del 'esse' que tiende la reflexión heideggeriana, dado que el 'sein' constituye como un preámbulo o antesala de la misma, una suerte de corteza fenomenológica

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[69] Martin Heidegger, *Los problemas fundamentales de la fenomenología* (Madrid: Trotta, 2000), 47.

[70] Tomás de Aquino, *De Hebdomadibus*, 1.2.

[71] Martin Heidegger, "El retorno al fundamento de la metafísica," texto introductorio a la quinta edición de *¿Qué es metafísica?* (Buenos Aires: Edic. Siglo XX, 1967), 19.

del núcleo ontológico vislumbrado por Santo Tomás.[72] Paradójicamente, Heidegger mismo parece olvidarse del ser, porque al comprenderlo como el sentido del ente, como el horizonte de comprensión o espacio semiótico que hace posible su manifestación, lo termina equiparando con la esencia, quedando su planteo relegado al plano predicamental. Esto es fruto de haber limitado a lo largo de toda su obra el ser (sein) al modo del ser humano, temporal e histórico (Dasein). De esta manera, se cierra al plano trascendental, a la concepción de un ser trascendente, eterno e infinito, quedando sumergido en una inmanencia radical del ser en el ente, de índole temporal y finito. De todos modos, más allá de las diferencias, la convergencia de fondo entre el 'esse' tomista y el 'sein' heideggeriano hace resaltar la legitimidad especulativa del ser del ente.

<div align="center">*</div>

Hemos visto a lo largo de estas páginas que, según Tomás de Aquino, el ente es un compuesto de ser y esencia, siendo el primero acto y el segundo potencia, el primero determinante y el segundo determinado, el primero fundante y el segundo fundado. Por un lado, una ontología que descuida el ser termina autoafirmándose como una ontología de la esencia, para la cual el ser sería un estado de la esencia o, más concretamente, el estado de tener la esencia el ser en acto y no en potencia, esto es, la existencia. Por otro lado, una ontología que descuida la esencia culmina autodeterminándose como una ontología de la existencia, para la cual no hay modos de ser reales y lo que se denomina esencia no es más que un tipo categorial o empírico, resultando en este caso que el ser también termina designando la mera situación fáctica de las individualidades mundanas, esto es, la existencia. En ambos casos, tanto en el esencialismo como en el existencialismo, en los que

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[72] "El tomismo es una filosofía del 'sein' en tanto que es una filosofía del 'esse'. Cuando los jóvenes nos invitan a hacer el descubrimiento de Martin Heidegger, nos invitan, sin saberlo, a hacerles redescubrir la metafísica transóntica de Santo Tomás de Aquino." (Etienne Gilson, *Las tribulaciones de Sofía* [Paris: Vrin, 1967], 151).

se presenta un desequilibrio entre el ser y la esencia en el seno mismo del ente, somos testigos de un oscurecimiento del ser y su sustitución por la existencia.

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The Obscuring of Esse and Its Substitution by Existence

SUMMARY

The question of the real distinction between *esse* and *essence* in *being* constitutes the core of Thomistic ontology. While there is a primacy of esse over essence, such as that of the founding over the founded, one must neglect neither of these aspects in the analysis of the act-potency transcendental relationship that links them. Through a brief historical journey—from the years following the death of St. Thomas Aquinas to the present—the author tries to show the way in which the notion of *esse* has been gradually distorted and obscured by the notion of *essence*, and then replaced by the notion of *existence*.

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Catherine Peters

Hylomorphic Teleology in Aristotle's *Physics* II

Discussion of final causality often occurs within a context of consciousness, which is hardly surprising given its indispensible importance for human activity. Yet associating final causality with conscious activity directed toward an end can tempt one to think of teleology as applying only to human acts, with the near-inevitable consequence of denying that non-conscious natural beings have true ends. While in no way suggesting that final causality is *not* essential to human activity, it is the purpose of the present study to show that teleology for Aristotle is much more extensive, encompassing even the relationship between matter and form.

To this end, I draw attention to the following argument in Aristotle's *Physics* II, chapter eight:

> And since "nature" means two things, the matter and the form, of which the latter is the end, and since all the rest is for the sake of the end, the form must be the cause in the sense of "that for the sake of which."[1]

It is my claim that this passage argues for a universal and essential interpretation of final causality. To understand the premises requires a return to Aristotle's treatment of the meaning of nature earlier in book II, specifically his presentation of nature as matter and form in chapter

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Catherine Peters — University of St. Thomas, Houston, Tex., USA
e-mail: peterscj@stthom.edu ▪ ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3479-9140

[1] Aristotle, *Physics* II, 8, 199a30–32, trans. R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gaye, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. R. McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941).

one. I argue that final causality includes matter's ordering to form and that the argument quoted above highlights the connections between chapter one's presentation of nature as matter and form and chapter eight's defense of final causality. In this way, teleology will be shown to be of central importance to the Aristotelian conception of nature. It is the final causality of matter to form that I refer to as hylomorphic teleology. This is universal (insofar as it extends to every natural subject) and essential (because it results from the *per se* principles of natural beings).

To clarify the meaning of hylomorphic teleology I will contrast my interpretation of chapter eight with that of Wolfgang Wieland regarding the scope and foundation of the final cause. Wieland rejects the claim that teleology is universal in nature, even going so far as to claim that the end of nature need only be a limited reflective concept, neither universally applicable *to* nor ontologically grounded *in* nature. To defend teleology as a universal principle of nature, I will counter an objection raised by Wieland that chance and universal final causality are mutually exclusive. It is my contention that Aristotle's presentation of teleology in chapter eight supports a diverse interpretation of the final cause, one that admits chance events while not sacrificing the intrinsic ordering of matter to form.

Nature as Matter and Form

The brevity of Aristotle's presentation of the ordering of matter to form in chapter eight requires a return to his treatment of the meaning of nature (φύσις) in chapter one. Here, nature is generally defined as "a source (ἀρχῇ) or cause of being moved and of being at rest in that to which it belongs primarily, in virtue of itself and not in virtue of a concomitant attribute" (192b20–23). Aristotle uses nature in this sense later in chapter eight to account for the predictability of nature's acting

for an end and thus intimates that final causality flows from nature taken as an intrinsic principle.[2] Having given this initial definition of nature, he continues to show how nature encompasses both matter (ὕλη) and form (μορφὴ), the two *per se* principles of natural beings already presented in book one, chapter seven.

Throughout his discussion of matter and form, Aristotle compares their relation to potency and act. Matter as that "out of which" a thing comes to be stands in potency to form. Though matter requires form to actually exist, it is not absolutely non-existent. Indeed, Aristotle notes in *Physics* I, 8 that much of the confusion regarding motion and change rises out of seeing matter as non-being rather than a potential for form. Matter as potency requires form in order to actually exist, and prime matter stands in particular need of substantial form. But even when actualized to some extent through substantial form, matter retains its receptivity to further actualization. In this way, matter is a principle of potency but not an inert or static one.[3] Though matter is constitutive of natural beings, its dependence on form leads Aristotle to insist that nature more properly refers to form, that by which a thing exists in actuality. As he explains, "The form indeed is 'nature' rather than the matter; for a thing is more properly said to be what it is when it has attained to fulfillment than when it exists potentially" (193a9–b21). Matter as potency relies on form for actuality. Although nature is both material and formal, Aristotle gives priority to form because it is that toward which matter is ordered for fulfillment. Nature is not identified

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[2] See *ibid.*, 8, 199b14–26. I discuss this passage in the conclusion of this study.

[3] For this point, see William Wallace, *The Modeling of Nature: Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Nature in Synthesis* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 9: "matter, as a basic constituent of all natural entities, is no longer seen as the passive and inert component it was previously thought to be. Rather it is a powerful and potential principle that lies at the base of the most cataclysmic upheavals taking place on our planet . . ."

with matter alone because matter is itself incomplete, requiring form for actualization and intelligibility.

Aristotle's understanding of matter as potency ordered to the actuality of form is not explicitly re-stated in *Physics* II, eight. It is, however, the necessary background for understanding the argument for hylomorphic teleology. To summarize, nature is understood as referring to matter and form, *per se* principles of natural beings. It more properly refers to form as the fulfillment and actualization of matter. These are the points from chapter one that Aristotle relies on in chapter eight when arguing for the final causality of matter to form.

At this point, the divisions of final causality made by William Wallace can be of assistance in understanding the ordering of matter to form.[4] The final cause can be understood broadly as (1) terminus, (2) perfection, and (3) intention. Though not directly drawn from the text of chapter eight, I suggest that this terminology can help in understanding the complexity of Aristotelian final causality. Insofar as form actualizes matter it is related to form in the sense of a terminus—that toward which actualization is aimed and terminates. The form can also, I suggest, be related to matter as a final cause in the sense of perfection. Wallace explains that the final cause under the aspect of perfection adds to a terminus a notion that "it is somehow a perfection or good attained through the process."[5] This point is raised—though not elaborated on— by Aristotle in book I, chapter three, when, after giving his fourfold division of causes, states that "for 'that for the sake of which' means what is best and the end of the things that lead up to it" (195a24–25). In chapter seven he further relates the goodness of natural beings to their natures.[6] Following Wallace, then, form taken as the end of natural

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[4] *Ibid*., 16–18.

[5] *Ibid*., 17.

[6] See *Physics* II, 7, 198b9: "because it is better thus (not without qualification, but with reference to the essential nature in each case)."

movement includes the sense of a terminus, but I suggest that it could also incorporate the notion of perfection insofar as informed matter possesses the perfection of existence to one degree or another.

Hylomorphic Teleology in Physics II, 8

Book II, chapter eight consists of a consideration of doubts about final causality, arguments in favor of it, and lastly a refutation of objections to his claim that nature is "a cause that operates for a purpose" (199a33–b33). The most straightforward division of the arguments in this chapter is three-fold.[7] The first argument reasons that nature is teleological because of chance's inability to account for nature's regularity (198b34–199a8). "Nature" as being what is or happens always or for the most part is contrasted with the infrequency of "chance" (τύχη) and "spontaneity" (αὐτόματον). Seeking to explain the observed order or regularity of the natural world, Aristotle argues as follows: natural events are either the result of final causality or chance. Chance cannot account for the regularity of nature. Therefore, natural events must be the result of final causality.

The second argument (199a8–29) proceeds from the ordering of processes to an end. Again seeking to explain the order of the natural world, Aristotle shows how processes are directed to an end. This argument can be further subdivided into arguments (1) from an analogy between art and nature and (2) the non-deliberative actions of animals. But of importance to my study is the common theme of finality based

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[7] In his commentary, Thomas Aquinas interprets this text as consisting of five arguments, yet suggests that one is a clarification and complement to another (see *Commentaria in VIII libros physicorum aristotelis*, Leonine Edition, vol. II [Rome: Commissionis Leoninae, 1882], lib. 2, lectio 13, n. 4: "Potest tamen dici quod haec non est alia ratio a praemissa; sed complementum et explicatio ipsius."). Aristotle himself connects two points made at 199a15 ("This is most obvious in the animals other than man . . .") which I also take as support of a three-fold division.

on the relationship of priority and posteriority in natural and artificial events. To use an artificial example, the stages of laying a foundation, erecting walls, and raising a roof are all ordered for the end of constructing a house. These prior stages are for the sake of an end. This order is not limited by Aristotle to works of art. To use a natural example, oak trees come to be from acorns, from which roots sprout and leaves unfurl into seedlings. The acorn, then, reaches its end when it terminates in a fully-grown oak tree. The acorn is able to become an oak tree because of its potentiality. When it is actualized as an oak tree it has reached its natural end. Indeed, despite drawing an analogy between art and nature, Aristotle is careful to note here that the order of nature need not be deliberative. The arguments of chapter eight show that final causality—including hylomorphic teleology—is a result of nature as an intrinsic principle, and Aristotle takes care to show that the order to an end need not be deliberative.[8]

The third argument, the primary focus of this study, is that there is an order to nature grounded in the material and formal composition of natural beings. Relying on the meaning of nature as material and formal already expounded in the opening chapter of book II, Aristotle argues that matter is for the sake of form and, thus, that form serves as a final cause. To repeat his argument:

> [S]ince "nature" means two things, the matter and the form, of which the latter is the end, and since all the rest is for the sake of the end, the form must be the cause in the sense of "that for the sake of which" (199a30–32).

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[8] In this way one can defend Aristotle's view of teleology from charges of imposing human awareness on nature. As Wallace explains, much of the difficulty with teleology "arises from conceiving all final causality as intention or cognitive and not sufficiently distinguishing the cognitive from the terminative or perfective." (*The Modeling of Nature*, 17.)

The brevity of this passage leads some to reject it as an argument for final causality. One objection raised by William Charlton is that "Aristotle is assuming, what he should surely be trying to prove, that the cause of natural things is nature in the sense of form" and thus that Aristotle must only be "pointing out the consequence that nature is form rather than matter."[9] Though I agree that this passage clearly incorporates a consequence of Aristotle's view of nature as matter and form, this is not a reason to reject this passage as an argument. Rather, the relationship between matter and form is not only a consequence of Aristotle's understanding of nature but serves at the same time as the premises for an argument for hylomorphic teleology. Indeed, the argument is only intelligible when read in light of chapter one.

In book II, chapter one, Aristotle shows that nature is matter and form, identifying form with actuality and matter with potentiality; but nature is more properly what is actual; therefore, nature is more properly form. Using the relation between potency and act, he can argue that form is the end of matter and that matter is for the sake of form; form is actuality; actuality is the end of matter; therefore, form is the end of matter. These earlier arguments, then, lay the foundation for his argument for hylomorphic teleology. In book II, chapter eight, Aristotle relies on the conclusions reached concerning the meaning of "nature" to argue concisely that form is an end; an end is a cause "for the sake of which;" therefore, form is a cause "for the sake of which."

This third argument is unlike the first and second arguments of chapter eight defending final causality in its explicit invocation of the principles of nature. Hylomorphic teleology is a consequent of the relation between matter and form, the latter being "that for the sake of which." This argument also differs from the other lines of argumenta-

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[9] See William Charlton, *Aristotle's Physics: Book 1 & 2* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 49.

tion because of the less obvious nature of hylomorphic teleology. The earlier arguments show how natural events are ordered to an end by beginning with some obvious feature of the natural world. This argument, on the other hand, looks at the ordering of natural beings themselves, an ordering resulting from the principles of nature. In this way, the presentation of arguments reflects the general Aristotelian methodology of beginning with what is more obvious to us before advancing to what is more intelligible in itself.[10] The regularity of natural events and ordering of processes is more obvious to us than the order intrinsic to natural beings.

Yet, one might object, it seems that hylomorphic teleology confuses the distinction drawn between the causes. If matter is ordered to form, it seems that the form alone is sufficient to account for this order. Aristotle himself grants that the causes often coincide with each other in reality.[11] Nature as form is that to which matter tends. But a natural being is ordered to form as something more than a form; matter is ordered to form as an end. Matter and form understood as principles of nature and the relation between potency (identified with matter) and act (identified with form) grants the aspect of final causality to form. This last argument does not supplant the final cause with the formal but instead shows the interconnectedness of the causes. As Aristotle himself

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[10] See *Physics* I, 1, 184a16–21: "The natural way of doing this is to start from the things which are more knowable and obvious to us and proceed towards those which are clearer and more knowable by nature; for the same things are not 'knowable relatively to us' and 'knowable' without qualification. So in the present inquiry we must follow this method and advance from what is more obscure by nature, but clearer to us, towards what is more clear and more knowable by nature."

[11] See *Physics* II, 6, esp. 198a21–25: "Now, the causes being four, it is the business of the physicist to know about them all, and if he refers his problems back to all of them, he will assign the 'why' in the way proper to his science—the matter, the form, the mover, 'that for the sake of which'. The last three often coincide; for the 'what' and 'that for the sake of which' are one, while the primary source of motion is the same in species as these (for man generates man), and so too, in general, are all things which cause movement by being themselves moved . . ."

grants immediately before discussing final causality, the form and end are often in reality the same: "for the 'what' and 'that for the sake of which' are one . . ." (198a25 ff.). Matter is ordered to the form under the aspect of final causality. In this way, the final cause is distinct from the formal cause. Because nature is both matter and form, and matter is ordered to form as its fulfillment, nature for Aristotle is essentially teleological.

Despite the brevity of its presentation, I suggest that the third argument in favor of final causality is the most fundamental and expansive of chapter eight because it argues for teleology based on the hylomorphic composition of natural beings. This passage shows that all natural beings are ordered to an end because of the relation between matter and form, the intrinsic principles of nature. The potency of matter is actualized by form, the latter being the end toward which matter is ordered. Aristotle's presentation of the meaning of nature in book II, chapter one is seen here in chapter eight to be the fundamental source for final causality. The regularity and order of nature results from the principles constituting all natural beings. In this way, the connection between book II, chapter one and chapter eight stands forth clearly.

The diversity of arguments presented in chapter eight evidences the richness of final causality in Aristotle's natural philosophy. Though each concludes that nature is ordered to an end, the individual arguments of chapter eight introduce different emphases. Briefly stated, the first argument proves that nature as occurring "always or for the most part" is not due to chance, but must be the result of final causality. The second argument reveals how, given the order of natural movement, there is finality in nature and also shows that teleology is an order to an end that need not be deliberative. The third and final argument shows that teleology is an essential part of nature by grounding it in matter and form, the intrinsic principles of every natural subject. It is this third argument for final causality that makes clear the tendency of natural

substances toward specified ends that flows directly from the ontological principles of matter and form. Aristotle's presentation of teleology is thus far from a simple or baldly univocal account and allows him to answer a variety of objections to his claim that nature acts for an end.

Though the actualization of form might be impeded by a lack of matter or by matter unsuited to attaining the end, it remains that toward which matter is ordered for its fulfillment. Indeed, Aristotle readily grants in chapter eight that natural ends will not always be attained.[12] The interruption of nature's order to an end does not, however, undo the intrinsic teleology of matter to form nor abolish the fulfillment of form that natural beings actually possess. Teleology is present even when imperfectly realized. As Aristotle continues, if a natural being fails to reach a determinate end this must be through "the corruption of some principle" (199b7) but this does not mean that the principle is non-existent. As he explains in chapter eight, the end of nature is attained only "if there is no impediment" and again, characterizing chance as an incidental cause, emphasizes that "when an event takes place always or for the most part, it is not incidental or by chance. In natural products the sequence is invariable, if there is no impediment" (199b22–25). So, of course, not every acorn flourishes into an oak tree and it is possible that a healthy oak tree be reduced to a stump, but this does not take away the natural order of an acorn to become an oak tree, an order that arises from what an acorn is.

Yet some claim, given the possibility of the end of nature not being attained, that teleology must be limited. Frederick Copleston reminds us that teleology is not "all-pervasive and all-conquering, since matter sometimes obstructs the action of teleology."[13] One should be careful, however, not to conflate universality with necessity, and argue

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[12] See esp. *ibid.* II, 8, 199a33–b7.

[13] Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. I, part II: *Greece & Rome* (New York: Image Books, 1962), 67.

that because the end might not be achieved that teleology is thereby limited. Form under the aspect of final causality allows the fulfillment or actualization of matter and is "all-pervasive" in that all natural beings have an intrinsic teleology through the order of their ontological principles of matter and form. Teleology taken in the sense of a full attainment of an end is, though, not guaranteed or "all-conquering." Aristotle grants in *Physics* II, 6 that natural events can be "in vain" and in II, 9 takes care to show how the necessity of nature is suppositional. In both cases, though, Aristotle is focused on the means toward an end, not the end itself, showing how—principally on account of a material impediment—an end might not be achieved.[14]

Thus far, I have argued that form must be understood as a final cause. The argument for matter's ordering to form in chapter eight relies on the earlier presentation of nature as matter and form in book II, chapter one. Using the distinction between potency and act, Aristotle shows that nature more-properly refers to form as that which actualizes and fulfills matter. Equipped with this understanding of the principles of nature, Aristotle is able in chapter eight to show that the final cause is an intrinsic and essential part of nature. This argument is of particular value precisely because it is rooted in the principles of nature. Yet as I mentioned at the beginning of this study, this interpretation is not without controversy. In order to shed more light on the meaning of hylo-

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[14] In *Physics* II, 6, 197b22–32 Aristotle states that "the means to an end is 'in vain', when it does not effect the end towards which it was the natural means" before relating this to spontaneous events, in which "the thing itself happens in vain. The stone that struck the man did not fall for the purpose of striking him; therefore it fell spontaneously, because it might have fallen by the action of an agent and for the purpose of striking." Likewise at *Physics* II, 9, 200a11–14 he grants that *if* an end is to be achieved, then the means and matter to that end must come to be. To use his examples, a house can come to be only given the existence of materials suitable for home construction. Likewise a saw cannot function as a saw unless made of the appropriate matter. As he concludes, what is necessary in nature "is necessary on a hypothesis; it is not a result necessarily determined by antecedents. Necessity is in the matter, while 'that for the sake of which' is in the definition."

morphic teleology, I will now examine some objections made to universal final causality by Wolfgang Wieland.

Wolfgang Wieland on the Scope and Foundation of the Final Cause

In his work on *The Aristotelian Physics,* Wolfgang Wieland raises the "Problem of Teleology."[15] Readily granting that final causality is of great importance to the Aristotelian study of nature, he nonetheless attempts to refute several aspects of the "traditional" interpretation of final causality that accords a pre-eminence to the end of nature. As he explains, final causality depends on material, formal, and efficient causality; thus reminding us that "goal (*telos*) or purpose (*hou heneka*) is only *one* of the four causes" and chiding those who attribute an "inflated" importance to the final cause.[16] Wieland's thesis, he plainly tells us, is that "teleology certainly plays an important role in Aristotle's science; but that it is simply not that universal cosmic principle that it became in the course of time."[17]

Of concern to Wieland is that the traditional emphasizing of the end of nature runs the risk of theologizing or anthropomorphizing final causality.[18] Yet Aristotle's rejection of a theological basis for teleology, Wieland argues, shows that the final cause has been exaggerated and that it was not meant to be understood as universal by the Philoso-

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[15] Wolfgang Wieland, *Die aristotelische Physik: Untersuchungen über die Grundlegung der Naturwissenschaft und die sprachlichen Bedingungen der Prinzipienforschung bei Aristoteles* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992). Chapter 16 of this work, the section of relevance to my paper, appears in English as "The Problem of Teleology," trans. Malcolm Schofield, in *Articles on Aristotle*, vol. 1: *Science*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, Malcolm Schofield, Richard Sorabji (London: Duckworth, 1975).

[16] Wieland, "The Problem of Teleology," 146 and 148.

[17] *Ibid.*, 142.

[18] *Ibid.*, 155–157.

pher.[19] The question of whether or not finality can be used to prove the existence of God lies beyond the scope and intention of my present study. Of concern is Wieland's rejection of the ordering of matter to form and his limitation of teleology.

> On no account should one ascribe to matter as such any power which could be given definite content—striving in a 'teleological manner' towards perfection in form . . . Aristotle never attributes to matter as such a hidden active power. But if, in spite of this, a teleology inherent in matter is fathered upon him, it is of course only a short step to the conception of a world perfectly ordered throughout in a teleological manner, a conception which has remained linked with Aristotle's name in the tradition right down to the present day . . .[20]

To counter this assertion, two of Wieland's primary objections to universal final causality must be answered. First, the dependency of final causality on other causes and conditions. Second, the purported exclusion of chance within a universally ordered natural world.[21]

In regard to this first objection, I have already shown that final causality in nature flows from the intrinsic principles of matter and form. Granted, the final cause depends on the other causes in order to be attained (as Aristotle explains in book II, chapter nine) but this dependence does not make the end subordinate to them. To return to the example of an acorn, an oak tree is not subordinated to the acorn because it relies on it to come to be. To say that the final cause of the acorn depends on its matter, form, and efficient causes is true, because

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[19] *Ibid.*, 157.

[20] *Ibid.*, 150.

[21] *Ibid.*, 149: "[I]t is precisely the *lack of self-sufficiency* which characterises the final goal that is shown here; each is *dependent upon conditions* which it cannot itself bring about but which for their part do not lead to it automatically. This *lack of self-sufficiency* which characterises each *telos* is, like the possibility of chance, an important argument against the hypothesis of a universal teleological ordering."

without the proper matter and conditions an oak tree cannot sprout, but these causes of the acorn are nonetheless ordered to the acorn's end.

To answer his second objection, Aristotle's view of chance must first be presented. Although chance is clearly of importance in the first argument for final causality, it does not negate hylomorphic teleology argued for in the third argument. Nonetheless, Wieland objects,

> Were teleology a universal cosmic principle, there would be no such thing as chance. But since there *are* according to Aristotle chance events and accidental causes, we must seek to understand the principle of teleology from the beginning in such a way that it does not just leave open the possibility of chance, but actually requires it.[22]

Chance has already made an appearance in my study within the context of the first argument for final causality in chapter eight. To answer the objection raised here, however, now requires a better understanding of the role of chance within *Physics* II.

Chance in Physics II

Chance is presented by Aristotle in book II, chapters 4–6 directly before his account of final causality. This order is of great importance to Wieland because of his insistence that teleology can only be understood when one presupposes chance. As he explains,

> [I]t is worth bearing in mind that Aristotle first discusses teleology in the *Physics* in a sequel to the investigation of chance. This sequence is not fortuitous; to reverse it is to run the risk of misunderstanding the essential point. *The fact is that Aristotle's theory of teleology cannot be understood properly unless it is taken to presuppose his doctrine of chance.*[23]

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[22] *Ibid.*, 144.

[23] *Ibid.*, 143. Emphasis in the original.

Elsewhere Wieland grants that when one speaks of chance events one is already "implicitly thinking with teleological concepts," but he then immediately explains that these "teleological concepts" need only be concepts of reflection, not a *real* principle of nature.[24] In this way, however, Wieland begins to sever the end of nature from its ontological foundation in the material and formal principles of nature. I will refute this claim below. Of present concern is to show that chance does not disallow an interpretation of the final cause resulting from matter's ordering to form. Indeed, chance is of central concern in the first argument for final causality, but there Aristotle explicitly rejects chance as accounting for the regularity of nature.

The reason for Aristotle's rejection is found in his view of chance as an accidental cause. Granting that chance and fortune are sometimes counted among the causes, Aristotle defends the reality of chance while not including it among the fourfold division of causes. Simply put, chance is defined as "an incidental cause in the sphere of those actions for the sake of something which involves purpose" (197a5–8). Chance is the result of two independent lines of final causality incidentally intersecting. The chance happening that they terminate in is outside their own ends. For example, Betty goes to a café to study. Bob meanwhile is already at the café eating breakfast. Seeing Bob was not Betty's purpose in choosing to go to that café at that time, nor was Bob breakfasting there with the end of seeing Betty. Their meeting, because it falls outside of the ends they were seeking, is a chance event, an incidental intersection of two lines of causality.[25] Because chance is

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[24] *Ibid.*, 146.

[25] Of course, Bob or Betty or both *could* attend the same café with the wish of seeing the other, but such a meeting would not be the result of chance. One always runs the risk of being "accidentally" run into when study or breakfasting habits occur "always or for the most part." By that same token, were Betty or Bob to become "regulars" at this particular café then meeting the other would no longer—strictly speaking—be the result of chance.

an incidental cause, it does not hold always or for the most part. Although each event was ordered to an end, the intersection is an incidental meeting of two distinct lines of causality. In the opening of his discussion of chance, Aristotle immediately eliminates chance as the cause of what happens always or for the most part, a point clearly invoked in the first argument for final causality in chapter 8.[26]

Wieland's account of "chance" (τύχη) tends to treat it as synonymous with "spontaneity" (αὐτόματον).[27] Though the latter is, I grant, what seems to be what is often meant when "chance" is used in common parlance, this conflation masks the complexity of Aristotle's account. Chance is placed within the sphere of intentionality (such as the case of Bob and Betty) while spontaneity is the broader term, accounting even for non-intentional events.[28] For Wieland, one can ascribe a kind of hypothetical "as-if" (*als ob*) teleology to chance events. As he explains, with chance an apparent teleology is present when "a goal is reached, although there was no intention to reach it as such. So this goal proves to be accidental, as it were, reached via the intention to reach another goal."[29] Characterizing the incidental conjunction as a goal in this way, however, bestows too much of finality to chance. Each of the caused events *are* for an end: Betty went to the café to study while Bob went there to breakfast. Their meeting is not a goal that was attained, but a coincidence that happened. Of course, each *could* go to the café with the purpose of seeing the other, but that is not the case here and—

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[26] *Physics* II, 5, 196b10–16: "First then we observe that some things always come to pass in the same way, and others for the most part. It is clearly of neither of these that chance is said to be the cause, nor can the 'effect of chance' be identified with any of the things that come to pass by necessity and always, or for the most part. But as there is a third class of events besides these two—events which all say are 'by chance'—it is plain that there is such a thing as chance and spontaneity; for we know that things of this kind are due to chance and that things due to chance are of this kind."

[27] See Wieland, "The Problem of Teleology," 144.

[28] See *Physics* II, 6, 197b36–198a21.

[29] Wieland, "The Problem of Teleology," 144.

were they to do so—their meeting would no longer be by chance. Describing chance as an "as-if" teleology ignores both the finality of the intersecting lines of causality and—more importantly—that the intersections of chance are incidental.

Because chance is incidental it cannot account for the regularity of nature. Aristotle's account of chance shows that chance is only intelligible in light of *per se* causal connections for an end. He strongly states that chance cannot be the cause of anything "without qualification" precisely because chance is not self-explanatory (197a13–14). A chance event is qualified precisely with reference to the teleological context. This does not mean, of course, that chance is banished from the natural world. In the first argument of chapter eight, Aristotle clearly grants that chance events occur, but insists that they stop short of explaining the order of nature. Although Wieland invokes chance as excluding universal final causality, this is not the position of Aristotle. Chance is used in the first argument *in defense* of final causality, not to limit it. As I have already shown, the incidental causality of chance is only intelligible when viewed in light of Aristotle's full account of final causality. Chance does not dispense with the ordering of hylomorphic teleology nor does it limit this essential ordering. Were there no real end, then chance would cease to exist as well. Wieland's claim that final causality presupposes the doctrine of chance simply reverses the subordination of chance to final causality.

The Ontological Source for Hylomorphic Teleology

Having rejected that final causality is universal, Wieland then reduces the end of nature to a reflective concept (*Reflexionsbegriff*). As he puts this, "Teleology obtains only within the world, not in connection with the world as a whole. *Telos* is thus a concept of reflection, which can be meaningfully applied only to *particular* states of af-

fairs."[30] The distinction between individual natural beings or particular states of affairs and nature as a whole introduces a point foreign to the discussion of final causality in chapter eight and does not vitiate Aristotle's claim for the teleology of nature. This is because final causality is a result of nature understood as an intrinsic principle. Individual natural beings are precisely those beings having a principle of this sort. As Aristotle himself notes, "[N]ature always implies a subject in which it inheres" (192b34). Nature as a whole always implies individuals, which are themselves subject to teleology because of their hylomorphic composition.

The teleology of individual natural beings can be extended to include Wieland's understanding of nature generally because individual ordering to an end is a consequence of nature as instantiated in individuals. "Nature as a whole" (*die Welt im Ganzen*) can correspond to Aristotle's general definition of nature as "a source or cause of being moved and of being at rest in that to which it belongs primarily, in virtue of itself and not in virtue of a concomitant attribute" (192b20). Individual natural facts (*einzelne Sachverhalte*), on the other hand, refers to things "which have a principle of this kind" (192b32). This distinction decidedly does not, however, lead necessarily to a limited interpretation of teleology.

Of greater concern is Wieland's conceptualization of the end of nature. As I have shown, nature is essentially teleological, flowing from matter and form as *per se* principles of nature. Yet following his discussion of chance, Wieland is content to make the end a reflective concept that one can invoke in natural investigations but that need not be real or actual. Such a view disregards the claim that the form is a final cause because form is not a mere concept for Aristotle. Wieland's conceptualization abandons nature as the ontological source for the final cause.

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[30] *Ibid.*, 159.

Reducing final causality in this way, he makes the end a category or reflective concept to be used as a mere aid in natural investigation. As he explains,

> [T]eleology is for Aristotle not itself a further object of investigation, but a category, a concept of reflection, with whose aid natural things should be explored. On *how* exactly teleological connections in nature are regulated, Aristotle gives no information; the doctrine of natural teleology is by reason of its methodological stance not in a position to give any such information.[31]

Viewing teleology in this way severs it from its foundation in the principles of nature. Yet, as has been shown, the ordering of matter to form as an end is part of the hylomorphic composition of natural beings themselves. It is not imposed on them from without nor is it used merely conceptually by the natural philosopher in his investigations.

The hylomorphic teleology argued for at 199a30–32 relies on Aristotle's understanding of the ontological composition of natural beings. It is nature understood as form that is the end "for the sake of which."[32] Making the end a reflective tool in natural investigation ignores the reality of nature as form. The end of nature is not merely a reflective concept and Wieland's claim that teleology is a reflective concept betrays a simplistic account of final causality that does a disservice to the richness of Aristotle's presentation. The actuality and fulfillment of nature as form shows that the final cause is more than a conceptual tool.[33] Aristotle's reasoning for hylomorphic teleology depends on the

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[31] *Ibid.*, 152.

[32] See also Aristotle's earlier claim in *Physics* II, 2, esp. 194a27–33: "['T]hat for the sake of which', or the end, belongs to the same department of knowledge as the means. But the nature is the end or 'that for the sake of which'. For if a thing undergoes a continuous change and there is a stage which is last, this stage is the end or 'that for the sake of which'."

[33] In his critique of Wieland's conceptualization, Charlton emphasizes Aristotle's grounding of teleology in nature. While it is a mistake, he holds, "to suppose that Aristotle's account of nature is teleological throughout" it is no less wrong "to suppose that

relation between matter and form in terms of potency and actuality. Form as the natural terminus and actualization of matter is its end, and this relationship holds throughout nature.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, I now return to a passage that follows the arguments for final causality in chapter eight. Answering the one who might deny that nature acts for an end, Aristotle states that

> [T]he person who asserts this entirely does away with 'nature' and what exists 'by nature'. For those things are natural which, by a continuous movement originated from an internal principle, arrive at some completion: the same completion is not reached from every principle; nor any chance completion, but always the tendency in each is towards the same end, if there is no impediment. The end and the means towards it may come about by chance. . . . This is incidental, for chance is an incidental cause, as I remarked before. But when an event takes place always or for the most part, it is not incidental or by chance. In natural products the sequence is invariable, if there is no impediment.[34]

This passage unites several of the points I have sought to highlight in this study. First, that final causality is of central importance to Aristotle's account of nature and that, thus, the one who denies it "does away with nature." Second, that natural beings arrive at completion on account of nature, an intrinsic principle understood in terms of matter and

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where Aristotle thinks teleological explanation appropriate, he is not committed to holding that there is a basis for it *in re*." Interestingly, despite rejecting 199a30–32 as an argument, Charlton holds that the ontological basis for teleology is form. As he continues to explain, "the form of a thing is for Aristotle very much of a reality—is, indeed, what has the best claim to the title of 'reality'. If we ourselves shrink from saying that dispositions like a craftsman's skill are mere concepts of reflection to which nothing corresponds in the craftsman, Aristotle would resist even more strongly a similar suggestion about nature as form." (*Aristotle's Physics*, 121.)

[34] *Physics* II, 8, 199b14–26.

form. Third, that the end being actually attained is not guaranteed, for in natural demonstration one assumes the end but there can be impediments to its fulfillment. Fourth, that chance as an incidental cause cannot account for the regularity of nature.

In contrast to the interpretation of Wolfgang Wieland, I have shown that the argument for hylomorphic teleology in chapter eight unifies the second book of the *Physics* by returning to chapter one's presentation of nature as matter and form, but more properly as form. Rooting final causality in the principles of nature reveals its fundamental importance for Aristotle's view of nature and book II, chapter eight is consequently of great importance to the *Physics* as a whole. Aristotle's account of final causality is intricate and expansive, proceeding along various lines of argumentation aimed at showing nature's order to an end. The passage of 199a30–32 underscores the relation between teleology and Aristotle's understanding of nature as matter and form. In this way, it concludes with an emphasis on the essential ordering of natural beings. Teleology is thus shown to be universal, but not invincible, for the ordering of matter to form does not necessitate a full actualization.

The major objections I have made to Wieland are his limitation of final causality and his conceptualization of the end of nature. In his view, causality must be understood in light of chance and need only be a reflective concept applicable to individual natural beings. Thus universal or essential final causality is explicitly banished from the natural world. Yet as has been shown, Wieland's dismissal of the "traditional" interpretation of teleology largely ignores Aristotle's treatment of nature in chapter one when considering the final cause in chapter eight. Severing the final cause from its ontological foundation in nature, he thus greatly reduces the scope of teleology and in so doing strikes at the heart of the Aristotelian conception of nature.

Hylomorphic Teleology in Aristotle's *Physics* II

SUMMARY

This study draws attention to the ordering of matter and form argued for in Aristotle's *Physics* II, 8 (199a30–32). This argument for hylomorphic teleology relies on the presentation of nature earlier in *Physics* II, 1. In this way, it highlights the connections between chapter one's account of nature as matter and form and chapter eight's defense of final causality. Grounding final causality in the principles of nature reveals its central importance for Aristotle's view of nature. To clarify the meaning of hylomorphic teleology I contrast my interpretation of Aristotle with that of Wolfgang Wieland regarding the scope and foundation of the final cause, countering his claim that chance and universal final causality are mutually exclusive. I contend that the presentation of teleology in chapter eight supports a diverse interpretation of the final cause, one that admits chance events while not sacrificing the intrinsic ordering of matter to form.

KEYWORDS

Aristotle, nature, matter, form, hylomorphism, teleology, hylomorphic teleology, Wolfgang Wieland, chance, final causality.

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Faustinus I. Ugwuanyi

Krąpiec on the Specificity of Man

While France had its Étienne Gilson (1884–1978) and Jacques Maritain (1882–1973), and Germany had its Josef Pieper (1904–1997)—Poland had its Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec (1921–2008).[1] He was "a philosopher, theologian, humanist, co-founder of the Lublin Philosophical School, rector of the Catholic University of Lublin, initiator and chairman of the scientific committee of *The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy*."[2] His academic legacy now extends its influence over many minds who see the originality of his thought, especially in the field of metaphysics and philosophical anthropology.[3]

Fr. Faustinus I. Ugwuanyi — John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland
e-mail: fadaike@yahoo.com ▪ ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4755-2825

[1] The original Polish pronunciation of *Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec* is: *mʲɛtʂɨˈswaf albɛrt krompyetz.*

[2] Wojciech Chudy, "*Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec* in *The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy*," *Studia Gilsoniana* 7, no. 4 (October–December 2018): 549.

[3] See, for example, Gabriela Besler, "The Connection between M. A. Krapiec's Existential Thomism and P. F. Strawson's Analytic Philosophy," in *Atti del Congresso Internazionale su L'Umanesimo Cristiano nel III Millennio: La Prospettiva di Tommaso d'Aquino 21–25 Settembre 2003*, vol. 2 (Vatican City 2005), 194–203; Natalia Kunat, "The Good as the Motive of Human Action According to Mieczyslaw Albert Krapiec," *Studia Gilsoniana* 3 (2014): 155–166; Tomasz Duma, "To Know or to Think? The Controversy over the Understanding of Philosophical Knowledge in the Light of the Studies of Mieczyslaw A. Krapiec," *Studia Gilsoniana* 3 (2014): 277–299; Arkadiusz Gudaniec, "The Foundations of Mieczyslaw Albert Krapiec's Metaphysical Personalism," *Forum Philosophicum* 19, no. 1 (2014): 61–96; Fr. Pawel Tarasiewicz, "Gilson, Krapiec and Christian Philosophy Today," *Studia Gilsoniana* 4, no. 4 (October-December 2015): 381–392; Fr. Tomasz Duma, "Personalism in the Lublin School of Philosophy (Card. Karol Wojtyła, Fr. Mieczysław A. Krąpiec)," *Studia Gilsoniana* 5, no. 2 (April–June 2016): 365–390; Rafał D. Grabowski, "La concepción finalista del

This paper aims at presenting selected insights Krąpiec had about the specificity of man. It will start with making a methodological remark about the correlation between Krąpiec's anthropology and metaphysics. Then, it will try to grasp essentials in his interpretation of attributes traditionally indicated as defining man alone, namely *animal rationale*, *animal culturale*, *animal sociale*, *homo faber*, and *homo religiosus*. Note that the term *man* in Krąpiec's philosophical anthropology, used in this paper, is equivalent of the Polish *czlowiek*, which includes all human beings, regardless of their sex—i.e., both men and women.[4]

Anthropology: A Metaphysics of Man

Krąpiec's main philosophical interests are focused on metaphysics and anthropology. He holds that the classical understanding of science developed in the Aristotelian tradition should form the basis of every rational knowledge and inquiry. Our daily experience then should provide the basis for scientific knowledge and be the starting point for philosophy. He appeals to the immediate experience of being (first cognitive act) which explains how the human intellect first comes into contact with reality. The conception of immediate experience, also known as that of existential judgment, describes how man's pre-reflective or

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derecho natural en Mieczyslaw Albert Krapiec," *Cuadernos de Filosofía* IX (1999): 391–472; Rafał D. Grabowski, "La ley natural, el derecho positivo y los derechos humanos en el pensamiento de Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec," *Colloquia Theologica Adalbertina. Systematica* 3 (2002): 7–30; Marek Krawczyk, *L'ente intenzionale come chiave nel dialogo tra la fenomenologia di R. Ingarden e il tomismo esistenziale di M. A. Krąpiec* (Kraków: Instytut Teologiczny Księży Misjonarzy, 2005).

[4] See Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, "*Man* in *The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy*," *Studia Gilsoniana* 7, no. 4 (October–December 2018): 597–664.

spontaneous knowledge is the basis for the cognitive relation between the knowing subject and the known object.[5]

For Krąpiec, metaphysics is the primary domain of philosophy. He defines metaphysics as "the general theory of being, where being is understood primarily as the concrete existing thing."[6] Metaphysics, therefore, is a first philosophy upon which other disciplines of philosophy are dependent, including philosophical anthropology.[7]

Krąpiec's anthropology studies man from a holistic point of view: it considers man from within and without. Man, according to Krąpiec, does not have a direct intuition of his nature but can get to know it through the analysis of his actions and passions. This "indirect way of getting to know man through his activities and creativity can show us who man is, what the meaning of his life is, what his essential functions and the conditions for their attainment are, and what man's destiny is."[8]

For Krąpiec, man is "a concretely living being of a corporeal and spiritual nature."[9] Man is then a unity of material and immaterial elements and, as such, is the subject matter of philosophical anthropology

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[5] See Chudy, "*Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec* in *The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy*," 555.

[6] *Ibid*, 553.

[7] On the relation between metaphysics and other domains of philosophy, see Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, Andrzej Maryniarczyk, "Metaphysics in the Lublin Philosophical School," trans. Hugh McDonald, *Studia Gilsoniana* 5, no. 2 (April–June 2016): 422–426. On the nature of philosophical anthropology as such, see Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, "Towards an Integral Anthropology," trans. Hugh McDonald, *Angelicum* 77, no. 1–2 (2000): 43: "Philosophical anthropology explains the human being in the context of «nature», that is, in the context of the portion of reality which is accessible to man in his natural cognition, by the senses and reason. This philosophical explanation is the foundation for understanding man as the source of personal activities in various human societies."

[8] Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, *I-Man: An Outline of Philosophical Anthropology*, trans. M. Lescoe et al. (New Britain, Conn.: Mariel Publications, 1983), 2.

[9] Krąpiec, "*Man* in *The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy*," 597.

which is nothing but a metaphysics of man whose end is "to present the structure of human being, and to show and explain the foundations of man's transcendence."[10]

Man's Specific Differences

Animal Rationale

Being an *animal rationale*, which distinctively makes man a human being, means that it is man only that acquires knowledge for the sake of knowledge alone (*scire propter ipsum scire*).[11] Man's cognition, that is, ability to make abstractions and to create ideas, lies at the basis of scientific knowledge as an organized, methodical and fundamentally rational activity. Krąpiec rejects the Cartesian notion of cognition as the consciousness of clear and distinct ideas.[12] He instead sees cognition as the understanding of a concrete thing under the aspect of a grasped meaning, that is, as a derivative of "a system of signs: (a) speech-gestures-writings, (b) concepts, fostered by the mind of the meanings of our speech or writing, (c) the designated things, material objects."[13]

Krąpiec identifies two aspects of a cognitive act: external utterance and its inner sense. The external utterance is a form of speech, writing or gesture, and is only a physical vehicle of an inner meaning. The sense of the external utterance refers then to the meaning of an expression articulated through the medium of signs. It ultimately results in understanding a determined cognitive content which man has "cognitively" experienced.[14] Krąpiec explains that,

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[10] Chudy, "*Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec* in *The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy*," 558.

[11] Cf. Krąpiec, *I-Man*, 35.

[12] Cf. *ibid.*, 119.

[13] *Ibid.*, 120.

[14] Cf. *ibid.*, 121.

Everything, whatever man has accomplished in nature within the limits of his existence, is the result of understanding the sense of his utterance or, precisely the result of human cognition—which awakened, from the beginning of the sensation of a perceived particular object; but it is nevertheless a particular representation of a thing.[15]

Man as an *animal rationale* is constantly aware of the formation of concepts and judgments taking place in him. This awareness gives credence to the existence of a supra-sensible, non-organic source of concepts and judgments which philosophy calls *reason* or *intellect*.[16] Everything which bears a human stamp—like science, morality, technology, including culture and civilization—is primarily derived from intellectual cognition or somewhat bound with the life of the human intellect (βίος θεωρητικός[17]) which defines the specificity of man.

Animal Culturale

Since he is an *animal culturale*,[18] man manifests his specificity in culture. For Krąpiec, culture denotes "everything which comes from man as human activity or production."[19] It is also a kind of the transformation of nature which is capable of producing beauty.[20] Cultural

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[15] *Ibid.*, 121–122.

[16] Cf. *ibid.*, 150.

[17] More on the *bios theoretikos*, see Piotr Jaroszyński, *Science in Culture*, trans. Hugh McDonald (Amsterdam; New York, N.Y.: 2007), 13–16.

[18] Man is regarded as an *animal culturale*, for example, by St. Thomas Aquinas. See Dario Sessa, "Attualità e fecondità del contributo di San Tommaso alla fondazione di una pedagogia cristiana," *Rivista e Letteratura Ecclesiastica* XXIII, no. 2 (2017): 112: "Per S. Tommaso l'uomo è un *animal culturale* e la stessa natura avvalora tale assunto, in quanto dota l'essere umano di due strumenti: la *ratio* e la *manus*, con cui egli gestisce se stesso, la propria vita, i propri bisogni. [For St. Thomas, man is an *animal culturale* which is supported by nature itself, as it endows man with two instruments: *ratio* and *manus*, with which he manages himself, his life, his needs.]"

[19] Krąpiec, *I-Man*, 170.

[20] Cf. *ibid.*

beauty is characteristically human—it is an expression of rationality that defines man. Since it cannot do without activities of the intellect, such as concepts, judgments or reasonings, culture also means the rationalization or intellectualization of nature. Nature, however—beside non-human creatures—also includes man himself. Thus, when they are subject to human rationality, all the forms of the transformation of nature—including human nature as well—are manifestations of culture.[21] Krąpiec explains that "the manifestations of the human spirit, insofar as they are guided by the intellect, human work and activity caused by the human intellect and creations of material nature which have been changed by the human intellect, constitute, in the widest sense, the domain of culture."[22]

Animal Sociale

Man is an *animal sociale*.[23] It means that he is disposed by nature to communicate with other persons. For Krąpiec, this communication is an interpersonal relationship that begins as an "I-Thou" relationship and then leads to a collective form of interpersonal life "which can be called 'we' and which is equivalent to a social form of living, which constitutes some new, distinct, real and truly human way of life."[24]

The collective bond, according to Krąpiec, is formed by the common good which only can be achieved within the context of a society. Ultimately, the society is destined to take the form of a community which guarantees a personal development, for there "individual persons

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[21] Cf. *ibid.*

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] In Greek: πολιτικὸν ζῷον. Cf. Aristotle, *Politics* I, 1253a: "[I]t is clear that the city-state is a natural growth, and that man is by nature a political animal." (*Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, vol. 21, trans. H. Rackham [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1944], available online [see the section: References]).

[24] Krąpiec, *I-Man*, 244.

participate as subjects by realizing that which constitutes the highest personal values and which ultimately opens it to the highest degree, by opening itself to an absolute, objective good, namely the Absolute Being."[25] Such a community—fostering human dignity and personal development—is then a model for all the forms of social life, from the family to the state. All these, however, would not be possible without a rational and free human nature which makes man a specific being in the world—i.e., a person.[26]

Homo Faber

As a *homo faber*,[27] man lives in the world that constitutes the context of his biological and psycho-spiritual life. Man's realization of himself is only possible through the world, for man "uses the world of things as a means for himself and for self-expression."[28]

Homo faber is closely associated with the term *progress* which is another eloquent expression of man's specificity: it is man as *homo faber* who is behind progress. It clearly manifests itself in the various areas of social organization which aims at making the world a better place to live.[29] Man's ability to use tools requires mastering the world, which becomes possible due to the development of science and technology. The history of science traces the stages of social progress from the age of knapped stone (the *Paleolithic*), through the periods of

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[25] *Ibid.*, 246.

[26] Cf. *ibid.*, 34: "We mean, rather, a human community of rational and free beings, a community which is an expression of a rational and free human nature. For a human community is a community of persons, and therefore, of people who are striving to develop and improve their knowledge and various intellectual endeavors."

[27] See Maria da Venza Tillmanns, "The Need to Move Beyond Homo Faber," *Philosophy Now* 106 (February/March 2015): 13: "Homo faber is a concept articulated by Hannah Arendt and Max Scheler referring to humans as controlling the environment through tools."

[28] Krąpiec, *I-Man*, 239.

[29] Cf. *ibid.*, 34.

smoothed stone (the *Neolithic*), bronze and iron, to the present era of pervasive computing.[30] Tool production appears as a result of man's self-realization, for it manifests his cognitive sense, that is, it first results from the activity of the human intellect and then is used by the intellect.[31] For his part, Krąpiec sees a strong correlation between progress and the collective "we." He explains:

> [T]he basis for human welfare and progress are, fundamentally, cognitive achievements, especially scientific. Scientific progress which takes place, before all, in its specializations surpasses the capability not only of an individual man, but even of smaller social groups. Scientific progress, in its transmission to the next generations, demands collective effort in the attainment and consolidation of theoretical achievements. For this reason, too, value and genuine good which flow from scientific knowledge are something universal communal, something that exceeds the possibility, production, and attainment by one individual. Hence, a communally existing form like 'we' is necessary—a form which has for its object a realization of scientifically-knowing value.[32]

Homo Religiosus

Krąpiec holds that the religious nature of man has a twofold expression. Intrinsically, it is manifested in man's inescapable reflection on death—man sees the whole cycle of his maturation and ageing as an inevitable journey toward death.[33] Thus, the very fact of man's religiosity can be recognized as a desire to survive death, a desire for life after

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[30] Cf. Alan M. Greaves and Barbara Helwing, "Archaeology in Turkey: The Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages, 1997–1999," *American Journal of Archaeology* 105, no. 3 (July 2001): 463–511.

[31] Cf. Aleksandr Spirkin, "Man and Culture," in *Dialectical Materialism*, ch. 5: "On the Human Being and Being Human," available online (see the section: References).

[32] Krąpiec, *I-Man*, 245.

[33] No wonder that Martin Heidegger calls man a *being-towards-death*. See Heidegger's *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 298.

death.[34] Extrinsically, man's religious nature, as we read in the *I-Man*, consists in "man's very reference and direction to a transcendent reality."[35] The subjective basis for man's inclination to a transcendent reality lies in his being dynamized. For Krąpiec, the term *dynamized being* means "one who has certain dispositions and who realizes (actualizes) them in contact with the world and other personal beings, through respective activity in relation to their potentialities."[36]

Krąpiec maintains that religion makes a vital contribution to the realization of man's personal potentials. For religion is a bond of all kinds of human activity—it is the only factor which penetrates both *theoria*, *praxis*, and *poiesis*, to concentrate them on the vertical transcendence of man. Consequently, separating man from religion would be tantamount to depriving him of his vertical transcendence which would result in subordinating him to a kind of ideology (e.g., anarchism, communism, imperialism, libertinism, militarism, Nazism, racism, secularism, or the like).[37] Krąpiec believes that both the protection from ideology and the actualization of personal potentials come from the same source: man's intellect and will which, as his highest potentials, are actualized and perfected by their proper objects—respectively truth and goodness which are ultimately identified with God.[38]

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[34] Cf. Krąpiec, *I-Man*, 35. Krąpiec concludes that the very thinking of his own death is a hidden confirmation of man's transcendence. It is also a proof that man's "I" can think of everything except the non-existence of itself. For man cannot cognitively experience his death "in some isolated cognitive act"—what he can is to "constantly experience it in an *accompanying* way . . . in [his] various cognitive-appetitive psychic experiences" (*ibid.*, 341).

[35] Zofia J. Zdybicka, "Man and Religion," in Krąpiec, *I-Man*, 278.

[36] Krąpiec, *I-Man*, 305.

[37] Cf. Tarasiewicz, "Gilson, Krapiec and Christian Philosophy Today," 390.

[38] To show how the human person is actualized through cognition and freedom (love), Krąpiec explains that the object of the intellect is truth and of the will is goodness. Thus, while the human intellect is disposed to the cognition of truth, the will is disposed to the attainment of goodness. Ultimately, man's intellect and will (desire) are oriented to the Absolute which is the highest truth and goodness. Although the proper object of

Conclusion

Krąpiec's philosophical anthropology points to the conclusion that, although such names as *animal rationale*, *animal culturale*, *animal sociale*, *homo faber*, and *homo religiosus*, aptly describe the specificity of man, they all are reducible to a common denominator, that is, to the fact that man is a person.

Why do we only call man a person? Why would it be inappropriate to apply the name *person* to a cat or a dog? Krąpiec answers that a cat or a dog cannot be regarded as a person, because it "is only an example of a nature," that is, because "its operation is determined by animal nature, its knowing is marked out by material stimuli and the determined reception of nature."[39] In contrast, man is a person, because he not only transcends "the works of pure biology,"[40] that is, "a defined genetic code,"[41] but can also overcome "the cultural code . . . and find his own personal way of acting."[42]

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the intellect is the essence of material things, the intellectual cognition realizes itself by seeking the essence of these things (since its end is truth in general) and by tracing their causes back to the Absolute truth. Thus, the full actualization of the intellect's potentiality is only realized by direct contact with the Absolute Truth—God. The same applies to the will. Just as the human intellect is oriented to the cognition of all what is true, so the will is oriented to the good in general. The essence of love as a desire is to cognize and unite with the good. Thus, the ultimate goal of human love is the Absolute Goodness—God. In sum, man's actualization and assurance of his total satisfaction are fully achieved only by a personal bond with the perfect personal Absolute Being—God. See also Chudy, "*Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec* in *The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy*," 553: "According to Krąpiec, without an appeal to existence as the fundamental reason for being, metaphysics cannot be cultivated, and philosophy becomes at most mythology or ideology."

[39] *Conversations with Father Krąpiec: On Man*, trans. Weronika Hansen (Lublin: PTTA, 2012), 84.

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] *Ibid.*, 69.

[42] *Ibid.*, 70.

Krąpiec on the Specificity of Man

SUMMARY

The author presents selected insights offered by Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, O.P., about the specificity of man. He starts with making a methodological remark about the correlation between Krąpiec's anthropology and metaphysics. Then, he tries to grasp essentials in Krąpiec's interpretation of attributes traditionally indicated as defining man alone, namely *animal rationale*, *animal culturale*, *animal sociale*, *homo faber*, and *homo religiosus*. Finally, he concludes that, although all these attributes aptly describe the specificity of man, they all are reducible to the fact that man is a person.

KEYWORDS

Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, man, human being, human person, specificity of man, anthropology, metaphysics, *animal rationale*, *animal culturale*, *animal sociale*, *homo faber*, *homo religiosus*.

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Book Reviews

Jude P. Dougherty

Walter Kaufmann: Philosopher, Humanist, Heretic by Stanley Corngold[*]

Walter Kaufmann was born in Freiburg, Germany, in 1921 and died prematurely in Princeton at the age of fifty-nine, having served more than thirty years as a professor at Princeton University, USA.

Upon completion of the gymnasium in Germany he was, as a Jew, denied by the Nazi regime, admission to a university. Influenced by Rabbi Leo Beck and Martin Buber, Kaufmann began the study of the Hebrew scriptures and the Talmudic tradition with the thought of becoming a rabbi.

The Kaufmann family fled Germany in 1939, migrating to the United States. Walter entered Williams College where he earned a bachelors degree, having studied with John William Miller who lectured on the philosophy of history and James Bissett Pratt, who occupied the chair of intellectual and moral philosophy. Walter subsequently entered Harvard University. After a year at Harvard, Kaufmann joined the Army Air Force. The war was over by then and Kaufmann was sent by the Army to Germany as an interrogator for the Military Intelligence Service.

Corngold relates that early in his undergraduate years, Kaufmann abandoned his commitment to Jewish ritual while developing a deeply

Jude P. Dougherty — The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., USA
e-mail: judeandpat@aol.com ▪ ORCID: no data

critical attitude toward all established religion. When posted to Germany, he chanced upon an edition of the collected works of Nietzsche. Upon returning to Harvard he completed a doctoral dissertation in l971, "Nietzsche's Theory of Values." The same year he began teaching at Princeton. Three years later he published *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, a book which still receives widespread use. At Princeton, Kaufmann subsequently brings his knowledge of Hebrew moral and cultural traditions to bear in a criticism of Christianity in general, the Gospels and St. Paul in particular. The Trinity, he finds absurd. Upon reading Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, he concurs, "there is no supreme being beyond; the spirit is not to be found in another world."[1] Defending Judaism against Christianty, he shuns the metaphysics of Plato and Aristotle which Catholics regard as the rational preamble to the acceptance of the Faith.

Kaufmann identifies himself as a humanist. In his sense, *humanism* implies, first of all, anthropological study, one centered on man's subjectivity—his thoughts, feelings, velleities, moods, accompanied by his sense of self. Kaufmann can say, "I am much less interested in metaphysics and theology than in what religions do to people—how they affect human existence."[2] In the aggregate, a more likely story (of Christ's redemptive act) would be hard to invent. From that insight, Kaufmann finds kinship with Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Jaspers, and others. He intellectually engages Sartre, Bultmann, Tillich and Niebuhr, but is repelled by the lukewarm Protestantism of uncritical Americans who unlike their European colleagues need to "be brought to their senses."[3] The son of a clergyman, Kaufmann has a grasp of the varieties of Christendom, he is well aware of the differences between Lutheranism and Anglicanism, and between Catholicism in France, Italy and Ireland.

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[1] Corngold, *Walter Kaufmann*, 251.

[2] *Ibid*., 8.

[3] *Ibid*., 89.

He will have none of it. He will eventually bring out a three volume work, *Discovering the Mind*, vol. 1: *Goethe, Kant and Hegel*, vol. 2: *Nietzsche, Heidegger and Buber*, vol. 3: *Freud versus Adler and Jung*.[4]

Stanley Corngold does a remarkable job welding into a chronological whole his subject's multifarious writings, a *tragic humanism*, he calls it in his "Epilogue" to the book. Kaufmann's treatise on Nietzsche is shortly followed by his *Critique of Philosophy and Religion*,[5] and *Faith of a Heretic*.[6] In the late 1970s, he reaches a much wider audience by publishing versions of his thought in the *Reader*'s *Digest*: (1) *Religion in Four Dimensions*: *Existential and Aesthetic*, *Historical and Comparative*,[7] and (2) a trilogy entitled *Man's Lot*.[8] Clearly, he is not a detached scholar, but an apologist for a materialistic point of view.

Corngold's book certainly acquaints the reader with the thought of Walter Kaufmann, but it does more than that; it aquaints the reader with the thought of a prominent, late twentieth century generation that in effect rejected the source of the very culture that nourished it.

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Walter Kaufmann: Philosopher, Humanist, Heretic by Stanley Corngold

SUMMARY

This paper is a review of the book: Stanley Corngold, *Walter Kaufmann: Philosopher, Humanist, Heretic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018). The author concludes that Corngold's book acquaints the reader not only with the thought of Walter Kaufmann, but also with the thought of a prominent, late twentieth century generation that in effect rejected the source of the very culture that nourished it.

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[4] New York: McGraw-Hill Co., 1980.

[5] New York: Harper, 1958.

[6] New York: McGraw-Hill Co., 1959.

[7] New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1976.

[8] New York: Reader's Digest Press / McGraw-Hill Inc., 1978.

KEYWORDS

Walter Kaufmann, humanism, religion, atheism.

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Jason Morgan

The Realist Guide to Religion and Science
by Paul Robinson[*]

I had not been in graduate school in the United States for too long before I discovered that intellectual faddishness had taken the place of being fastidiously intellectual, and that the pursuit of political correctness had won out over the pursuit of truth. Most people in the American academy, regardless of what they profess to study, are little more than makeshift sociologists, nervously checking to see where the surrounding herd is headed before making any pronouncements in their own field. Anything judged not in keeping with the ever-shifting stand-ards of conformity to received opinion is rejected as unscientific or anti-intellectual and ignored.

Frustrated with this state of affairs, I remarked one day during seminar that in the Middle Ages universities had been places where truth was sought. I said I wanted to return universities to their medieval orientation of honest, freewheeling debate. Needless to say, the profes-sor assumed a pained, frozen smile while the other graduate students snickered and sneered.

Since that experience, my resolve to restore truth-seeking to American intellectual life has only increased. I also learned that many share my desire to reform the academy in this radical way. Little by

Jason Morgan — Reitaku University, Chiba, Japan
e-mail: jasonmorgan@holyapostles.edu ▪ ORCID: no data

little, a clear vision for renewing the life of the mind through the rededication to truth becomes visible in the West.

Paul Robinson's *The Realist Guide to Religion and Science* is therefore a very welcome addition to the growing, and increasingly activist, remnant of truth-seekers who want to do more than fritter away their intellectual dhimmitude on the margins of post-modern and Marxian anti-scholarship. More than a call to action, *The Realist Guide to Religion and Science* is a plan for it, as well as a rallying cry to go on offense in taking back the academy for purposes higher than identity politics.

Divided into three parts—Reason, Religion, and Science—Robinson's book is a double-hearted adventure. On the one hand, Robinson, a Kentucky native and Catholic priest currently teaching in Australia, patiently and methodically rebuilds our capacity for knowing and loving truth by returning to Aristotelian and Thomistic principles and insights, showing how *realism*—Robinson's term of art and the keystone of this book, on which more below—is the approach needed for the human mind to look for, know, and delight in what is objectively true. On the other hand, *The Realist Guide* is a ruthless dismantling of the various false edifices and untenable ideologies that thicket the modern academy. Going down the list from *pagan pantheism* and *Protestant biblicism* to the thoroughly unscientific claims of Richard Dawkins, Lawrence Krauss, and Daniel Dennett, Robinson does not attempt to find common ground with the enemies of truth. His objective is to annihilate their falsehoods forever. *The Realist Guide* is a bracing frontal attack on every idol of the age, and in section after section Robinson picks apart the enemies' defenses with all the confidence of a seasoned combat veteran.

Like the soldier fighting for love of country, Robinson's cut and thrust blossoms forth from a very simple notion, namely, that truth exists, and that the human mind was made to know it. From this starting

point, Robinson's thinking, and his book, follow. As Robinson asserts in the preface:

> This book sets forth a general principle about human knowing, and then illustrates that principle by looking at the history of religion and science, as follows:
> – General principle—realism is the human way of relating to reality and so is the default basis for all the knowledge of it that humans acquire.
> – Religion as example of principle—religion is reasonable when realist and becomes irrational to the degree it is not.
> – Science as example of principle—science is reasonable when realist and becomes irrational to the degree it is not.
> These three bullet points correspond to the three sections of the book. First, we have to know reality using realist eyes; second, we have to see how religion is reasonable when realist and unreasonable when not; third, we must do the same for science.[1]

Robinson's *realism* is thus the organizing principle of his thinking and of the volume under review.

But what exactly does Robinson mean by the term? For many philosophers, *realism* is not cut and dry. Basic realism, of course, is simply the assertion, assumption, or even belief that the world and its attributes exist independently of the mind. Beyond this, though, there are many different branches: semantic realism, platonic realism, mathematical realism, epistemological realism, and so forth. Robinson's *realism* seems to borrow aspects from many of realism's subsets. For example:

> Truth occurs, in its essence, when the mind affirms a correct proposition about reality, aptly joining a subject and predicate by the concept 'is'. 'Is' expresses real being; it is the assertion of something really existing outside the mind. When the mind says

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[1] Robinson, *The Realist Guide to Religion and Science*, xxv.

'Mountains are high', reality has not just connected with the mind; the mind has also connected with reality.[2]

This reference to the copula as indicating reality may lead some to think that Robinson is espousing a kind of semantic realism. Elsewhere, Robinson affirms that his realism is epistemological, too, as when he follows up on a Joseph Pieper quote about the spirit being part of the perfection of the human intellect to state:

> Realism does not just affirm the ability of the human intellect to acquire knowledge from reality; it also affirms the intellect's ability to know that it knows, and so also the ability to say what reality is. . . . [Furthermore,] the senses know what is particular, the intellect what is universal[, and] the intellect's highest act is the attainment of truth by the formation of a correct intellectual judgement about reality.[3]

Robinson's realism, then, is a synthesis of many of modern realism's disparate strands. But it is much more, too. As readers will likely already have guessed, Robinson's realism is human, alive, robust, the very nature of our intellects—it is, in two words, Aristotelian and Thomist.

The citation footnoted in the above quotation gives it away, for when Robinson speaks of the senses knowing what is particular and the intellect what is universal, he is drawing from St. Thomas Aquinas's *De Anima* (book 2, lesson 5, no. 6), but also from the grand tradition of the West, the insights by Aristotle, St. Thomas, and their many students across the centuries that the world is real and we can really know it, and also that, ultimately, as St. Thomas taught in light of much of what he learned from Aristotle, we are made to know and love God.

Robinson's realism is, therefore, much more than one more gear in the secularist philosophical transmission. Robinson is not locked into

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[2] *Ibid.*, 9.

[3] *Ibid.*, 10.

the usual logic-chopping debates of the modern professors. By openly embracing God, Robinson raises the stakes of his project infinitely. He is not trying to play inside the boundaries that the secularist philosophers maintain—he is turning the tables on the secularists and insisting that metaphysics not be lopped off of philosophy, but that philosophy recover its sanity by proceeding from Aristotle's First Cause and acknowledging St. Thomas's "proof for the real distinction between essence and existence propounded in chapter 4 of his *De Ente et Essentia*."[4] As Robinson pithily remarks, it's "first cause or bust."[5] Robinson's book is thus a full-on rejection of half-measures and intellectual compromise. This book plays for keeps, and everything—the legacy of the past 2,500 years of the Western intellectual tradition—is on the table.

That legacy includes the Arabic sources from which our current Aristotelian corpus derives—and by extension the Arabs' Muslim faith—as well as the Protestantism and scientism that flared up in Western Europe during and after the fifteenth century. Robinson eruditely argues, for example, against a widely-held Islamic view that Allah creates and destroys the universe with every moment, and follows Étienne Gilson in criticizing William of Ockham for equally undermining causality among the Latins.[6] He then turns to Protestantism, arguing against Luther's literalism and rejection of reason before turning to more recent Protestants, such as Charles Darwin and the Creationists, who, equally influenced by biblical literalism, either rejected God outright or embraced fundamentalism completely, with equally disastrous results.

In this unapologetically Catholic realism, Robinson's model is the late philosopher and historian of science Stanley Jaki. Robinson's

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[4] *Ibid.*, 50–51.

[5] *Ibid.*, 50.

[6] *Ibid.*, 226, citing Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy*, 489.

debt to Jaki is apparent in nearly every section of *The Realist Guide*, and it is a debt that Robinson gratefully acknowledges:

> I do not hesitate to state that my inspiration [in writing *The Realist Guide*] came from the writings of the late, great Fr Stanley Jaki, physicist and theologian, herculean researcher, and prolific writer. From the early 1960s until his death in 2009, he applied his rapacious and capacious mind to exhaustive research into the history of science. The sheer volume of first hand sources from the past as well as contemporary works that he read, assimilated, and synthesised seems to justify his magisterial tone, forceful invective, and adamant insistence, all wrapped in a sophisticated and obscure prose. Jaki packs a punch.[7]

As Robinson sees it, "one of Jaki's main contentions is that realism is needed to do religion rightly and to do science rightly."[8] "To do religion rightly," Robinson continues,

> means to provide it with a rational foundation, by means of realist philosophical proofs for the existence of God and His attributes. To do religion wrongly is to base it upon an irrational emotion or a sacred text read irrationally. To do science rightly is to require that its theories match empirical evidence and conform to the world as we know it, that is, that it be realist. To do science wrongly is to cook up theories which do not serve hard fast evidence, but rather serve some preconceived notion of the way that the universe ought to be. What is the mentality behind right religion and right science? Realism. What is the mentality behind wrong religion and wrong science? Either idealism or empiricism.[9]

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[7] *Ibid.*, xxii–xxiii.

[8] *Ibid.*, xxiii, citing *The Road of Science and the Ways to God* (Port Huron, Mich.: Real View Books, 2005), *A Mind's Matter* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), *Bible and Science* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), and *Lord Gifford and His Lectures* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1986).

[9] *Ibid.*, xxiii.

This two-hearted book—both reconstruction and demolition—is also double-edged, with realism cutting both ways, through *scientific* and religious empiricism and idealism, to clear the ground for a Jakian return to right reason. Using what he calls an *epistedometer*,[10] Robinson shows how a variety of false creeds, from Daoism to Lawrence Krauss's generationist nothing-ism, clock in against the realist index.

And yet, even though Robinson's book is a tour de force of solid thinking and feisty polemics, there is one wrinkle that remains to be ironed out. Throughout the volume, Robinson seems to maintain a distinction between *science* and *philosophy*, using the two terms as meaning two separate things: *science* being the thing people do with beakers and microscopes to find out about the natural world, and *philosophy* referring to thinking about things in this world that the senses cannot necessarily detect. But this is a fallacy, and it cuts at the root of Robinson's own project. As Robinson knows perfectly well—especially since he occasionally says so, such as on page 324 when he cites Aristotle's definition of science as knowing causes with certainty—science and philosophy are the same thing. His entire book could be read as in support of this claim, to be sure. But more clarity about the identity of science and philosophy can only help readers more readily overcome the scientism that has made philosophy and science appear separate. Like a straw in a glass of water, what seems to be broken is actually one.

But this is in no way a fatal flaw. Robinson has given us a truly monumental volume and I hope that everyone interested in intellectual history, or intellectual honesty, will buy and read *The Realist Guide to Religion and Science*. Paul Robinson may very well be our next Stanley Jaki. But I have a feeling he may be even more. There is a movement afoot to take back our Christian heritage and realist patrimony, and in

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[10] *Ibid.*, 13.

that sense Robinson's book may be much more than just a work of philosophy.

The Realist Guide to Religion and Science **by Paul Robinson**

SUMMARY

This paper is a review of the book: Paul Robinson, *The Realist Guide to Religion and Science* (Leominster, Herefordshire, UK: Gracewing, 2018). According to the author, Robinson's book is a double-hearted adventure. On the one hand, Robinson patiently and methodically rebuilds the reader's capacity for knowing and loving truth by returning to Aristotelian and Thomistic principles and insights, showing how *realism* is the approach needed for the human mind to look for, know, and delight in what is objectively true. On the other hand, *The Realist Guide* is a ruthless dismantling of the various false edifices and untenable ideologies that thicket the modern academy.

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Robinson, Paul. *The Realist Guide to Religion and Science*. Leominster, Herefordshire, UK: Gracewing, 2018.

Brian Welter

The Realist Guide to Religion and Science
by Paul Robinson[*]

What makes *The Realist Guide to Religion and Science* both accessible and sensible is Father Paul Robinson's illustration of Thomist philosophy's coherence, starting from a basis in philosophy of being. This congruity contrasts with the incoherence and falsehoods that abound in idealism and empiricism, the latter followed by most scientists today. After outlining the strengths and weaknesses of Aristotelian philosophy, the author argues that the medieval Christian worldview enabled repair of these flaws. The resulting unified, multifaceted philosophy guided science (and other endeavors) yet kept science from swaying into metaphysical terrain. This helps readers comprehend modern science's wrong turns and possible corrections. Anyone unsettled by modern science's hubris will find this engaging reading. Robinson's book is above all a work of apologetics, as it addresses why the Catholic faith provides the most logical belief system, and why seemingly sophisticated attacks on the Church and its beliefs by seemingly rational philosophers and scientists are not only erroneous, but actually irrational. Counterarguments can be easily evoked.

Robinson argues convincingly that philosophical realism enabled the experimental method and mindset to develop in the Middle Ages

Brian Welter — Taipei, Taiwan
e-mail: brianteachertaiwan@gmail.com ▪ ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6796-6561

sufficiently so that the later Age of Science and its aftermath survived realism's waning. In the "Forward," Paul Michael Haffner notes, "Realism affirms the existence of universals against nominalism. Against positivism, realism proposes that reality extends beyond that which the natural sciences can measure."[1] Throughout the book readers see realism compared to idealism and empiricism on a scale, with concrete examples illustrating why certain thinking harms both scientific and religious worldviews. Robinson warns that whenever religion or science seem to be at odds with each other, "it is not because they are incompatible with one another, it is because one or the other of them is incompatible with reality."[2] Aside from this important relationship between religion and science, Robinson explores timely themes, including a science-inspired pantheistic perspective, the relationship between metaphysics and epistemology, and Luther's problematic philosophical and theological teachings.

The discussion on Aristotle pinpoints strengths and weaknesses in the Greek philosopher's thinking, such as a faulty understanding of God and therefore of First Causes. Unlike some Thomist writers, Robinson keeps Aristotle and St. Thomas separate, so that we can clearly see where the Dominican corrected the Stagirite's shortcomings and therefore took the original thinking to conclusions which proved vital to science's development. This includes the Four Causes, which are clearly delineated.

A healthy metaphysics engenders a healthy epistemology, Robinson observes. The author comes back to this theme repeatedly, highlighting the key relationship between sensory perception and the intellect. Unlike empiricists, realists require more than sensory perception.

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[1] Robinson, *The Realist Guide to Religion and Science*, xvi.

[2] *Ibid.*, xxi.

Realism results from the intellect taking sensory input further by building universals:

> Both intellect and sense are able to receive reality and correctly reflect it with their respective powers, but the way in which they do so is different. The intellect reflects the common or universal aspects of reality with its concepts, while sensation reflects the particular aspects of reality with its internal sense images.[3]

Easy enough for non-specialists to follow, this sufficiently rich and detailed discussion also allows more serious readers to gain a coherent overview of the various facets of the issue. Robinson's critique of scientism later in the book returns to this essential issue. Scientists err when they try to build a metaphysics based solely on sense.

The chapter entitled "Catholic Creativity" captures much of the essence of the book. Robinson traces the work of French scientist Pierre Duhem (1861–1916), whose *Système du monde* traced the debt modern science owes to medieval Christianity. The Christian view of creation "naturally engenders a realist epistemology,"[4] Duhem discovered. Just as surprising for Duhem, the key was "how the medieval church created a society of free intellectual inquiry, one in which neither theology nor the Bible impeded the progress of science."[5] Robinson's discussion of other religions helps readers put this achievement into context. Even other Christian eras or Christian cultures failed to accomplish this. Robinson captures the brilliance of the medieval mind well, describing "a top-down unity wherein each thing has some relation to every other thing."[6] Later in this chapter, Robinson gets around to mentioning Robert Grosseteste (1168–1253), a major contributor to the scientific method. More references to such individuals would have added more variety

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[3] *Ibid.*, 9.

[4] *Ibid.*, 157.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*, 161.

to the discussion. Concerning Grosseteste's work, Robinson notes that modern scientists "would recognise this 'highly developed experimental method' as essentially the same as their own, though they would not recognise it as being motivated by a Christian worldview."[7] Unfortunately, Robinson lacks the space to develop this exciting medieval age of science more. The author of *The Realist Guide to Religion and Science* shows the expansive view of the medieval mind without being able to take us too deeply into one or another strand.

Like other themes, when the author addresses Luther and the Protestant battle against realism, he focuses on the roots. Soon after realism's medieval high point, reflected in the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas, William of Occam's nominalist writings became more deeply-ingrained, eventually reaching Luther through the Augustinian order. As Robinson notes with clarity, Occam fit into a widespread late medieval stream of thinking: "Seeking to save the Church from Aristotle and Averroes, some thinkers did not reconcile faith with reason, but had faith overtake reason's territory."[8] While such luminaries as St. Bonaventure tended in this direction, Robinson accuses Occam of undermining the medieval causality that enabled a scientific mindset to develop. Occam "does not want God's will to be obliged to obey anything, not even His own mind. Thus, he claims that when God creates, God does not follow any plan in His mind, or create creatures according to certain forms or types."[9] Robinson calls this "radical epistemological individualism."[10] He describes how this destroyed the "principle of causality,"[11] a principle that relies on realist metaphysics. Robinson is careful to show that Occam was not the only one with this view; the English friar

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[7] *Ibid.*, 185.

[8] *Ibid.*, 222.

[9] *Ibid.*, 224.

[10] *Ibid.*, 225.

[11] *Ibid.*

was representative of a powerful, centuries-long current that called into question the delicate reason-faith balance.

The author identifies the relationship between science and religion as based on the rationality of belief in God's existence. In fact, the author shows how disbelief in God leads to irrationality. He evokes the Thomistic philosophy outlined earlier:

> Before anything can be classified as a certain type of living thing, it must first be a thing. It must first have the four substantial characteristics which natural species provides to a being: essence, unity, sameness, and fixity. Only then can we begin to speak of accidental characteristics that derive from those substantial characteristics, the aspects which biologists use to classify living things.[12]

A pithy statement describes this irrationality: "*The empiricist biologist must try to find a way to deny that species exist*."[13] Robinson follows a similar pattern for physics and chemistry. He pinpoints the inconsistency and irrationality of contemporary scientistic scientists who disallow any belief in God or in the legitimacy of any metaphysics. Their own scientific reductionism replaces both God and metaphysics. The discussion on science derives much from the teachings of Jesuit physicist and theologian Stanley Jaki (1924–2009). Jaki fearlessly pointed out science's metaphysical shortcomings and opposed its hubristic claims to surpass both religion and traditional metaphysics.

Robinson thus clarifies the seemingly bold position that scientists destroy science when they reject realism. Science becomes irrational without reference to final causes: "In trying to make of natural selection a system of total explanation, Darwin seeks to differentiate one thing from another while failing to account for how anything is something."[14]

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[12] *Ibid.*, 444.

[13] *Ibid.* Robinson's italics.

[14] *Ibid.*, 445.

Denying the most significant step in the process of creation renders modern science hopelessly incomplete. Scientists then try to fill the God-gap in much the same way that Biblicists employ a God-of-the-gaps argument against evolutionary theory. Well-known British atheist Richard Dawkins, for instance, ascribes to genes a godlike role, such as being able to perform the great miracles of macro-evolution and immortality, the latter by being passed down through the generations. Readers will appreciate the irony here. Dawkins is one of several scientists covered in the book who, having eliminated traditional Aristotelian metaphysics, assert their scientific theory as a theory of everything. This hubris badly oversteps science's boundaries. Such scientists make poor metaphysicians.

Robinson weaves the theme of pantheism throughout the book. Modern scientists are beholden to the senses due to their empiricist worldview and denial of the intellect. With his usual clarity, the author explains the connection between sensory overload, the rejection of metaphysics, and pantheism:

> Thus weighed down, reason abandons logical labour, stops at the mountain's foot, and settles for a simplistic worldview, one that sees matter as the ultimate reality, one making God the all and the all God. The pantheistic god, instead of flooding reality with light, overshadows it with an umbrageous cloud, sapping the universe of all causal explanation by reducing it to a brute fact.[15]

These words come from the "Epilogue," where Robinson turns to the beginning of the *Divine Comedy* and the reference to the three bestial impulses that prevent Dante from "ascend[ing] the 'mountain of delight', atop of which sits 'the origin and cause of every joy'."[16] Readers clearly see how we have regressed since the realist Middle Ages, even as science has gone from one discovery to another. Strongly implied

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[15] *Ibid.*, 498.

[16] *Ibid.*, 497.

throughout the book, and made clearer at the end, is how denying Final Cause, as science and modern man do, amounts to a spiritual fallacy.

Science's hubris is, even more than philosophical error, ultimately a spiritual sickness. The apt Chesterton quote at the beginning of the "Epilogue" bears this out: "The man who cannot believe his senses, and the man who cannot believe anything else, are both insane."[17] By this time in the book, readers have been well-prepared for these words with Robinson's analysis of both empiricism and idealism. Robinson's conclusions are damning to the scientific establishment:

> To fill in the vast vacuum of explanation left by the removal of formal and final causes, modern materialists tell stories. They say perturbations of nothing configured the universe, that we were born from the stars, that genes wove us from their selfishness, that fish became fowl by turns of fortune. In the end, it is the same magic and mythology of primitive thought, only today's myths do not allow for intelligent agents to enter the story. It's all magic and no magicians.[18]

Science denies an important part of itself, including its medieval realist heritage, when it denies religion and metaphysics. This reflects the theme Robinson develops at the book's outset, namely that any apparent discord between science and religion indicates error in one or both.

Catholic readers will come away from *The Realist Guide to Religion and Science* quite confident in their viewpoint. More importantly, the author arms us for intellectual battle against well-known currents of secularism. His citations of brilliant and inspiring Catholic thinkers such as Chesterton, Etienne Gilson, Fr. Stanley Jaki, and Jacques Maritain illustrate how Catholicism can not only hold its own against secularism and scientism, but can go far beyond this. Robinson shows us the grace and generosity of the universe as conceived by the Catholic

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[17] *Ibid.*
[18] *Ibid.*, 499.

mindset, an intentional, welcoming, and orderly world instead of the cold, indifferent, and accidental one of atheist science.

The Realist Guide to Religion and Science by Paul Robinson

SUMMARY

This paper is a review of the book: Paul Robinson, *The Realist Guide to Religion and Science* (Leominster, Herefordshire, UK: Gracewing, 2018). According to the author, what makes the book both accessible and sensible is Robinson's illustration of Thomist philosophy's coherence, starting from a basis in philosophy of being. Robinson presents the philosophy of being as being appropriate to cooperate with science. This helps readers comprehend modern science's wrong turns and possible corrections. This also makes Robinson's book a work of apologetics, as it addresses why the Catholic faith provides the most logical belief system, and why seemingly sophisticated attacks on the Church and its beliefs by seemingly rational philosophers and scientists are not only erroneous, but actually irrational.

KEYWORDS

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